

PRIORS DEAN VINEYARD

FINE ENGLISH WINE

www.priorsdeanvineyard.co.uk

Information and sales.

Pam Morley

5 St Mary's Road

Liss

Hampshire

GU33 7AH Tel: 01730 894147 Email: pamelaelkins@ukonline.co.uk

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2006

The Harvest

A cold spring followed by a hot summer and wet autumn made for a mixed result. The vines flowered late but set a really good crop. The hot summer made for good ripening, but before they were ready the rain started, and the grapes soaked up the water diluting the sugars and encouraging rot.

As usual we had our own problems. Last year you may remember the tractor's head gasket blew, and one had to be purpose made, meaning the spray programme, essential for our early variety vines, was thoroughly disrupted, and we lost quite a bit of the crop. We kept assuming that the tractor would be back any day, but in the end it was away so long that the powdery mildew had got a hold and was impossible to eradicate. We assumed that this year all would now be well, but just as the vines started to flower the same thing happened again. The custom made gasket was faulty. Our tractor repairer, he specialises in vintage tractors like ours, had to cast about for another supplier. This time we did not hang round waiting for its return, but hired something to do the work. Unfortunately we had to fit in with its normal job, so we couldn't spray as frequently as was desirable. Powdery mildew, which is our chief enemy, should have a preventative spray every ten days, but we were unable to manage that so there was a bit of trouble by harvest time.

Our first picking day was on 4th October, a bit earlier than usual, but the spreading rot plus the threat of the descent of the pigeons that had enjoyed last years crop, made us go ahead. The pickers did brilliantly, sorting out the best grapes and we got a pretty good amount, but the rain meant the natural sugar was a bit low. The second lot, the Seyval grapes, are mildew resistant and with no sign of any pigeons we were able to leave them a bit longer. We had a full vanload to take to the winery, and the sugar was very good. Altogether we got over two tonnes of grapes, and this should produce about 2000 bottles of wine.

A visit to Denbies

A few weeks ago I found myself on a coach tour to Denbies Wine Estate near Dorking. People had often asked me about it but all I knew was that it was vastly bigger than us, 265 acres to our 1.5. In fact it was another world, reception areas, restaurants, scenic trains, conference rooms and shop. A far cry from our hospitality chalet alias garden shed! What was of interest was the panoramic cinema with a film about the estate and the reasons it was chosen for a vineyard. This was for the soil, light loam over chalk, and the setting or 'terroir' with a sheltered south-facing slope. 'The same as in Champagne' said the advisory geologist, but in fact it was almost identical to Priors Dean. It was pleasant to think that a millionaire with the whole country to choose from, and the best possible advisors, should choose a site so similar to ours to make his world class wine. In fact we have always, even in disaster years, produced an excellent wine, which has won awards in local and national competitions.

Volunteers

We have been extremely grateful for all the help we have had during the last two years. Without all the friends rallying round, the vineyard would have had to be abandoned. The situation has not changed and we still need you desperately. We have working parties once or twice a month, or volunteers can adopt a row, be given a key, and come when they wish. In all cases there will be free Priors Dean wine available. The first working parties will be in January for pruning, the first one being Sunday Jan. 7th. Weather permitting of course. If you haven't been before and would like to help do come along. We just meet for the morning – about 9.30, and finish about lunchtime with a break for coffee. I expect we will have another meeting later on in the month, but I haven't fixed a date yet.

The vines have lost their leaves, so those of you that have adopted a row can start pruning any time now. If anyone can't manage to come this year just let me know so I can reallocate your row.

Sales

We are starting our Christmas wine deliveries now, so if you have not yet contacted us we are ready and waiting for your call. Remember what an excellent gift Priors Dean wine makes, and ideal as an aperitif in the festive season.

The current wines available direct from us are:

2001 Dry. A light dry white wine awarded 'Highly Commended' in the UKVA Wine of the Year competition 2003

. £5.00 per bottle £60.00 per case of 12 bottles

2003 Dry. Bronze Medal UKVA competition 2005. The judge's verdict was "Delicate, light, neutral, balanced". Silver Medal Wessex Area Wine of the Year competition 2005.

£7.00 per bottle. £80 00 per case of 12 bottles

We still have a very small quantity of the very popular 2002 Medium Dry available by special request and there may still be some in the shops. This is definitely your last chance to get it. Please contact me for availability.

Delivery is free locally (within about 20 miles) of 6 bottles or more, and we can deliver smaller quantities locally for a small charge. For anything further afield we can arrange carriage at cost. Please contact me for details.

The wine is also available in the shops, but please note the price is not necessarily the same as ours.

Blackmoor Farm Shop (Apple Shop)

Durleighmarsh Farm Shop

East Tisted Post Office Stores

Froxfield Stores

The General Wine Company Liphook

The Haslemere Cellar

And finally...

Very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year to you all and especially to all of you who have given us such support during the past year.

Pam, Neil and Jim Morley

PS Jim's latest book 'Rocastle's Vengeance' an exciting thriller set round a Dorset harbour, and an ideal holiday read, is available from One Tree Books, Petersfield, from Amazon, or direct from Jim at a discount Tel.01420 538688