1

00:00:00,710 --> 00:00:05,230

[Music]

2

00:00:02,020 --> 00:00:05,230

[Applause]

3

00:00:08,400 --> 00:00:12,799

Hello and welcome to Ear to the Ground,

4

00:00:10,639 --> 00:00:14,799

the agricultural podcast brought to you

5

00:00:12,799 --> 00:00:15,280

by Farming Connect supporting Welsh

6

00:00:14,799 --> 00:00:17,600

farms

7

00:00:15,280 --> 00:00:19,840

to adapt and thrive. You're listening to

8

00:00:17,600 --> 00:00:21,520

episode 47 and we've crossed an

9

00:00:19,840 --> 00:00:23,359

important milestone with the

10

00:00:21,520 --> 00:00:26,000

podcast because we've just crossed

11

00:00:23,359 --> 00:00:27,439

20,000 downloads, so thank you very much

12

00:00:26,000 --> 00:00:30,080

to all our loyal listeners

13

00:00:27,439 --> 00:00:31,920

for your ongoing support. Well, if you're

14

00:00:30,080 --> 00:00:33,520

anything like me and enjoy a good glass

15

00:00:31,920 --> 00:00:36,320

of wine from time to time,

16

00:00:33,520 --> 00:00:37,360

this episode is right up your street

17

00:00:36,320 --> 00:00:39,840

because we're here today

18

00:00:37,360 --> 00:00:42,000

at White Castle Vineyard. Now I’ll just pause

19

00:00:39,840 --> 00:00:44,160

as a tractor passes us.

20

00:00:42,000 --> 00:00:46,719

It's a busy place near White Castle

21

00:00:44,160 --> 00:00:46,719

Vineyard.

22

00:00:46,960 --> 00:00:51,199

It's the home of co-founder Robb

23

00:00:49,520 --> 00:00:51,680

Merchant who runs the vineyard with his

24

00:00:51,199 --> 00:00:53,600

wife

25

00:00:51,680 --> 00:00:55,039

Nicola and they've been in the press

26

00:00:53,600 --> 00:00:57,520

recently because

27

00:00:55,039 --> 00:00:59,600

they won a gold medal in the Decanter

28

00:00:57,520 --> 00:01:01,840

World Wine awards, the first

29

00:00:59,600 --> 00:01:03,120

Welsh wine to do so and we'll be talking

30

00:01:01,840 --> 00:01:05,680

some more about that

31

00:01:03,120 --> 00:01:06,479

later on. But, it's a beautiful day here

32

00:01:05,680 --> 00:01:09,600

in Monmouthshire

33

00:01:06,479 --> 00:01:10,960

Robb. 26 degrees, boiling hot perfect

34

00:01:09,600 --> 00:01:12,560

day for growing grapes?

35

00:01:10,960 --> 00:01:14,240

It is, we're very blessed living

36

00:01:12,560 --> 00:01:16,080

here. Yes, it's stunning and

37

00:01:14,240 --> 00:01:17,600

we're sat just overlooking the vines

38

00:01:16,080 --> 00:01:20,400

behind us.

39

00:01:17,600 --> 00:01:21,040

Tell us, where did this all start because

40

00:01:20,400 --> 00:01:23,119

I gather

41

00:01:21,040 --> 00:01:24,960

your wife had to persuade you quite hard

42

00:01:23,119 --> 00:01:28,080

to start this venture?

43

00:01:24,960 --> 00:01:30,320

She did. I suppose that it started back

44

00:01:28,080 --> 00:01:33,200

in 1993 when we

45

00:01:30,320 --> 00:01:35,119

first bought the property. It was a small

46

00:01:33,200 --> 00:01:37,600

Holding, 12 acres

47

00:01:35,119 --> 00:01:38,960

and Nicola started having a dream

48

00:01:37,600 --> 00:01:41,040

about planting a vineyard

49

00:01:38,960 --> 00:01:42,159

that we could retire to and work

50

00:01:41,040 --> 00:01:45,280

together.

51

00:01:42,159 --> 00:01:48,320

I put her off for 12 years

52

00:01:45,280 --> 00:01:52,079

and in 2008 the field that we now sat in,

53

00:01:48,320 --> 00:01:53,040

we purchased, and my excuses had run dry,

54

00:01:52,079 --> 00:01:54,640

so

55

00:01:53,040 --> 00:01:56,320

that's where it all started. It had to be

56

00:01:54,640 --> 00:01:58,560

done. And so this is a beautiful

57

00:01:56,320 --> 00:02:01,520

south-facing field and that's important

58

00:01:58,560 --> 00:02:04,799

to get the sunlight to grow these grapes?

59

00:02:01,520 --> 00:02:08,239

Personally I don't think it's

60

00:02:04,799 --> 00:02:09,200

the key. It certainly helps. We

61

00:02:08,239 --> 00:02:12,480

do have

62

00:02:09,200 --> 00:02:15,920

north facing fields planted but

63

00:02:12,480 --> 00:02:18,160

the slope is one of the key things so

64

00:02:15,920 --> 00:02:19,520

site selection is the real

65

00:02:18,160 --> 00:02:21,280

driver behind everything.

66

00:02:19,520 --> 00:02:23,040

Yes, of course, and in this field now

67

00:02:21,280 --> 00:02:24,959

you've got six different

68

00:02:23,040 --> 00:02:27,200

varieties. Tell us a bit about

69

00:02:24,959 --> 00:02:30,239

what's actually growing behind us here.

70

00:02:27,200 --> 00:02:32,720

The vineyard is split 60%

71

00:02:30,239 --> 00:02:33,680

red and in that we have some Pinot Noir

72

00:02:32,720 --> 00:02:35,920

Picos,

73

00:02:33,680 --> 00:02:37,360

so that's early ripening Pinot Noir, we

74

00:02:35,920 --> 00:02:41,360

have some Regent

75

00:02:37,360 --> 00:02:44,640

and some Rondo sorry

76

00:02:41,360 --> 00:02:47,680

in the reds, then in the whites we have

77

00:02:44,640 --> 00:02:49,200

Phoenix and Sea grape for still white

78

00:02:47,680 --> 00:02:52,400

wines and then we have a little bit of

79

00:02:49,200 --> 00:02:53,920

Suavignon Blanc to make a sparkling.

80

00:02:52,400 --> 00:02:56,560

And is there any reason why there's that

81

00:02:53,920 --> 00:02:59,840

60% 40% split? Do you sell more red wine

82

00:02:56,560 --> 00:03:00,879

than white? We do now it was naivety when

83

00:02:59,840 --> 00:03:04,319

we planted

84

00:03:00,879 --> 00:03:05,760

but Pinot Noir is

85

00:03:04,319 --> 00:03:08,239

classed as the most difficult grape to

86

00:03:05,760 --> 00:03:10,959

grow in the world and

87

00:03:08,239 --> 00:03:12,080

it's small volume crop so that's the

88

00:03:10,959 --> 00:03:14,879

biggest planting

89

00:03:12,080 --> 00:03:16,480

of vines in this field but probably one

90

00:03:14,879 --> 00:03:18,480

of the smaller productions.

91

00:03:16,480 --> 00:03:21,040

And it's with the Pinot Noir you won the

92

00:03:18,480 --> 00:03:24,159

the gold medal, an incredible achievement.

93

00:03:21,040 --> 00:03:25,120

Has it actually sunk in yet? I think it's

94

00:03:24,159 --> 00:03:26,799

beginning to sink in,

95

00:03:25,120 --> 00:03:29,280

we have no time to celebrate it yet but

96

00:03:26,799 --> 00:03:32,080

97

00:03:29,280 --> 00:03:32,560

it was really something special, it really

98

00:03:32,080 --> 00:03:37,599

was.

99

00:03:32,560 --> 00:03:39,200

It's probably changed our life,

100

00:03:37,599 --> 00:03:41,200

certainly in the last two weeks, it has

101

00:03:39,200 --> 00:03:42,879

certainly changed our lives and

102

00:03:41,200 --> 00:03:44,879

it probably will change the perception

103

00:03:42,879 --> 00:03:46,560

of the vineyard and everything else.

104

00:03:44,879 --> 00:03:48,640

I think it's fair to say it's a massive

105

00:03:46,560 --> 00:03:50,480

turning point in the business and in

106

00:03:48,640 --> 00:03:52,080

the journey of White Castle Vineyard

107

00:03:50,480 --> 00:03:52,799

and you often refer to it as a journey

108

00:03:52,080 --> 00:03:54,879

because this

109

00:03:52,799 --> 00:03:56,159

isn't something you set out to do

110

00:03:54,879 --> 00:03:57,360

when you started your career? You had a

111

00:03:56,159 --> 00:04:00,400

very different

112

00:03:57,360 --> 00:04:03,519

life before growing grapes. I did.

113

00:04:00,400 --> 00:04:04,799

I left school at 16, I

114

00:04:03,519 --> 00:04:07,120

tried to do an apprenticeship but it

115

00:04:04,799 --> 00:04:08,400

didn't work. All I wanted to do was drive

116

00:04:07,120 --> 00:04:10,080

tractors really

117

00:04:08,400 --> 00:04:12,560

so I got a job working for an

118

00:04:10,080 --> 00:04:14,879

agricultural contractor.

119

00:04:12,560 --> 00:04:16,720

I did that for about five years and then met

120

00:04:14,879 --> 00:04:18,239

Nicola,

121

00:04:16,720 --> 00:04:20,400

do the good thing, want to get

122

00:04:18,239 --> 00:04:22,079

married and needed to change my job so I

123

00:04:20,400 --> 00:04:23,520

became a postman.

124

00:04:22,079 --> 00:04:26,400

I then moved into the management so I was a

125

00:04:23,520 --> 00:04:29,840

postman for six years, manager

126

00:04:26,400 --> 00:04:33,600

for 24 years and was fortunate

127

00:04:29,840 --> 00:04:35,759

to finish in 2014 when it was privatised.

128

00:04:33,600 --> 00:04:37,120

And what did Nicola do?

129

00:04:35,759 --> 00:04:40,479

Nicola was the one who had

130

00:04:37,120 --> 00:04:43,520

the wine dream? She was a

131

00:04:40,479 --> 00:04:45,680

nurse district nurse for 38 years so

132

00:04:43,520 --> 00:04:47,440

it was a dream to retire and work

133

00:04:45,680 --> 00:04:49,840

together.

134

00:04:47,440 --> 00:04:51,040

Owning the vineyard is not retirement.

135

00:04:49,840 --> 00:04:52,960

It is

136

00:04:51,040 --> 00:04:55,440

full on labour intensive but it's an

137

00:04:52,960 --> 00:04:57,120

awesome life.

138

00:04:55,440 --> 00:04:58,720

You were saying that

139

00:04:57,120 --> 00:04:59,600

Pinot Noir is one of the hardest grapes to

140

00:04:58,720 --> 00:05:03,039

grow in the world

141

00:04:59,600 --> 00:05:07,039

why is that?

