

PRIORS DEAN VINEYARD

FINE ENGLISH WINE

www.priorsdeanvineyard.co.uk

Information and sales.

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NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2011

At last some good news – a Bronze award.

After some years with very little wine to bother to put in for competitions, we had rather lost interest, but favourable tastings of the 2009 Classic Dry gave us the impetus to enter it for the Wessex Vineyards Association wine of the year competition. Here 46 wines were entered, then blind tasted by four judges, marking to International standards. Their marks are averaged and awards made accordingly. 13 – 14 earns a Bronze and we got 14.5 marks, unfortunately just short of the 15 needed for a Silver, but it does mean that at least two of the judges thought it was worth that at least. Their comments were pretty favourable also. "Lemon curd, apple, fresh. floral, nice mid weight palate, balanced, melon, long peachy finish." I'm not sure about the lemon curd and melon comments, but it does show that although the wine is absolutely dry, it has a lot of fruit flavour, just what that is you can decide yourselves. It is on sale now, nicely timed for Christmas.

The harvest

A bit of a mixed success. For once we kept the mildews at bay but the berries were rather small, probably due to the dry summer. Because of that we decided to give the first pick, the Madeleine Angevines, an extra week. This was a big mistake, the weather turned exceptionally hot, and when we came to pick a lot had gone over and dried up. The Seyvals when it was their turn were also very small, but as many vineyards had none of these at all we were lucky to have what we did. The end result was rather less crop than we had hoped for, but the quality was very good. Jim and I went over to the winery recently to taste the first draft, and already it seems to have great potential.

A new winery

After 20 very successful years with our old producer we decided to change, largely because of the distance involved. Hattingley Valley vineyard near Medstead was planted recently mainly to produce sparkling wine. They have a state of the art winery and were looking to make still wine under contract. The great advantage for us is that it is only half an hour away instead of getting on for two hours to reach our old winery, Stanlake Park near Reading. Not only does this mean that it is easy for us to go and taste the vintage as it matures, and discuss it with the winemaker, but it means we can do two runs with the crop if necessary. In 2009 the hired van was overloaded and we had to abandon a lot of worthwhile grapes. It would have been impossible to get there and back twice in the time.

Our new winemaker is Emma Rice, a rising star in English wine. She was trained in England and has worked in California and Australia, before coming home and setting up her own consultancy. She and her team are very enthusiastic and have taken a real interest in our product. We hope for great things in the future.

Sparkling wine

Which? Magazine did a test of Champagnes recently, coming up with best buys from Morrisons and Waitrose among others. However they also mentioned some English sparkling wines which were much the same price and even higher marks. This wine is made in exactly the same way as Champagne, from the same varieties of grapes grown on the same type of soil, but because of the French cannot be described as Champagne. We are unlikely to produce a sparkler ourselves, and our new friends at Hattingley will not have any on stream until 2013 so why not try something else from England. Ridgeview, Nyetimber and Chapel Down all produce excellent wine which we, as well as Which?, can thoroughly recommend.

Job vacancy

Doug who was doing selling for us now has a full time job in London, so we really need someone to go round local outlets to promote sales. It would only be for a few hours a month, and commission is payable.

Working parties

The help during the year from the volunteers has been invaluable and we cannot thank you enough for all the work, both in winter and summer. As usual we shall be starting pruning in the New Year and anyone who can come would be very welcome indeed.

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 2012 will be on **Sunday January 8th** and **Sunday January 22nd**. 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. Of course this depends on the weather as the road to the farm can be impossible if there is any snow. Please phone for information if any doubt.

Sales

Wines available at the moment from us are the 2006 Medium Dry, now only £5.00 per bottle, £60 per case of 12 bottles. The Bronze Award Classic Dry 2009 is £7.00 per bottle £82.00 per case. NB This price will increase to £7.50 per bottle from January 1st Local delivery free, minimum 6 bottles.

Independent Stores stocking the wine are as follows: Please note their prices are not necessarily the same as ours.

Cheriton Stores,
Durleighmarsh Farm Shop
East Tisted Post Office Stores
Froxfield Stores

Liss Forest Post Office Stores
OAM news, Chapel Street, Petersfield
Rake Stores, Rake
Rowswells. High Street, Petersfield
Selborne Post Office Stores

Christmas gifts

Obviously Priors Dean wine makes a brilliant present, it is especially good to take as a gift when visiting as you know it is good quality, and something different. It is ideal as an aperitif and with salads or fish.

Jim's thrillers are also in demand, many set locally, and usually with a sailing background, ideal to give to someone interested in boats. They are available from One Tree Books in Petersfield, or direct from Jim at a discount. Tel.01420 538688 Email: jamesmorley5@googlemail.com

A merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year to you all

Pam and Jim