

# 'Golden' vineyard to build on success

A CORNISH vineyard has announced that it is to double its acreage of vines next year to build on its award-winning success.

The Camel Valley Vineyard, near Bodmin, will plant ten acres of Seyval Blanc grapes to take production up to 70,000 bottles a year from 35,000. The vineyard last week celebrated winning a gold award at the International Wine Challenge Awards in London – the only vineyard in the country to do so – for its Cornwall 2001 Sparkling Brut.

With its wine being one of a handful of British labels being served at EU functions during our presidency, word could spread even further.

Despite her long-running clashes with Westcountry agriculture, Defra Secretary Margaret Beckett is said to be a fan – as is, even more astonishingly, French President Jacques Chirac, who made a gaffe earlier this year by dismissing all British attempts at gastronomic greatness.

Sam Lindo, who runs the vineyard with father Bob and mother Annie, said the growth in acreage was to meet the demand for more of their wine.

## DAVID WILCOCK

"We are selling more wine now," he said. "We feel we are good enough as growers now to take this extra step. We don't think it is a risk, we know that every year we can make a good wine."

The good summer weather the region has seen this year is another factor which has contributed. "The weather is a lot more consistent as well," Mr Lindo said.

### 'The wine from here has been getting better every year'

"The August just gone was the warmest and driest here for ten years, and we harvested the grapes two weeks earlier than normal, for the third year in a row."

This could be attributed to the increased effect of global warming, which some experts believe could give the Westcountry a climate like that of the present-day Mediterranean in decades to come.



● WINE ON TAP: Bob Lindo, of Camel Valley Vineyard, checks the latest vintage

But it is unlikely to have anything to do with the Westcountry soil.

Dick Thompson, a soil expert at the National Soil Resources Institute at Cranfield University in Bedfordshire, said the brown podzolic soil the vineyard lay on, and which accounted for much of Bodmin Moor and Dartmoor as well, was not found where other top sparkling wines were made.

"It's very different to those in the Champagne region," he said. "Those grapes tend to grow on chalky soils. I suspect it is more a testament to the skill and management of the people who own the place."

Mr Lindo said that whatever the weather held, the vineyard's wine would still be good. Reds benefit from a long, hot summer while the sparkling wine is better after a cooler, wetter summer season, meaning it can take whatever the region's often tempestuous weather has to offer.

The vineyard was set up and planted by the Lindos in 1989, but it was three years before the vines were ready to produce wine. It is the same for the new vines, which will not start to produce until the summer of 2009.

"The wine from here has always been very good, but it has been getting better

each year since 1992," Mr Lindo said.

Although the vineyard has 20 acres and the capability to add five to ten acres on top of that – something that is "in the pipeline", according to Mr Lindo – it is not among the biggest producers.

At least one in the UK has more than 200 acres – but that is not the Camel Valley plan.

"We are going for quality, hand-crafted wines," Mr Lindo said. "If you want large-scale factory-crafted wines, that is something different. You can get it somewhere else."

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