

Cracraft Chase

Accredited sustainable by Sustainable New Zealand Winegrowing since 2009



The Cracroft Chase Vineyard lies in a secluded valley at the foot of the Port Hills of Christchurch, sheltered from the cold winds from south and from east.



Looking towards Christchurch and the nor'west



We have planted 13 acres with ~ 4500 grafted vines of Pinot Gris. Each row is made of a double line of diverging posts.



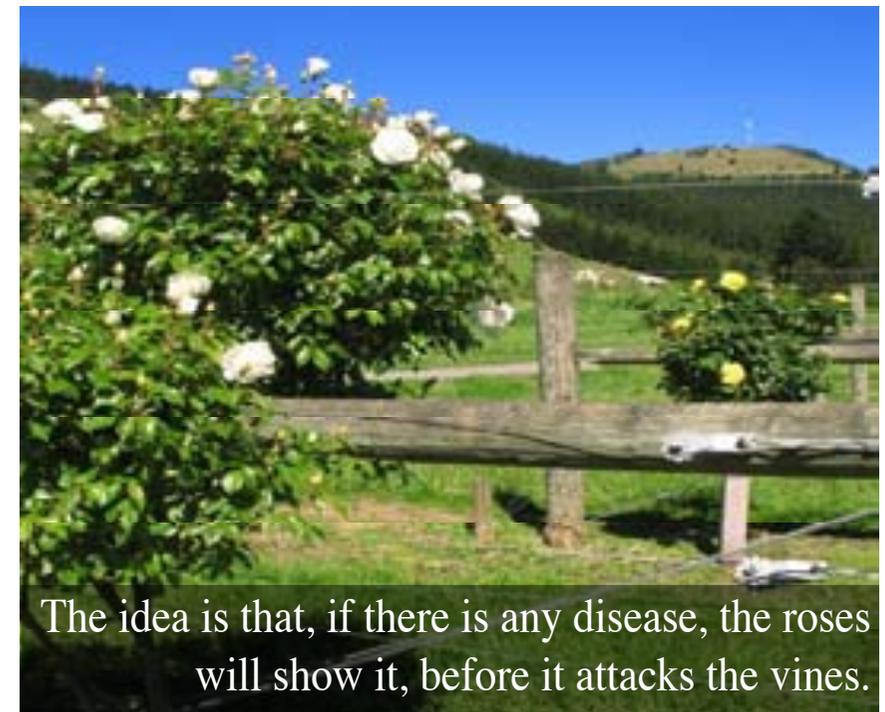
Each vine is split into two parts, so each line of vines makes a double canopy.



It's called a LYRA trellis system.



Tradition wants roses at the head of each row.



The idea is that, if there is any disease, the roses will show it, before it attacks the vines.



So far, we've just had flowers...



Each vintage starts in spring, with woolly buds and leaves appearing everywhere...



Some buds grow where we don't want them...



... so they have to be removed manually...



Soon the shoots grow, reaching from one horizontal wire to the other.
In December they flower, then they grow bunches of berries.



The weeds are kept under control all summer.



The bird nets are kept ready,neatly stacked in the hay shed.



Sandro & his netting machine: in early February it's time to cover the vines, because it's the start of...



