

PRIORS DEAN VINEYARD

FINE ENGLISH WINE

www.priorsdeanvineyard.co.uk

Information and sales.

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NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2013

Good News for once!

After all the lean – and wet – summers it is almost unbelievable to report a potentially good harvest. All the varieties are looking good. Even the Bacchus grape, which has been reluctant to produce much in the past, has branches with good looking fruit.

After last summer's disastrous weather we had hopes for this year but it looked as though this would come to nothing in the cold wet spring. The vines were reluctant to start growing and budburst was at least two weeks later than usual. Then everything changed, there was a bright breezy spell, which is what the vines need at flowering time and all three varieties set a good crop. Since then the weather has been good with plenty of sun and so far although there are traces of mildews most have been kept at bay.

It could all change, there could be contiguous rain from now on, but even so we ought to be able to salvage enough to make a worthwhile vintage. The current estimate for the first picking is for the first week in October with the second two to three weeks later.

Beech Hanger Gold wins award

We haven't been entering our wines for the National competition (UK wine of the Year) recently. We didn't have much stock, and entering involves a fee and sending bottles up for specialist analysis, also at a price. It didn't seem worthwhile. However with our new winery, Hattingley Valley, and a new label we thought that this year we would enter the 2011 vintage which we named Beech Hanger Gold to reflect the wooded hills, known locally as Hangers, which run below us.

Wines at this competition are judged by a very prestigious panel consisting of 'Masters of Wine', and only if the wine reaches a certain standard is an award given. The standard is very high and we were very pleased to be awarded a Bronze. The judges marked out of 20, individually assessing each wine. The average of the six scores gives the award level. For gold you need to get 17 points, for silver 15.5 and for bronze 14. The judges' comments were "Very pale lemon, pineapple and mango, lightly green; dry and very fresh, fruity with a hint of honey giving interest, fair weight and length. Perhaps lacking concentration." These comments seem very favourable. And as our wines improve with ageing we have great hopes for future improvement.

Beech Hanger Gold is 'off dry' slightly sweeter than our standard 'Classic Dry', which makes it a good alternative. We are selling it for £8.00 per bottle, £92.00 per case of 12 bottles.

Local delivery free, minimum 6 bottles.

NB. The price in the shops may well be different.

Grape picking

We usually have two picking days during harvest, usually on a weekday. We start at 9.00am and aim to finish mid-day to get the grapes to the winery in time to be pressed that afternoon. We provide a light lunch, ploughman's or similar, a small wage is payable, and Priors Dean wine is available. Please let me know if you are interested and days you can come – or not come. Email address if possible. I will then contact you when the date is fixed. Because of various considerations, e.g., booking space at the winery and most notably the weather, we can only give about three days notice. I think everybody that comes has a very enjoyable time.

Work parties

Many thanks to all who have helped during the year, without your efforts pruning summer and winter the crop would be nothing like as good. Now for the final push. We will have work parties on **Sundays September 15th and 29th**. These are to take off any leaves in front of the grapes for ripening and – I can't believe I am writing this! - to do some thinning out of grapes. The crop is so heavy, especially on the Seyvals, that they may have a job to produce enough sugar unless we remove some bunches.

Alresford show

As usual we will have a stall at Alresford show this Saturday September 7th. It is in the Produce tent just inside the public entrance from the Cheriton side car park.. We share the pitch with our good friends Court Lane Vineyard at Ropley. Do come and see us and try the new wine.

Personal items

Jim's new book 'A song of Sussex' is now available. A change from his usual thrillers it is the life story of a composer, from rags to riches, but also includes plenty of action including sailing and flying. You can buy it at One Tree Books Petersfield, Amazon, or direct from Jim at a discount from Jamesmorley5@googlemail.com Tel 01420 538688

Due to cancellations there are several weeks available at the Pembrokeshire cottage this autumn, contact me for details.

Please keep all fingers crossed for the good weather to continue!

Best wishes to all
Pam and Jim

Stockists

Durleighmarsh Farm Shop, Rogate, Petersfield
East Tisted Post Office Stores
Selborne Post Office Stores

Wine available direct from the vineyard owners Tel. 01730 894147