



Dear all,

2023 will go down as a bumper English harvest, albeit of varied quality. Cool and wet conditions in July and August increased disease pressure as well as bunch and berry sizes. The risk was that, especially for those who had not dropped some fruit, the big crop would not ripen - fortunately warm weather in September helped enormously and most of the grapes ripened before the rain set in again at the end of harvest.



After a late start to harvest in mid September, it was then bigger, longer and more intense than ever before. For 4 weeks we operated 24/7, pressed nearly double the amount of grapes than last year and on our biggest day pressed about 3/4 of the total amount of our first harvest in 2019! Out of interest, whilst France enjoyed a similarly large harvest, other parts of Europe and the world had a very poor year and the global harvest was down about 7% ([link to BBC report](#)).

Our new tanks from Croatia arrived slightly later than originally planned and there was a lot of work in getting the new winery ready - concrete poured; drains laid; power and water connected; tanks, catwalks and cooling installed; and holes pierced in the walls to connect the two buildings. Fortunately it was ready just in time - although a week or two earlier would have saved a lot of stress and made life a bit easier! The tanks are great and the catwalks make for a much better working environment. We also bought a new press and very gentle de-stemmer, both of which were fantastic. Having tried to anticipate a



bigger yield (on the back of last year's conditions) I had ordered more tanks than I thought we would need but even so bought an extra 20 tanks over the summer and during harvest to try to keep up with the amount of grapes that were picked.



Looking across the catwalk



Night shift briefing

But none of this would have worked without a fantastic team. Everyone pulled their weight, working 12 hour shifts for over a month and we had great harvest staff, the home team being augmented by cellar hands from New Zealand, California, Australia and France.



The wines have now finished fermenting, although some are still going through malolactic fermentation (converting malic to lactic acid, reducing the acidity of

the wines and changing the mouthfeel). The lab are therefore busy checking the analysis on all the wines (so much so we have had to take on extra staff) and the winery team have been putting wines to barrel. We have started planning bottling for next year and confirming glass supply, which was so problematic this year. In the meantime, contract disgorging and labelling has re-started after a break for harvest as we get wines out to clients in time for Christmas.

Have a very good Christmas and a happy New Year,

Regards,

Henry and all the team



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