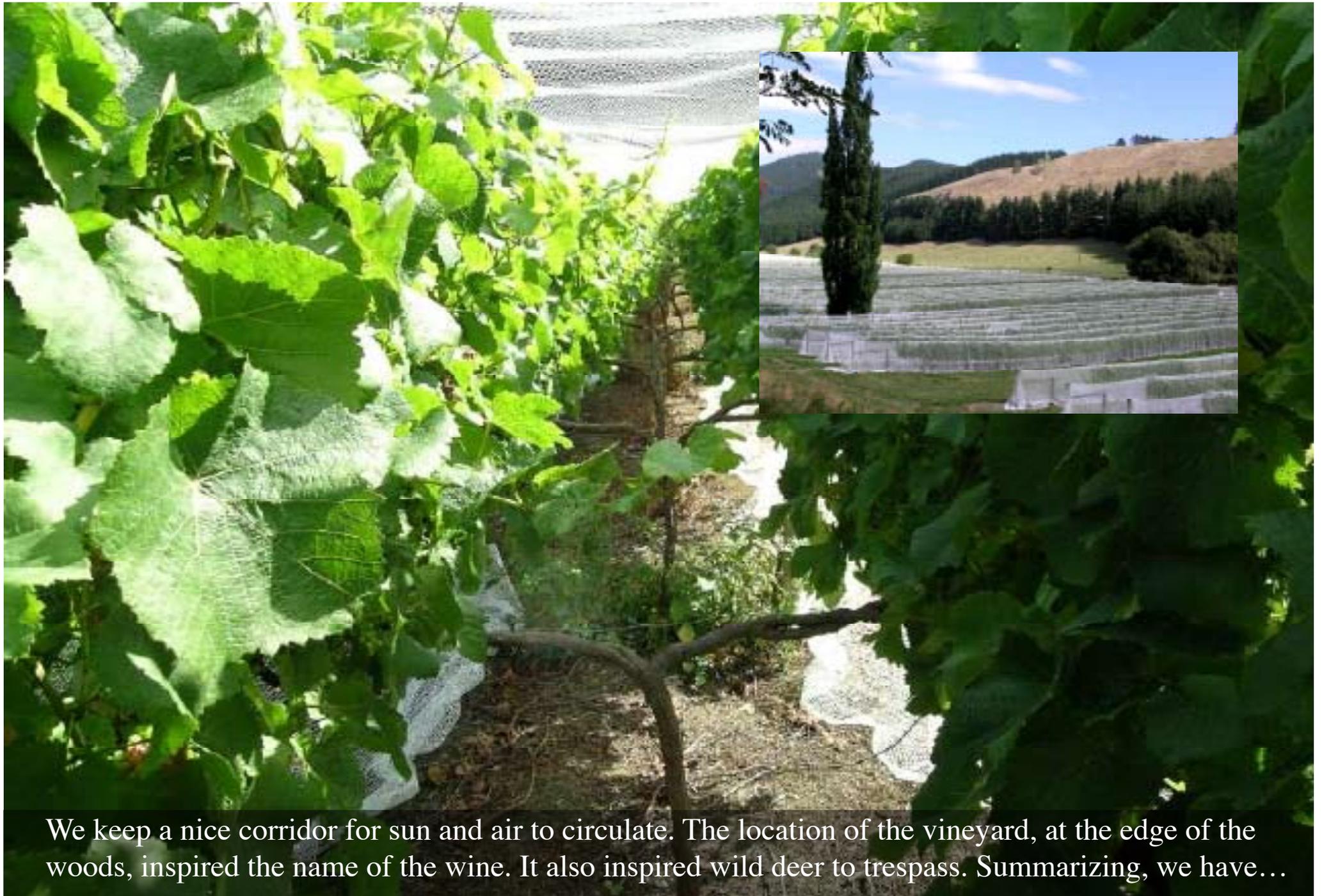
the veraison!



With the help of the Gentlemen's Club



the grapes are safe from the birds... and we just keep working under the nets,
ready to receive orders over the cell phone.



We keep a nice corridor for sun and air to circulate. The location of the vineyard, at the edge of the woods, inspired the name of the wine. It also inspired wild deer to trespass. Summarizing, we have...



double lines of posts with the roses at the end of each row, and electric fences to keep the wild deer out with scary balloons (that the birds loved!).



Everyone comes...

The pukeko walk their chicks... but from mid-April their peace is shattered, it's harvest time!

Everyone comes —



the Italian friends,



the friendly neighbours



(...and we don't forget the basics).



The boss tries hard to keep everyone into line... including the chatty daughter,



and her friends.



