

THE GRAPEPRESS

Volume 176 | December 2021



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DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER SALES
MECHANICAL HARVESTING
WINERY DESIGN
LATEST PLUMPTON RESEARCH
BIRDS IN VINEYARDS



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Cover photo: Alder Vineyard © Adam Birch

Did you know? Our cover photo this month may well be the most successful English vineyard image of all time. Adam Birch, head of creativity for Alder Vineyard, explains: "As a lover of photography and having just upgraded to a new iPhone, I was playing around in the vines before harvest to see what the new camera could do. That's when I was able to capture and share this macro shot of the morning dew dripping from our grapes. When posting it out on social media with the added hashtag of #shotoniphone, I didn't really expect anything to happen. But then came an email from Apple and the next thing we knew our image was in front of its 27 million followers as part of its 'Shot on iPhone' campaign."

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THE GRAPEPRESS



This year can best be described as 'mixed', and undoubtedly this was the case for the weather and results of the harvest, as can be seen in a condensed version of Stephen Skelton MW's Harvest Report on page 41.

It has also been a year of mixed messages, beginning with a lockdown and ending in a cautious new normal. These turbulent times have left their mark on the industry in interesting ways. In this issue of *The Grape Press*, Lucy Shaw explores the rise of direct-to-consumer sales (pages 22-27), brought about by the pandemic, coupled with new investment in oenotourism and the growth of wine clubs. Victoria Rose looks at the rise of mechanical harvesting, a trend stimulated by labour shortages and rising wages, and the technological innovations in this field (pages 31-33). With new vineyards springing up and facilities required to process them, Dr. Alistair Nesbitt covers the importance of winery design and planning (pages 37-39). On pages 51-53, Natalia Zielonka reveals how fluctuating weather patterns

determine bird behaviour in vineyards and can contribute to crop losses.

We also hear from Plumpton College graduates Andrea Quirrenbach (Wine Business), and Neil Walker, Samantha Williams, Tamasine Herriott and Zoë Driver – all Viticulture & Oenology – whose research runs the gamut from an examination of the 'Champagne effect' on English sparkling wine to a study of the impact of blending before malolactic fermentation.

2021 has also been 'mixed-mode'. At WineGB, we've held a virtual and an in-person conference this year, and will maintain our varied offering of online webinars and face-to-face events into 2022. A highlight was the return of our annual Trade & Press Tasting in London. For many it was the first opportunity to reconnect with friends and colleagues after a year-and-a-half behind computer screens. An overview of our many activities this year can be found from pages 5 to 20.

I hope you enjoy this winter edition of *The Grape Press*. It's my first as editor, so in the words of Adele, (please) go easy on me.

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CEO's report

FROM THE CEO SIMON THORPE MW

When we gathered at the Vintners' Hall in November it struck me just how important the role of community is in all that we do at WineGB. We benefit enormously from the contribution of so many members, sponsors and others in some way connected to our industry, and there's little doubt that we could not be as effective as we are without this support. It was heart-warming to see so many from our community come together to celebrate and reflect on what has been another challenging yet inspiring year, but it feels very much as if we are still only at the early stages of our development as an industry and as a WineGB organisation.

This sense of where we sit in our development is in no way a commentary on what has already been achieved, but rather a reflection on the fantastic opportunity and future which lies ahead of us. We have the components and desire to go far and to establish ourselves as a leading region in the premium wine world, for both sparkling and still wines. The speed and steps that take us towards that future are topics upon which we have spent a lot of our time this past year. Looking to the horizon will no doubt continue to be a focus alongside delivering the programme of events and activities, which we produce throughout the year for our members and the industry more broadly.

This time last year, WineGB undertook a piece of research to try to analyse the supply and demand curve for our sparkling wines. The motivation behind this was primarily to assess what level of stock might be in producers' cellars at the end of this decade, and to gain a sense of whether this might be problematic or not. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the conclusions drawn from this exercise were rather broad, but we generally feel comfortable with the projections. So much depends on yield variation and where we sit on the demand curve. With this type of exercise there is a need to make some very fundamental assumptions; a projection on vine planting, yield per hectare, sales and channel growth, split of still and sparkling wine...these are all very strong components of the direction of travel for the industry and most of them are interdependent. What becomes clear from this exercise is that there are so many moving parts, that the picture we paint of the landscape in 2030 could have a raft of different interpretations and it simply isn't possible, nor indeed attractive, to control all the variables.

Taken in this context, WineGB's key responsibility is therefore to provide a framework within which our members can flourish and achieve their own business objectives. Prioritising the key areas on which we focus becomes much more obvious. We must collectively ensure we maintain and build the quality of our wines, which in turn means we need a pipeline of skilled people across all areas of viticultural, winemaking, and commercial activity. We need to concentrate on growing best practice in environmental sustainability and engage as broadly as possible with all growers. We need to build our export capability as this is a long-term driver for the continued demand for our wines, and of course, we must support the phenomenal growth in wine tourism and help vineyard owners to understand the hospitality industry. Crucially, and wrapping around everything we do, is the



need to work towards an economically sustainable future. That will be the title of the WineGB Business & Marketing Conference in March.

Underpinning all of this is the need to continually highlight our good news stories to an audience of trade, consumers, and commentators. Such has been the growth in awareness for our industry, that it would be easy to become complacent. However, the next stage is to finesse our messaging and to support those areas which are most relevant and important to our long-term health as producers and as an industry. That's why we are throwing our focus towards the on-trade community in 2022. We have such an amazing local marketplace, yet still there are a very small number of restaurants and bars which have a decent list of home-grown wines. Our long-term objective should be to replicate Napa and its relationship with the Californian restaurant scene; for outlets to be showcasing local wine as standard and something to celebrate, not as something of novelty.

Together we have enjoyed an incredible year. Thank you to all our members for your continued support, to the very many who contribute in different ways to our work, and especially to the WineGB team who are so wonderfully committed to our members and industry. Here's to a successful and healthy 2022!





36 webinars

24 new producers at the WineGB Awards

7 WineGB regional groups

5 WineGB Partners

5 WineGB Gold Patrons

14 WineGB Silver Patrons

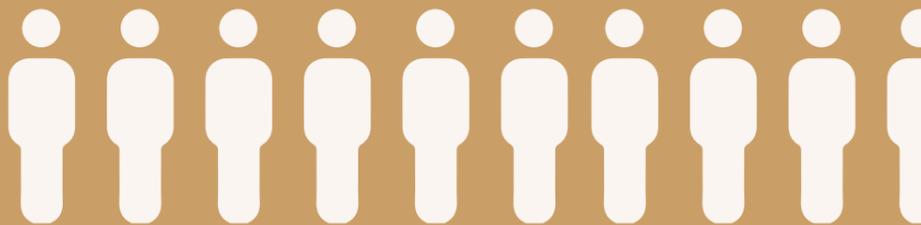
23 SWGB Sponsors



A year at WineGB in numbers



275 medals given at the WineGB Awards



572 Members +92 in 2021

1 new WineGB chair

6 WineGB executive team members +1 in 2021

5 major events organised

2 conferences

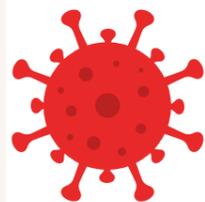
1 Trade & Press tasting

2 industry shows with a WineGB presence



2 issues of The Grape Press

10 new SWGB-accredited wines



3 WineGB staff successfully fought off coronavirus

8 Instagram lives as part of International Women's Day



4 major social media campaigns, including English Wine Week



Chair's report

FROM THE CHAIR SAM LINTER

2021 has been a year of constant change, again! Both in our own industry and of course in the world around us. There have been many challenges for us to overcome, but it still feels as if we are generally ending the year in a stronger place as wine producers and as WineGB.

When I took over as chair of WineGB earlier in the year I said that it is important for us to build an open, accessible, equitable and inclusive organisation, something which feels like it belongs to all our members, and which listens to and acts upon our collective will. We should be forward-thinking, modern, and innovative and reflect the image of our membership.

Successful change programmes tend to be led from the top and we have already taken steps as a board and executive team to make this happen. We have proactively sought to increase the diversity and experience of our directors. This year we have welcomed four new directors – Ned Awty, Guy Smith, Wendy Outhwaite and Ruth Simpson – and they all bring different knowledge and skills to the board. We now invite members of the MAC groups to board meetings and pass the agenda and papers of our meetings to the regional chairs for their input. We want to actively encourage members to get involved in WineGB activity, on working groups, feeding into specific projects or simply providing feedback and ideas. Our WineGB Weekly newsletter is another step already taken to improve our communications.

Next year we are intent on further increasing our communication and engagement with the broader membership. We are planning a series of WineGB visits to the regions so that we can listen directly to as many members as possible, and hopefully encourage new members to join the organisation. We are also setting up a regular open session webinar where anyone can tune in and ask questions or raise concerns with board members and the executive team.

The directors now each have a specific role to fulfil in support of the WineGB team. For example, Wendy Outhwaite is leading our lobbying and government engagement programme, and Ned Awty is strongly supporting our member communications drive. This support provides additional drive and impetus to our effectiveness as we look to fulfil a very ambitious programme in the coming years.

As we near the end of 2021, I would like to express my gratitude to our Partners, Patrons and other Sponsors who provide so much support to WineGB and our membership. Without your help we would not be able to achieve all that we do, and your continued friendship and support is invaluable. Equally, to all those who contribute to our programme of events and activities. For a small organisation we have a very large output, whether it be webinars, conferences, PR, events like the trade tasting, and the WineGB Awards. We punch very much above our weight because of the collaboration and support we receive from you, our membership. Long may that continue!





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Expand?

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- Enter new export markets

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Overview of events and activities in 2021



ENGLISH WINE WEEK PROVED A SUCCESS THIS YEAR



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SOME OF THE WINEMAKERS OF THIS YEAR'S TROPHY-WINNING WINES JOINED US FOR A TASTING AIMED AT SOMMELIERS AT BLACKBOOK WINERY IN LONDON



THE WINEGB TRADE & PRESS TASTING WAS A CHANCE TO CATCH UP WITH INDUSTRY FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES



©TOM GOLD

EMILY JAGO IS PRESENTED WITH THE WISTON TROPHY-WINNING WINE AT THE WINEGB CELEBRATION IN NOVEMBER



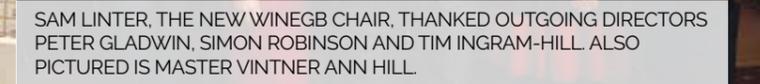
WINEGB AWARDS JUDGING AT ASHLING PARK



ATTENDEES JOINED US FOR A SUCCESSFUL WINEMAKING CONFERENCE IN NOVEMBER AT DENBIES WINE ESTATE



SIMON THORPE MW PRESENTS THE BREAKFAST BRIEFING AT VITI-CULTURE



SAM LINTER, THE NEW WINEGB CHAIR, THANKED OUTGOING DIRECTORS PETER GLADWIN, SIMON ROBINSON AND TIM INGRAM-HILL. ALSO PICTURED IS MASTER VINTNER ANN HILL.



