



Dear all,

Another year, another lockdown....

We remain lucky in being able to keep wine production going as an essential service. We have limited the number of visitors and the number of people in offices - so all our meetings are in the winery (or outside during a rare moment of sunshine last week), which as it is about 10-12 degrees helps to keep things focussed!



In the winery we have been continuing to manage wines in barrel and ensuring that wines (that need it) go through malolactic fermentation, which is a way of reducing some of England's signature acidity by converting malic into creamier lactic acid. We are also starting to filter wines ready for bottling and ensuring that they are all heat and cold stable (the latter is especially important for sparkling wines so that no tartrates form which would result in the wines gushing on opening).



Tasting trial for a client

The production team have been disgorging wines for a number of external clients as well as running our first bottling of the year. This has meant adding new parts to our lines - we have now disgorged half bottles and magnums in addition to standard sparkling bottles and we recently bought a new screw capper head in order to bottle a different brand of screw caps (it looks identical but applies a different axial load and lateral pressure to the tuck under rollers and thread rollers in case you were wondering!). This arrived in time from Italy and was quickly installed by Pete our production manager but on the day of bottling a blown pump seal meant we had to manually control the volume of wine in the filler bowl; the screw caps occasionally jammed in the feeder due to embossing on them; the lot coder was knocked out of alignment; Pete cut his hand on a broken bottle; and our water system chose this of all days to burst, all leading to a rather more fraught day than it should have been! However the wine all got safely to bottle and we have ironed out gremlins for future.



Socially distanced 'dosage' trial for another client in more comfortable surroundings

We will start to send samples out to those clients who cannot make it in to taste their wines, as well as to journalists and wine influencers - [follow the link here](#) for an interview Nick recently had with Brad Horne from WineTimeLondon on Instagram Live. We had planned to run a trade tasting this year, giving our clients an opportunity to show off their wines to a range of journalists and buyers but will have to see how rules develop post lockdown.



In the lab, Irena has taken over from Wanda and has been kept busy monitoring our own wines as well as running contract analysis for other wineries, as we have a range of equipment that others do not. We are continuing to invest in the lab, as we see this as a key area for ensuring the consistent quality of our wines.

Otherwise BREXIT has disrupted many of our suppliers, adding extra paperwork (and charges) and creating longer lead times but hopefully the increased costs of importing wine from Europe will encourage more people to drink English wine!

Regards,

Henry



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