Joe, our poster boy



the ladies in playful conversation



Eventually the crates are ready to be collected.

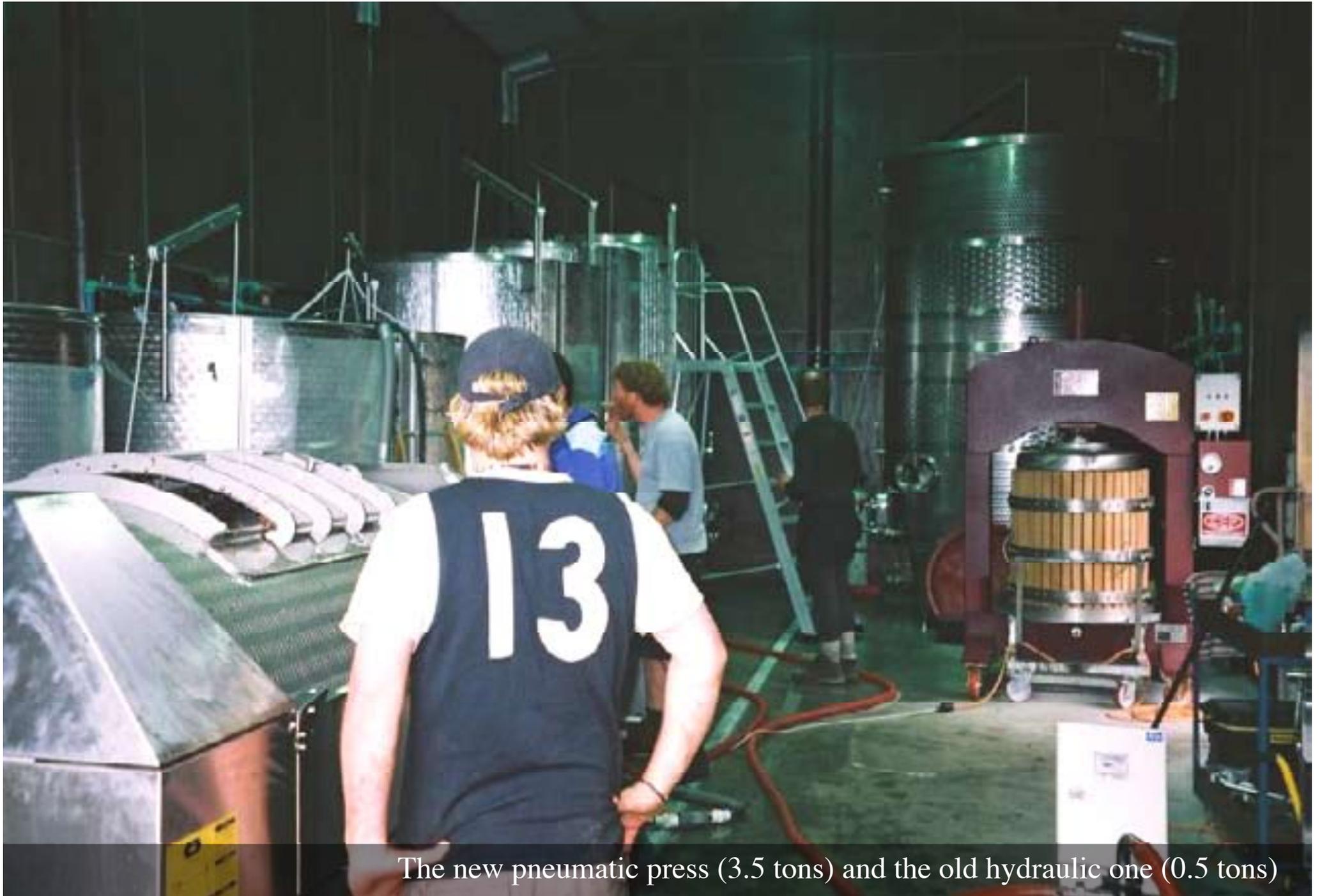




The crusher /de-stemmer equipment...



separates the berries from the stems, then the berries are pumped into the press.