142

00:05:03,039 --> 00:05:10,479

It likes a cooler climate ideally

143

00:05:07,039 --> 00:05:11,919

but it's susceptible to

144

00:05:10,479 --> 00:05:14,160

every ailment a vine can have

145

00:05:11,919 --> 00:05:17,199

basically because

146

00:05:14,160 --> 00:05:20,639

we come from a quite a humid climate so

147

00:05:17,199 --> 00:05:21,520

mildews are one thing we keep an eye

148

00:05:20,639 --> 00:05:24,479

on

149

00:05:21,520 --> 00:05:25,280

virtually every day because they're

150

00:05:24,479 --> 00:05:27,840

pretty damaging.

151

00:05:25,280 --> 00:05:28,479

Of course but you've had some incredible

152

00:05:27,840 --> 00:05:30,880

reviews

153

00:05:28,479 --> 00:05:32,560

on this Pinot Noir wine. I heard

154

00:05:30,880 --> 00:05:34,560

an interview where the chair

155

00:05:32,560 --> 00:05:35,919

of the Decanter World Wine awards was

156

00:05:34,560 --> 00:05:38,639

praising you for

157

00:05:35,919 --> 00:05:40,000

your bravery in choosing this particular

158

00:05:38,639 --> 00:05:41,680

variety to grow because it's so

159

00:05:40,000 --> 00:05:43,280

difficult to grow but on top of that,

160

00:05:41,680 --> 00:05:44,400

you've produced some incredibly top

161

00:05:43,280 --> 00:05:46,800

quality wine

162

00:05:44,400 --> 00:05:47,919

from a region that possibly in the past

163

00:05:46,800 --> 00:05:50,320

isn't or has not been

164

00:05:47,919 --> 00:05:51,360

recognised as a wine producing

165

00:05:50,320 --> 00:05:54,560

country but

166

00:05:51,360 --> 00:05:58,240

you're rapidly putting Wales on the map.

167

00:05:54,560 --> 00:06:01,680

Thank you very much.

168

00:05:58,240 --> 00:06:03,280

The Pinot Noir Picos ripens

169

00:06:01,680 --> 00:06:05,440

early so it gives us

170

00:06:03,280 --> 00:06:06,880

an extra bit of time in the harvest

171

00:06:05,440 --> 00:06:09,120

window in October if you like.

172

00:06:06,880 --> 00:06:10,639

If the weather is a bit changeable, we

173

00:06:09,120 --> 00:06:11,840

still have hope to be able to produce a

174

00:06:10,639 --> 00:06:13,280

red wine out of it

175

00:06:11,840 --> 00:06:15,280

because it would give me an extra three

176

00:06:13,280 --> 00:06:18,080

to four weeks basically.

177

00:06:15,280 --> 00:06:20,080

Yes, it is challenging, but I find it

178

00:06:18,080 --> 00:06:22,319

very rewarding when it comes

179

00:06:20,080 --> 00:06:24,319

good. And we've noticed the

180

00:06:22,319 --> 00:06:27,680

way that the climate is changing

181

00:06:24,319 --> 00:06:28,800

from 2014 on, the way that the Pinot Noir

182

00:06:27,680 --> 00:06:30,639

is developing

183

00:06:28,800 --> 00:06:32,319

has been awesome to be honest.

184

00:06:30,639 --> 00:06:34,000

We're hearing a

185

00:06:32,319 --> 00:06:36,479

lot about climate change,

186

00:06:34,000 --> 00:06:37,919

warmer weather, hotter summers, that's

187

00:06:36,479 --> 00:06:40,800

working to your benefit?

188

00:06:37,919 --> 00:06:42,400

It is. Through

189

00:06:40,800 --> 00:06:43,680

Farming Connect I had the Management

190

00:06:42,400 --> 00:06:46,560

Exchange.

191

00:06:43,680 --> 00:06:47,440

I travelled the Loire valley four

192

00:06:46,560 --> 00:06:49,440

or five times

193

00:06:47,440 --> 00:06:51,039

to meet producers and we've now

194

00:06:49,440 --> 00:06:55,120

planted a Cabernet Franc

195

00:06:51,039 --> 00:06:56,720

based on that

196

00:06:55,120 --> 00:06:58,880

visit and some

197

00:06:56,720 --> 00:07:01,520

research from there.

198

00:06:58,880 --> 00:07:03,120

You've often mentioned how

199

00:07:01,520 --> 00:07:04,960

grateful you are to Farming Connect for

200

00:07:03,120 --> 00:07:05,680

giving you a lot of opportunities and

201

00:07:04,960 --> 00:07:08,000

202

00:07:05,680 --> 00:07:09,360

the Management Exchange is one example of

203

00:07:08,000 --> 00:07:12,479

that.

204

00:07:09,360 --> 00:07:14,160

Have you been taken back by how open

205

00:07:12,479 --> 00:07:15,680

some of these vineyards are to sharing

206

00:07:14,160 --> 00:07:17,039

Information. I guess it can be quite

207

00:07:15,680 --> 00:07:18,479

secretive industry people don't want to

208

00:07:17,039 --> 00:07:20,960

share their secrets

209

00:07:18,479 --> 00:07:22,240

or their nuggets of wisdom but on the

210

00:07:20,960 --> 00:07:23,360

other hand there are people out there

211

00:07:22,240 --> 00:07:26,639

that's willing

212

00:07:23,360 --> 00:07:27,919

to share knowledge? In my Management

213

00:07:26,639 --> 00:07:28,560

Exchange traveling in the Loire valley,

214

00:07:27,919 --> 00:07:30,960

once

215

00:07:28,560 --> 00:07:32,000

they realised I was Welsh then

216

00:07:30,960 --> 00:07:34,560

you've got a

217

00:07:32,000 --> 00:07:36,800

different reception, no disrespect to

218

00:07:34,560 --> 00:07:38,800

anybody from any other nationality, but

219

00:07:36,800 --> 00:07:41,199

there's an affinity between France and

220

00:07:38,800 --> 00:07:44,319

and Wales and certainly rugby based.

221

00:07:41,199 --> 00:07:46,800

They were quite

222

00:07:44,319 --> 00:07:47,759

free with a lot of information and

223

00:07:46,800 --> 00:07:49,199

that was great.

224

00:07:47,759 --> 00:07:52,160

When we first came into the industry in

225

00:07:49,199 --> 00:07:55,039

the UK it was pretty secretive.

226

00:07:52,160 --> 00:07:55,039

227

00:07:55,199 --> 00:07:59,840

I was 48, I still deemed myself to be

228

00:07:58,240 --> 00:08:01,120

young you know youngsters coming in

229

00:07:59,840 --> 00:08:03,280

because a lot of people coming into the

230

00:08:01,120 --> 00:08:04,960

wine industry usually come with big

231

00:08:03,280 --> 00:08:07,759

financial backgrounds

232

00:08:04,960 --> 00:08:09,840

and maybe later on in life.

233

00:08:07,759 --> 00:08:11,680

But my view is that

234

00:08:09,840 --> 00:08:12,960

everything we do in the vineyard is the

235

00:08:11,680 --> 00:08:14,560

activity we do,

236

00:08:12,960 --> 00:08:16,560

it’s the same no matter what vineyard

237

00:08:14,560 --> 00:08:19,599

you've got.

238

00:08:16,560 --> 00:08:22,479

Sharing knowledge and improving

239

00:08:19,599 --> 00:08:24,560

is the best way forward. You keep your

240

00:08:22,479 --> 00:08:25,840

trade secrets around

241

00:08:24,560 --> 00:08:28,080

your wine making and everything else,

242

00:08:25,840 --> 00:08:29,199

that's to you specifically, but

243

00:08:28,080 --> 00:08:31,440

the activity in the vineyard is

244

00:08:29,199 --> 00:08:32,800

certainly shareable and I don't mind

245

00:08:31,440 --> 00:08:33,680

sharing my time with anybody for that to

246

00:08:32,800 --> 00:08:36,000

be honest.

247

00:08:33,680 --> 00:08:36,959

And another example of how you've given

248

00:08:36,000 --> 00:08:39,039

back is

249

00:08:36,959 --> 00:08:40,560

by becoming a Farming Connect Mentor.

250

00:08:39,039 --> 00:08:42,159

I think you're mentoring about 16

251

00:08:40,560 --> 00:08:43,519

different people so on top of running

252

00:08:42,159 --> 00:08:44,880

the vineyards and keeping on top of

253

00:08:43,519 --> 00:08:46,480

all these vines behind us,

254

00:08:44,880 --> 00:08:47,920

responding to inquiries following the

255

00:08:46,480 --> 00:08:50,880

award, you're mentoring

256

00:08:47,920 --> 00:08:52,399

16 people and that's a fantastic service.

257

00:08:50,880 --> 00:08:53,519

Have you found that an enjoyable

258

00:08:52,399 --> 00:08:56,800

experience?

259

00:08:53,519 --> 00:08:58,080

Yes, I have. I've met some very

260

00:08:56,800 --> 00:09:01,360

interesting people.

261

00:08:58,080 --> 00:09:01,680

It's not for everybody, and if I

262

00:09:01,360 --> 00:09:03,200

get

263

00:09:01,680 --> 00:09:05,040

driving all the way to Anglesey to see a

264

00:09:03,200 --> 00:09:06,399

site and the gentleman just said to me,

265

00:09:05,040 --> 00:09:08,080

how much can I do off the press of a

266

00:09:06,399 --> 00:09:10,640

button on the tractor.

267

00:09:08,080 --> 00:09:12,560

I spent the day with him but soon

268

00:09:10,640 --> 00:09:16,560

realised that

269

00:09:12,560 --> 00:09:19,839

it wasn't going to work.

270

00:09:16,560 --> 00:09:20,959

There's not a lot of

271

00:09:19,839 --> 00:09:23,200

mechanisation

272

00:09:20,959 --> 00:09:24,320

in the vineyard, you have to put a lot of

273

00:09:23,200 --> 00:09:27,920

leg work

274

00:09:24,320 --> 00:09:29,600

and arm working.

275

00:09:27,920 --> 00:09:31,040

If you don't have that thought

276

00:09:29,600 --> 00:09:33,279

from the start

277

00:09:31,040 --> 00:09:34,959

then you might plant vines but you don't

278

00:09:33,279 --> 00:09:37,200

stay long.

279

00:09:34,959 --> 00:09:39,200

Is it very labour intensive and

280

00:09:37,200 --> 00:09:40,640

requires a lot of manual input?

281

00:09:39,200 --> 00:09:43,279

It is labour-intensive. It's not

282

00:09:40,640 --> 00:09:45,200

physically hard work

283

00:09:43,279 --> 00:09:46,800

and no disrespect to the French ladies

284

00:09:45,200 --> 00:09:47,440

but a lot of the work that's done in the

285

00:09:46,800 --> 00:09:49,920

vineyard

286

00:09:47,440 --> 00:09:51,440

is done by females because it's not

287

00:09:49,920 --> 00:09:54,000

physically hard work, it's just

288

00:09:51,440 --> 00:09:54,880

tucking in, positioning shoots, removing

289

00:09:54,000 --> 00:09:57,440

leaves.