WALKING THE VINEYARDS AT BLACK CHALK AT THE WINEGB WESSEX 'WAFFLE & WALK' IN AUGUST



THE WINEGB TRADE & PRESS TASTING WAS ONE OF THE FIRST MAJOR EVENTS IN THE WINE INDUSTRY CALENDAR AFTER THE LOCKDOWNS



THE WINEGB REGIONAL GROUPS ALSO HELD THEIR OWN WINE COMPETITIONS. HERE LAURA ROBINSON PICKS UP AN AWARD FOR BURN VALLEY VINEYARD AT THE WINEGB EAST COMPETITION

Events and activities 2022

BY JULIA TRUSTRAM EVE

Our marketing activities support members and build awareness of English and Welsh wines and the industry at large. We are planning an extensive calendar of events, activities and campaigns – both PR and social media – as well as being involved in other external events.

Our key focus areas for 2022 are:

- Classic Method: ensuring Classic Method is the recognised term for traditional method sparkling wines by embedding it in to our 'language' at every opportunity. Also proactively supporting adopters of the Hallmark.
- Still wines: continuing to raise awareness of Britain's still wines and styles.
- Other wine styles (sparkling): highlighting the diversity of other styles of sparkling wine.

- Sustainability: our commitment to sustainability across every aspect of the industry will be demonstrated through our activities and in our communications.
- Diversity and inclusion: our commitment to D&I will include providing further information and support for members as they look at their own businesses. Some of our focused activity will include:
 - Increasing engagement with UK trade and resellers through targeted activity, including English Wine Week and a series of one-day wine schools, plus our annual trade tasting in September. We will also be working with London Wine Fair to enable a presence at the show, with affordable stand options for members. Our focus in 2022 will be on the on-trade.
 - Actively supporting the growth of wine

- tourism in Britain. As well as delivering further support for our members, we will be staging a 'travel show' aimed at travel trade and tourism media in February 2022 to highlight this important sector.
 - Supporting the initiatives undertaken by the export group.
 - A comprehensive PR, social media and website content plan to deliver across the year, both to support our activities and to develop even further awareness and following.
 - Holding a Business & Marketing Conference in March, the focus this year being economic sustainability
- Here is a calendar of dates that include events that WineGB is organising, plus those that will be of interest to many. Further details and, where relevant, links to booking, will be published on the WineGB website and in email notifications.

SUSIE BARRIE MW JUDGING AT THE WINEGB AWARDS



SIMON THORPE MW GIVING A SEMINAR AT THE VINEYARD & WINERY SHOW



WINEGB MASTERCLASS FOR SOMMELIERS AT LONDON'S BLACKBOOK WINERY



MARCH

Friday 11 March (TBC)
WineGB UK Pruning Competition – Yotes Court Vineyard

Thursday 17 March
WineGB Business & Marketing Conference. Key theme: building towards economic sustainability. Venue TBC.

Sunday 27 – Tuesday 29 March
ProWein - Dusseldorf

JANUARY

Thursday 25 January
Diversity & Inclusion Half Day Conference

Friday 27 January
SWGB AGM – Denbies Wine Estate

FEBRUARY

February TBC
UK Wine Tourism Travel Show (Trade/Press event)

APRIL

Saturday 23 – Wednesday 27 April
US inbound trade & influencers visit

MAY

Monday 16 – Wednesday 18 May
London Wine Fair

JUNE

Thursday 2 – Sunday 5 June
Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Saturday 4 – Sunday 12 June
Welsh Wine Week

Friday 9 June
Viti-Culture Show

Monday 13 – Thursday 16 June
WineGB Awards 2022 judging

Saturday 18 – Sunday 26 June
English Wine Week

JULY

July TBC
WineGB Awards 2022 winners' lunch

Monday 18 July
One-Day Wine School – trade masterclass

SEPTEMBER

Tuesday 6 September
WineGB Trade & Press Tasting

NOVEMBER

Friday 18 November
Post Vintage Industry Celebration

Wednesday 23 November
Vineyard & Winery Show

November TBC
WineGB Viticulture Conference

WINEGB WEBINARS

We will be continuing with our webinars throughout the year – look out for the upcoming series on the WineGB website.

WINEGB WEEKLY NEWSLETTERS

A bulletin delivered to you every week with at-a-glance news items and media updates.

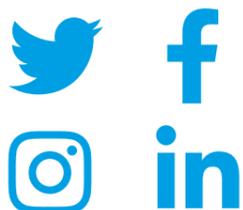


WINEGB TRADE TASTING



WE ARE PLANNING MORE OF OUR SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCES IN 2022

WineGB's social media – 2021 in review



BY JOANA ALBOGAS



2021 has come and gone with a bang. We've seen the need for brands to continue to build a strong digital presence – especially on social media.

The increasing need for digital interaction and deepening reliance on technology has not only strengthened the relationship between ourselves, producers and our followers, but has also brought new audiences online. This results in an increase in awareness – and, hopefully, more sales for our members.

2020 was the first full year that we were able to show the tangible benefit of focused social media activity to support our overall marketing plan. In 2021 we took it one step further. One of WineGB's strategic objectives is to develop the domestic market and to increase UK consumer and trade awareness through social media. We have continued to enhance WineGB's brand image and following online by optimising content and messages to these audiences, which has resulted in a significant increase in the number of WineGB social media followers.

Our digital highlights:

February 2021 – WineGB's presence on LinkedIn

In addition to WineGB's Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, this year we have established our presence on LinkedIn, dedicating time to growing our community. Why? LinkedIn builds credibility, creates a meaningful network and obtains insider expertise from experts in our industry. Follow us if you don't already!

March 2021 – Great British Wine Industry Women

One of our biggest online campaigns to date was the Great British Wine Industry Women. We teamed up with Women in Wine London to stage a series of inspirational Instagram live interviews with female professionals who are shaping Great Britain's wine industry. As well as including those working in viticulture and winemaking, the interviews also featured founders of successful wine businesses, and those working in retail, hospitality and communications.

And because there are many more female industry role models to celebrate, the campaign will return next year!

June 2021 – WineGB Awards 2021

Our WineGB Awards 2021 was heavily promoted across all our four social media channels. While live activities took place on Instagram during judging days and on the results day, static posts and stories were shared across all WineGB's social media channels.

Through the informal IG lives, we raised the profile of our judges and the competition, and kept digital audiences engaged. It was an opportunity for the competition judges to give us an insight into their careers, but also share their opinion on the general quality of the wines they tasted, comparatively to previous years, and if there had been any standouts, in style or variety.

On the 24 July, we announced the medal and trophy class winners to the world, and celebrated them with an IG live, featuring an informal chat between the competition's co chairs, Oz Clarke OBE and Susie Barrie MW, and WineGB's CEO Simon Thorpe MW and assistant marketing manager Joana Albogas.

You can still catch up on our WineGB Awards judging days reportage via our Instagram highlights and watch the interviews on our Instagram video channel.

September 2021 – Press & Trade Tasting

Our Social Media promotion around the Trade Tasting lasted for a month. Our goal was to increase awareness of the WineGB Trade & Press Tasting and to position it as a must-attend event for the trade, press and influencers.

Social media had a dedicated area for the first time at the event, with a branded backdrop and the technology to generate recordings and live feeds for the all-important influencers. The volume of social media activity and other press coverage was impressive, illustrating just what a buzz there is around this industry and its fabulous wines.

The Influencer Pod provided a platform to create engaging content promoting the event and also new releases and current industry trends.

This year's results:

- **Instagram:** from around 6k to over 9k followers with over 60k accounts reached organically
- **Facebook:** from 3.6k to almost 4.3k followers

- **Twitter:** our most mature channel saw an increase of almost 500 followers (15.7k to over 16.1k)
- **LinkedIn:** our most recent social media network went from 203 followers to 932 in 10 months, with an outstanding engagement rate of 6%.

Looking forward

It is no secret that we have high aspirations for the future of WineGB, online and offline. We aspire to continue to build on our strong bond with our audience, translating into real content and follower relationships. We will continue to share and promote our members' incredible content and carry out successful campaigns into the new year, alongside our long-standing ones, such as English Wine Week. We will also develop an insightful social media programme around diversity and inclusion, in order to shine the spotlight on both domestic and international peers. Stay tuned!

How is WineGB perceived online?

"Online presence has been a unifier across the Great British wine industry this year. Their efforts to elevate and collaborate with everyone from winemakers to wine influencers has really brought the industry together and has made it a more diverse and exciting place to be!"
Sophia Longhi, digital communicator @skinandpulp

"Over this year, WineGB have focused all their social media energy curating fabulous visual content and covering events, seamlessly promoting and communicating the fantastic wines of England and Wales to both producers and the trade"
Brad Horne, digital communicator @WineTimeLondon

"The WineGB presence has certainly grown online recently. Social media platforms are a great way to make our industry more accessible and to showcase the people behind it. Over time, the reach will increase and as our industry body, I hope that the WineGB presence online will continue to encourage people to buy, taste or get involved with English Wine."
Tommy Grimshaw, head winemaker at Langham @tommygrims



SOPHIA LONGHI (SKIN & PULP) AND JOANA ALBOGAS (WINEGB)



THE GREAT BRITISH WINE INDUSTRY WOMEN CAMPAIGN

5 key social media trends

2 Instagram makes major changes in continuous effort to evolve: IGTV and Collabs. Instagram is making rapid changes to its overall strategy and focus. The app has now merged all of its video content into one combined feature, having announced the retirement of its longer-video feature, IGTV. This means that videos of all lengths, including Reels, will be seen via one video tab. The app has introduced two new options for creators: Collabs and Superbeat. Collabs is a function that allows users to invite others to create a joint post, shown on both feeds. Superbeat is a tool that enables users to add new music-focused effects to a video.



