

## A Visit with Oscar and Clara Marin

*Brian Butterworth, PhD, FBA*



Dinner party hosted by Brian Butterworth and Diana Laurillard at their house in London around 1989-1990. Left to right: Marta Panzeri, Clara Marin, Oscar Marin, Alessandra Semenza, Carlo Semenza, Diana Laurillard, Anthony Marcel, unidentified. Photograph courtesy of Brian Butterworth.

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My partner, Diana Laurillard, and I stayed with Oscar and Clara Marin in Paris and in Oregon, both in Portland and at their vacation home in Tillamook Bay. At the shore in August of 1982, according to my log, we caught two large perch and a big crab, which Clara cooked for dinner.

Here's an extract from the log for 30th August 1982, our last day with Oscar and Clara in Portland:

We had to get up early to say goodbye and thanks to the Marins. They are a wonderful couple, unnecessarily so—to be half as wonderful would be quite enough. They are kind, considerate, sane, socially aware, witty, on top of various kinds of talent. Oscar was a professor of music in Chile, while a neurologist there. Almost a part-time brain surgeon! In fact, he

had been a neurosurgeon previously....He paints well, too, and his houses are full of interesting experiments in various approaches. Both he and Clara collect “treasures” from the beach—driftwood that they make into decorations, and agates, which Clara polishes....

Although they both manifestly have a full and satisfying life, there are detectable undercurrents of unhappiness. Of course, the overthrow of [Chilean

President Salvador] Allende was deeply shocking and painful, and although Oscar rarely talks about it, he told me that rarely a day goes by when he doesn't think about it with pain. Also, America, though good to them, is a subject for continual criticism—for the lack of historical perspective and an avoidance of serious political discussion. Most of our mornings have been filled with it. One day Oscar said, “Sorry, I have to leave for work now.” (It was 7:45 am.) One-and-a-half hours later, we were still chatting.