



Dear all,

It has been another roller coaster month...



*First bottles*

Our extra gyros have arrived and been installed, not without some teething problems and our disgorging line has been set up, although installation was also not as smooth as it could have been as our first client changed the 'dosage' (the recipe of what goes into a bottle of sparkling wine before the cork is applied) at the last minute, which meant that we could not commission the line whilst the two technicians from France were here. One fortunately was able to come back this week and everything ran smoothly on his part of the line... but not on the other. We have since realised that one machine, which provides quality control (and means we don't have to manually

check the fill heights of bottles with a ruler) needed adjusting to the correct shade of bottle colour to work properly. It is now working perfectly but life could have been easier!

Our bottling line and cross flow filter will be delivered at Easter. We will be one of a small number of wineries in the UK with a cross flow which, with the lab equipment which has been arriving, will help to set us apart. In the meantime, we have been ordering the extra bits and pieces that we need: pump, air filter, filter housing, filter cartridges, hot water unit, steamer, case sealer, case label printer, case conveyor etc. A lot of choices and decisions! And I am off to Germany this week to look at tanks and an extra press that we need for harvest this year. I have had to cancel a trip to Milan to see the bottling line in production; we will spend our life steam cleaning it, so no danger of it importing the Coronavirus!



*Pruning demo - courtesy of Darry Kemp from Simpsons Wine Estate*



*Tasting*

Otherwise we are starting to ready wines for bottling; have had clients in tasting their wine; potential clients visiting; run dosage and tasting trials for people who want to buy wine we have been storing; held a pruning day for clients; finished smartening up the winery; submitted a paper to HMRC, supported by WineGB and external counsel on what our wine production licence should cover; closed last year's accounts (our financial year finishes at the end of Feb); and attended 'Farm Expo' to talk to farmers and other events run by Wine GB, looking at marketing and the future of English wine.

As planting continues apace in England, some have been asking who is going to drink all the wine being produced (see <https://www.drinks-today.com/wine/there-too-much-optimism-around-english-sparkling-wine>), others are more optimistic - the bottom line is we drink 1.6 billion bottles a year as a nation, so 6-10 million bottles and more of English wine should hardly scratch the surface, however the marketing, and price, will have to be right.



*running trials in the lab*

Regards,

Henry



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