1 Facebook is now Meta: Facebook has a new name and logo to match its change. This was announced via a pre-recorded livestream and included other VR/AR-related updates. The new name will also help Facebook to rebrand itself as a company with several channels under its belt, such as Instagram, WhatsApp and Oculus. According to Facebook's official announcement, Meta will go beyond just digital entertainment with "the potential to help unlock access to new creative, social and economic opportunities."



3 E-commerce continues to be a strong focus for Pinterest. The e-commerce giant Pinterest is expanding its shopping features and providing new opportunities for merchants to connect with users of the platform. It also now allows merchants to display their brand values (like "responsibly sourced" or "inclusive") providing another way to facilitate stronger brand connections.

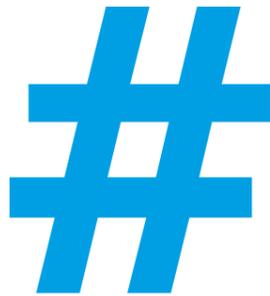


5 Educational content on TikTok is an actual thing: TikTok is still a social entertainment app, but the content users find entertaining on the one billion followers app has broadened, bringing to light educational entertainment. These informative bite-sized clips are not only limited to how-tos and tutorials, but range from career advice and psychology to languages, philosophy and art.



4 How many hashtags you should be using on Instagram: Instagram recently shared an update on their @creators page "what you need to know and what you should avoid to get the most out of adding hashtags to your content". The secret's out:

- Do keep the number of hashtags between three and five
- Do use hashtags that are relevant to the theme of your content
- Do check which hashtags your fans already use and follow
- Do mix well-known and niche hashtags to broaden your discoverability
- Do use specific hashtags so your fans can easily search for your content. You can even create your own!



Media round up 2021



It has been another spectacular year in the press for the GB wine industry, with English and Welsh wine, vineyards, the industry mentioned in the national press. Several of the main papers carried a good number of articles across the year:

- *The Guardian* (potential reach = 100m) – 35 articles
- *Daily Mail* (potential reach = 72m) – 25 articles
- *The Telegraph* (potential reach = 30m) – 70 pieces, includes *The Sunday Telegraph*
- Articles in *The Daily Express* (48m), *The Independent* (45m) and *Daily Mirror* (33m) also featured.
- *The Times/The Sunday Times* is not picked up on our media monitoring service due to it now being subscription only, but some good features appeared this year including an in-depth article in *The Sunday Times Magazine*.

BY JULIA TRUSTRAM EVE

US-based online magazine *Forbes* (potential reach = 83m) featured our industry in nine articles across the year. Features on the industry have been spreading across the globe, with over 130 mentioned in Australian media, some 300 in the USA, 140 in Ireland and 92 in Canada. France also carried over 20 articles, with a TV feature about the Champagne houses Taittinger and Pommery in the UK. Other articles were picked up in Greece, Germany, Hong Kong and India. Further coverage is achieved through national stories when they are franchised out to regional titles; similarly, some of the articles are picked up by Yahoo and MSN and carried globally online, which adds to the circulation and potential reach.

The UK wine trade press published a good number of stories, prompted by WineGB press releases, plus other more detailed pieces. *Harpers* (potential reach

= 14k) alone covered the industry in some 60 articles across the year. Top themes included the Budget, The European Cup and English Wine Week (EWW alone achieved a potential reach of 500m). Pleasingly, there were many extensive articles both nationally and internationally about wine tourism in the UK. According to the media monitoring service Meltwater, some 4,000 pieces featured one or some of the keywords below, accruing to a massive potential online and print reach of 15bn. In value terms, this is measured as an advertising cost equivalent (ie if we were to pay for the space occupied by an article where the topics are mentioned) – which this year thus far has reached £138m. Keywords included: industry, wine type, English wine, Welsh wine, British wine, and WineGB. We also searched for 'English Wine Week' and 'WineGB Awards'.

(Based on monitoring figures 1 January – 26 November 2021)



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Outstanding Contribution Award

In 2019, WineGB created a Lifetime Achievement Award to acknowledge and thank an individual for their outstanding contribution to the industry. In 2021, the title of the award has been renamed Outstanding Contribution Award.

WineGB members were invited to nominate an individual and give their reasons why. This year's winner yielded a resounding number of votes, making him the clear cut choice: Peter Hall of Breaky Bottom Vineyard in Lewes, East Sussex

Peter Hall at has been producing wines for nearly half a century at his vineyard Breaky Bottom.

To many over the years he has been an inspiration – some describe him as quite simply a legend - and for that Peter received a resounding vote to present him this award to acknowledge his contribution over the last 47+ years. His wines, from the earlier days of Alsace-style still wines from Seyval Blanc and Müller-Thurgau to classic method sparkling from Chardonnay, Pinots Noir and Meunier and in some blends Seyval have commanded the highest praise from pundits across the world and many awards both nationally and internationally.

His inspirational influence on younger winemakers has been enormous. One comment received was: "A visit to Breaky Bottom refreshes the soul and inspires us winemakers to do greater things."

©AXEL HESSELEBERG

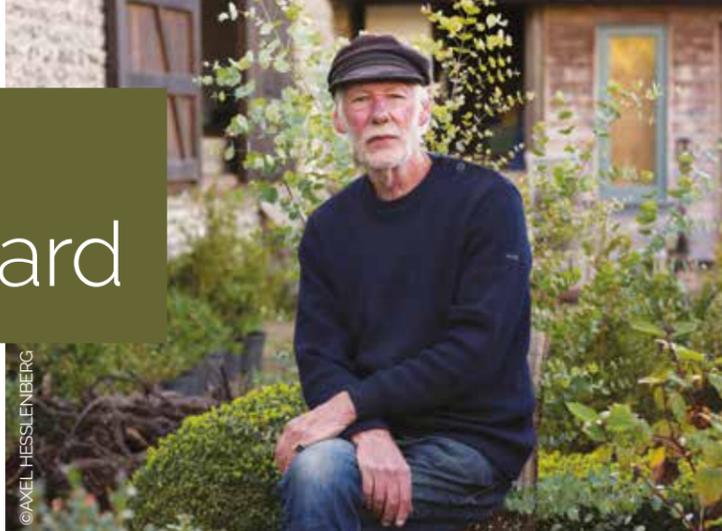
Over the years he has encountered a fair share of adversity, from pheasants to spray drift, floods and other curveballs from the English weather. Despite the many challenges, Peter kept going, unstintingly focused on producing quality wines.

Peter still does the bulk of the work himself, in vineyard and winery, and the accolades and praise still flood in. In the WineGB Awards last year alone, all five of his wines entered gained a Gold medal, one scooping a trophy (for Non Classic Blend - Cuvée Michelle Moreau 2014).

Breaky Bottom is 'the uncelebrated UK boutique producer bar none', a sentiment shared by many fellow winemakers and vigneron in the UK, plus throngs of other critics, journalists and producers. Peter – we salute you!

Our previous two award winners of this trophy:

- 2020: Stephen Skelton MW
- 2019: Chris Foss



WineGB government lobbying report



WINEGB'S WORK WITH WESTMINSTER HAS GAINED SIGNIFICANT MOMENTUM OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS, AND OUR DIALOGUE WITH VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS IS NOW CONSTANT AND COLLABORATIVE, WRITES **SIMON THORPE MW**

The growth of viticulture, wine production and sales make our industry one of the most exciting agricultural sectors in the country. This brings added credibility, gravitas and importance to our discussions and lobbying. Leaving the EU means that there is an increase in responsibility for government departments, such as Defra, to ensure the appropriate regulatory and agricultural frameworks are in place to allow us to operate in the most successful manner possible. For example, the UK is now a full member of the OIV and we have input strongly into both rounds of meetings which have taken place this year.

As we grow and become a more sophisticated and demanding industry, we have a longer list of agenda items, or 'asks', for the government and are more ambitious in what we are looking to achieve from our dialogue. The recent budget statement and the government's Excise Duty Review is a good example of this. We were extremely pleased to learn of the scrapping of the super-tax on sparkling wine, a move that will benefit around two-thirds of total production in this country. However, we also want to see more support for our members in the form of small producer tax relief, or in our words, Cellar Door Relief. Our role is to ensure the key decision-makers are aware of our objectives and the requirements of the industry and to match our needs as much as possible with government policy.

There is no doubt that viticulture and wine production in this country generates a great deal of political capital for the current government. We are growing, prestigious, super-premium, local and looking to grow our exports and reputation around the world. Our success is a great news story, both for our producers as well as the UK. To illustrate this, there was an English Wine Adjournment Debate in the House of Commons during English Wine Week at which strong support was delivered by the Minister for Agriculture, Victoria Prentis. Our sparkling wine was front page news at the time

of the budget and we have been quoted often with regards to Free Trade Agreements and other government initiatives.

Wine has been selected by the Prime Minister's Brexit Opportunities Unit for a "deep dive". This project is intended to determine and eliminate unwanted and unhelpful bureaucracy and to help us to set up a regulatory framework that works for us in the long-term. This means a review of the current PDO/PGI scheme, identifying unwanted elements within the regulations which were transferred when we left the EU, and seeking out ways in which we can be better supported in our industry growth objectives. WineGB is fully engaged with this team and will look to make recommendations early in the new year.

The Department for International Trade is also very much front of mind as we look to develop our sales overseas. The growing initiative of gastro-diplomacy will see our wines served more frequently in target market embassies and missions. Equally, support continues for overseas exhibitions and inbound visits, particularly in the key US market.

We have been very well supported in our communication with Westminster by Andrew Griffith, who heads up the WineGB All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG).

The advice and support that this group offers is invaluable. Our relationships with the teams at Defra, DIT and HMT are very collaborative, but we do have a list of items with which we need further support. Labour shortages, better industry data, a smooth importing process for vines, a simplified export paperwork and logistics cost structure, as well as the adoption of a re-work of our Cellar Door Relief proposals are all on our workplan. Equally, we seek support from Defra in how to tap into R&D funding as well as maximise our sustainable practices in both vineyard and winery. The government's intention to create a skills framework for lifelong learning also fits perfectly with our requirements for a fully and appropriately trained labour force.

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SWGB's achievements in 2021

BY PHOEBE FRENCH



Sustainable Wines of Great Britain has celebrated another year of progress and achievement.

Initially operating as the WineGB Environmental Sustainability Workgroup (ESWG) in 2019, the SWGB Scheme was launched and welcomed its founding members in 2020.

