

Tucked away in quiet leafy part of Frilford Heath, down a rather unkempt drive, is one of the county's oldest vineyards – Bothy Vineyard. Richard and Sian Liwicki talked to MADNews



Small and neat, Bothy Vineyard has attracted a loyal following over the past 25 years in the MAD area and beyond, but it remains one of the county's better kept secrets. The area currently given over to vines covers a modest 3 acres and even in the best years, the vineyard is only able to produce 5- 6,000 bottles of its award-winning product although it is now being expanded to 5 acres. Each vintage is often sold out before it reaches its peak.

This vineyard has recently changed hands and the new owners Sian and Richard Liwicki are currently renting in Marcham while their new house is being built on site. With two little girls and only Richard's reduced income to live on, Sian and Richard have taken on an unconventional project in an unconventional time of their lives. However, for them the vineyard is a passion.

When the vineyard came up for sale, Richard was then a volunteer helping the previous owners in the vineyard and winery. The quality of the wine and the (apparently) gentle out door lifestyle proved too attractive to resist while Sian saw this as an ideal environment to bring up their daughters.

The site had been specially chosen its amazingly deep, sandy soil - 20 feet deep. Sheltered and sun baked, the vineyard provides a haven for wildlife as well as for grapes, even if the rabbits have found the land too hospitable for comfort! Badgers, deer, glow worms, adders and solitary bees

Our Grapes

Ortega (Müller-Thurgau x Siegerrebe)

An early ripening variety which can produce rich and zesty wines. In most years we blend this with Optima.

Optima ((Silvaner x Reising) x Müller-Thurgau)

Another early ripening variety capable of reaching high sugar levels. Slightly aromatic and adds good "mouth-feel" to a wine.

Perle of Alzey (Gewürztraminer x Müller-Thurgau)

A little planted early-ripening variety. The Gewürztraminer in its parentage gives its pink colour when ripe and its flowery character.

Findling (Müller-Thurgau mutation)

A neutral variety with high sugar levels which we use in blending, usually with Perle.

Huxelrube (Chasselas x Courtilier Musqué)

Slightly later ripening, but capable of producing excellent wines from large bunches of grapes. The wines can have sauvignon blanc characteristics.

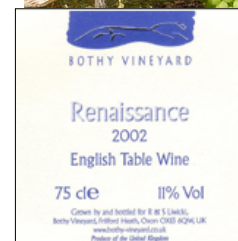
Albalonga (Rieslaner x Silvaner)

We believe that we may be the only UK vineyard to retain this variety! It is a heavy yielder, but ripens late and retains high acid levels.



share this site with wildflowers and birds. Richard and Sian have started a five year programme of enhancing the environmental diversity of the site through a combination of new plantings and gradually changing cultivation methods.

The extreme hard work and long hours demanded by the vineyard, some of it in difficult weather, is compensated for by the friendships that have built up around the volunteer parties, the gentle beauty of the site when the weather is clement and the intense satisfaction of producing this most rewarding of crops.



If you would like to visit the vineyard, it is open for tastings and sales between Easter and Christmas on Saturdays from 10am to 5pm and on Sundays and bank holidays from 11am to 4pm, or by appointment by ringing 01865 391560. Alternatively, visit our website on www.bothy-vineyard.co.uk.

Bothy Vineyard wines are available at the Post Office – ideal for spring tipping!