

2012 at Bow-in-the-Cloud

In summary this was the worst growing season that we have experienced in our 19 years of production. During the key period in July when we needed dry and warm weather for the fruit to set we experienced temperatures that were 2 degC below average and rainfall that was 171% of average. This resulted in very poor fruit set for the Seyval and the Bacchus and Schonburger were complete failures. The generally wet summer mean that keeping disease under control was difficult and the key ripening period mid-Sept to mid-October was the coldest since 1974 – so definitely the coldest since we started.

In the end we did manage to pick about 1 ton of Seyval which is important as our bubbly stocks are under pressure; not helped by the fact that we had sold our 2011 Seyval, and also our Bacchus as grapes.

At the other end of the business, sales are holding up well and even achieving records, helped by the fact that we now have a license to sell from the vineyard and have given in to the need to take credit card payment. We have also signed up a new trade customer – the Waggon and Horses in Cirencester - where the Seyval will be provided as the house wine.

Winter pruning will be different: We are probably unique in preferring to use cane pruning on our high wire system, but this year the wood on the Bacchus and Schonburger has not ripened properly and so we shall be using spur pruning instead. Quicker and easier but not the best start to 2013, which therefore will also be a difficult year.