This year, SWGB has grown both in membership and in staffing. As of 30 November, the scheme has 100 members, with 65 vineyards and 35 wineries signed up.* These members account for around 33% of the area under vine in the UK and consist of major wine producers through to growers and boutique vineyards as well as contract winemakers.

The scheme, chaired by Chris Foss, is supported by a 23-strong workgroup that meets regularly, and includes vice-chair Beth Kelly MW from Majestic. In May, I was hired as scheme manager to handle scheme promotion, communications, event organisation and admin.

SWGB also has a large group of sponsors that backs its work, including major retailers Marks & Spencer and Waitrose.

Successful audits

A total of 23 vineyards and 11 wineries have now successfully passed their audits and achieved SWGB accreditation. This means that an additional 12 vineyards and eight wineries have successfully passed their audit since August 2020.

Every vineyard and winery signing up for the SWGB Scheme will ultimately progress to audit. The accreditation process entails an annual self-evaluation to monitor progress against guidelines set out to fulfil the SWGB objectives. Upon joining, then again every three years, each self-evaluation score is rigorously checked and verified by independent auditors and environmental consultancy firm Ricardo PLC. Successfully passing an audit is, therefore, a big achievement and should be celebrated.

New wines

As well as welcoming new members, SWGB announced its first accredited wines this year. Ten wines from four producers now have the right to have the SWGB Trade Mark on their labels.

The release of the first generation of wines bearing the SWGB Trade Mark is a major achievement for the wine industry of Great Britain and demonstrates the success of the SWGB Scheme.

The first SWGB-certified wines are:

- Gusbourne Guinevere Chardonnay 2019, Pinot Noir 2019 and Pinot Noir Rosé 2020
- Henners Vineyard Gardner Street Rosé 2020
- Three Choirs canned wine range: Sparkling, White, Rosé and Red
- Yotes Court On the Nod Bacchus 2020 and Best Turned-Out Pinot Meunier Rosé 2020

These wines were promoted via a press release sent out by WineGB and a promotional stand and literature at the WineGB Trade & Press Tasting.

New technology

After a year in the making, SWGB launched its ground-breaking Data Repository in 2021. Using this facility, British wineries and vineyards are able to compare their performance against an industry standard for sustainability for the first time.

The repository enables members to store and present their data for audit, as well as measure progress against key performance indicators. Through its automatic benchmarking facility, the secure and private online portal greatly facilitates the scheme audit process. It allows members to easily identify areas they need to improve and gives them the proof and confidence to talk about where they excel.

The year ahead

The major goals for the scheme in 2022 are to increase membership and awareness.

Our vision is to create a strong and vibrant community within the English and Welsh wine industry that actively promotes sustainability through information sharing and a certification scheme that is inclusive, effective and well-respected by our customers. To do this, we need more vineyards and wineries to join us.

We want to involve those already part of the scheme in its promotion. This involves displaying the SWGB logo on websites, social media and other assets and talking about the scheme with members of the public and journalists.

The SWGB team will continue to share information in the form of bulletins, updates, factsheets and the newly-launched 'despatches'. The despatches, from among which will be published quarterly, will feature examples of best practice among the SWGB member community. The aim is to encourage others to adopt such practices.

The scheme will also be promoted through a series of monthly webinars and via member events like the successful workshop held at Albury Vineyard in September.

Recruitment

SWGB is in the middle of its annual recruitment drive in which new members are signed up for the year ahead. If you would like to join us, please email Chris Foss on swgb@winegb.co.uk.

** Vineyards and wineries are counted separately, even if operated by the same company. This is because vineyards and wineries must undergo separate audits.*

IAN BEHLING OF RICARDO GIVES A TALK ON SUSTAINABILITY AT THE WINEGB WINEMAKING CONFERENCE



THREE CHOIRS SWGB ACCREDITED WINES



VITICULTURE WORKSHOP AT ALBURY VINEYARD



© NATALIA ZIELONKA

YOTES COURT SWGB ACCREDITED WINES

© NATALIA ZIELONKA

New directors join WineGB board

A number of new appointments to the WineGB board have taken place in recent months. These board appointments bring additional skills, experience and expertise to support members and help move WineGB and the industry forward to its next phase.

Ruth Simpson (appointed October) joins the board as Group B director, one of three representing the larger producers (over 15ha), replacing Sam Linter who is now chair. Ruth, together with her husband Charles, is co-founder and -owner of Simpsons Wine Estate in Kent, producers of still and sparkling wines, and they are actively involved in the Wine Garden of England. Ruth and Charles are also owners of and winemakers at Domaine Sainte Rose in the Languedoc. Prior to the 20 years spent in the wine industry, Ruth worked in international aid and development. Ruth has board responsibility for tourism.

Wendy Outhwaite (appointed October) is a co-founder of Ambriel, having planted vineyards in 2008 in West Sussex. After 25 years as a barrister, frequently working with government departments, she now produces English sparkling wine. She is hands on and hands in. Prior to joining the board, she served on WineGB's Export Committee. Government relations will be Wendy's area of responsibility on the board.

Guy Smith (appointed July) is co-founder and owner of Somerset sparkling producers Smith & Evans. He is also actively involved in the UK wine trade through importers and distributors Frederick's Wine Co. Guy is chair of WineGB West and takes over the role of regional director from Tim Ingram Hill.

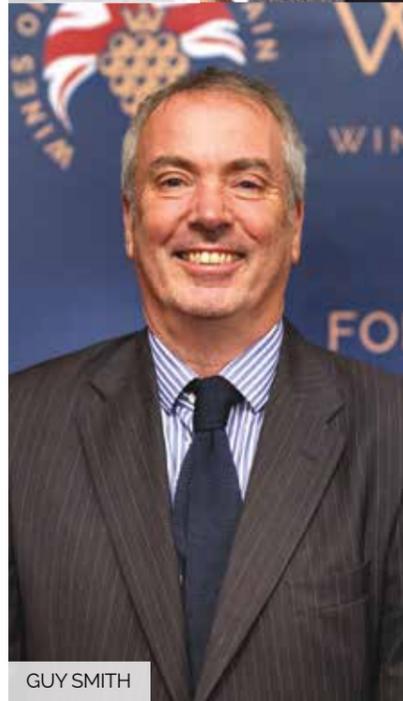
Ned Awty (appointed July) joins the board as a Group A director (grower/ producers below 15ha). He is now working with his family's vineyard Oatley, also in Somerset, as well as being a brand marketing strategy consultant after a 20-year career in a global FTSE100 company. Ned takes on the board responsibility for communications.

The other WineGB board members are unchanged and are as follows:

- **CHAIR**
Sam Linter, Bolney Wine Estate (Appointed July)



RUTH SIMPSON



GUY SMITH

- **DEPUTY CHAIR**
Nick Wenman, Albury Vineyard (Appointed July)
Board responsibility: revenue generation
- **CEO**
Simon Thorpe MW
- **GROUP A DIRECTOR**
Bruce Tindale, High Clandon Estate
- **GROUP B DIRECTOR**
Tamara Roberts, Ridgeview
Board responsibility: finance
- **GROUP B DIRECTOR**
Frazer Thompson, formerly of Chapel Down
- **LEGAL COUNSEL**
Dominic Buckwell

- **Other new appointments**
Jacob Leadley takes over as chair of WineGB Wessex.



NED AWTY



WENDY OUTHWAITE



SAM LINTER

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A LUNCH IN THE VINEYARD AT HUNDRED HILLS

The grape escape

WITH DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER SALES OF ENGLISH AND WELSH WINE ON THE RISE, **LUCY SHAW** LOOKS AT WHAT HAS CONTRIBUTED TO THIS INCREASE AND HOW PRODUCERS ARE LOOKING ACROSS THE POND FOR INSPIRATION

James Dyson knows a thing or two about marketing. Having built a successful British brand by tapping into unmet consumer needs, the current tagline on the Dyson website perfectly encapsulates the zeitgeist, encouraging consumers to 'buy direct from the people who made it'. In our plugged-in era, consumers want to get closer to the source of the goods they buy, and feel connected to the hands that created them.

Having developed an interest in the provenance of the food they eat, curious consumers are now keen to understand the backstory behind their bottles, particularly when it comes to homegrown drops from the UK. "People are going to their local farm shop more, and are getting closer to their suppliers, who they might know by name. They are seeking out that feeling of connection to get closer to the land," believes Ian Kelllett of Hambledon Vineyard in Hampshire.

This shift in mindset, coupled with the need to pivot to online sales during the pandemic, has led to a DTC (direct-to-consumer sales) boom within the British wine industry, with WineGB reporting that

winery websites and cellar door sales accounted for 50% of English and Welsh wine volume sales last year. While the significance of DTC sales depends on the size of individual businesses, with the UK's smaller players leaning more heavily on cellar door income, there is a united belief within the industry that DTC is only going to grow in importance as producers invest more heavily in sophisticated oenotourism offerings and visitor experiences.

The pandemic turbo-charged the acceleration of wine e-commerce, with 15% of total wine value sales in the UK taking place online last year. The sector is booming, and is poised for explosive growth – according to IWSR estimates, the global online wine market will be worth £30 billion by 2024. East Sussex producer Ridgeview grew its online sales by 280% in 2020, having pivoted to DTC when on-trade sales dried up last March, dropping delivery charges and offering next day delivery to entice customers to splash out on a treat spend. While that level of growth is difficult to maintain, year-on-year sales are up by 74%, suggesting that the consumer shift online is here to stay.

Jacob Leadley of boutique Hampshire-based estate Black Chalk has also seen a "huge jump" in online sales since COVID hit, and stresses the importance of having a slick digital operation that reflects the aspirations of your brand.

"Your website needs to be a window into who you are. We're constantly looking to improve and review our site to meet the needs of our customers. Those needs seem to change almost as fast as we can update it," he says. "DTC is very important to many UK producers, especially those making small volumes. Once producers get to a certain size it's wise not to rely too heavily on one route to market, no matter how good the margins are, but the potential for DTC is massive and we're only just starting to scratch the surface."

Social media is also proving a successful sales tool for local producers. "We put a lot of emphasis on Instagram and Twitter. Not only is it good for building a brand and telling our story, we've received a lot of business from it. If used well, social media is just as powerful, if not more, than a website," says Chris Haywood of Astley Vineyard in Worcestershire, where the lion's

share of sales come via the cellar door. Year-on-year cellar door sales at Denbies in Surrey are currently up by 150% and its hotel has been running at 100% occupancy post lockdown, buoyed by a growing consumer thirst for staycations. "Cellar door sales have seen tremendous growth in the past 18 months and the momentum has continued. Wine tourism has always been an integral part of Denbies' business model and continues to experience significant growth year-on-year," reports COO, Jeannette Simpson.

