

Defined

Dear all,

after almost 6 weeks, harvest is now over. It has not been a classic vintage, in fact many vineyards found it very challenging, especially the constant rain. Whilst some people have had good yields, many had to pick earlier than they intended, before the grapes were fully ripe, due to disease pressure. So after the exceptional conditions of 2018, a more typical UK harvest.



Despite this, we have managed to process about three times more than my conservative target and had a manic period for about ten days when we had to run two shifts of 10/12 hours to keep up. In all we have pressed 17 different varieties of grapes for both still and sparkling wines, including a couple of reds, as well as fermenting some apple juice for cider (which we will bottle and put through secondary fermentation in the same way as traditional method sparkling wine). In

keeping with recent planting, we predominantly pressed Chardonnay and Pinot Noir followed by Bacchus, the 'English Sauvignon Blanc'.



We are making wine for 23 different clients, from big brands to small vineyards. We couldn't have managed this without the extra tanks we ordered and borrowed; our new winery software system; extra staff; and great organisation by Rob. And I am hugely grateful for all the work that everyone has done. The focus for the next couple of months will be finishing the wines and managing the 'ullage', the gap between the top of the wine and the top of the tank, to prevent oxidation before bottling.

In the meantime, Rob has set up the lab, a mix of old school 'wet chemistry' and a sophisticated new system that will enable us to test more parameters and much faster - and cost more than a small car!

For those who want to see a bit more, I recently featured on Kent TV and in a Financial Times article.

Regards,

Henry



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