290

00:09:54,880 --> 00:09:59,600

The pruning is a bit more,

291

00:09:57,440 --> 00:10:01,760

maybe done by a male member.

292

00:09:59,600 --> 00:10:04,480

But, again, that's not physically

293

00:10:01,760 --> 00:10:06,959

demanding work, it's just repetitive.

294

00:10:04,480 --> 00:10:07,600

Take us through the life cycle,

295

00:10:06,959 --> 00:10:09,519

296

00:10:07,600 --> 00:10:11,440

from planting the vine in

297

00:10:09,519 --> 00:10:13,360

the first place. When can you expect some

298

00:10:11,440 --> 00:10:16,000

crop and how much work do you need to

299

00:10:13,360 --> 00:10:16,959

constantly pruning, titivating, making

300

00:10:16,000 --> 00:10:18,480

sure they're growing in the right

301

00:10:16,959 --> 00:10:19,760

direction and not going to leave too

302

00:10:18,480 --> 00:10:22,800

much,

303

00:10:19,760 --> 00:10:23,440

tell us a bit about that. Planting

304

00:10:22,800 --> 00:10:26,240

season is

305

00:10:23,440 --> 00:10:26,880

is usually the last week of April

306

00:10:26,240 --> 00:10:29,600

into the

307

00:10:26,880 --> 00:10:30,079

last week of May, therefore sort of five to six

308

00:10:29,600 --> 00:10:33,360

weeks

309

00:10:30,079 --> 00:10:36,240

planted in the UK.

310

00:10:33,360 --> 00:10:37,839

We plant with a machine where we've planted,

311

00:10:36,240 --> 00:10:40,480

it just gives us

312

00:10:37,839 --> 00:10:42,720

a bit of accuracy and ease in

313

00:10:40,480 --> 00:10:45,440

planting.

314

00:10:42,720 --> 00:10:48,160

Then the growth spurt comes then because

315

00:10:45,440 --> 00:10:50,079

they've been in cold storage for

316

00:10:48,160 --> 00:10:51,600

several months probably and the minute

317

00:10:50,079 --> 00:10:53,839

they come into the atmosphere

318

00:10:51,600 --> 00:10:54,640

they burst bud and then it's about

319

00:10:53,839 --> 00:10:57,440

choosing

320

00:10:54,640 --> 00:10:58,880

your shoot selection that's going

321

00:10:57,440 --> 00:11:01,680

to be your main cane.

322

00:10:58,880 --> 00:11:02,720

There's a lot of knee work up and

323

00:11:01,680 --> 00:11:04,880

down the rows

324

00:11:02,720 --> 00:11:06,560

or certainly bending over to choose your

325

00:11:04,880 --> 00:11:07,760

best cane and you're looking after that

326

00:11:06,560 --> 00:11:10,399

because that's going to be your

327

00:11:07,760 --> 00:11:11,279

livelihood for the rest of your days

328

00:11:10,399 --> 00:11:14,480

probably.

329

00:11:11,279 --> 00:11:17,760

A vine will last

330

00:11:14,480 --> 00:11:20,320

70, 80, 90 years, (is it really, wow),

331

00:11:17,760 --> 00:11:21,839

if you treat it with respect obviously.

332

00:11:20,320 --> 00:11:22,880

It's like anything, you only get out of

333

00:11:21,839 --> 00:11:26,000

it what you put into it.

334

00:11:22,880 --> 00:11:28,720

Care is the key thing.

335

00:11:26,000 --> 00:11:30,720

And then for all the first year growth

336

00:11:28,720 --> 00:11:33,120

you just cut it back to two buds

337

00:11:30,720 --> 00:11:35,120

so maybe about four inches long and let

338

00:11:33,120 --> 00:11:38,320

it all start again next year.

339

00:11:35,120 --> 00:11:41,279

Then for year three,

340

00:11:38,320 --> 00:11:42,079

we would put them on a fruity wire

341

00:11:41,279 --> 00:11:44,160

with a

342

00:11:42,079 --> 00:11:45,279

hope for a bit of harvest, a small

343

00:11:44,160 --> 00:11:48,480

crop,

344

00:11:45,279 --> 00:11:50,399

your first wine. A still

345

00:11:48,480 --> 00:11:56,970

white wine you might get out at

346

00:11:50,399 --> 00:12:00,090

three and a half, four years.

347

00:11:56,970 --> 00:12:00,090

[Music]

348

00:12:02,079 --> 00:12:05,839

So why have you decided to plant these

349

00:12:04,000 --> 00:12:07,600

vines in this particular width pattern,

350

00:12:05,839 --> 00:12:10,720

are they 2.4?

351

00:12:07,600 --> 00:12:14,160

These are 2.45.

352

00:12:10,720 --> 00:12:14,800

The row width is driven by the

353

00:12:14,160 --> 00:12:17,040

height

354

00:12:14,800 --> 00:12:18,639

of the canopy if you like, therefore we

355

00:12:17,040 --> 00:12:20,320

top these out to seven foot

356

00:12:18,639 --> 00:12:22,079

and it's about

357

00:12:20,320 --> 00:12:23,519

casting shadow on the fruits.

358

00:12:22,079 --> 00:12:25,120

You're just trying to maximise the

359

00:12:23,519 --> 00:12:27,519

sunshine all the time.

360

00:12:25,120 --> 00:12:28,560

The higher the vinyl the more space you

361

00:12:27,519 --> 00:12:29,600

need in between.

362

00:12:28,560 --> 00:12:32,000

When you

363

00:12:29,600 --> 00:12:34,000

go to France,

364

00:12:32,000 --> 00:12:35,440

they'll be at four foot wide

365

00:12:34,000 --> 00:12:38,639

and they'll be low.

366

00:12:35,440 --> 00:12:39,040

The

367

00:12:38,639 --> 00:12:42,079

other

368

00:12:39,040 --> 00:12:45,120

part of that is

369

00:12:42,079 --> 00:12:46,720

equipment. Orchard equipment in the UK

370

00:12:45,120 --> 00:12:48,240

tends to be bigger. It

371

00:12:46,720 --> 00:12:50,480

tends to fit in this,

372

00:12:48,240 --> 00:12:51,440

a standard agricultural tractor is three

373

00:12:50,480 --> 00:12:53,760

meters wide.

374

00:12:51,440 --> 00:12:54,720

If you've got loads of

375

00:12:53,760 --> 00:12:57,200

acres

376

00:12:54,720 --> 00:12:58,399

then cost effectively use

377

00:12:57,200 --> 00:13:01,040

traditional farming kit.

378

00:12:58,399 --> 00:13:01,680

But if you're a smaller

379

00:13:01,040 --> 00:13:03,120

space,

380

00:13:01,680 --> 00:13:05,360

if you want to maximise the

381

00:13:03,120 --> 00:13:09,360

plant in orientation in your vineyard,

382

00:13:05,360 --> 00:13:12,000

or in your site, then you

383

00:13:09,360 --> 00:13:13,440

use two meter kit for orchards which is

384

00:13:12,000 --> 00:13:16,000

reasonably priced. When you start getting

385

00:13:13,440 --> 00:13:18,160

down to 1.2s and 1.3s

386

00:13:16,000 --> 00:13:20,000

it's specialist and for me I don't fit

387

00:13:18,160 --> 00:13:22,399

in a small tractor anyway.

388

00:13:20,000 --> 00:13:23,680

The reason

389

00:13:22,399 --> 00:13:24,079

you've got it at this site

390

00:13:23,680 --> 00:13:25,600

391

00:13:24,079 --> 00:13:27,200

is it for pest control? Some of it is

392

00:13:25,600 --> 00:13:30,240

pest control.

393

00:13:27,200 --> 00:13:32,240

Badgers are partial to ripe grapes.

394

00:13:30,240 --> 00:13:33,440

They could really

395

00:13:32,240 --> 00:13:35,040

decimate the crop?

396

00:13:33,440 --> 00:13:36,800

They would just trash things.

397

00:13:35,040 --> 00:13:38,560

Badgers are

398

00:13:36,800 --> 00:13:40,079

a powerful beast and they

399

00:13:38,560 --> 00:13:40,320

would just latch onto a bunch of grapes

400

00:13:40,079 --> 00:13:43,199

and

401

00:13:40,320 --> 00:13:44,880

pull it all over. Then

402

00:13:43,199 --> 00:13:50,320

the other thing we're doing is

403

00:13:44,880 --> 00:13:50,320

working towards bare soil

404

00:13:50,880 --> 00:13:54,160

without herbicides. We've got a

405

00:13:52,800 --> 00:13:57,279

little cultivator now

406

00:13:54,160 --> 00:14:00,480

that we use because that

407

00:13:57,279 --> 00:14:02,560

soil heat radiation up,

408

00:14:00,480 --> 00:14:04,480

that is worth three degrees more heat

409

00:14:02,560 --> 00:14:06,320

rising than grass.

410

00:14:04,480 --> 00:14:08,639

When we come along

411

00:14:06,320 --> 00:14:10,639

now we strip the leaves off

412

00:14:08,639 --> 00:14:12,160

around the fruiting zone, that heat

413

00:14:10,639 --> 00:14:13,760

radiation is coming up.

414

00:14:12,160 --> 00:14:16,800

And you cut the

415

00:14:13,760 --> 00:14:16,800

grass then you would lawn mower?

416

00:14:19,199 --> 00:14:22,639

I’ve got a fly on mower that goes

417

00:14:20,880 --> 00:14:24,480

behind the tractor. I see.

418

00:14:22,639 --> 00:14:26,240

How old would this vine be?

419

00:14:24,480 --> 00:14:28,480

So this vine is 12 years old.

420

00:14:26,240 --> 00:14:30,000

It's 12 years old. Right now,

421

00:14:28,480 --> 00:14:33,279

what we're doing is, coming in

422

00:14:30,000 --> 00:14:34,880

these are growing the wrong way,

423

00:14:33,279 --> 00:14:37,279

if you see, what we'll do is come and

424

00:14:34,880 --> 00:14:39,040

remove those, remove that

425

00:14:37,279 --> 00:14:41,440

so everything we're doing is about

426

00:14:39,040 --> 00:14:43,440

making them grow on an angle.

427

00:14:41,440 --> 00:14:45,040

One of these canes will be a

428

00:14:43,440 --> 00:14:48,160

fruiting cane for next year.

429

00:14:45,040 --> 00:14:50,079

We'll save that, but also

430

00:14:48,160 --> 00:14:51,760

we're putting the energy into the

431

00:14:50,079 --> 00:14:52,720

grapes because it's not wasted energy

432

00:14:51,760 --> 00:14:56,480

into

433

00:14:52,720 --> 00:14:58,880

the excess plant. We’ve got to be careful

434

00:14:56,480 --> 00:14:59,760

with this temperatures on the western

435

00:14:58,880 --> 00:15:01,279

side if you like

436

00:14:59,760 --> 00:15:04,160

because that's the hottest site for

437

00:15:01,279 --> 00:15:06,560

the longest and Germanic hybrids they

438

00:15:04,160 --> 00:15:07,760

can get sunburned, believe

439

00:15:06,560 --> 00:15:10,240

it or not,

440

00:15:07,760 --> 00:15:11,360

sunburnt grape sounds a bit daft but it

441

00:15:10,240 --> 00:15:13,279

does happen.