Bob Lindo of Camel Valley has built his business around the lure of the cellar door, and welcomes 30,000 visitors a year to his scenic abode in the Cornish countryside. The estate is run to suit Lindo's lifestyle – tours take place during the week and there's no restaurant on site. "You have to decide how big you want to be and have a tourism offering that you're comfortable with. I've done a lot of wine tours in New Zealand, South Africa and Australia, and I've yet to come across a winery restaurant that's a profitable add on; it's more of an image thing. Restaurants are calling cards for wineries, but it's hard to make money from them," says Lindo, who warns English and Welsh estates against biting off more than they can chew. "In the '80s people expanded into oblivion, growing



HUNDRED HILLS WINERY

on corporate money. We didn't struggle during the pandemic as our business is totally wine-based," he says.

If done correctly, a memorable cellar door experience can create loyal brand ambassadors. "There's no better way of establishing your brand than by welcoming visitors to your place, where you can control the environment and create a cohort of lifelong advocates for your business, maintaining their loyalty much longer and more cost effectively than in other channels," says WineGB CEO, Simon Thorpe MW. As the English and Welsh wine industry has matured, so too have its visitor experiences, to such an extent that some

of the bigger players believe the south of England has the potential to become the Napa Valley of the UK. Producers in Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire are looking to cash-rich, nature-starved Londoners seeking weekend escapes to the country as their prime tourism targets.

"Wine tourism in Napa and Sonoma is driven by San Francisco, which is an hour away. It's the same distance from Kent to London, so that's my target market. Londoners have high expectations, so we have to be able to offer them a great experience. We can't cut corners as an industry when it comes to tourism,"

[Article continues >>](#)



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GUSBOURNE'S HAND AND FLOWERS POP-UP



©Kimberley Garrod Photography



A TASTING TOUR AT DENBIES WINE ESTATE

<< believes Richard Balfour-Lynn of Balfour Winery. Having headed up boutique hotel chains Malmaison and Hotel du Vin, hospitality was always going to be at heart of his wine business. "Our industry has a fantastic opportunity when it comes to tourism, but you've got to invest in facilities that can compete with the best in the world, and make it fun, as we're in the entertainment business. A lot of people go into it as enthusiastic amateurs thinking they can just open a cellar door and it will be wonderful, but people's expectations are a lot higher than they used to be – if you don't get it right people won't come back," he says.

Groups like Kent's Wine Garden of England are helping to turn the country's top wine counties into tourism hubs that merit more than a day trip. Both Chapel Down and Gusbourne are members, and see tourism as playing an integral role in the growth of the English wine industry.

Around 60,000 visitors flock through Chapel Down's doors each year, and numbers are steadily creeping back up to pre-pandemic levels. Tours range from £20 to £130, and its on-site restaurant, The Swan, boasts a Michelin Bib Gourmand. "We're creating a new industry, and the way in which we'll get people most excited about English wine is through winery visits. Emerging and established producers need to ensure guests have the best experience, and we need to work closer as an industry to create wine trails for people to follow. Sustainable tourism is going to be one of the biggest focus points of government growth in the UK, so we need to work with local producers to collectively promote winery tourism as a holistic experience," believes Chapel Down's new CEO, Andrew Carter, who is looking into eco-friendly ways of bringing visitors to the estate.

Carter believes the GB wine industry can learn a lot from Napa and Sonoma. "When

you visit estates like Beringer and Stag's Leap in Napa, they're cutting the grass with a pair of scissors. They offer a pristine, super-premium luxury experience, which is the kind of brand impression we should be creating for our guests," he says. Ian Kellett of Hambleton has bold ambitions to create "the best oenotourism facility in the UK," and has invested a "seven-figure sum" into the project, hiring Heston Blumenthal's former right-hand man, Ashley Palmer-Watts, as a restaurant consultant; the former head chef of Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons to oversee the kitchen; and Fabled Studio, who decked out Gordon Ramsay Royal Hospital Road, to look after the interiors. "We're investing heavily in our hospitality facilities. I've been gulping at the bills, but we're doing it to build the DTC side of the business and are hoping to open our seafood-focused restaurant next year," enthuses Kellett.

Article continues >>

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<< Wine clubs are also proving a profitable sales channel, offering members first dibs on new releases and perks like access to wine dinners and limited releases. Members of Gusbourne Reserved have been treated to restaurant takeovers at the Kent estate whipped up by the teams from The Hand and Flowers, Trinity and The Clove Club, who have weaved ingredients foraged from the estate into their dishes. "There's huge demand for these events and the tickets sell out in hours," says CEO and head winemaker Charlie Holland. "Giving our members access to these events, pre-releases and exclusive bottlings is an important way of making them feel like they've bought into the Gusbourne brand. Through our club we're building an ambassador network – there's a strong correlation between winery visitors and wine club sign-ups."

Taking the idea to new heights is boutique estate Hundred Hills in Henley, where a five-year membership to its coveted Hundred Club will set you back £20,000.

"My vision for English wine is more Napa than Champagne. A Napa Valley model has a lot more to offer England and its wine industry than a Champagne model does in the 21st century," says co-owner Stephen Duckett. Hundred Club members receive wines throughout the year, have the chance to be involved in the winemaking process from grape to bottle (via dosage and disgorgement), and can host events at the estate. Duckett says he founded the club, which is capped at 100 members, as a way of "rationing demand" for visits. Once capacity is reached, he'll operate a one-in-one-out policy. "During my time

in the tech industry, I spent a lot of time working in California and have been heavily influenced by the Napa and Sonoma model. At Hundred Hills I'm trying to create something beautiful, entertaining and of its place," he says.

Cellar door and DTC sales are a vital source of income for small producers, and offer enticing margins, but on- and off-trade sales are equally important routes to market, particularly for bigger brands seeking wider distribution. "The success of the English and Welsh wine industry will be down to each producer finding what suits them, and specialising. All on-trade, or all DTC limits our potential as a wine producing country, so our industry needs to cast a wide net and let each vineyard be themselves," says Chris Haywood of Astley Vineyard. Duckett of Hundred Hills is confident that the UK has a shot at becoming a compelling international wine destination if enough players are willing to invest in high-end facilities and deliberately pursue that strategy. With international tourists in mind, WineGB is set to host a travel show next year bringing wineries, tourist operators and travel journalists together in a bid to ramp up overseas visitors. Kellett of Hambledon believes southern England has the chance to combine the luxury hospitality on offer in South Africa with the sales conversion nous of Napa, but collaboration is key. "There needs to be three or four flagship wine estates in each county close enough to each other that people can book in a weekend of wine visits – I'd love for others to pick up the gauntlet," he says.

California dreaming

Winery tourism as we know it is a relatively recent concept pioneered by California's Robert Mondavi, who was one of the first producers to fling open his cellar door to visitors in the late '60s, primarily as an educational tool to show the world what Napa had to offer. Today, the Napa Valley is the second most visited California destination after Disneyland, which has led Robert Mondavi Winery to rethink its tourism strategy. "There has been a repositioning of what we offer as a visitor experience – our parking lots got over-run, so we've moved to a more high-end, reservations-only model and sit-down tastings," says Mark de Vere MW, director of the Constellation Academy of Wine. "Napa has changed and the visitor scene has evolved – we're moving into a new era."

The success of DTC wine sales in the US has been particularly beneficial for boutique wineries with smaller volumes and less of a retail presence. "Distributor consolidation over the last decade in the US has led to limited routes to market for many small wineries. Tourism and DTC sales have been critical to their success and have opened the door for increased competition across the entire industry. This gives boutique wineries like many of ours – such as Stonestreet and Brewer-Clifton – an opportunity to be relevant," says Rick Tigner, CEO of Jackson Family Wines, who reveals that since moving the company to an appointment-only model across all of its cellar doors in order to provide more focused tours, the average visitor spend has doubled since 2019.



CAMEL VALLEY WALKING WINE TOUR

At this time of year, as nights get longer and fewer people are around the vineyard, it's worth looking at your business from the point of view of a would-be thief, advises leading rural insurer NFU Mutual*

David Harrison, one of NFU Mutual's viticulture specialists said: "Consider the temptations: can expensive machinery be seen from the nearest road? Are people out and about? Are the security measures already in place obvious and tough enough to deter an intruder?"

Whether your operation is using vineyard tractors, other specialist machinery or ATVs, you will be vulnerable to agri-vehicle theft. Crime can cause huge disruption to lives and businesses – the cost to NFU Mutual last year was over £9 million – only a 2% fall from pre-pandemic times.

In recent months, criminals have increasingly targeted smaller, higher-value equipment such as Global Positioning Systems (GPS) commonly used in the arable sector and in precision viticulture.

The cost of claims reported to NFU Mutual for stolen GPS systems almost doubled last year to £2.9m. As the viticulture sector grows and embraces innovation, it's important that vineyard owners consider the security and portability of any new technology that they adopt.

Thieves also increased the value of their hauls under lockdown by targeting side-by-side, utility terrain vehicles (UTVs).

David Harrison explains: "While coronavirus restrictions locked some criminals out of the countryside, rural crime hasn't gone away. Criminals are returning, armed with new tactics and targets, and it's concerning that rural theft continues to be a real issue. Thieves have even used e-scooters and drones to move around sites and scope out items to steal.

"When we work together with the police, rural businesses, communities and other rural organisations to tackle rural crime, it can make a real difference. That's why we're investing over £430,000 in targeted rural security schemes this year to help police set up covert operations and recover more stolen machinery from countries across Europe."

NFU Mutual has been insurance industry partner to WineGB for almost three years and has recently run a webinar focusing on rural crime. The recording can be found on



Take steps to freeze out rural thieves this winter

the members' area of the WineGB website.

David adds: "Over the last two decades English vineyards have overcome huge challenges to become world class wine producers and a sustainable industry providing jobs and contributing to the economy. We want to support and protect the viticulture industry from risks so that it can continue to thrive."

■ Winter security

Robin TILL, technical manager, NFU Mutual Risk Management Services Limited, explains: "Thieves will strike at any time of year, but the darker nights and colder weather provides more opportunities. We advise growers and producers to look at their site through the eyes of a thief and start with entrances.