The new pneumatic press (3.5 tons) and the old hydraulic one (0.5 tons)



Sandro, Wilma and the variable capacity tanks



Stems, pips and skins are let to dry for one year, and then used to mulch the garden, and while the wine ferments the colours in the vineyard change...



It's autumn,



it's time for pruning.



It's a delicate job, on which depends...

the correct growth in the following year.



It requires good thinking. The branches will be shredded with the next mowing.

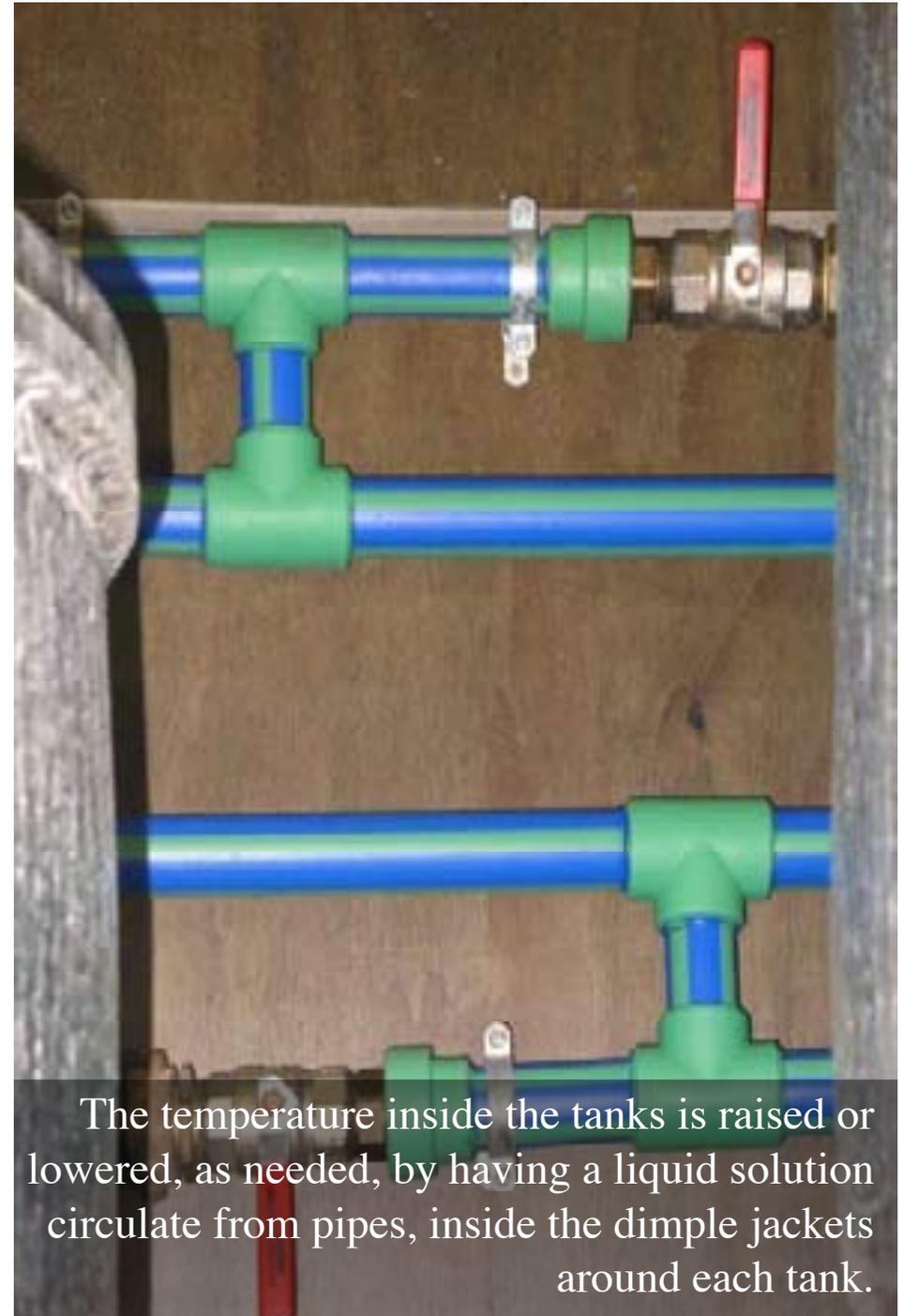




It's quiet again around the winery (left), the warehouse (rear) and old stables, which are now the labs and packaging (right).



