

Sustainability is vital



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> Forty Hall

If you said, 'name two sustainable wineries' to me, my knee jerk response would be Ancre Hill and Forty Hall. Sustainability is now so vital to us and our planet that its message ought to be woven into every single business alive, but it is not. It is a real pain in the backside when you start to think about this vast subject and then try to find answers to every single minute question that it throws back at you. In the wine business, or rather the wine farming business, sustainability is seemingly more attainable than in many other walks of life. We have a good record of sustainable pioneers in the GB wine scene and we should support them as well as take note of the lengths that they go to to embody these worthy challenges.

Sustainability, in its purest form, is the ability to exist without diminishing your environment. These days it more commonly means that us humans and the natural biosphere around us need to find agreeable harmony so that we can perfectly coexist. Of course, most of us, myself included, fall a long way short of an ideal sustainable standard, but some in our business excel at the care and attention to detail required to maintain a sustainable business and they inspire and illuminate the rest of us.

So back to Ancre Hill and Forty Hall. Richard Morris, of Ancre Hill, wrote me a long email over a decade ago which inspired me to visit his estate in Monmouth. It was this snippet of a sentence which originally fired up my imagination, "with viticulture practised to a level and degree I doubt

is commonly seen elsewhere in the UK". Of course, he was right because Ancre Hill is a leader in the production of organic, biodynamic and natural wines as much as in the closed circle principles employed for sourcing of materials from within their farm and its near carbon-neutral set-up. Just taste my favourite current release to see just how pure and vital it is - 2018 Ancre Hill Chardonnay has superb balance, with a bitter grape skin tang and a juicy, lemongrass core.

Forty Hall Vineyard, on the other hand, is not only a superbly-managed organic vineyard which makes delicious wines under the calm guidance of organic guru Will Davenport but it is also a fantastic community project, too. Please take the time to visit their website (www.fortyhallvineyard.com) to read about the exemplary, ecotherapy work they do. Buy a bottle of 2017 Forty Hall Vineyard Brut or 2018 Bacchus and drink the fruits of their labour while you learn more about this vineyard and its human-sustainable initiative. You will then truly understand the unavoidable link between the nervy, tender, balletic, refreshing and memorable wines and their creators. All of the profits from the sales of Forty Hall's delicious wines are put back into the project to enable them to deliver health and well-being benefits to often vulnerable people in their local community. Let's hope that every winery in our land makes more of an effort to pursue a sustainable path - there is no other realistic choice available. Opposite you will find three more remarkable examples of this genuinely life-fulfilling mantra.

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