

PRIORS DEAN VINEYARD

FINE ENGLISH WINE

www.priorsdeanvineyard.co.uk

Information and sales.

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NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2006

It is sometime since I wrote a newsletter, basically because there has been very little to report. However you might like to know that we supplied wine to HMS Illustrious to use when they rendezvoused with a French Warship "to stop French wine being rammed down our throats!"

2005 Vintage

In spite of last year's disasters, mildew on the early varieties, and a demolition by pigeons on the later crop, we did manage to get 1000 bottles, not too bad considering.

We usually enter the previous vintage for the National Wine of the Year competition, so I am able to tell you what medal it has won and we have always won something. This year however we did not get it back in time, the winery has changed owners, and there has been something of an upheaval there, although Vince, our winemaker, has stayed I am glad to say. In fact not entering it this year does not matter, as it improves with time, and will be a much better wine next year. Meanwhile we rest on our laurels of last year – a Bronze medal in the National competition, and a Silver in the Wessex area one.

The year so far

Once again we had tractor trouble. Our vintage tractor, made in Romania circa 1960, again blew the head gasket. The same thing happened last year and we were delayed while one was custom made. While it was out of action we were unable to spray and mildew leaped in. This gasket seems to have a fault so our repairer has been casting about for a better one. However we learnt from last year and did not wait for the return of the tractor but hired something to do the job. This is not cheap, but at least the vines are looking well, although they badly need sorting out. (see below). They have set a really good crop. Fine weather at flowering time is essential and this year it was excellent. If the bugs hold off and we can beat the pigeons we should do well.

Help needed

There was a time when Neil and I did all the hands on work with help from Jim. Now things are difficult. Neil has a job to get to the vineyard and as he is very confused now I can't leave him at home and come myself. Jim has a lot of other irons in the fire. He is involved with Sailability – sailing for the disabled – at Frensham Pond Sailing Club, and he has just published his second book. Rocastle's Vengeance. This is a thriller set round a Dorset harbour and is a real 'page turner'. It is available from One Tree Bookshop in Petersfield, or direct from Jim at a discount Tel. 01420 538688.

In consequence the vines badly need a summer prune to let the air in and keep the mildew at bay. So we are calling all previous volunteers and anyone else who would like a morning helping in the vineyard to give us a hand. We are having working parties on Sundays August 20th and 27th starting at 9.30 and finishing at lunchtime, but anyone who would like to come any other time, say an evening, is welcome. There are also a lot of weeds in the rows if anyone is handy with a scythe. Let me know if possible if you can come, but last minute volunteers welcome. No experience needed, training will be given. Also we would be grateful for help for an hour or so at Alresford Show Saturday September 2nd.

Sales

We are now almost sold out of 2002 Medium Dry; if you would like some of the last few bottles please let me know. Price £7.00 per bottle, £80.00 per case of 12 delivered.

There is still some of the 2001 Dry available @ £6.00 per bottle £70.00 per case.

Our main stock is of the off-dry 2003 Bronze and Silver medal winner. Price £7.00 per bottle, £80.00 per case.

Doug Thow has been beavered away getting us new outlets so the wine is now available in several more places locally. See stockists below.

Wine can be obtained from the following independent stores:

Blackmoor Farm Shop (Apple Shop)
Durleighmarsh Farm Shop
East Tisted Post Office Stores
Froxfield Stores
The General Wine Company Liphook
The Haslemere Cellar

Inns and Restaurants serving it include:

Alton Grange Hotel
The Harrow Inn Steep,
Langrish House Hotel
Lythe Hill Hotel
Stansted Park Pavilion Tea Room
The Trooper Froxfield

Grape picking

The year is rushing by and we shall soon need grape pickers. The harvest takes place on two weekday mornings, one probably at the beginning of October, the other two to three weeks later. Please let me know if you would like to come either by filling the form below or – preferably – by E-mail. As usual we will try to give at least three days notice, and yes, you will be paid! For anyone who has not been before, it is an enjoyable time, open to all ages and abilities, as long as you can manage our steep slope. Dogs and children are welcome as long as they are kept under control, as there is farm machinery moving about. We provide a picnic lunch.

So wish us well for a good harvest. Come and see us at Alresford Show on September 2nd or Blackmoor Apple tasting day on October 8th.

Best wishes to all
Pam and Jim

GRAPE PICKING

NAME(S)

ADDRESS

TEL.

COMMENTS

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