

PRIORS DEAN VINEYARD

FINE ENGLISH WINE

www.priorsdeanvineyard.co.uk

Information and sales.

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NEWSLETTER CHRISTMAS 2016

Competition success - a Gold Medal for the 2015 vintage

This newsletter is going out late this year as I was waiting for the result of the Wessex Area Vineyards annual competition held on the 8th December. Our **2015 Flint Hill Dry** has been very popular this year at shows and wine tasting but had not been entered for any competition previously. The wines are judged by experts, and as some of the most prestigious vineyards are in this area, I was very pleased to get the message that it had been awarded a Gold Medal.

Our other wine on sale is the medium dry **2014 Beech Hanger Gold**. This was awarded a Silver Medal in last year's Wessex competition, and a Bronze in the National competition.

These successes are certainly due to Emma, our winemaker, but thanks are also due to the volunteers who helped with the vines throughout the year.

The harvest

We usually have two pickings each year, as the grapes ripen at different times. The first two varieties are very mildew prone and unfortunately we missed some of the vital sprays and there was a lot of potential loss, so we thought not worth a separate session. The Seyval grapes, the latest variety, were looking good and we decided to concentrate on them and just have one picking including any of the earlier ones that were still viable.

To find out if the grapes are ready, we test the sugar which this year was pretty good. However the Seyvals tend to be rather too acid and leaving them as long as possible means this reduces. This year the autumn was very good with days of sunshine and all looked promising. However our neighbours at the farm decided to rear pheasants for a shoot and they were released a week or so before our potential picking date. At first they seemed to keep to their own territory and no problem but just before the scheduled grape picking they found the grapes and demolished two thirds of them. In consequence we only sent a very small crop to the winery. The late autumn sunshine meant that as for once we had very good sugars and acids it should have been a very good wine but there is so little of it we are not quite sure what to do with it as yet.

The sparkling wine

I know everyone is waiting for our sparkling wine; well I made a big mistake announcing it early. We have only had still wine made before and I did not realize that it took a minimum of three years before it is ready for sale. The latest information is that the winery are going to taste it after

Christmas to see if it is ready. There are still procedures it has to go through before it can go on sale so don't expect it before Easter – if then.

Work parties

As usual we would really like help for the pruning, especially needed this year as just after the grape picking I was rushed to hospital with galloping pneumonia. The result has left me really tired and shaky and I am told it will take me three months before I am back to normal. At the moment I don't think I could get to the vineyard, let alone do any work there.

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 2017 will be on **Sunday January 8th and Sunday January 22nd**.

We start about 9.30 and go on until lunchtime with a coffee break. 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.

Other news

Melanie has been busy getting other sales outlets for the wine at local shops and pubs so it would help us and encourage them if you just want single bottles to visit one. For larger quantities better to contact us, the shops never have very much stock.

Melanie has also taken over the rough areas of the vineyard and we are going to have a wild flower meadow. She has already found a considerable number of species there.

Wine sales

As you can see our wine is of really good quality and makes an ideal present and a talking point for your guests. The 2015 Flint Hill Dry is ideal as an aperitif, The 2014 Beech Hanger Gold is classed as Medium Dry and is a bit sweeter; both are suitable as a table wine.

Both wines are available from us @ £8.50 per bottle; case of 12 bottles £100.00. Local delivery free, minimum order 6 bottles.

Other stockists

Durleighmarsh Farm Shop, Rogate, Petersfield
East Tisted Post Office Stores
Holybourne stores
Meonstoke Stores
South Harting Stores
Selborne Post Office Stores

Inns and Restaurants include

The Golden Pheasant, Farringdon
The Hawkley Inn, Hawkley
The Harrow, Steep
The Selborne Arms, Selborne

A Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year to you all
Pam and Jim