442

00:15:11,360 --> 00:15:14,399

Pinot Noir, they’re used

443

00:15:13,279 --> 00:15:17,440

to be growing in

444

00:15:14,399 --> 00:15:18,639

in hotter climates and the Germanic

445

00:15:17,440 --> 00:15:21,199

hybrids are not.

446

00:15:18,639 --> 00:15:21,839

This pruning and shaping is

447

00:15:21,199 --> 00:15:23,680

constant?

448

00:15:21,839 --> 00:15:25,360

It's constant. Every day

449

00:15:23,680 --> 00:15:26,160

you've got to do something, just tucking

450

00:15:25,360 --> 00:15:28,880

in just

451

00:15:26,160 --> 00:15:30,240

keeping it nice and tidy. If you think

452

00:15:28,880 --> 00:15:31,600

you just do that and you just open up

453

00:15:30,240 --> 00:15:32,160

the grape straight away then we'll bring

454

00:15:31,600 --> 00:15:33,920

out

455

00:15:32,160 --> 00:15:35,440

wire clips that we'll just clip there

456

00:15:33,920 --> 00:15:37,680

to

457

00:15:35,440 --> 00:15:38,639

pull that foliage in tight. We're

458

00:15:37,680 --> 00:15:41,040

just

459

00:15:38,639 --> 00:15:42,160

exposing the grapes all the time.

460

00:15:41,040 --> 00:15:44,580

From now on, it is

461

00:15:42,160 --> 00:15:51,520

is crucial for us.

462

00:15:44,580 --> 00:15:51,520

[Music]

463

00:15:53,440 --> 00:15:57,839

When do they peak in terms of

464

00:15:56,320 --> 00:15:59,360

production and yield? In

465

00:15:57,839 --> 00:16:01,040

in the life cycle of the vine you say

466

00:15:59,360 --> 00:16:01,920

they could last anything up to 70-80 years

467

00:16:01,040 --> 00:16:04,160

or more.

468

00:16:01,920 --> 00:16:05,120

When does a vine really come into

469

00:16:04,160 --> 00:16:09,279

its own?

470

00:16:05,120 --> 00:16:09,680

I think from about 15 to 35 is their

471

00:16:09,279 --> 00:16:12,959

key

472

00:16:09,680 --> 00:16:15,360

production growth years.

473

00:16:12,959 --> 00:16:16,959

Then it just start to decline but

474

00:16:15,360 --> 00:16:20,000

they reckon

475

00:16:16,959 --> 00:16:21,839

the quality then improves with age.

476

00:16:20,000 --> 00:16:24,000

Could you notice there's a different

477

00:16:21,839 --> 00:16:25,279

taste to the grape if it's from a more

478

00:16:24,000 --> 00:16:27,040

mature vine?

479

00:16:25,279 --> 00:16:28,480

In the top right

480

00:16:27,040 --> 00:16:30,160

hand corner behind you,

481

00:16:28,480 --> 00:16:31,759

there's a variety there called Sea

482

00:16:30,160 --> 00:16:33,920

Gariba.

483

00:16:31,759 --> 00:16:35,120

When we when we ordered our

484

00:16:33,920 --> 00:16:36,880

vines we had to wait an extra

485

00:16:35,120 --> 00:16:38,800

12 months for it because it's not widely

486

00:16:36,880 --> 00:16:41,279

propagated anymore.

487

00:16:38,800 --> 00:16:42,160

For the first two harvests from

488

00:16:41,279 --> 00:16:47,360

those vines,

489

00:16:42,160 --> 00:16:50,000

the plant the juice was very bland

490

00:16:47,360 --> 00:16:51,519

and it just didn't excite me at all and

491

00:16:50,000 --> 00:16:54,560

so we just blended it in with

492

00:16:51,519 --> 00:16:56,720

with another wine.

493

00:16:54,560 --> 00:16:58,079

Then third vintage it was just like some

494

00:16:56,720 --> 00:16:58,720

reflector switch, they just became a

495

00:16:58,079 --> 00:17:00,880

different

496

00:16:58,720 --> 00:17:02,079

flavour straight away.

497

00:17:00,880 --> 00:17:04,240

498

00:17:02,079 --> 00:17:05,360

Now we make it as a single varietal.

499

00:17:04,240 --> 00:17:07,600

500

00:17:05,360 --> 00:17:08,640

You've got

501

00:17:07,600 --> 00:17:12,160

to wait for that little

502

00:17:08,640 --> 00:17:12,720

button to go and then just enjoy the

503

00:17:12,160 --> 00:17:15,679

journey.

504

00:17:12,720 --> 00:17:17,039

Of course. You grow the grapes, you

505

00:17:15,679 --> 00:17:19,280

harvest the grapes, it's all hand

506

00:17:17,039 --> 00:17:21,520

harvested,

507

00:17:19,280 --> 00:17:23,360

and then you take it away to a winery

508

00:17:21,520 --> 00:17:25,600

for it to be processed into wine.

509

00:17:23,360 --> 00:17:26,880

Yes. We take ours to Three Choirs

510

00:17:25,600 --> 00:17:30,559

in Newant

511

00:17:26,880 --> 00:17:33,120

they would probably process 75%

512

00:17:30,559 --> 00:17:33,919

of Welsh vineyards, or Welsh grapes if

513

00:17:33,120 --> 00:17:34,960

you like.

514

00:17:33,919 --> 00:17:37,600

Obviously, they've got to keep it all

515

00:17:34,960 --> 00:17:38,720

separate. We have to notify DEFRA because

516

00:17:37,600 --> 00:17:40,960

we're going into England

517

00:17:38,720 --> 00:17:42,960

with tonnage per variety and dates

518

00:17:40,960 --> 00:17:45,600

of harvest and what we intend

519

00:17:42,960 --> 00:17:46,720

to make with those wines and also

520

00:17:45,600 --> 00:17:47,360

it's because the government want to

521

00:17:46,720 --> 00:17:50,480

collect their

522

00:17:47,360 --> 00:17:52,720

bit of duty. It's all kept

523

00:17:50,480 --> 00:17:55,520

separate and fermented separately

524

00:17:52,720 --> 00:17:57,200

by the vineyard then. And

525

00:17:55,520 --> 00:17:57,760

is it your long-term ambition to have

526

00:17:57,200 --> 00:18:01,200

your own

527

00:17:57,760 --> 00:18:03,760

winery here at White Castle? It is now.

528

00:18:01,200 --> 00:18:04,799

It wasn't I suppose for the first 10

529

00:18:03,760 --> 00:18:07,120

years, it was all about

530

00:18:04,799 --> 00:18:08,559

producing the quality grapes. For me

531

00:18:07,120 --> 00:18:11,520

now it's

532

00:18:08,559 --> 00:18:12,160

become a bit more of an

533

00:18:11,520 --> 00:18:14,960

obsession

534

00:18:12,160 --> 00:18:17,200

than a dream really. It

535

00:18:14,960 --> 00:18:18,559

could quite easily take over?

536

00:18:17,200 --> 00:18:20,240

It's changed my life.

537

00:18:18,559 --> 00:18:22,160

It's taken over my life.

538

00:18:20,240 --> 00:18:23,760

My life is 24 hours a day just grapes.

539

00:18:22,160 --> 00:18:26,840

540

00:18:23,760 --> 00:18:28,160

And what does your family think, your

541

00:18:26,840 --> 00:18:30,720

Children?

542

00:18:28,160 --> 00:18:31,600

The youngest boys, when we

543

00:18:30,720 --> 00:18:34,960

told them we're going to plant some

544

00:18:31,600 --> 00:18:36,160

vines, they said, well we're not French.

545

00:18:34,960 --> 00:18:38,240

It was something you just didn’t

546

00:18:36,160 --> 00:18:40,160

see in the UK in them days.

547

00:18:38,240 --> 00:18:41,280

I suppose when we started 12

548

00:18:40,160 --> 00:18:43,440

years ago there might have been

549

00:18:41,280 --> 00:18:45,520

400 vineyards in the UK in total and

550

00:18:43,440 --> 00:18:48,720

probably about 15 in Wales.

551

00:18:45,520 --> 00:18:51,840

Now it's in excess of 900 or around 900

552

00:18:48,720 --> 00:18:53,919

but some of those vineyards now

553

00:18:51,840 --> 00:18:55,520

have grown as well. There's people now

554

00:18:53,919 --> 00:18:57,679

with a thousand acres of vines.

555

00:18:55,520 --> 00:18:59,520

It is a growing

556

00:18:57,679 --> 00:19:01,919

industry.

557

00:18:59,520 --> 00:19:03,679

Do you see Welsh wine growing as a

558

00:19:01,919 --> 00:19:05,600

growing industry and

559

00:19:03,679 --> 00:19:06,880

from a farming and a

560

00:19:05,600 --> 00:19:09,280

diversification

561

00:19:06,880 --> 00:19:10,559

context and point of view, are you seeing

562

00:19:09,280 --> 00:19:12,720

more farmers

563

00:19:10,559 --> 00:19:14,559

possibly approaching you say,

564

00:19:12,720 --> 00:19:16,000

look Robb how can I get into this

565

00:19:14,559 --> 00:19:17,840

I've got some fields I can see

566

00:19:16,000 --> 00:19:19,039

you're growing a lot of vines here from

567

00:19:17,840 --> 00:19:21,200

a relatively small

568

00:19:19,039 --> 00:19:23,200

paddock can I get into this? Out

569

00:19:21,200 --> 00:19:26,400

of the 16

570

00:19:23,200 --> 00:19:27,760

people that I've mentored probably six,

571

00:19:26,400 --> 00:19:29,440

maybe eight of those are farmers looking

572

00:19:27,760 --> 00:19:31,520

at diversification.

573

00:19:29,440 --> 00:19:32,799

The rest would be new entrants

574

00:19:31,520 --> 00:19:36,640

with

575

00:19:32,799 --> 00:19:38,960

small paddocks or maybe their father has given

576

00:19:36,640 --> 00:19:39,840

Jimmy five acres somewhere and he can

577

00:19:38,960 --> 00:19:42,559

have a go

578

00:19:39,840 --> 00:19:43,520

at what he wants with it.

579

00:19:42,559 --> 00:19:45,280

There is a

580

00:19:43,520 --> 00:19:46,640

fair cross section of what

581

00:19:45,280 --> 00:19:48,799

we're seeing.

582

00:19:46,640 --> 00:19:50,720

Do you have to get a certain soil

583

00:19:48,799 --> 00:19:52,240

type or can you grow grapes

584

00:19:50,720 --> 00:19:53,840

practically anywhere and you just have

585

00:19:52,240 --> 00:19:54,960

to choose the variety that suits your

586

00:19:53,840 --> 00:19:57,919

soil, your

587

00:19:54,960 --> 00:19:59,360

topography? Or ideally you want

588

00:19:57,919 --> 00:20:00,960

a sandstone, like you got here?

