



Dear all,

As you will have realised, this has not exactly been a classic British summer and vineyards have suffered. A late start following the coldest April on record and rain during flowering, was then followed by the wettest August on record. The resulting high humidity has led to lots of downy mildew - which has been difficult to spray against due to the rain and some of which has proved resistant to treatments. As a result one or two English vineyards have lost all their crop and across the country there is a general shortage of grapes this year. The last couple of weeks of warmer drier weather have been beneficial but even so, this year's harvest is several weeks behind last year - or about normal for England twenty years ago.



We have however had our first grapes (early ripening Pinot Noir) and have seen some very impressive crops on our rounds of all our vineyards. Although overall we expect to make less wine than anticipated earlier in the year.

The first grapes were de-stemmed into our new 'red fermenters' which were delivered last month from Italy - the transport costing more than the fermenters (giant plastic buckets)! Covid related issues have also meant that we have not been able to get German or Italian technicians over as planned. Nayan Gowda, our vintage winemaker (more on a project he runs during the rest of the year written by [Jancis Robinson here](#)) and the winery team have done a great job in re-arranging all the tanks in the winery and installing 24 new German tanks - the final 10 new tanks only arrive from France next week - despite having been ordered back in February!





We have made some design modifications to all the new tanks, which will give Nick and the winemaking team more options to manage the wines, all part of improving quality. We also have a new (second hand) press, more barrels (some new, some old) and various other innovations ready for harvest, including in the lab, which continues to do contract analysis for other wineries. And on top of our WineGB awards, we have just won two Golds and other medals at the Independent English Wine Awards, so hopefully we are doing something right. Over the weekend we featured in a piece on English wine in the Daily Telegraph.

Move over, Provence. Inside England's wine boom

English wine is having a Cloudy Bay moment and production could reach 40 million bottles a year by 2040

By Victoria Moore, WINE CORRESPONDENT
24 September 2021 - 5:00am

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In the meantime, the delay to harvest is giving us the chance to finish off various production projects, which have been complicated by technical issues with our labeller. I had certainly never appreciated how difficult it is to foil and label bottles of sparkling wine!

Two of our summer production staff, Callum and Harry, have stayed on permanently and have just completed their forklift licence. And whilst the rest of the summer staff have gone back to Uni or school, we have been joined by Sam, Flora and James, so there will be 16 of us for harvest - can't wait!

Regards,

Henry



Staff summer BBQ



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