

non-intervention with the growing vine, who steers away from the use of chemicals and non-natural assistance in plant production.

"We don't interfere with the crop. We don't trim it, we don't fertilise it, we don't spray it and we let the grasses, weeds and wild flowers act as our biology. We are re-wilding and letting nature do its thing. The vineyard covers some four hectares and once planted it will take around five years before the first wine can be taken. It has an indefinite life with many years of grape production. If you trim and prune, the vine does not like this attack and fights back growing new shoots. But by not pruning and having this growing "woodwork," I believe this is where I get my flavour store. Also, as each year passes, the vine produces a consistent flavour with each harvest. Another factor with our method of non-interference is that during the periods of extreme rainfall, our vines suffer little as all the surrounding plant life, shrubs, trees and grasses, help by absorbing much of this excess rainfall," said Fraser.

More and more I was beginning to understand that by doing less to his vines, Fraser may well be achieving more. He was certainly saving large sums of money by not using chemicals and fertilisers, but the plant was also getting biological help from surrounding flora and fauna. The vine leaf has a natural wax that forms over the leaves. It would also seem that this wax is deep enough to prevent any harmful viral penetration, and a strong defence against mildews – something that this plant has built up over eons. Mayfield Vineyard has six varieties (a seventh coming out



this year) and is currently producing up to 12,000 bottles each year. Fraser markets through shows, events, markets, on-line, word of mouth and from his own premises. He is adamant that selling through supermarkets is not the way for Mayfield Wines. "In our method of wine production, we have zero residual sugar, zero added sugar and we don't add sulphides, preservatives, chemicals, milk or powder – many of the things found in supermarket wines. So, in our bottles there are two products – grape juice and alcohol. In a supermarket wine there are often seven or eight ingredients. In the production of red wine, we de-stone them and keep the berry in the wine for a period of time to allow the tannins to flow and create a rich red colour. We can store in casks or bottles depending

upon which wine it is," Fraser explained.

While there is much more that can be written about Mayfield Vineyard, space is limited so I can only give you a 'taste' of what is happening here. Fraser has stated that it started out as a challenge as he really felt that there could be another way to produce a quality product without putting in unrequired additives, and without interference with nature's way of growing plants. Perhaps unconventional, perhaps a maverick or a pioneer, or maybe someone that simply loves to take up a challenge. Whatever it is that drives Fraser, you cannot but admire his enthusiasm and determination when pursuing a specific project.

Thank you, Fraser, for showing me another aspect in your production of wine in England.

To find out more please do make contact and visit the website: mayfieldwine.co.uk