589

00:19:59,360 --> 00:20:04,159

That works well for you?

590

00:20:00,960 --> 00:20:07,280

Yes, I think

591

00:20:04,159 --> 00:20:07,760

site selection in terms of the aspect of

592

00:20:07,280 --> 00:20:09,679

593

00:20:07,760 --> 00:20:11,520

where you're situated, you could

594

00:20:09,679 --> 00:20:14,799

have a beautiful south facing

595

00:20:11,520 --> 00:20:16,240

field by the sea and if you're over

596

00:20:14,799 --> 00:20:18,480

West Wales, say St David's way,

597

00:20:16,240 --> 00:20:20,080

the wind's going to be whistling now off

598

00:20:18,480 --> 00:20:21,120

the Irish sea, then it's going to cause you

599

00:20:20,080 --> 00:20:23,919

a few problems,

600

00:20:21,120 --> 00:20:24,720

so that aspect of your field

601

00:20:23,919 --> 00:20:28,720

602

00:20:24,720 --> 00:20:30,480

is the key driver. From there

603

00:20:28,720 --> 00:20:32,240

you can manipulate most things. You

00:20:30,480 --> 00:20:33,200

choose your root stock to suit your

605

00:20:32,240 --> 00:20:34,640

soils

606

00:20:33,200 --> 00:20:36,400

and you choose your variety that you

607

00:20:34,640 --> 00:20:38,400

want to graft

608

00:20:36,400 --> 00:20:41,039

or to grow. They're grafted onto

609

00:20:38,400 --> 00:20:41,039

the rootstock.

610

00:20:41,679 --> 00:20:44,799

We planted Germanic so out of the six

611

00:20:43,760 --> 00:20:46,880

varieties in this field

612

00:20:44,799 --> 00:20:48,880

four of those are Germanic hybrids which are

613

00:20:46,880 --> 00:20:52,159

designed for cooler climate.

614

00:20:48,880 --> 00:20:53,280

12 years down the line we probably

615

00:20:52,159 --> 00:20:53,919

wouldn't have planted some of those.

616

00:20:53,280 --> 00:20:55,280

We've

617

00:20:53,919 --> 00:20:56,720

been looking at different varieties and

618

00:20:55,280 --> 00:20:57,360

that's because the climate has changed.

619

00:20:56,720 --> 00:20:59,039

620

00:20:57,360 --> 00:21:00,480

These are now being

621

00:20:59,039 --> 00:21:01,600

planted further north.

622

00:21:00,480 --> 00:21:03,919

We've got vineyards now

623

00:21:01,600 --> 00:21:05,600

in Scotland.

624

00:21:03,919 --> 00:21:07,120

The country is warming up

625

00:21:05,600 --> 00:21:08,799

and what suits here now was very

626

00:21:07,120 --> 00:21:10,159

different to what was suited you 12 years ago.

627

00:21:08,799 --> 00:21:11,520

It is.

628

00:21:10,159 --> 00:21:13,360

The Cabernet Franc, that's

629

00:21:11,520 --> 00:21:14,799

developing very well is testament to

630

00:21:13,360 --> 00:21:16,640

the way it's changed.

631

00:21:14,799 --> 00:21:18,080

I know a boy down the

632

00:21:16,640 --> 00:21:19,120

South of England he's growing some

633

00:21:18,080 --> 00:21:20,159

Merlot.

634

00:21:19,120 --> 00:21:22,000

He's probably the only boy in

635

00:21:20,159 --> 00:21:22,320

the country growing Merlot at the minute

636

00:21:22,000 --> 00:21:24,240

637

00:21:22,320 --> 00:21:25,360

in the UK and people are watching and

638

00:21:24,240 --> 00:21:28,480

watching what we're doing

639

00:21:25,360 --> 00:21:30,080

because the climate is changing. I

640

00:21:28,480 --> 00:21:32,159

guess it's shifting isn't it because

641

00:21:30,080 --> 00:21:34,159

for quite some time now, parts of

642

00:21:32,159 --> 00:21:35,679

England have been very well regarded for

643

00:21:34,159 --> 00:21:37,120

their sparkling wine probably putting

644

00:21:35,679 --> 00:21:37,520

some of the wine makers of the champagne

645

00:21:37,120 --> 00:21:39,440

region

646

00:21:37,520 --> 00:21:41,280

a run for their money and I

647

00:21:39,440 --> 00:21:42,799

even hear reports of some

648

00:21:41,280 --> 00:21:44,320

producers in France that could have changed

649

00:21:42,799 --> 00:21:45,679

their grape varieties because what

650

00:21:44,320 --> 00:21:47,840

worked there traditionally

651

00:21:45,679 --> 00:21:49,039

isn't working there now.

652

00:21:47,840 --> 00:21:52,799

Bordeaux was just

653

00:21:49,039 --> 00:21:56,159

licensed eight new varieties for

654

00:21:52,799 --> 00:21:58,080

research because of climate change

655

00:21:56,159 --> 00:22:00,640

because they realised that the

656

00:21:58,080 --> 00:22:04,240

traditional

657

00:22:00,640 --> 00:22:06,000

Merlot, Capsolve, Cabernet Franc

658

00:22:04,240 --> 00:22:08,159

are going to struggle in years to come

659

00:22:06,000 --> 00:22:09,840

because of the changing climate.

660

00:22:08,159 --> 00:22:12,000

You've got champagne growers,

661

00:22:09,840 --> 00:22:14,720

Tattinger, they're over in the UK

662

00:22:12,000 --> 00:22:15,919

now. They've planted maybe 600-

663

00:22:14,720 --> 00:22:17,919

700 acres of

664

00:22:15,919 --> 00:22:19,520

vines in the UK and created their own

665

00:22:17,919 --> 00:22:22,960

English brand because

666

00:22:19,520 --> 00:22:24,480

champagne is struggling now.

667

00:22:22,960 --> 00:22:26,000

The grapes are ripening quicker.

668

00:22:24,480 --> 00:22:29,600

When you make sparkling wine you don't

669

00:22:26,000 --> 00:22:31,280

need quite ripeness. You can

670

00:22:29,600 --> 00:22:34,159

get away with underripe grapes.

671

00:22:31,280 --> 00:22:35,360

They're over here now and

672

00:22:34,159 --> 00:22:36,320

they've created their own English brand.

673

00:22:35,360 --> 00:22:39,520

674

00:22:36,320 --> 00:22:40,320

What you are seeing now is a bit more

675

00:22:39,520 --> 00:22:42,799

676

00:22:40,320 --> 00:22:43,679

a lean towards still wine because a lot

677

00:22:42,799 --> 00:22:47,360

of it

678

00:22:43,679 --> 00:22:48,960

in the last four or five years,

679

00:22:47,360 --> 00:22:51,200

maybe 10 million vines have been planted

680

00:22:48,960 --> 00:22:52,799

in the UK

681

00:22:51,200 --> 00:22:54,799

with I would say 8 million of those

682

00:22:52,799 --> 00:22:55,440

are going to be towards sparkling wine

683

00:22:54,799 --> 00:22:57,679

production.

684

00:22:55,440 --> 00:22:59,360

We've seen the

685

00:22:57,679 --> 00:23:00,000

popularity of prosecco in recent years,

686

00:22:59,360 --> 00:23:01,760

687

00:23:00,000 --> 00:23:03,039

people have got a taste for that. Yes

688

00:23:01,760 --> 00:23:05,440

they have.

689

00:23:03,039 --> 00:23:06,480

Now in the UK, we have people

690

00:23:05,440 --> 00:23:09,039

producing

691

00:23:06,480 --> 00:23:10,640

an English style prosecco

692

00:23:09,039 --> 00:23:12,000

and that's not to be confused with the

693

00:23:10,640 --> 00:23:13,679

traditional method

694

00:23:12,000 --> 00:23:15,919

sparkling wine. We make ours in the

695

00:23:13,679 --> 00:23:16,799

traditional method or the classic

696

00:23:15,919 --> 00:23:21,120

method,

697

00:23:16,799 --> 00:23:23,840

that's time consuming,

698

00:23:21,120 --> 00:23:25,840

but that's all about quality. I'm

699

00:23:23,840 --> 00:23:28,320

not just turning a quick pound over.

700

00:23:25,840 --> 00:23:29,840

It's these agents are lying the

701

00:23:28,320 --> 00:23:30,880

bottles down for three years once it's

702

00:23:29,840 --> 00:23:33,200

bottled

703

00:23:30,880 --> 00:23:35,360

maybe more some producers five

704

00:23:33,200 --> 00:23:37,760

or six years,

705

00:23:35,360 --> 00:23:39,760

whereas the prosecco style is probably

706

00:23:37,760 --> 00:23:43,919

four or five months. It can be in a

707

00:23:39,760 --> 00:23:45,760

bottle, they manually gas

708

00:23:43,919 --> 00:23:46,960

just like a lager,

709

00:23:45,760 --> 00:23:49,520

710

00:23:46,960 --> 00:23:51,440

it's two different products.

711

00:23:49,520 --> 00:23:52,720

Tell us a bit more about the Decanter

712

00:23:51,440 --> 00:23:54,640

World Wine Awards. I know

713

00:23:52,720 --> 00:23:55,760

we touched upon it earlier on. it's

714

00:23:54,640 --> 00:23:59,039

a real big deal

715

00:23:55,760 --> 00:24:01,440

Robb, 18,000 different types of wine are

716

00:23:59,039 --> 00:24:04,159

entered and are tasted by this judging panel.

717

00:24:01,440 --> 00:24:05,360

You're within the top 600 to get a gold

718

00:24:04,159 --> 00:24:06,880

medal,

719

00:24:05,360 --> 00:24:08,559

that's an incredible achievement. Tell us

720

00:24:06,880 --> 00:24:11,120

a bit more. How does it actually work?

721

00:24:08,559 --> 00:24:11,679

Do the judges have to sample 18,000 each?

722

00:24:11,120 --> 00:24:13,760

723

00:24:11,679 --> 00:24:15,520

This year, I think there

724

00:24:13,760 --> 00:24:18,559

was 174 judges

725

00:24:15,520 --> 00:24:19,360

basically locked away in

726

00:24:18,559 --> 00:24:22,080

a room to judge

727

00:24:19,360 --> 00:24:24,240

18,200 bottles of wine that

728

00:24:22,080 --> 00:24:27,200

were entered from 56 countries

729

00:24:24,240 --> 00:24:27,840

around the world. Each one is tasted

730

00:24:27,200 --> 00:24:29,679

blind,

731

00:24:27,840 --> 00:24:31,200

the judge will be told they're going

732

00:24:29,679 --> 00:24:32,159

to taste Pinot Noir Picos for

733

00:24:31,200 --> 00:24:34,640

instance

734

00:24:32,159 --> 00:24:35,440

but they would not know where it's

735

00:24:34,640 --> 00:24:38,880

come from.