The wine stays in the tanks for 8-9 months, on the lees.



The temperature inside the tanks is raised or lowered, as needed, by having a liquid solution circulate from pipes, inside the dimple jackets around each tank.



Eventually, it's bottling time!



The gravity filler is in line, after the rinsers, and before the corker. The bottles are sterilized, but we give them a good rinse anyway...



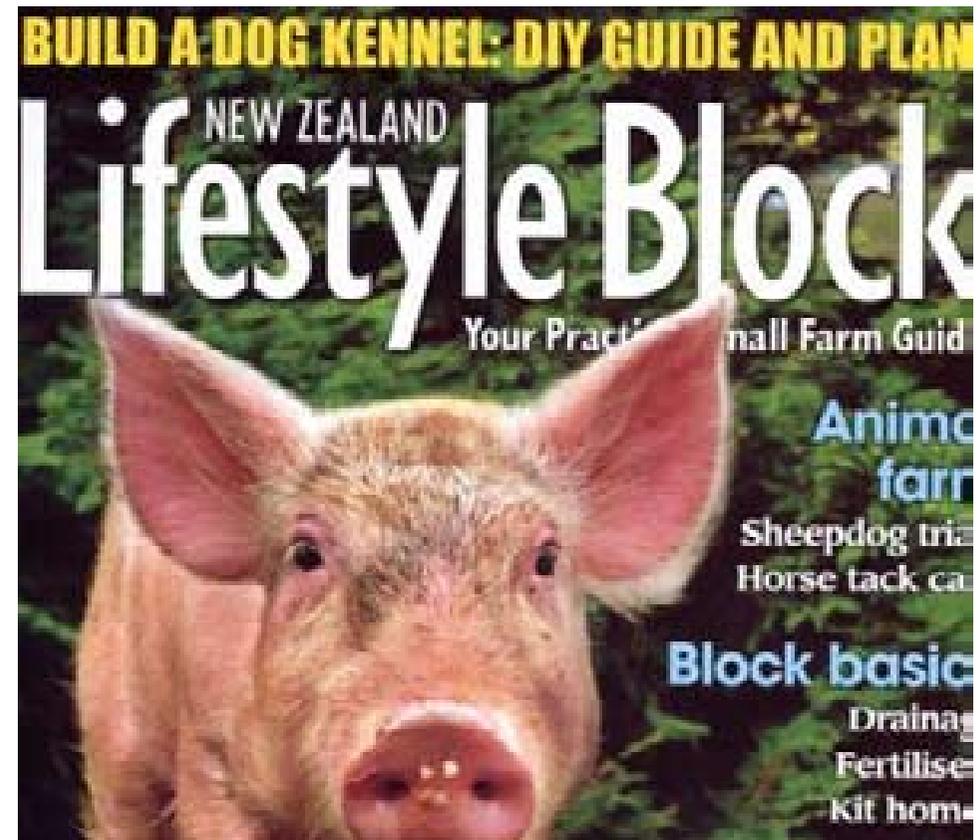
Now the bottles are ready to be stacked.



In the Warehouse: the CELLASTACK system. Here the bottles remain, until they are needed.



The bottles are fitted with the capsules and labelled.





All the best from Cracroft Chase!