

PRIORS DEAN VINEYARD

FINE ENGLISH WINE

www.priorsdeanvineyard.co.uk

Information and sales.

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NEWSLETTER CHRISTMAS 2020

James Morley

I am sorry to start this newsletter with bad news but sadly my brother Jim died on November 11th at the Royal Surrey Hospital. He had been a bit fragile for some time and a bad cold and cough led to pneumonia which he did not have the strength to resist.

Jim was instrumental in founding the vineyard; with the farm being too small to be viable he looked for diversification and my husband Neil suggested a vineyard. They found a suitable field and planted the vines. Jim always said he was a farmer and not a horticulturalist, but he took on a lot of the work, from tractor driving to selling at shows. In later years when this became difficult he enjoyed helping with the pruning and chatting to all the volunteers. His main interest was writing and he published several thrillers and he also helped with Sailability (sailing for the disabled) at Frensham Pond Sailing club.

The year in the vineyard.

This started very well with fine weather at flowering time, and our situation meant we escaped the frost which caught out many vineyards. Then the continuing sun meant the grapes got good sugars although we did get mildew on the Bacchus vines which is a problem most years. Luckily we had done the pruning before lockdown struck as at first there was prohibition on driving any distance. Rumour had it that the police were stopping doubtful workers. Then vineyards got in the essential group and I wrote Sid an official permit so he could cut the grass. At first volunteers were not allowed but later this too was relaxed and as it was open air and social distancing was not a problem we were able to do the summer pruning, so the grapes got sun and the harvest was pretty good. For once the Madeleine Angevines survived the mildews, largely because of all the efforts of the volunteers to let light and air into the canopy. Our Seyval grapes nearly always do well so the total of the two varieties was one and a quarter tonne. This should make about 1500 bottles and will be another still off dry wine.

New vineyard dog

Many of you will remember black and white collie Flint; the fourth vineyard collie in succession. He gave his name and picture to three of our labels, including the next one to be released, a new fizz, again made by the traditional method but slightly lighter in texture; an easy drinking wine. It will be called 'Flint Hill Sunset'. He was very much missed but the vacancy has been filled by Ollie (but called Oliver if he is in trouble). He is big, brown and bouncy and loves everyone. Apart from his vineyard duties he has been a real companion to me during lockdown. I hope he will feature on the next label but have not yet thought of an appropriate name.

The future

This is still uncertain. Old age is certainly catching up with me. I can just about get down to the vineyard but then have to collapse and can't really do any work. So once again much credit is due to our volunteers, it was because of you and the good summer pruning that we got such a good crop. Reason tells me that I should sell up, but it represents so much of my life I am very reluctant to do this. So once again I propose to continue. There are other changes, Sid who has done all the tractor driving and the general maintenance since we started has had to retire. Stephen has taken on a lot of the work but his hip operation has once again been postponed. Sooner or later he will reach the top of the waiting list and then we will be in difficulties. Melanie, who made a very good job of the selling, has had to give it up, so once again we have a vacancy. It needs someone to go round the shops and pubs, and also help at stalls when the shows and fetes start up again. Payment by arrangement.

Work parties.

As already mentioned the vineyard could not keep going without the volunteers to do the pruning, summer and winter. Luckily all who come seem to enjoy themselves and it is certainly a lovely place to work. We start about 9.30 and finish lunch time with a break for coffee and chat. All are welcome provided you can manage the muddy walk down, and back! And the vines are on a steep hill of course. The first dates for next year are **January 3rd and January 17th**. It is a help if you let me know in advance but you can just turn up. Bring secateurs if possible. These dates may change if bad weather is forecast. 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. If you have not been before training will be given, and contact me for directions and parking.

Sales

Don't forget to buy our award winning wine. The perfect antidote to a lockdown Christmas and it makes an ideal present. It is something unusual, and you know it is good quality from the awards given by experts including Masters of Wine. There is a lot of interest in English Wine nowadays and people are very keen to try it.

We can deliver locally, minimum 6 bottles, or you can collect from Liss by arrangement.

PRICES FROM US (For other outlets see web site.)

Seyval Blanc Sparkling Wine 2013 1 bottle £20.00 Case of 12 bottles £228.00
Bronze award WineGB Wine of the Year Competition.

Summer Hills Dry White Wine 2018 1 bottle £10.00 Case of 12 bottles £110.00
Silver award Wine GB Wine of the Year Competition 2019

Mixed cases available. Discount for larger quantities

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all

Pam