736

00:24:35,440 --> 00:24:42,640

They're judging it blind and

737

00:24:38,880 --> 00:24:43,600

the first panel judge is it worthy of a

738

00:24:42,640 --> 00:24:46,559

medal

739

00:24:43,600 --> 00:24:47,760

and if they deem it is, then it goes to

740

00:24:46,559 --> 00:24:50,080

the next panel,

741

00:24:47,760 --> 00:24:51,840

who then taste and decide whether it's

742

00:24:50,080 --> 00:24:55,120

bronze, silver or gold.

743

00:24:51,840 --> 00:24:55,919

If it's deemed to be worthy of a

744

00:24:55,120 --> 00:24:59,039

gold

745

00:24:55,919 --> 00:25:01,679

it then goes to the chairs

746

00:24:59,039 --> 00:25:02,960

and the top judges then to decide

747

00:25:01,679 --> 00:25:06,080

whether that gold

748

00:25:02,960 --> 00:25:09,120

is worthy or not.

749

00:25:06,080 --> 00:25:10,559

It's quite a rigorous process.

750

00:25:09,120 --> 00:25:12,480

A bad wine is not going to slip through

751

00:25:10,559 --> 00:25:15,679

that net? No,

752

00:25:12,480 --> 00:25:19,120

there was only 14,000, maybe

753

00:25:15,679 --> 00:25:21,120

say 14,500 awards out of the 18,200.

754

00:25:19,120 --> 00:25:22,240

There's 4,000 wines that

755

00:25:21,120 --> 00:25:25,360

didn't get an award.

756

00:25:22,240 --> 00:25:27,440

Have you entered that

757

00:25:25,360 --> 00:25:28,720

for many years? First time ever.

758

00:25:27,440 --> 00:25:32,159

759

00:25:28,720 --> 00:25:33,840

First time.

760

00:25:32,159 --> 00:25:35,279

I was filling an entry for me for the

761

00:25:33,840 --> 00:25:36,480

International Wine Challenge for the

762

00:25:35,279 --> 00:25:40,000

same wine

763

00:25:36,480 --> 00:25:42,080

and it just popped up on the screen,

764

00:25:40,000 --> 00:25:43,200

as things do, and it just said that

765

00:25:42,080 --> 00:25:45,919

Decanter

766

00:25:43,200 --> 00:25:46,799

and Worldwide Award entries close in

767

00:25:45,919 --> 00:25:48,320

two days.

768

00:25:46,799 --> 00:25:50,000

While I was sat at the computer

769

00:25:48,320 --> 00:25:52,480

I put the entry in

770

00:25:50,000 --> 00:25:53,360

and Nicola asked what do

771

00:25:52,480 --> 00:25:54,720

you really think?

772

00:25:53,360 --> 00:25:56,480

I said, well if we get a bronze I'd

773

00:25:54,720 --> 00:26:00,240

be dead chuffed to be honest.

774

00:25:56,480 --> 00:26:02,000

You must have known that

775

00:26:00,240 --> 00:26:03,440

it was a good wine to enter?

776

00:26:02,000 --> 00:26:05,440

Did you have a feeling this

777

00:26:03,440 --> 00:26:07,600

is some special stuff we're growing here?

778

00:26:05,440 --> 00:26:09,120

I knew it was a good one. I

779

00:26:07,600 --> 00:26:13,200

knew it was a good wine

780

00:26:09,120 --> 00:26:15,039

but sometimes you have those

781

00:26:13,200 --> 00:26:16,880

rose-coloured glasses,

782

00:26:15,039 --> 00:26:20,320

it's your own wine and

783

00:26:16,880 --> 00:26:22,840

I don't like to be

784

00:26:20,320 --> 00:26:24,159

big-headed and sometimes you

785

00:26:22,840 --> 00:26:27,600

understate

786

00:26:24,159 --> 00:26:29,279

what you think sometimes.

787

00:26:27,600 --> 00:26:31,760

I put it in and as I say if I

788

00:26:29,279 --> 00:26:33,840

could have got a bronze I was happy.

789

00:26:31,760 --> 00:26:35,200

It was only the second time we ever

790

00:26:33,840 --> 00:26:37,039

entered the International Wine Challenge.

791

00:26:35,200 --> 00:26:38,960

We had a silver in there

792

00:26:37,039 --> 00:26:41,600

and then two weeks later we get a gold

793

00:26:38,960 --> 00:26:43,520

in Decanter which was just

794

00:26:41,600 --> 00:26:44,640

off the scale to be honest in terms of

795

00:26:43,520 --> 00:26:47,600

796

00:26:44,640 --> 00:26:48,640

what it's done for us personally and

797

00:26:47,600 --> 00:26:50,320

for Welsh wine.

798

00:26:48,640 --> 00:26:51,679

Now there's a massive

799

00:26:50,320 --> 00:26:53,039

interest in Welsh wine.

800

00:26:51,679 --> 00:26:54,960

There’s a huge interest in Welsh wine and

801

00:26:53,039 --> 00:26:57,279

there's a huge interest in White Castle

802

00:26:54,960 --> 00:26:58,880

Wine. Tell us about the

803

00:26:57,279 --> 00:27:02,080

aftermath. Your phone

804

00:26:58,880 --> 00:27:02,640

was red hot I understand. We sold

805

00:27:02,080 --> 00:27:06,000

806

00:27:02,640 --> 00:27:09,039

800 bottles of wine in 36 hours.

807

00:27:06,000 --> 00:27:10,720

Our website all day on Wednesday

808

00:27:09,039 --> 00:27:12,640

7th of July

809

00:27:10,720 --> 00:27:14,000

from 6 o'clock in the morning until 11

810

00:27:12,640 --> 00:27:16,159

o'clock at night, we couldn't

811

00:27:14,000 --> 00:27:17,520

keep the website hosted it was

812

00:27:16,159 --> 00:27:20,720

just crashing. Was it really?

813

00:27:17,520 --> 00:27:23,919

Yes

814

00:27:20,720 --> 00:27:25,679

Almost, I think we're still seeing the

815

00:27:23,919 --> 00:27:26,880

aftermath of it now in orders for

816

00:27:25,679 --> 00:27:29,919

other wines because

817

00:27:26,880 --> 00:27:30,480

that wine was sold out by Thursday

818

00:27:29,919 --> 00:27:33,840

lunchtime.

819

00:27:30,480 --> 00:27:35,600

People are thankfully still

820

00:27:33,840 --> 00:27:37,440

supporting us and

821

00:27:35,600 --> 00:27:39,279

interested in what we're doing.

822

00:27:37,440 --> 00:27:40,320

My favourite wine wasn't the Pinot

823

00:27:39,279 --> 00:27:44,559

to be honest.

824

00:27:40,320 --> 00:27:46,320

We've got a 2017 Regent which I think

825

00:27:44,559 --> 00:27:48,080

is my favourite one. There's

826

00:27:46,320 --> 00:27:49,760

better to come. There could be some more

827

00:27:48,080 --> 00:27:52,799

medals. That's my personal choice

828

00:27:49,760 --> 00:27:53,440

around my wine. Wine is subjective

829

00:27:52,799 --> 00:27:55,120

as well.

830

00:27:53,440 --> 00:27:57,279

People will like different types of wine

831

00:27:55,120 --> 00:27:58,880

and there's hardly a right or wrong, if

832

00:27:57,279 --> 00:27:59,360

you like a certain variety then that's

833

00:27:58,880 --> 00:28:01,200

fine.

834

00:27:59,360 --> 00:28:02,559

That's right and the one thing

835

00:28:01,200 --> 00:28:05,760

we don't do

836

00:28:02,559 --> 00:28:07,120

is get disappointed if somebody says

837

00:28:05,760 --> 00:28:09,600

they don't like our wine.

838

00:28:07,120 --> 00:28:11,279

It makes me beam when somebody

839

00:28:09,600 --> 00:28:14,159

says, wow I don't drink red wine but that

840

00:28:11,279 --> 00:28:14,159

was absolutely beautiful.

841

00:28:14,240 --> 00:28:17,840

I taste wines. I'd be invited to tastings,

842

00:28:16,559 --> 00:28:19,360

some serious tastings,

843

00:28:17,840 --> 00:28:21,279

four or five hundred pound

844

00:28:19,360 --> 00:28:23,360

bottles of wine,

845

00:28:21,279 --> 00:28:24,559

and I've just looked at it and just

846

00:28:23,360 --> 00:28:25,200

tasted it and just thought that's not

847

00:28:24,559 --> 00:28:29,039

for me.

848

00:28:25,200 --> 00:28:31,679

Don’t be upset if

849

00:28:29,039 --> 00:28:32,960

I don't like it.

850

00:28:31,679 --> 00:28:35,200

You've also had some

851

00:28:32,960 --> 00:28:38,720

pretty impressive wine buyers knock on

852

00:28:35,200 --> 00:28:41,600

your door on the back of that award.

853

00:28:38,720 --> 00:28:43,039

Yes we have had an email from

854

00:28:41,600 --> 00:28:44,960

Ocado

855

00:28:43,039 --> 00:28:46,880

asking for us to get in touch with them

856

00:28:44,960 --> 00:28:49,039

as they'd be keen to

857

00:28:46,880 --> 00:28:50,159

stock it. We have some great stockist’s

858

00:28:49,039 --> 00:28:54,240

in Wales

859

00:28:50,159 --> 00:28:55,679

who have some great

860

00:28:54,240 --> 00:28:58,880

wines from around the world as well.

861

00:28:55,679 --> 00:29:00,399

862

00:28:58,880 --> 00:29:02,080

We have some great advocates for

863

00:29:00,399 --> 00:29:04,399

what we do

864

00:29:02,080 --> 00:29:05,200

in chefs and wine writers and

865

00:29:04,399 --> 00:29:07,520

everything else.

866

00:29:05,200 --> 00:29:09,360

We're pretty stoked to be

867

00:29:07,520 --> 00:29:12,559

where we are.

868

00:29:09,360 --> 00:29:15,120

Now producing Welsh wine understandably

869

00:29:12,559 --> 00:29:18,320

comes at a higher cost point compared to

870

00:29:15,120 --> 00:29:20,159

French wine for example, have you

871

00:29:18,320 --> 00:29:21,760

reached any sort of market resistance on

872

00:29:20,159 --> 00:29:24,080

price? Probably less so now given that

873

00:29:21,760 --> 00:29:26,720

you're so well known and well regarded

874

00:29:24,080 --> 00:29:28,080

internationally, but is price still

875

00:29:26,720 --> 00:29:29,039

still something you've got to be mindful

876

00:29:28,080 --> 00:29:31,039

of when you're when you're

877

00:29:29,039 --> 00:29:32,080

pricing a bottle? I'm very mindful of

878

00:29:31,039 --> 00:29:33,120

that because

879

00:29:32,080 --> 00:29:35,120

the easiest thing would have

880

00:29:33,120 --> 00:29:37,120

been to put an extra fiver on the bottles

881

00:29:35,120 --> 00:29:38,399

that we sold once they started going in

882

00:29:37,120 --> 00:29:42,080

the way that they did.

