

Indian Summer in United Kingdom â?? a boon for English Vineyards

Description

â??English have a miraculous power of converting wine into water â?? â?? Iâ??m not exactly sure what Oscar Wilde meant when he said this, but I imagine turning wine into water could mean converting something as great as wine into something as common as water.

e5

Pic â?? Google

Given that Oscar was one of Londonâ??s most popular playwrights in the early 1890s, he may have been correct or at least certainly entitled to his views. But that was 19th century and this is 21st, so does the anecdotal proverb still hold ground ? Letâ??s find out..

I for one, feel that the alleged inability to produce high quality wines in Britain has less to do with the wine making prowess of English vintners and more with the classic English weather, which is famous (or notorious) for being a bit too cold and too wet most of the year (or at least so in the growing season in vineyards). Now Wine grapes, as we all know are very fussy customers and can only be grown in certain climate and terroir (as French would say) in order to produce a quality wine of acceptable standards. And up till now, the English climate is not considered to play up to these standards.

All the same, the vagaries of the weather have not deterred the steel resolved Brits to stay clear of wine making. They have been on it continuously and the consistency of their efforts has produced favorable results and in recent years English sparkling wines are garnering a lot of appreciation from the experts. However the cold weather still precludes the UK to make â??stillâ?• Red and White (even Rose) wines of character.

However, things seem different this summer. The country is experiencing a heat wave â?? which as per a BBC report is expected to be even worse than the one in 1976. People are said to be suffering from heatstroke, sunburn and dehydration. Some rivers have dried up and drought is a looming threat. Certainly a grave situation which the authorities are taking measures to address.

bbc1

Higher temperatures to benefit UK vineyards (pic credit â?? BBCReport)

However, as the proverb goes, every dark cloud has a silver lining and in this case it is the English vineyards which are likely to benefit due raised temperatures. A hot and dry spell in the growing season has been a boon for the vines and has helped in an early and bountiful flowering.

In a way, the present heat wave can be considered a vindication of the proponents of global warming, who have been warning about climate change since a long time. Some futuristic winemakers having

appreciated the effects of warming up of the climate in vineyards quite early on, have already taken suitable measures to counter it. Miguel Torres, who is the considered a pioneer in climate change and wine initiatives, has initiated a strategy to counter climate change which include shifting of vineyards to higher elevations and cooler regions in Spain.

Coming back to Britain though, the famous wine personality Steven Spurrier who owns the Bride Valley vineyard in Dorset, England (which he planned as a long term investment), also sees the current warmer season as a boon to English vineyards.

Spurrier, who was also the famous wine magazine Decanter's Man of the Year 2017, feels that this is likely to result in a big harvest which will be good in terms of both in quality and quantity.

s1

Steven Spurrier in his UK vineyard (pic ?? google)

In a brief to the wine magazine Drink Business recently he's quoted to have said that he was a "happy bunny", noting that the conditions this year were so good that he was considering planting a further two hectares at his estate, as well as making a barrel fermented red and white wine from the harvest. Well that is certainly is an encouraging development for the English wine industry.

So let's conclude by raising a toast to the English wines with a British Fizz (a suggested name by English wine aficionados for the Sparkling Wine ?? more on it in my future blogs) with a hope that a few years down the lane the same toast will be with a Chardonnay or Pinot Noir or even with a Cabernet Sauvignon (though a Cab Sauv does sound a bit preposterous as of now) but who knows. We hope and wish best for the English Wine Industry, all the same.