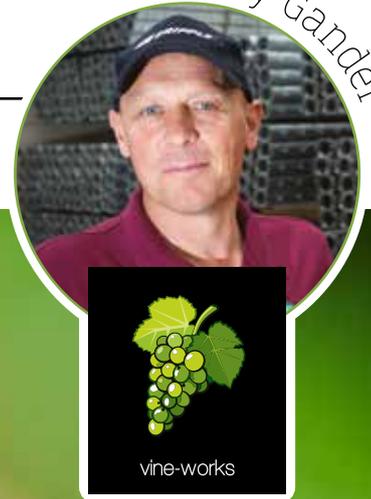


The vine post

Services continue for the season ahead.

Darcy Gander



We are all suffering during these unprecedented times either on a personal and/or business level and our best wishes go out to the invaluable NHS workers and carers. However the team at Vine-Works are aiming to continue to provide our normal high quality service to UK vineyards, either with our vineyard management and establishment teams or through our retail department. There have been some supply chain delays with products coming from Europe, but these are minor and are caused by slower productions and transport times.

Since the lockdowns across Europe and the closure of the Schengen area borders there has been a lot of misinformation spread by the media, leading to confusion in the UK and Europe. So, I thought it important to update readers about our position for this season.

At the time of the UK lockdown on 23rd March many countries in Europe were already in lockdown and the Vine-Works pruning teams were still completing their winter work. Consequently, a large proportion of our vineyard labour teams decided to remain in the UK throughout the lockdown and we have managed to find sufficient work to keep them busy up until the commencement of spring tasks, which have already started on some sites in the last week. Thanks to the work by the WineGB team it was established early on that vineyard and winery staff are classified as essential key workers. This has enabled us to maintain a workflow and guarantee loyal customers their regular teams.

Those of you who already work with us know that we pride ourselves on our quality and reliability and this is acknowledged in our high numbers of staff retention. This means that we retain the skill set and you are likely to recognise the teams that work on your vineyards year on year. Also, all of our European staff have applied and been accepted onto the EU Settlement Scheme so we can guarantee that all of our staff will keep coming to your vineyards.

In addition to our labour teams, our colleagues Ernst Weiss and Dietmar

Minges arrived from Germany on 1st May to begin the planting season. We have been working with the most experienced planting contractors in Europe for two decades now and they have never let us down. My team mates James, Will and Chris will be travelling around the UK in the next month planting new vineyards so if you have a last minute project or have been let down elsewhere don't hesitate to contact us. As we do each spring, we have our vines delivered directly to our refrigerated store in early March so we can guarantee supply for existing orders and we anticipate no issue for additional requests.

Since the beginning of lockdown all of our management team have been social distancing and working from home, however Cherry Constable our retail manager has been flying solo at Vine-Works HQ and has been taking your orders and calls for all of your viticultural necessities. Don't hesitate to call Cherry, (or her co-worker Kara the greyhound) any time for prices and information.

There has been a lot of media about various land army initiatives, however details from the Association of Labour Providers have stated that despite the initial enthusiasm from the domestic workforce, there were "50,000 applicants, 6,000 completed interviews and 200 accepted job offers". Clearly recently furloughed staff are looking for short term employment whilst growers and contractors require a lasting commitment. I would anticipate that growers hoping to use local recruits will find some challenges in transporting new staff to vineyards and if there is a lack of work pipeline new recruits are unlikely to stay. With the new health and safety requirements of social distancing there will be challenges in the work place and transport to the work place.

Thanks to the warm weather in April bud-break has been even although some unprotected sites have suffered frost damage. We hope that everyone stays safe and well during the Covid 19 crisis and we're hoping for a productive season ahead.