

## Country Comment for Mid Devon Gazette Patrick Phelan from Roger White at Yearlstone Vineyard

( A bit Long at 650 words, feel free to cut !)

By the time you read this the big trade English wine tasting event of the year will be over. According to insiders this is THE year that the trade and press are taking note of the UK wine industry.

It's up in London of course.

Sometimes it seems half my time is spent loading up boxes, ordering couriers, printing out labels, and delivering wines to tasting after tasting, competition after competition. Oh and writing the cheques too

Lately I seem to be slipping back into a quasi-full time marketing role. London is the usual destination. But we've been invited to send wines to the *Selezione Vini da Pesce* in Italy...and the Berliner Wein Trophy.

I'm not complaining. The recent cold snap has held back the vines thank Goodness and we seem to have escaped with minimal frost damage. All this marketing has given me a good excuse to sit by the computer in the warm and play.

The Seventh Devon Wine Week is also looming. It's become a lot more relaxed in recent years. Those planning meetings agonising over co-ordinating our events and promoting them have gone. Now we all just do our own thing – and I've given up raising sponsorship money. There doesn't seem any spare about does there these days?

If I do have any spare energy I'll try again to get local pubs and restaurants to chalk up a Devon wine special on the blackboard for a few days at least. It's surprising that for all the international coverage very few do join in. After all does anyone ask for anything else these days than a " Pinot Grigio"? It's probably made from a blend of grapes from Macedonia, but who cares? More " Pinot Grigio" from Italy is drunk in the UK alone, than is produced in the whole of that beautiful country according to very well informed sources.

Here at Yearlstone the big news is that we're relaunching the cafe. It's now the Deli Shack Cafe – and we've taken a further step towards harmonising our food with our wines. Iain and Lisa Thompson, well known to many of you from the Pannier Market, have created some wonderful menus – my favourite being the Kiln Smoked Salmon Tagliatelli finished with Yearlstone White Wine and a liaison of fresh eggs, double cream and freshly grated Parmesan.

The bottling of the 2011 wines starts first week in May. We're also excited to see how our 2009 sparkling wine tastes, after spending two years ageing on the lees in the bottle. We got such a great review in the leading French wine magazine for the 2006 ( which is now sold out ), that it will be fascinating to taste if the 09 is better...We're still nearing at the sparkling wine game....and it's pretty clear that the longer we leave the ageing process, the better the fizz is at the end. We may go bust waiting for wine to sell – or I may run myself over with the tractor first....But someone will get to drink it anyway!

Oh one last thing. Some progress to report on our long unsuccessful campaign to get equal treatment on alcohol duty with cidermakers and small brewers. Our MP Neil Parish seems keen to lobby for us...and we already have Mel Stride on board. Do English winemakers yet have the clout to be heard?

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Watch this space.

And don't forget Devon Wine Week. We're running a course on how to set up your own vineyard, and offering that superb Smoked Salmon Tagliatelli and a glass of fizz all week at a bargain price.

It starts June 2 and ends June 9. Don't worry, the sun will be shining and you'll be running for the shade of the Yearlstone marquee!

Roger  
Yearlstone