"It's particularly important at this time of year to fully utilise all of your security measures, this can include detectable measures such as intruder alarms and security lighting to CCTV. Many businesses are embracing new technology that relays live footage to mobile phones and set-off voice warning systems."

■ NFU Mutual shares its winter rural security tips

- Lock outbuildings at night and carry out regular security checks
- Ensure security lighting, intruder alarms and cameras are working correctly
- Consider installing an intruder alarm system where there is high-value stock and/or business of a critical nature, linked to a remote monitoring centre to

generate a prompt response

- Review building entrances to ensure that doors and windows are secured
 - When planning new buildings, consider using robust construction materials to improve wall and roof security
 - Avoid leaving vehicles and equipment where they can be easily seen from nearby roads by criminals
 - Never leave keys in machines when not in use
 - Remove GPS systems and other portable equipment where possible and lock them in a secure place overnight
 - Store portable tools and finished stock in a secure locked 'cage'
 - Join a local rural watch group on WhatsApp to keep updated about crime trends and suspicious sightings
 - Mark tools, equipment and implements to deter thieves and aid recovery
 - Use tracking devices, immobilisers and CESAR-marking on tractors and quadbikes/ATVs to deter thieves
 - Know what you own' – record all makes, models, serial numbers and photograph kit to help police investigate and aid an insurance claim.
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Mechanical harvesting proves fruitful for UK growers

MECHANICAL HARVESTING IS TAKING THE UK BY STORM AS INCREASING NUMBERS MAKE THE SWITCH FROM HAND TO MACHINE. **VICTORIA ROSE** FINDS OUT WHY...

Even just five years ago, it would have been a rare sight to see a mechanical grape harvester making its way down the rows of an English vineyard.

And yet, in 2021, not one, but two Pellenc harvesters worked side by side on a Kentish estate, proving just how quickly English wine growers are embracing this technology for both still and sparkling wines.

In early October, over 20 leading vineyard managers and winemakers from the South East joined specialist tractor and machinery dealer NP Seymour and vineyard contractor SJ Barnes at a vineyard on the Kent / East Sussex border for a special machinery demonstration day.

From 10am until 2pm, English still and sparkling wine producers were able to see one of SJ Barnes' Pellenc Grapes Line 80 mechanical grape harvesters in action as it navigated the rows of Bacchus.

"One of the best things about the Pellenc Grapes Line is its suitability for our vineyards here in the UK," said Sam Barnes, founder of SJ Barnes and specialist vineyard sales advisor at NP Seymour. "Because it is a trailed machine, equipped with a hydraulic tow bar for better manoeuvrability, it can cope with the tight headlands we normally see in vineyards, which have been planted with hand harvesting in mind."

Those attending the demonstration were also invited to stand on the top platform to see how the Pellenc's sorting table carefully removes unwanted matter (MOG) and diseased fruit on the go, before then being able to inspect what the harvester had loaded into the Dolavs (grape pallets).

"The Pellenc is far more selective compared to any of the other mechanical harvesters I have used," said Sam, who

travelled to New Zealand to research the different makes and models back in 2019.

"The sorting table really is very effective at ensuring only the best sample of fruit ends up in the bins as, unlike other machine harvesters, you are not just relying on a de-stemmer and some fans to remove leaves and debris. It also has a much gentler cleaning method, which will be important for those looking to use mechanically harvested fruit for sparkling wine production."

During the demonstration day, the consensus among vineyard managers and winemakers was that mechanical harvesting was going to be a necessity for the future, particularly if the labour shortages and rising wages continue. Depending on the width of the rows, it currently costs between £1,000 to £1,250 per ha to run the Pellenc.

[Article continues >>](#)

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<< "For still wine varieties, mechanical harvesting is without a doubt the most efficient and cost-effective solution," said Claire Seymour, sales and marketing director at NP Seymour, the UK's importer and distributor for Pellenc mechanical harvesters. "I spoke to at least one winemaker who is looking at mechanically harvesting all their Bacchus from next season and is planning to adapt their winery receival line so that they can use lorries instead of bins. The English wine industry is growing and we need to make sure our systems and production processes can keep up."

Demand is certainly increasing for machine harvesting solutions in the UK. With almost 200ha booked in for the 2021 season, this year SJ Barnes had to invest in a second Grapes Line 80 to ensure that the contracting company could fulfil growers' needs.

"Anyone with over 60ha would find it justifiable to invest in their own Pellenc," said Sam. "But it is not just about buying the equipment; you need to ensure that you have a skilled operator to drive it and the infrastructure in place to cope with the logistics."



In an article posted on the WineGB website on 10 October, the team behind Kent producer Mereworth Wines explains why they have chosen to embrace mechanical harvesting methods as their winery expands.

2021 was the first year Mereworth moved away from hand-harvesting grapes. As with all decisions, there are pros and cons associated with machine-harvesting and hand-harvesting, but the quality of the resulting wine is not one of the defining differences.

"There has often been an argument that hand-picking grapes, as we have done with our previous vintages, provides a more artisanal approach to winemaking, with a supposed reputation

for higher-quality wines," explains vineyard manager and head winemaker, Scott Gebbie.

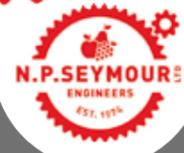
"In reality, machine-harvesting can produce the same, or even better results, as long as it suits the circumstances of the individual vineyard. Advancements in the technology of harvesting machines have come a long way over the last decade, making them much more gentle and precise in their approach, negating the argument that this method is detrimental to the grapes."

Overall, mechanical harvesting not only allows growers to choose the optimum time for picking, it also means that the job can be completed in a much shorter space of time.

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Demand is certainly increasing for machine harvesting solutions in the UK





Seven things to consider when planning for viticulture in a national park

There are 10 National Parks and 34 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in England covering almost 25% of land. These areas are recognised for their exceptional natural beauty and their special and iconic landscapes, which have been shaped not only by nature but by the communities that have lived in them. The need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of these areas now and for the future is enshrined in legislation, as is the requirement for national park authorities to promote opportunities for the public to understand and enjoy the special qualities of these areas. The requirement to conserve and enhance is a much higher benchmark than in other non-protected landscapes.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the government's approach to planning policies in England and it echoes the requirement to conserve and enhance the landscape in national parks and AONB. There is an expectation that the scale and extent of development is limited and that all development is sensitively located in order to conserve and enhance the special landscape qualities of these designated areas.

So, what's important to consider when your vineyard is in one of these protected landscapes?

1. Cluster buildings

Cluster buildings together wherever possible to reduce their visual impact in the landscape and cut down on the need for additional hard standing and access routes as these elements of a scheme can often appear stark in an otherwise verdant landscape. There may be redundant or under-used buildings on the land which can be converted or extended to meet the demands of the enterprise, possibly by way of permitted development rights.

2. Consider planting

Consider siting buildings close to existing natural screening and bolstering planting if necessary. With planting, particularly tree planting, it is important to consider the landscape character of the area. It is not about hiding a building behind a screen of fast-growing, dense trees, which could be in themselves an alien feature in the landscape, but about connecting that building to its landscape. Use native planting which will also provide new opportunities for increasing biodiversity on the site.

3. Think local

Whether you're looking for a traditional or a contemporary design solution, the character of an area and what makes it locally distinctive are hugely important factors. The landform and underlying geology will have influenced the historic

pattern of development and defined the material palette. Think local.

4. Visual impact

Think beyond the immediate boundaries of your enterprise. As well as immediate views of your site from the local road network or neighbouring properties, consider the visual impact of new buildings from long ranging view points, whether that's a public footpath network or local vantage points.

5. Dark sky friendly

Some of our national parks are also Dark Sky Reserves, so light spill and sky glow from either external or internal lighting will be a key consideration for the local planning authority. If lighting is necessary, give thought to using 'dark sky friendly' types.

6. Don't be shy

Make your business case and set out clearly how your enterprise contributes to both the local and wider economy, and how it plays its part in sustaining strong communities and supporting thriving rural communities.

7. Seek advice

Last but by no means least: seek advice early on as to whether your proposals need to meet other non-planning legislation (eg: Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations).

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Paris Smith's planning team has extensive experience in planning for viticulture in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). For further advice contact Jane Rarok:
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Why winery design matters

DR ALISTAIR NESBITT OF UK-BASED CONSULTANCY VINESCAPES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF WINERY DESIGN AND THE PROCESSES INVOLVED

A winery can be so much more than an industrial production centre – it's part of your brand and it can be as sophisticated as your wine. Wineries can also offer a unique and memorable visitor experience. All this presents a complicated challenge for the designer, who needs to fulfil the practical and technical requirements of a wine production facility, create a stunning and artistic building with the 'wow' factor, and also respect the landscape and environment.

In the UK we are increasingly seeing aspirational winery projects as found in other wine regions around the world. Bespoke designed wineries that offer exciting tourist 'destinations' with tasting rooms, cellar door sales, accommodation and restaurants – these are all aspects of the business that drive sales, create brand loyalty and increase profit margins.

Currently, consultancy firm Vinescapes is the only company in the UK providing a complete end-to-end winery scoping, design, planning and construction service. With a combination of skills, the team, which comprises oenologists, architects and viticulturists, understand winemaking, winemaking strategies and winery equipment, as well as architecture, project management, building design, engineering, planning, highways, landscapes, and construction.

■ What is involved: scoping, design, and budget

As an example, Vinescapes has partnered with architect Designcubed, led by Stephen Blowers. Using combined expertise, the team scope the project with the client to form a detailed brief along with the business plan. A realistic budget is set, which could be for a basic but functional winery, or it could also be for an impressive centre with spectacular spaces to host clients and tourists – with the numbers to reflect this.

The initial brief establishes the technical and functional requirements of the winery, such as winemaking strategy, tank capacity, production equipment, operating areas, and production flow. However, in parallel to the production considerations are the tourist activities; including wine tastings, point of sale, tours, events, restaurants, and accommodation. If any of these activities are sharing space with the winery, then careful design needs to ensure safety.

Early in the scoping stage all aspects of sustainability and energy use are considered – it may be that greater longer-term investment is favoured to reduce running costs in the future. As the building concept develops, there are many critical project considerations which are discussed below.

■ Planning and planning policy

Most construction projects need to obtain planning approval. It may be relatively simple, if an existing building can be converted under Permitted Development Rights, but often wineries are more complicated in terms of planning, especially if they are in Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (ANOB), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or National Parks (see a helpful article on this by Paris Smith on page 34).

