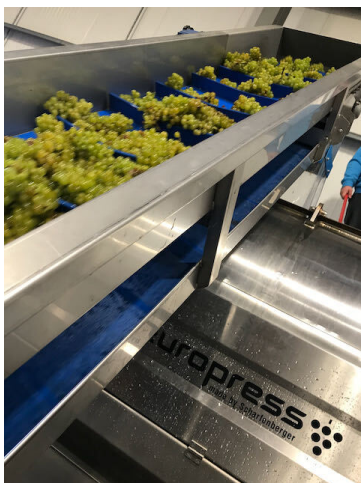




Dear all,

The 2021 harvest is finally over. Many growers had a very challenging year (with some people reporting losses of up to 50% and organic growers particularly badly hit) due to a combination of factors: frost; a particularly cold start to the season (the coldest April on record); rain during flowering leading to uneven fruit set; and a cool, humid summer causing significant disease pressure, especially downy mildew. Plus there were the problems associated with Covid, BREXIT and the fuel crisis which affected transport and the availability and cost of pickers.



However a generally warm and dry September helped enormously and whilst the grapes were not as ripe as 2020 (on average 0.75% potential alcohol lower), they have generally been very tasty and probably better than 2019. And some sites had great yields and ripeness. We are therefore pleased with the quality of the wine we have in tank - even if we have had to add a lot of sugar!

As predicted, it was a very late harvest - whereas last year we finished on 17th October, this year we started on 25th September and our last grapes only arrived on 4th November. As these went to make a red, they were only pressed last week, the grapes having fermented on their skins to draw out the colour, tannins and other phenolics. On this occasion, the left over pressed grapes (or 'pomace') have gone to be distilled into grappa and gin, otherwise our

pomace was taken away by a local farmer for composting.



Winemaking decisions - by Nick and Poppy

Given the difficulties people had with deciding when to pick, juggling availability of pickers and transport, let alone the weather and ripeness of the grapes, we made sure we could receive grapes whenever our growers wanted. During the peak of harvest we therefore ran 24/7 with two shifts of 12 hours (and some

people straddling between the two) for over three weeks and there were some intense periods - on two 3 day blocks we pressed more than we did in the whole of our first harvest! Huge thanks therefore to everyone who took part, from seasoned harvest hands, such as Nayan (who goes back to run a very cool project in Bolivia), Sam who is mid studying for his Oenology Masters, to James post Uni, Flora and Mary on their Gap year, and Henry and Trevor who are cricket groundsmen for the rest of the year. Plus of course thanks to the core team: Nick for all his expertise and input into picking decisions; Poppy for masterminding all the pressing and operations; Pete B and Jim for running the presses; Pete R and Louis in the cellar; Matei, Harry and Callum on the forklift and cleaning multiple presses; Irena for working ever longer hours to keep on top of all the analysis; and Carole for ensuring that we had everything we needed - not least hot food from the local pub! A total of 19 of us in all.



Irena on the daily ferment round

We have already bottled four 'Pet Nats' (which are bottled prior to primary fermentation finishing, so that this finishes in bottle, giving it some fizz, as opposed to traditional method sparkling wines which ferment in tank and then have more yeast added just prior to bottling so that they undergo a secondary fermentation in bottle) and have started disgorging again for a range of clients who want sparkling wines before Christmas.

Regards,

Henry



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