

Wine tourism is certainly booming.

Napa Valley, France, the New World of course- but England and the Exe Valley too. We've always had dozens of visiting groups from all over the country, one from Bordeaux (doctors mainly who had never visited a vineyard before!), another from Champagne and plenty of French, Belgian, Australian, American and even Swiss wine tourists intrigued either by the vineyard sign on the main road, our website, or even the recent coverage in the wine press.

But it's taken on another dimension. A nationwide experience day finally recruited Yearlstone last year. Every tour was overfilled to the maximum we allow of 21 and they just kept on adding new dates to cope. For 2014 we're on two more schemes - one national (for lunch at the Deli Shack Cafe and tour) and another locally. The local operators Andy and Kate have just launched South Devon Wine Tours. Andy's an ex-BBC man like me, and told me they'd seen an opportunity to promote the rapidly expanding wine tourism market in Devon after seeing how they do it New Zealand.

He's bought a wine tour minibus and recruited his favourite four local vineyards. All these wine tourists must be contributing to the local economy in other ways too - staying overnight, eating out, but they do find it a bit strange (and have told us so on many occasions) to stay at the many local hostelrys who still don't offer local wine (and yes occasionally have told visitors they were completely unaware there were any!).

We could do much more with wine tourism (a good earner) if we had a bit more enthusiasm for our excellent Devon wines and the perfect opportunity once again is the Devon Wine Week starting at the end of May. Can I encourage some of our chefs to come up with some exciting ideas to pair local food with local wines and promote them for this week?

Here at the Deli Shack Cafe we will be doing something special with our sparkling wines - details on our website shortly.

In the vineyard the buds are woolly already and showing ominous signs of breaking out too soon. The hot summer of 2013 has ripened the fruiting wood well - most notably the Pinot Noir which are looking better than I can remember. A week or two of cold nights would be very welcome to hold them back. The new wines are coming on well in the winery. Our feeling is that they won't benefit from early bottling, despite the fact that we are completely sold out of at least half the range and down to a few hundred bottles of dry white! So we will aim to release the 2013's around Wine Week. Hope to see some of you from April 4 for the new season!

Roger White