Designcubed has been designing wineries since 2011, and is aware that planning authorities can vary in their experience of wineries. Having an experienced planning consultant and a planning strategy is key. The planning consultant can meet with the local authority, local interest groups and any stakeholders in advance of a formal planning application.

The South Downs National Park (SDNP) recently carried out a detailed study in conjunction with Vinescapes, on the impact of vineyards and wineries in the National Park, and the general findings were positive for the local economy as well as for ecological and sustainable tourism.

The study found a total of 51 vineyards located in the SDNP, 11 of which had

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<< wineries, covering 436ha of land. These vineyards were found to employ 358 people, including seasonal labour, attracting approximately 33,000 visitors a year and contributing around £24.5 million to the local economy. This contribution increases to £54 million when the impact on the wider economy is considered. Vineyards were found to employ 17 times more people per hectare than traditional farming.

SDNP has produced technical reports and policies accordingly, which provide useful guides and help inform planning authorities who are less familiar with wineries. The Viticulture Technical Advice Note (TAN) can be read via this link: www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/SDNPA-Viticulture-Technical-Advice-Note-TAN.pdf

It is important to consider the client's vision and come up with a solution that considers site location, topography and ecology, as well as addressing national and local planning policy. Pre-planning meetings need to show that all the required planning policies have been met and surveys will be conducted fully, as planning objections are often based on failure to meet these legal requirements. They also need to show an understanding of vehicular access, traffic capacity and a respect for neighbours.

The right design team can be inspirational, working with the vision of the client for the winery, along with an understanding of national and local planning policy. Try and have an open mind on where the building is sited, as when considering topography and ecology, the best place is not always the obvious place.

The technical fit out

Aside from the aesthetics, a winery's main purpose is to produce and possibly age wine, so the most critical part of winery design is having a well-planned layout. The aim is to create a seamless winery design for efficient production flow – a space where winery staff can get their tasks done.

Some of the more mundane, but vital elements, need to be considered such as a durable, hygienic, winery floor, with efficient integrated drainage, and the disposal of wastewater. There needs to be adequate space for forklift operations and even areas to wash picking crates. Disgorging, packaging, and bottling areas need to be considered and are usually separate to the main winemaking area. A spectacular barrel hall is always a hit with visitors.

Staff need to be able to work safely in the winery. There must be efficient extraction and monitoring of CO₂, facilities to safely store and handle chemicals, and practical solutions to avoid a spaghetti-network of pipes, hoses, or power cables.

Storage capacity is frequently far greater than 'spreadsheet' calculations suggest, and palletised dry goods, including empty bottles should not be forgotten.

Maintaining specific temperatures within the facility is critical, and a good civil and structural engineer can save

money and provide key solutions. They will be able to consider the soil type and topography, with a view to excavating cellars and the basement area, which provide naturally stable temperatures and reduce cooling costs. In addition, technical fit-outs may also include refrigeration, controlled temperature storage and insulation solutions.

Utilities, services, and wastewater

Winemaking uses a lot of water, particularly during harvest, so a reliable supply and efficient removal of wastewater is an inevitable part of winery operation.

Your team should consider the best solutions for the power requirements of the winery, which can be substantial, and this may include solar and renewables, along with charging points for electric vehicles.

Good design does not have to be expensive. Often, when the design is right it looks simple, but still retains the visual drama and impact required – especially when surrounded by vines.

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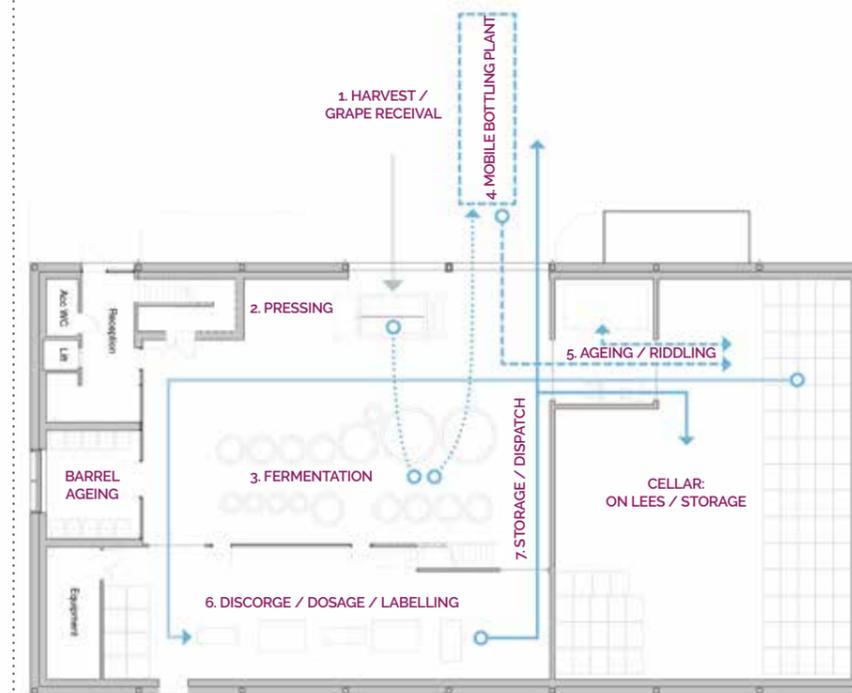
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Harvest report for Great Britain – 2021

IN HIS ANNUAL HARVEST REPORT, VITICULTURAL CONSULTANT **STEPHEN SKELTON MW** REPORTS ON CONDITIONS EXPERIENCED THIS YEAR AND THE RESULTS OF HIS GROWER/PRODUCER SURVEY. MORE INFORMATION CAN BE FOUND ON WWW.ENGLISHWINE.COM

2021 will be remembered by many producers as a year with a late start, indifferent summer, and a problematic growing season. For some, this resulted in high levels of disease, leading to poor, even very poor yields, with some vineyards choosing not to pick at all. For others, and much to their surprise, the late flowering coincided with good weather, leading in some cases, to above average yields.

Excellent canopy management (especially de-leafing) was required, plus effective and timely spraying, to maintain crops. This helped keep disease, most noticeably downy mildew, under control, and growers were able to harvest clean fruit. Sugar levels were only very slightly down on average, but acid levels were significantly higher than average, suggesting a good year for long-aged sparkling wines, and less good for quick-drinking still wines.

Weather conditions for the year

2021 started off with storm Christoph (January) and then storm Darcy (February) bringing snow, rain and floods to several parts of Britain. Rainfall in February was well above average, while the March weather returned to the norm, at least until the end of the month, when temperatures soared. However, it turned cold again in April with -9°C recorded on 7 April.

Despite terrible reports of frost-damaged vines in Europe, many vineyards in Britain (but not all) escaped harm as their vines had barely burst their buds. Some growers reported losses of 10%-15% from frost, but losses were mainly light.

May was cold to start with and wet in the middle, but there was then a sustained hot spell at the end and into June. Flowering started in some vineyards on 23/24 June, almost a full month later than 2020.

After a very hot spell in July there followed what can only be described as the summer from hell. The constant on-off rain and heat were perfect for mildew of both types and many growers were spraying weekly to try and control disease. August was generally cool with intermittent bouts of rain. Véraison didn't

show its face until the first 10 days of September and although temperatures improved, it was slow, with some reds struggling to fully colour up at all.

The April-October GDDs at around 870 were not far off those of 2020 and above the LTA [1981-2010 long-term average] of just under 800. However, growers in parts of Essex and Kent reported GDDs of 960-1,000.

Picking started with some early varieties around 25 September, almost a month later than in 2020, and finished at the end of the second week in November. This was not the latest ever harvest date – that was in 2012 – but it was still late.

Despite the late spring with its frosts, the patchy flowering weather, lousy summer, late véraison and indifferent October, in many vineyards, crops have been relatively successful. Several vineyards have reported yields of the 2019 level (second highest of recent times), with fruit clean and ripe. Acids are high, perfect for sparkling, but not so good for the still wine brigade. However, many growers struggled (and in some cases totally failed) to keep their crops clean. 2021 was also a very testing year for organic and biodynamic growers with their limited arsenal of plant protection products, and while some made it, others didn't.

Data collected from 75 separate vineyards with 231 different plots (each plot with one variety) and covering 360 ha of cropping vineyards showed an average yield of 5.24 tonnes/ha (2.12 tonnes/acre) with sugar levels at 8.75% potential alcohol and total acids of 11.84 g/l (as tartaric). For most varieties, potential alcohol levels were down by around 0.5% and acids up by varying amounts. However, these figures are from a relatively small number of producers, and do not contain data from many of the less successful vineyards.

Taking an educated guess, these figures suggest a national average for 2021 of around 22.50 hl/ha, which is just below the 10-year national average of 25.24 hl/ha. Based on an estimated 2,700 ha of cropping vineyards, this would result in a national yield of 60,750 hl or 8.10 million x 75 cl bottles, very similar to 2020 results, despite the increased cropping area.

Growing cellar door sales through placemaking

Creating new marketing opportunities has never been more important than it will be post-COVID and placemaking could be a fantastic tool to help increase cellar door sales and boost the profile of English wines.

Placemaking is relatively new in the context of the land-based sector, but it is a process land and property agent Strutt & Parker believes has huge potential as businesses look to find creative ways of engaging with potential customers.

When venture capitalists consider buying a business, two of the first KPIs they analyse are Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) and Average Basket Value (ABV). The former is the number of customers acquired as a result of investment in marketing and sales, the latter is the average value of goods or services paid for in a transaction. A good grip of these metrics means they can estimate the revenue that could be generated from investment in marketing and sales.

A lower CAC is better, as it means it is costing less to win customers, while a higher ABV is preferred, as people are willing to spend proportionately more when they buy goods or services compared to when buying from others in the same sector.

Businesses winning new customers at a relatively low marketing cost are often those situated in places with good footfall, and where there are long dwell times and high return rates. Effectively, they are businesses in lovely places that people enjoy visiting and where they want to spend their time.

This simple understanding is at the heart of placemaking. It's a hands-on approach to increasing the quantity and quality of footfall to your business, by building a relationship with the customer that keeps them there for a longer and in doing so encourages them to spend more.

