

As expected English wine got a deluge of good publicity over English Wine Week. Sales – especially of sparkling wine – soared...up 350% at Waitrose. M& S sold 50,000 bottles of English fizz in a week.

On the other hand I can tell you too that Tesco's Tiverton sold a grand total of – zero bottles of English wine. Funnily enough the exact number sold by Morrisons Tiverton too. Absolutely no sign of a single English wine, still, rose, or sparkling to be seen.

Thanks guys. Oh, and thanks for going one better, and wrapping Champagne in the Union Jack

Tesco Tiverton even promoted Champagne for the Jubilee on a stand decorated in British flags.

The Champenois are famous for prosecuting anyone who dares to use any misleading labelling – but they can count on some of our retailers to help them screw English sparkling wine producers every time!

But let's think of more pleasant things.

The Wine Week kicked off with an excellent introduction to the rise of English sparkling wine on the Apprentice. It carried on with just about every national newspaper recommending their favourite English fizzes. Here Rory at the Jolly Vintner got into the spirit with a special offer on Yearlstone sparkling as did Bray Valley in South Molton. If you celebrated with anything else – I really can't imagine why!

Our own Devon Wine Week was a modest success. Yearlstone's key event – Music, Mezes and English fizz – was sold out. Everyone crowded into the winery to learn more of the long technical process behind making top class fizz and taste three of our vintages before chilling out to the excellent guitarist David Cottam and a meze-style Deli Shack Platter.

We didn't have wine weather but we had the wine!

Weatherwise first the coldest spring for ages then a burst of a fortnight's hot weather & more cool and rain ...like us the vines are thoroughly confused.

Fortunately it's not critical. Yet.

The vines are perhaps a week behind. But the real test comes in early July, when they should be ready to flower. Setting the flowers to fruit goes badly below 18C or so. Fine warm weather (20C+) can lead to a full set in a few days.

But 17 years of growing vines here has taught me to have faith in the climate of the Exe Valley. After all there's not much more any grower can do than make sure the vines are happy, healthy and ready to do their best.

They've had their seaweed feed...and in fact are mostly looking great. If you haven't seen them from below at the bridge then come up and look from above on the cafe terrace.

We're well into the season of Food Festivals now.

Yearlstone is booked into the Crediton Food & Wine Festival, the Honiton Wine Festival, Mid Devon Show (of course) We are being pressed quite hard to take our wines to the

English Wine Pavilion at the BBC Good Food Show in London this November too. Add to this the wine competitions, from Berlin to Bologna, and the marketing expenses are looking a bit on the high side right now.

Working twice as hard to stay still is going to be the formula for many small producers this year I fear. Things seem even worse out there financially. No sign of the Trout re-opening, the Cadeleigh Arms has gone, and I've been getting lots of information from fellow food producers about trade falling off a cliff since March. This is before the coming break-up of the Euro.

Still if it all goes pear-shaped some French supermarket will no doubt be happy for me to stick the Tricolore all over my sparkling wines next Bastille Day. Pas de probleme.