883

00:29:38,399 --> 00:29:44,480

I just want to try and be

884

00:29:42,080 --> 00:29:46,399

loyal and respectful to my customers.

885

00:29:44,480 --> 00:29:47,679

886

00:29:46,399 --> 00:29:49,840

What we're trying to build is a brand

887

00:29:47,679 --> 00:29:54,000

that's renowned for quality,

888

00:29:49,840 --> 00:29:56,320

sustainable, financially

889

00:29:54,000 --> 00:29:57,679

the easy thing would be two or

890

00:29:56,320 --> 00:30:00,640

three pounds on each bottle of wine now

891

00:29:57,679 --> 00:30:02,000

because of the reputation we have

892

00:30:00,640 --> 00:30:03,840

but I don't think that's been respectful

893

00:30:02,000 --> 00:30:06,880

to the people that have been long-term

894

00:30:03,840 --> 00:30:09,039

customers. I just try and do it

895

00:30:06,880 --> 00:30:10,480

in a sympathetic way.

896

00:30:09,039 --> 00:30:12,960

I’ve got to cover my costs obviously.

897

00:30:10,480 --> 00:30:14,720

This is my living. It’s

898

00:30:12,960 --> 00:30:16,640

not a big living but it's a great

899

00:30:14,720 --> 00:30:18,080

lifestyle

900

00:30:16,640 --> 00:30:19,919

and I want those customers to come back

901

00:30:18,080 --> 00:30:22,320

and back and back.

902

00:30:19,919 --> 00:30:23,279

Now you often describe the wine

903

00:30:22,320 --> 00:30:26,480

business as

904

00:30:23,279 --> 00:30:28,399

a journey, would it be right for me to

905

00:30:26,480 --> 00:30:29,039

describe some of the historic

906

00:30:28,399 --> 00:30:30,799

practices

907

00:30:29,039 --> 00:30:32,640

or instances in the past

908

00:30:30,799 --> 00:30:34,880

where there's been a lot of snobbery

909

00:30:32,640 --> 00:30:36,000

around wine and possibly people not

910

00:30:34,880 --> 00:30:37,440

respecting Welsh

911

00:30:36,000 --> 00:30:40,559

producers in the way they should and

912

00:30:37,440 --> 00:30:44,240

they now do? Is that snobbery

913

00:30:40,559 --> 00:30:47,600

going away do you think? It will do.

914

00:30:44,240 --> 00:30:50,559

915

00:30:47,600 --> 00:30:52,320

I think our reward will

916

00:30:50,559 --> 00:30:54,240

certainly

917

00:30:52,320 --> 00:30:55,360

make people sit up and look at what

918

00:30:54,240 --> 00:30:57,120

we're doing in Wales.

919

00:30:55,360 --> 00:30:58,559

What we always have in Wales is smaller

920

00:30:57,120 --> 00:31:00,399

production.

921

00:30:58,559 --> 00:31:02,159

We don't have the big thousand acres

922

00:31:00,399 --> 00:31:05,200

flat ground where people can plant

923

00:31:02,159 --> 00:31:06,320

all in one hit.

924

00:31:05,200 --> 00:31:08,240

Anyone that's coming into the

925

00:31:06,320 --> 00:31:08,720

business I'd say, don't be drawn into

926

00:31:08,240 --> 00:31:11,919

that.

927

00:31:08,720 --> 00:31:12,880

Stick to quality because quality

928

00:31:11,919 --> 00:31:14,080

will always sell.

929

00:31:12,880 --> 00:31:16,080

You see it in the marts

930

00:31:14,080 --> 00:31:17,600

every week with lambs and stuff,

931

00:31:16,080 --> 00:31:19,120

they all want to buy the best quality

932

00:31:17,600 --> 00:31:21,200

lambs they can buy

933

00:31:19,120 --> 00:31:22,960

and same with cattle, so stick with the

934

00:31:21,200 --> 00:31:27,200

quality.

935

00:31:22,960 --> 00:31:29,120

Be yourself. For me,

936

00:31:27,200 --> 00:31:30,799

I love people coming to taste at the

937

00:31:29,120 --> 00:31:33,200

vineyard

938

00:31:30,799 --> 00:31:34,320

because I'm breaking down the myths.

939

00:31:33,200 --> 00:31:37,600

940

00:31:34,320 --> 00:31:39,440

I'm an ex-footballer rugby player.

941

00:31:37,600 --> 00:31:41,200

I love what I do. I'll always be in my

942

00:31:39,440 --> 00:31:43,360

shorts

943

00:31:41,200 --> 00:31:45,519

and I just stand and talk wine and grapes all day

944

00:31:43,360 --> 00:31:48,559

with people

945

00:31:45,519 --> 00:31:50,640

because that's what I enjoy.

946

00:31:48,559 --> 00:31:52,799

I could take you to some

947

00:31:50,640 --> 00:31:56,320

very starchy environments in the UK

948

00:31:52,799 --> 00:31:57,919

and around France but I just want to

949

00:31:56,320 --> 00:32:00,399

be that

950

00:31:57,919 --> 00:32:01,279

down to earth person, that I'm accessible to

951

00:32:00,399 --> 00:32:04,720

people

952

00:32:01,279 --> 00:32:06,399

and in the long-run I think we have a

953

00:32:04,720 --> 00:32:08,000

benefit from that.

954

00:32:06,399 --> 00:32:09,760

And that's what people enjoy because you

955

00:32:08,000 --> 00:32:11,120

were saying earlier, you bump into

956

00:32:09,760 --> 00:32:12,960

your customers. They come in here and

957

00:32:11,120 --> 00:32:14,720

they can meet you and Nicola,

958

00:32:12,960 --> 00:32:16,720

the owners of the place. You're not this

959

00:32:14,720 --> 00:32:19,440

big corporate outfit

960

00:32:16,720 --> 00:32:21,200

that's sterile and you're very authentic.

961

00:32:19,440 --> 00:32:21,760

You've got a good story it's something

962

00:32:21,200 --> 00:32:23,840

you've got

963

00:32:21,760 --> 00:32:25,600

clearly a lot of passion for and that

964

00:32:23,840 --> 00:32:26,960

comes through in the experience

965

00:32:25,600 --> 00:32:29,519

that people get when they come

966

00:32:26,960 --> 00:32:30,480

here. No matter how busy

967

00:32:29,519 --> 00:32:33,600

we are,

968

00:32:30,480 --> 00:32:35,600

I do the tours, twice maybe three times a

969

00:32:33,600 --> 00:32:38,240

day on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

970

00:32:35,600 --> 00:32:39,440

Nicola will be serving in the shop,

971

00:32:38,240 --> 00:32:40,880

preparing people's

972

00:32:39,440 --> 00:32:42,960

platter lunches or whatever they've

973

00:32:40,880 --> 00:32:44,799

ordered doing the tastings.

974

00:32:42,960 --> 00:32:46,480

I come back and do some tastings when I

975

00:32:44,799 --> 00:32:49,279

finish the tours.

976

00:32:46,480 --> 00:32:50,799

It's our business.

977

00:32:49,279 --> 00:32:54,159

978

00:32:50,799 --> 00:32:55,519

That's what people wanted to meet

979

00:32:54,159 --> 00:32:58,240

if you like,

980

00:32:55,519 --> 00:33:01,360

these people that have achieved in a

981

00:32:58,240 --> 00:33:02,880

short period of time in wine.

982

00:33:01,360 --> 00:33:04,640

I don't want to change that because

983

00:33:02,880 --> 00:33:07,120

I just love

984

00:33:04,640 --> 00:33:08,080

showing people around what we’ve got here.

985

00:33:07,120 --> 00:33:09,440

986

00:33:08,080 --> 00:33:11,360

You're describing it, it's your baby isn't

987

00:33:09,440 --> 00:33:13,360

it. You're very proud of it.

988

00:33:11,360 --> 00:33:15,440

It's like having a second

989

00:33:13,360 --> 00:33:18,480

lot of children.

990

00:33:15,440 --> 00:33:20,320

They take a lot of looking after but

991

00:33:18,480 --> 00:33:21,600

immense rewarding as I said earlier on

992

00:33:20,320 --> 00:33:22,720

you only get out of it what you put into

993

00:33:21,600 --> 00:33:25,519

it

994

00:33:22,720 --> 00:33:27,360

and that's what we enjoy. Now people

995

00:33:25,519 --> 00:33:31,279

can also adopt a vine,

996

00:33:27,360 --> 00:33:33,440

tell us about that.

997

00:33:31,279 --> 00:33:34,480

It's basically a short-term lease

998

00:33:33,440 --> 00:33:36,480

for you.

999

00:33:34,480 --> 00:33:38,399

It gives you the opportunity to come

1000

00:33:36,480 --> 00:33:42,399

and have a tour around the vineyard

1001

00:33:38,399 --> 00:33:44,799

and a glass of wine to celebrate that.

1002

00:33:42,399 --> 00:33:45,519

You get a plaque on your nominated vine.

1003

00:33:44,799 --> 00:33:47,919

It's

1004

00:33:45,519 --> 00:33:49,279

not just, oh I have a vine there, you

1005

00:33:47,919 --> 00:33:50,840

actually do have a physical vine with a

1006

00:33:49,279 --> 00:33:54,000

plaque with your name on it.

1007

00:33:50,840 --> 00:33:55,600

Practically we'd be put on a

1008

00:33:54,000 --> 00:33:56,080

few events tasting events and stuff like

1009

00:33:55,600 --> 00:33:58,640

that,

1010

00:33:56,080 --> 00:33:59,840

so you'd either get a free invite or you

1011

00:33:58,640 --> 00:34:03,200

could buy your tickets

1012

00:33:59,840 --> 00:34:05,840

pre-release. Then

1013

00:34:03,200 --> 00:34:06,559

you come and help with harvest and I

1014

00:34:05,840 --> 00:34:09,359

suppose

1015

00:34:06,559 --> 00:34:11,520

the final part of that is, you can have a

1016

00:34:09,359 --> 00:34:14,560

bottle of wine from that vintage.

1017

00:34:11,520 --> 00:34:15,919

It's picking up on

1018

00:34:14,560 --> 00:34:18,159

an interesting theme about the

1019

00:34:15,919 --> 00:34:19,679

experience economy and you know a lot of

1020

00:34:18,159 --> 00:34:20,639

farm diversification projects are

1021

00:34:19,679 --> 00:34:23,040

including that

1022

00:34:20,639 --> 00:34:24,480

experience where they're offering a bit

1023

00:34:23,040 --> 00:34:26,079

to farm tours with the

1024

00:34:24,480 --> 00:34:28,079

accommodation complex they might have, or

1025

00:34:26,079 --> 00:34:30,159

whether it's adopting a vine alongside

1026

00:34:28,079 --> 00:34:31,839

your wine business, so it's tapping into

1027

00:34:30,159 --> 00:34:33,359

that demand, particularly on a year like

1028

00:34:31,839 --> 00:34:34,879

now where there's a lot of staycations

1029

00:34:33,359 --> 00:34:35,520

on the back of the pandemic, if you can

1030

00:34:34,879 --> 00:34:37,359

offer

1031

00:34:35,520 --> 00:34:39,440

something extra, boy there's an

1032

00:34:37,359 --> 00:34:42,159

interesting demand for it.

