

“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine other infirmaries.”

(Bible: Timothy 1)



I know the very place – and it is right here in Norfolk. I visited Broadland Wineries at Cawston on a chilly day in January where I received a warm and courteous welcome. We embarked on a tour of the premises, accompanied by the Engineering Manager, Robert Morris and Louise Cooper, Sales and Marketing co-ordinator.

I was taken through the whole process of producing a bottle of wine from the start to finished product,

boxed, labelled, shrink-wrapped and palletted stage. It was fascinating.



The first thing that impressed me was the high standard of hygiene and health and safety. Initially, I had to fill in a form asking what illnesses I had recently suffered and then, before we set off on our tour, I had to don the regulatory hair net, white coat and reflective jacket. I was ready for anything! We started off in I might call ‘the hall of vats’ – these mighty vessels were in rows and as tall as houses. I was reminded, strangely, of a cathedral –

which seemed to fit in well with the biblical quotation above!

In these vats the fermentation of the ‘must’ was taking place. To let you in to a few secrets of winemaking: the product is received from the farmer as concentrated grape juice. Once the other ingredients (such as water, sugar, yeast etc) are added, the process of fermentation begins to make what is called the “must”.



The 'must' occasionally contains various quantities of pulp, skins, stems and seeds. The length of time these compounds are allowed to be in contact with the grape juice during the fermentation process is critical to the final character of the wine. The process of fermentation is controlled and tested throughout by members of the Laboratory team who decide if the balance of ingredients is right for a particular wine.



We then moved on to the bottling area - a vast area of automated plant, which washed and sterilised the bottles before moving them on to be filled, corked and labelled. They were then smoothly boxed and shrink-wrapped and put on to a pallet ready for delivery to the customer. This mechanised line processed 10,000 bottles per hour.

Production personnel were dressed in blue and engineers were dressed in black. You can imagine how the smooth 24/7 running of this line is dependent on their maintenance skills. It was all very impressive.

Broadland Wineries Ltd was founded in the 1960s by a family that emigrated from Germany after the war. The company quickly

established itself as a premium wine producer and bottler and worked alongside Continental Wine Experts (CWE) to produce finished bottled wine and 'Make Your Own Wine' boxes which were available from Boots.

After a management buy-out in 1985, Broadland Wineries continued to build their business. Today the business is thriving. Their best selling range is their own "Three Mills" brand of red, white and rose – a great value wine without compromising on taste. This product range surpassed all expectations with two million bottles being consumed since April 2009. Holding 32% share of the British wine market, Three Mills is now driving the growth of the British made wine market. As well as being economical it also makes environmental sense to buy locally made wine – keeping your carbon foot print low while supporting local jobs. The wine is nice too! The 'Three Mills' range is available from Tesco's, Asda, Roys of Wroxham and the Co-op Stores.

There is also a selection of "Fruit and Country" wines, using original recipes and natural ingredients. These are wonderful as aperitifs, table wines, dessert wines or as mixers with lemonade or tonic water and ice to make a delicious cool drink. They have seductive flavours such as Apricot, Sloe, Strawberry, Ginger, Blackcurrant, Cherry, Damson, and Elderberry. Broadland Winery also produces Communion Wine in both alcohol and non-alcoholic varieties.



And who remembers Wincarnis ('tonic') Wine? It was first produced in 1887 by Colmans. It is now produced by Broadland Wineries and distributed throughout the country and abroad to countries like Jamaica.

Broadland Wineries have a good relationship with EAGIT and have put several apprentices through our programme. **Andrew Greener** is in third-year training. He started as a Young Apprentice then moved on to the Advanced Apprenticeship programme and is now a full-time employee. He is currently doing shift work. **Aaron Gooch**, a new apprentice, has just started and is enjoying his work and training very much – here he is adjusting the screws on one of the automated lines (right). Aaron is part of the team of maintenance engineers and is busy learning on the job as well as studying his apprenticeship programme. Both are on the same programme and are being assessed in company by EAGIT.



And lastly there is the Environmental angle: Once the 'must' is fermented the alcoholic liquid is then separated from the lees (dead yeast cells). These are kept in storage tanks and a slurry firm comes regularly and takes it away. It is then treated and sold to farmers as fertilizer by the slurry firm. Nothing is wasted.

This was one of the most impressive and enjoyable company 'profiles' I have ever done (and no, I was not sampling the produce as I went along!). I would recommend you to treat the family to one of the Three Mills wines – or a light wine from the Fruit and Country selection, mentioned above. And don't forget the cider too!

There is Pear Cider and Apple Cider – and watch out for Scrumpy Dog, a mixture of apple and cider – which is just about to come on the market – it should go down a treat.

Well done, Broadland Wineries and well done to the maintenance engineers who have to keep this complex line running smoothly.

