La Casa Maribel, the opening

The opening day of the restaurant La Casa Maribel approached. To say people were excited would be wrong, they were apprehensive. It was only Maribel and her challenged taste buds that were looking forward to the launch of her restaurant. No one had the heart to tell her that apart from Remitroot Alquerian foodstuffs were practically inedible.

When the big day arrived Maribel was in high glee while the rest of Alqueria held its collective breath. Maribel was persuaded to employ Manuela as waitress, it was hoped her harmonious curves would distract the invited connoisseurs from what was going to be placed in front of them.

The ambiance was convivial, gentle guitar music soothed the would-be diners while several glasses of a particularly potent Remitroot aperitif stupefied them. All was going well. Then Maribel started the food preparation. The food pundits sniffed the air as cooking odours wafted in from the kitchen. The initial reaction was to check the soles of their shoes for any unwelcome extras. Manuela tried plying the guests with liberal quantities of Remitroot wine and whisky in the hope she could numb them before the appalling food arrived.

The subterfuge seemed to be working. Then the food made an appearance.

The French connoisseur Didier Frogeaux simply looked at the food, rose from the table and, still looking at his plate backed out of La Casa Maribel. He was never seen nor heard of again apart from a postcard from Kaffeklubben Island asking for his back-pay to be forwarded care of the local post-office. The Italian representative Alrigo Scoffaconi put a fork full into his mouth but didn't chew or swallow. He was airlifted back to Treviso where he had the morsel of Alquerian cuisine surgically removed from his paralysed jaws. Burt Scrumblegob, the English oficionado chewed away merrily. “Just like home” he was heard to mutter as he tucked in.

Maribel and her unserviceable taste buds still thought the food to be wonderful. She put the reactions of the French and Italian connoisseurs down to jealousy. She believed in the Alquerian brand. Maribel pointed to the remaining diner who was eating the Alquerian Trout, the smell of which was stripping the whitewash from the walls. He was certainly enjoying the fare.

Unhappily it fell to Manuela to point out the deluded restaurateur that the remaining diner was in fact English. The horrible realisation dawned on Maribel, 'English', his experience of fine cuisine would be on a par with Loco Paco's exposure to quantum physics.

Maribel closed her restaurant and now runs a shelter for the gustatorily challenged.