1033

00:34:39,440 --> 00:34:43,679

I think for me personally I've

1034

00:34:42,159 --> 00:34:45,839

had the benefit of

1035

00:34:43,679 --> 00:34:47,040

being employed in a big organisation and

1036

00:34:45,839 --> 00:34:50,079

you're a number

1037

00:34:47,040 --> 00:34:51,839

and you work hard for your money. A

1038

00:34:50,079 --> 00:34:55,040

lot of pressure comes with that.

1039

00:34:51,839 --> 00:34:56,320

Now, people want an experience. They want

1040

00:34:55,040 --> 00:34:59,119

the full experience.

1041

00:34:56,320 --> 00:34:59,119

They will spend

1042

00:34:59,599 --> 00:35:02,880

but they want value for money and giving

1043

00:35:02,000 --> 00:35:05,920

that experience

1044

00:35:02,880 --> 00:35:07,599

is key.

1045

00:35:05,920 --> 00:35:09,599

It's not just about taking the pound

1046

00:35:07,599 --> 00:35:12,320

note.

1047

00:35:09,599 --> 00:35:14,640

I just put myself in the position of, if

1048

00:35:12,320 --> 00:35:16,800

I was paying what would I expect

1049

00:35:14,640 --> 00:35:18,400

and just trying to give people back what

1050

00:35:16,800 --> 00:35:20,240

I would expect.

1051

00:35:18,400 --> 00:35:21,599

For our listeners now and some of

1052

00:35:20,240 --> 00:35:22,400

them might be thinking wow this is an

1053

00:35:21,599 --> 00:35:23,760

industry

1054

00:35:22,400 --> 00:35:25,280

I want to get into there might be

1055

00:35:23,760 --> 00:35:26,960

farmers thinking well I got a field that

1056

00:35:25,280 --> 00:35:28,079

I think could do well for some for

1057

00:35:26,960 --> 00:35:30,240

Pinot Noir or

1058

00:35:28,079 --> 00:35:31,920

Cabarnet Franc or whatever variety they

1059

00:35:30,240 --> 00:35:33,920

might suit, what would be your advice to

1060

00:35:31,920 --> 00:35:35,920

them?

1061

00:35:33,920 --> 00:35:37,760

If it's farmers direct now then

1062

00:35:35,920 --> 00:35:41,359

obviously go to Farming Connect,

1063

00:35:37,760 --> 00:35:41,359

through the mentor scheme, then

1064

00:35:41,680 --> 00:35:45,119

I'm probably going to be blown up the

1065

00:35:43,520 --> 00:35:48,320

water now with applications but

1066

00:35:45,119 --> 00:35:48,320

1067

00:35:49,359 --> 00:35:52,079

through the mentor scheme I can come

1068

00:35:50,480 --> 00:35:53,520

along and have a chat and give you the

1069

00:35:52,079 --> 00:35:56,960

pros and cons,

1070

00:35:53,520 --> 00:35:59,599

some of the stuff that

1071

00:35:56,960 --> 00:36:01,359

maybe I paid for that wasn't so good,

1072

00:35:59,599 --> 00:36:02,560

just some learning points.

1073

00:36:01,359 --> 00:36:03,760

To me, that's what

1074

00:36:02,560 --> 00:36:05,359

mentorship is all about. I don't want to

1075

00:36:03,760 --> 00:36:06,400

be a consultant to be honest.

1076

00:36:05,359 --> 00:36:09,280

I don't want to be in other people's

1077

00:36:06,400 --> 00:36:11,599

vineyards every day. I love what I do so

1078

00:36:09,280 --> 00:36:13,520

if I can just share some of the good

1079

00:36:11,599 --> 00:36:15,440

practices and some of the bad practices

1080

00:36:13,520 --> 00:36:16,640

that they need to be weary of. I like

1081

00:36:15,440 --> 00:36:18,800

to support them in any way then that's

1082

00:36:16,640 --> 00:36:20,720

what I enjoy doing.

1083

00:36:18,800 --> 00:36:22,480

And what's refreshing to hear from what

1084

00:36:20,720 --> 00:36:23,760

you just said there Robb is that you

1085

00:36:22,480 --> 00:36:25,520

you're interested. It's not

1086

00:36:23,760 --> 00:36:26,880

a competitive environment, it's not about

1087

00:36:25,520 --> 00:36:28,400

vineyards competing against each other

1088

00:36:26,880 --> 00:36:30,560

it's about raising the bar

1089

00:36:28,400 --> 00:36:32,240

of Welsh grapes growing and wine

1090

00:36:30,560 --> 00:36:34,480

together and collectively

1091

00:36:32,240 --> 00:36:35,760

you're all going to benefit. Yes, there

1092

00:36:34,480 --> 00:36:37,599

might be some people with a different

1093

00:36:35,760 --> 00:36:39,119

view to that, some of the vineyard owners.

1094

00:36:37,599 --> 00:36:40,720

Wales is like living in a

1095

00:36:39,119 --> 00:36:43,839

goldfish bowl sometimes

1096

00:36:40,720 --> 00:36:47,200

but my own personal view is,

1097

00:36:43,839 --> 00:36:47,839

working together improves what we're

1098

00:36:47,200 --> 00:36:50,880

doing

1099

00:36:47,839 --> 00:36:52,880

and ten years ago when 12 years ago

1100

00:36:50,880 --> 00:36:55,280

when I came into the wine industry

1101

00:36:52,880 --> 00:36:56,640

most of it was like vinegar, that

1102

00:36:55,280 --> 00:36:57,839

was the reception,

1103

00:36:56,640 --> 00:37:00,640

never had a good bottle of English or

1104

00:36:57,839 --> 00:37:02,400

Welsh wine, so if we all work together

1105

00:37:00,640 --> 00:37:04,880

and look to improve what we're doing

1106

00:37:02,400 --> 00:37:06,160

we're improving those perceptions.

1107

00:37:04,880 --> 00:37:08,160

Then, out of that,

1108

00:37:06,160 --> 00:37:10,720

our businesses become more sustainable

1109

00:37:08,160 --> 00:37:12,880

in the financial way.

1110

00:37:10,720 --> 00:37:14,640

And finally Robb where next for White

1111

00:37:12,880 --> 00:37:16,560

Castle Vineyard? On the back of this

1112

00:37:14,640 --> 00:37:17,920

gold medal on the back of the huge

1113

00:37:16,560 --> 00:37:21,280

interest what's the

1114

00:37:17,920 --> 00:37:22,000

the five and ten year plan? A five-year

1115

00:37:21,280 --> 00:37:25,200

plan would be

1116

00:37:22,000 --> 00:37:26,320

to plant more vines. That plan was

1117

00:37:25,200 --> 00:37:29,440

already

1118

00:37:26,320 --> 00:37:33,280

being mooted around, probably have to

1119

00:37:29,440 --> 00:37:37,839

bring a bit more to the forefront now.

1120

00:37:33,280 --> 00:37:37,839

Build my own winery.

1121

00:37:38,320 --> 00:37:42,480

I've been working at it for two or three

1122

00:37:39,920 --> 00:37:43,839

years.

1123

00:37:42,480 --> 00:37:46,000

I don't come from a big financial

1124

00:37:43,839 --> 00:37:48,240

background so

1125

00:37:46,000 --> 00:37:49,440

it's the cash we can release

1126

00:37:48,240 --> 00:37:50,400

out of what we reinvest out of the

1127

00:37:49,440 --> 00:37:52,880

business

1128

00:37:50,400 --> 00:37:53,920

so that's what we're looking at

1129

00:37:52,880 --> 00:37:57,040

now

1130

00:37:53,920 --> 00:37:58,400

with a view to hopefully having that

1131

00:37:57,040 --> 00:38:00,800

up and running in

1132

00:37:58,400 --> 00:38:02,560

for this time next year. Well we'd love

1133

00:38:00,800 --> 00:38:03,280

to come back and see what progress is

1134

00:38:02,560 --> 00:38:05,760

made.

1135

00:38:03,280 --> 00:38:07,520

Robb Merchant, once again, sincere

1136

00:38:05,760 --> 00:38:09,280

congratulations on your award and

1137

00:38:07,520 --> 00:38:11,520

everything you've achieved here and also

1138

00:38:09,280 --> 00:38:13,119

please send our best wishes to Nicola. It’s

1139

00:38:11,520 --> 00:38:13,680

very much a team effort both of you are

1140

00:38:13,119 --> 00:38:15,920

in this

1141

00:38:13,680 --> 00:38:17,359

and share that passion about what you do

1142

00:38:15,920 --> 00:38:19,520

and on behalf of the team at Farming

1143

00:38:17,359 --> 00:38:20,240

Connect, congratulations and all the best

1144

00:38:19,520 --> 00:38:21,680

for the future.

1145

00:38:20,240 --> 00:38:24,079

Thank you Aled and thank you Farming

1146

00:38:21,680 --> 00:38:25,760

Connect.

1147

00:38:24,079 --> 00:38:27,680

If you would like more information about

1148

00:38:25,760 --> 00:38:28,320

the support available through Farming

1149

00:38:27,680 --> 00:38:30,079

Connect,

1150

00:38:28,320 --> 00:38:31,920

then please contact your local

1151

00:38:30,079 --> 00:38:32,480

Development Officer or the Service

1152

00:38:31,920 --> 00:38:35,440

Centre

1153

00:38:32,480 --> 00:38:36,000

on 08456 000 813

1154

00:38:35,440 --> 00:38:38,800

1155

00:38:36,000 --> 00:38:41,040

And there we are we've reached

1156

00:38:38,800 --> 00:38:42,720

the end of yet another episode

1157

00:38:41,040 --> 00:38:44,480

we'll be back in two weeks time with

1158

00:38:42,720 --> 00:38:46,480

plenty more to talk about

1159

00:38:44,480 --> 00:38:49,040

but in the meantime, don't forget to hit

1160

00:38:46,480 --> 00:38:51,440

subscribe on whichever platform you use

1161

00:38:49,040 --> 00:38:53,119

to keep notified of all new episodes of

1162

00:38:51,440 --> 00:38:54,960

Ear to the Ground.

1163

00:38:53,119 --> 00:38:56,800

On behalf of the team at Farming

1164

00:38:54,960 --> 00:38:58,480

Connect and myself Aled Jones

1165

00:38:56,800 --> 00:39:00,850

thank you for listening and goodbye for

1166

00:38:58,480 --> 00:39:16,829

now

1167

00:39:00,850 --> 00:39:16,829

[Music]

1168

00:39:20,000 --> 00:39:22,079