

KEEPING THE COST DOWN

By P. G. Netley

WHEN enthusiasm run riot hobbies have a habit of becoming quite expensive. By the exercise of a little thought and care and the free use of improvisation and unusual expediences home winemaking can be quite inexpensive. Certainly wine can be made for less than 6d. per bottle, but is that the real cost?

What about the special casks, jars, filtering devices, fruit presses, siphons, storage racks, corking machines, and all the other items that one needs? When these are spread over the normal production of a year on a one-third per annum basis what is then the cost of a bottle of wine? It will vary with the individual, of course, but will undoubtedly be much higher.

During the course of these articles we will have a look at all aspects of winemaking endeavouring to find out the least expensive ways of tackling the whole problem without in any way sacrificing the quality of the final product.

First of all comes the original outlay or capital cost, which can be spread over quite a 1011g period of time, and can run up to quite a high figure. If the reader can gaily go ahead and equip himself with a fruit press, several 3 or 5 gallon casks, and has the space to store them, these articles will no doubt be read "for amusement only." I am really thinking of the town dweller who hasn't either money, time, space or facilities to launch out a big scale.

(From the Editor's Chair-continued)

writing is required. Two individual winemakers, "Frial Marcus," and Mr. W. Nickless, of Attleborough, Norfolk, have also sent us examples of their own excellent private labels that they have printed. Will other Circles please send us specimens?



1960 CONFERENCE

Exciting news this month! Bournemouth Winemakers Circle have decided to follow up the success of the National Congress at Andover this year by organising a Conference at Bournemouth in 1960. This is wonderful news for Bournemouth will be an ideal centre for such a gathering: an attractive seaside resort, with ample accommodation, and central to the majority of the wine clubs. Bournemouth has a large and lively Circle, which is backing to the full its most able chairman, Mr. R. C. Lucas, and very competent secretary, Mr. V. J. Tonks, who have taken the lead in this, and got off to a most promising start. The Town Hall has been booked and delegates will be given all the usual conference facilities-tickets for piers, deck chairs, golf courses, tennis courts, etc., and there will be a civic reception on the Friday evening. It is early days yet, but many will be interested even now to make a note of the dates-April 22nd and 23rd, 1960. Out with those diaries. . . you must keep that week-end clear!



HAPPY CHRISTMAS!

In "signing off for the last time in 1959, may we wish every one of our readers the very happiest Christmas possible, and a bright New Year. Raising our glass, we give you the toast "To Winemakers everywhere."

In this series of articles Mr. Netley, a Colchester winemaker, will give practical hints as to how one can save both money and time. "I think the crux of the matter," he says, "is that most of us look upon winemaking as a fascinating hobby-but only as a hobby. It is not the be-all and end-all of our lives . . . therefore we want to keep our costs down, where we reasonably can, and save time for other pursuits, where possible." In this first article Mr. Netley discusses ways of obtaining cheap equipment. One point should be emphasised: NEVER, as he says, buy equipment, particularly casks and containers that have held harmful liquid, about which you are doubtful; THAT is false economy.

For Primary and Pulp Fermentation in Quantity

Open necked storage jars of glazed porcelain, earthenware crocks and tall narrow glass storage tanks are ideal for pulp fermentation and the primary fermentation on juice only. These, of course, can be purchased from suppliers, but the secondhand market is well worth trying, always with the proviso that it is inadvisable to purchase "doubtful" articles which may have contained harmful liquids and be difficult to clean and sterilize.

These items can often be obtained amongst odd lots in local auction rooms. Not many of us are in a position to attend sales during the day, but auction porters are always willing to accept a commission. A stamped addressed postcard will make things easier for both of you. Junk shops are not the happy hunting grounds that they used to be. The containers are still available, but prices are adjusted to the demand that has grown with the increase in home winemaking. In any case 35-50 per cent of the retail value is to be expected. Particularly look out for tall narrow glass tanks from 2-gallons upwards.

Open top casks are also to be obtained through the auction rooms, but special care should be taken with them. Wood fibres, being absorbent, can hold compounds injurious to wine and health without any smell or sign being apparent.

Glass and glazed porcelain can generally be cleaned completely, but imperfectly glazed earthenware can be slightly absorbent and is suspect accordingly. Plenty of hot strong detergent and soda will do most cleaning jobs, and afterwards the nose is a good guide as to the state of the container and its suitability for wine.

For smaller quantities

One-gallon pickle jars with wide necks can frequently be obtained from cafes and chemists. One can often obtain these for the deposit charge, generally 2/-, and it is worth going to a lot of trouble to run them to earth. Sweet jars (usually 6 pints) are also often obtainable from sweet shops for the asking.