

PRIORS DEAN VINEYARD

FINE ENGLISH WINE

www.priorsdeanvineyard.co.uk

Information and sales.

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NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2009

A Bumper crop!

After two years with hardly any grapes this year the vines did us proud. As a start the weather at flowering time, June and July, was beautiful, warm and sunny. This meant the flowering was good, and we had an excellent fruit set. Of course there are many potential disasters which can strike before harvest, most of which we have had over the years. Botrytis and various mildews, wasps and an invasion of hungry pigeons have all descended on us in previous seasons. In spite of our anticipating the worst, none of these happened, and as a bonus there was a warm and sunny autumn.

We had two mornings picking this year, for the first one the van we hired was nearly full, for the second one we were overcome by the unexpected amount of grapes, and with the van full to capacity we had to abandon some and leave them for the birds. We just had not anticipated the amount available, and as the load has to be at the winery in time to be pressed that afternoon there was no time for a second run. Most years there may look like a lot of bunches on the vine, but when the time comes for picking many have to be discarded due to rot or damage. This year nearly all were beautiful clean bunches, our best crop ever!

The end result of the two pickings was nearly two and a half tons of grapes and this will yield approximately 2000 bottles. On the advice of Vince our winemaker this is to be made 'off-dry', slightly sweeter than our normal dead dry 'Classic' white wine. It would be nice to have a new distinctive name for this, any suggestions welcome.

Changes

Jim has sold the little field adjoining the vineyard so we can no longer walk across it. However the track, 'Buttons Lane' has been widened and there is a new entrance. We are now bringing into use the small strip of scrub land just beyond the vineyard chalet. It is not suitable for vines, but should make a useful addition to our picnic area. The view from it is superb.

Volunteers

Once again we are very grateful to our volunteer helpers. I am sure that the excellent quality crop was in good part due to the hard work everyone did with the summer pruning, letting the light and air into the canopy, and helping to keep the mildew at bay. I am especially grateful as I seem to have been out of action all year, first having a knee replacement, and just as it seemed to be on the mend damaging the adjacent soft tissues. The final blow was in the summer, when I tripped over a half dug rabbit hole, flew through the air and fell hard on my bad knee. Although it is a lot better I still have to be careful not to twist it. Without all your hard work the vines would have been in a bad way.

Working Parties

The leaves are off the vines now and we can think about the pruning to be done, and any help will be welcome. For those who don't know, volunteers meet on occasional Sunday mornings to help out for a few hours. No money is involved, but free bottles of Priors Dean wine are available, and you can have use of the vineyard whenever you want, say for family picnics or barbecues. The first working parties for 2010 will be on **Sunday 3rd January, and Sunday 17th January**. We start about 9.30 and go on until lunchtime. It is a help if you could let me know if you are coming, but otherwise just turn up. Bring secateurs if possible.

Wine for sale

As usual before Christmas I like to remind you of the many qualities of Priors Dean wine. Of course you know what a good aperitif it makes, and of its excellence with fish and cold meat. What I find myself is how useful it is as a Christmas present, and especially as a little gift when you are visiting comparative strangers and don't know what they like, or what they have already got. Because it has done well in competitions you are assured that it is really good quality.

The current vintages on sale are:

2006 Medium Dry A light fragrant white wine for everyday drinking.

Highly Commended Wessex Area Wine of the Year Competition 2008

2007 Classic Dry White The latest example of our very dry but fruity wine which has been such a favourite with our customers over the years. Awarded Highly Commended in the UK Vineyards Wine of the Year Competition and Silver in the Wessex Competition. The Judges comments were 'lightweight nose, lovely fresh palate, gooseberry, full mouth feel, refreshing acidity, balanced, long dry finish, nice wine'

Price from the vineyard. Both wines £8.00 per bottle £90 per case of 12 bottles
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 available in the shops, but please note the price is not necessarily the same as ours. Also some have very limited stocks so best to check before making a special journey.

Blackmoor Farm Shop (Apple Shop)

Hindhead Post Office Stores

Durleighmarsh Farm Shop

The Handy Store, Medstead

East Tisted Post Office Stores

Selborne Post Office Stores

FeedThyme Farm Shop, Froxfield

Best wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year

Pam and Jim

Cottage in Pembrokeshire. Neil and I bought this some time ago as a holiday cottage for ourselves, friends and family. We chose the area because we had very good friends there who offered to look after it for us. However these friends have now moved which makes things more difficult. I am reluctant to sell it as it is such a lovely restful place, but it does stand empty a lot of the time. Advertising it as a holiday let is difficult as there is no one to check it between tenants and there is the worry about what state it will be left in. It is a shame it should not be used, so if anyone would like a free holiday in Wales please let me know. I am sure that vineyard friends will leave it clean and tidy. It is centrally situated up a quiet woodland track, sleeps five and dogs are welcome. Phone me for more details.

Jim's books. Jim has now published four books, all exciting holiday reading and mostly set locally. Many have a sailing background so would be an ideal present for someone with this interest. His latest page turning thriller is called 'Emily's Hour', a sequel to 'The Nemesis File', and is an exciting story set in the Surrey countryside with a dramatic ending. You can get them from One Tree Books in Petersfield, from Amazon, or direct from Jim at a discount. Tel. 01420 538688