The key principles of placemaking are as follows:

■ The anchor

The anchor is the key, identifiable reason that customers would choose to visit a place. For vineyards the anchor might be the opportunity for people to get first-hand experience of what a vineyard looks like and how it works. It might centre around an impressive view from a particular point of the site, a tour, or it could involve advertising the chance to come and get involved in picking and harvesting the grapes.

The pandemic has highlighted that people who don't have green spaces on their doorstep are desperate to access them. This presents tremendous opportunities for land-based businesses to use their beautiful outdoor spaces as a vehicle to develop new products and services that fulfil people's need to spend time in calming, beautiful spaces and feel more connected to nature.

■ The power of 10+

One of the main principles of the placemaking concept is that places thrive when people have a range of reasons (10+) to be there. There is no magic in the number 10, rather it is a reminder that more is better. This suggests there is an opportunity for vineyards to increase their footfall by inviting complementary

businesses into your world to give customers more reasons to visit and increase the length of their visit.

The possibilities are endless. This could involve ideas like yoga sessions among the vines or hosting an exhibition by a local artist in the tasting room. You could invite local food businesses who are producing bespoke, high-end foods like chocolate, charcuterie or artisan cheese to set up a pop-up shop.

■ Creating clusters of like-minded businesses

The choice of which businesses to partner with to create this multi-layered experience for customers is crucial. It requires taking a strict editorial approach to ensure businesses that are clustered together have shared values and complement each other by appealing to a similar sort of customer.

It also involves thinking carefully about how to link each business together and to the anchor, so that customers can move seamlessly between them and the amazing landscapes they are immersed in. The visitor experience is key.

■ Take a customer-centric approach

Many vineyards are already engaging with their customers by inviting people to visit, take a tour and taste wine. But there is potential to take this further and create a new level of engagement.

■ There is so much you can get back from your customers if you encourage them to give

Feedback, either in person or through social media. It will also be worth monitoring the takings on days when you invite various collaborators to trade/exhibit at the winery, and seeing what impact their presence has on visitor numbers and bottles sold.

The coronavirus pandemic has brought about change in every industry and the wine industry is no exception. The good news is that rural placemaking is a process which we believe has huge potential for the wine industry, helping individual businesses to grow whilst supporting exciting plans to further develop wine tourism in the UK.



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Nick Watson is head of Strutt & Parker's Viticulture Group and also senior director, Land Management:
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The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on English wine producers



ANDREA QUIRRENBACH BA (HONS) WINE BUSINESS

The COVID-19 lockdowns of 2020, with the complete shut-down of the hospitality sector, resulted in the sudden and almost complete collapse of one of the wine industry's most important sales channels. Wine producers were forced to adapt and change their business strategies at short notice, while dealing with a number of unprecedented problems, as well as the opportunities that have presented themselves throughout the crisis.

This study highlights the strategies employed by English wine producers to mitigate the challenges of 2020.

■ Diversify sales channels

The pandemic has shown that the greatest initial losses were sustained by companies who concentrated on trade sales, especially the on-trade. A better balance of trade and DTC sales leaves producers not only less exposed in an economic crisis, but also increases revenue through higher DTC margins.

■ Invest in DTC sales

Online sales platforms have proven to be the most important DTC channel during the pandemic. Producers have learned that their websites should be consumer-friendly, attractive, easy to navigate and, crucially, regularly updated.

■ Communicate with consumers

The use of social media, (in particular Instagram, Facebook) and email, helps to shape and control brand image through interesting, seasonal and educational stories, new products, special offers and competitions. The creation of balanced, consistent content and the use of attractive photography and images is essential. Technical knowledge to handle social media in-house, or engage outside professional help, to increase followers and utilise available marketing and sales tools is required.

■ Support your trade customers

Many producers stressed the importance of continued communication with, and support of, their trade customers throughout this crisis wherever possible, as this is a relatively small and close-knit industry in the UK.

■ Cultivate the local community

Buying local is a growing trend and the pandemic has shown there is great support for vineyards from their local communities, resulting in repeat custom, brand loyalty and free advertising. Sustainability is an increasingly important factor in buying local as well as making purchasing decisions in general. Sustainability is becoming an important marketing tool.

■ Invest in hospitality

English vineyards need to become real destinations, not just for wine tourists but for the local community and beyond. Tours and tastings initially attract visitors, but a shop, cafe, restaurant or picnic area will result in repeat visits, foster brand loyalty and help increase sales. Interesting facilities, including special events, a wine trail, accommodation or a wedding venue, will entice visitors and broaden the vineyard's appeal. The need to invest in accessibility so that all members of the public can enjoy the experience of visiting an English vineyard is also extremely important.

■ Consider collaborations

Joint offers, tastings or events with artisan food producers, chefs, local hotels, neighbouring vineyards, or teaming up with suitable brands will create increased interest, visibility, customer databases and sales.

■ Wine competitions and media

Winning awards and competition medals translate into increased brand visibility, consumer interest and confidence and, ultimately, bottle sales, as does favourable media coverage by wine writers and journalists.

■ Consider a wine club

Wine clubs are a vital and very effective sales channel in the US but still a novelty in this country. While they require an initial investment, the long-term benefits to the business in sales, stock control, margins and brand loyalty etc, are quite obvious. Specialist software and professional help to set them up are available in the UK. Wine clubs offer great benefits to the business and the member.



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English sparkling wine vs Champagne



A STUDY EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF THE "CHAMPAGNE EFFECT" ON ENGLISH CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION BY **NEIL WALKER** MSC VITICULTURE & OENOLOGY

The power of brands is one of the most influential factors in determining consumer choices. It is even more prevalent in the luxury wine sector. This study aims to investigate the impact of the "Champagne effect" on the luxury sparkling wine consumption sector in England.

Fifty-four regular English wine consumers (45% male; 55% female) participated in an experiment involving two wine tasting steps (blind and informed). In the first step (blind condition), consumers were invited to describe four Champagnes and four English sparklings using the check-all-that-apply (CATA) methodology. Then, they were asked to indicate how much they liked each wine on a nine-point scale. After a one-hour break, the subjects were invited to evaluate the same wines in the same way, but now they were aware of the origin of the wine they were tasting (i.e., if they were tasting

Champagne or English Sparkling Wine). In both conditions, the samples were served individually and randomly sorted. The results showed that the Champagne effect was decisive on guiding consumers' evaluation and appreciation of the wines. When they were aware they were drinking Champagne, the English Sparkling wines received lower scores of likeability compared to the Champagne. This evidence was supported by their descriptions. When looking at the nature of the vocabulary that consumers used to describe the wines, when subjects were aware they were tasting Champagne, they described the Champagne samples using the descriptor "balance", which is a well-known sensory marker of wine quality, while they used the descriptor "acidic", a faulty sensory marker, to characterise the English sparkling wines.

Clonal evaluation of potential fruitfulness in Chardonnay across sites in a UK vineyard

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SAMANTHA WILLIAMS BSC (HONS) VITICULTURE AND OENOLOGY

Bud fertility and inflorescence size were assessed for two French *vitis vinifera* (L.) cv. Chardonnay clones 75 and 95 across two sites in a Sussex vineyard. The performance of Chardonnay clones in major sparkling wine regions around the world has been assessed previously, but currently no literature has been published in the UK. The aim of this study was to assess the performance of Chardonnay clones in the context of fertility, a principal component of yield variation.

Methods and results

Canes were selected randomly during dormancy and cane diameter, cane length, and mass were recorded. Each bud along the cane was dissected perpendicular to the apex under

microscope to assess the number and diameter of inflorescence primordia (IP). Node number significantly impacted inflorescence number and diameter. Fertility increased linearly from node one along the cane in both clones, which plateaued at node eight for clone 75 but continued to increase to node 10 in clone 95. Inflorescence size was consistent mid-cane in clone 95 and increased linearly in clone 75. The impact of site was highly significant for inflorescence diameter. Mean inflorescence diameter was 3.6µm at Site A and 4.2µm at Site B. Inflorescence diameter was larger for both clones at Site B. A difference in response to site conditions was observed for cane parameters in correlation with fertility and IP diameter.



Significance of the study

This study confirms the suitability of cane pruning for Chardonnay and highlights an area of further research, being the comparison of single-guyot with double-guyot systems. Extension of this study to incorporate flowering and fruit set would provide a more comprehensive statistical evaluation of the yield potential and variation in these clones.

Planning your financial future in an uncertain world

Understanding the financial decisions you need to take today to realise your future ambitions is difficult at the best of times, let alone after the upheaval of the past 18 to 24 months. No-one could have predicted the far-reaching ways in which the pandemic would impact the economy, businesses and our everyday lives.

Yet having a clear grasp of your finances is essential to building security in later life, especially when it comes to landowners and businesses owners who typically have more complex needs. You may be grappling with decisions such as when to retire, how much wealth to pass on to your family, and the 'best' time to sell your land, property and/or other assets. With last year's stock market volatility still fresh in many people's minds and inflation surging to a near-decade high, you may also be wondering how to ensure your savings last as long as they need to.

Piecing together all the parts of your financial puzzle is not easy – and this is where a financial adviser who specialises in cashflow modelling and financial forecasting can help.

The power of cashflow modelling

It might seem like you need a crystal ball to understand your future finances, but this isn't the case. A financial adviser can provide clarity over your future, thereby helping you make the right decisions at the right time for you.

By collecting information about you, your finances and your goals, cashflow modelling and financial forecasting allow your financial adviser to build a full picture of your life and give a projection of how long your money could last. Once the initial picture has been built, your financial adviser can show the effect of, for example, saving more, working longer, or passing on more wealth to loved ones.

Cashflow modelling effectively enables you to 'rehearse your future' by exploring and stress testing both positive and negative 'what if?' scenarios. This may include:

- Realising that you can sell your business in two years rather than five and still live your dream life,



- Understanding the consequences of settling large sums into a trust for your beneficiaries,
- Buying a holiday home rather than simply going on holiday, and
- Whether you can afford to retire earlier than you think you can.

Tangible financial future

Working out whether you are on track to meet your future ambitions and what you can do today to support these goals is powerful. It means your financial future is tangible.

Many landowners and business owners not only face the difficult decision of when to sell, but also how much to sell for. A cashflow modelling exercise will build a picture of your future expenditure and inform your understanding of how much money you're likely to need from the sale or disposal to meet your immediate and longer-term objectives.

Another key priority may be how and when to pass wealth down the generations, particularly with young people today facing considerable debts and a challenging jobs market once they

graduate from university. Again, cashflow modelling can help you strike the right balance between passing on wealth to loved ones and meeting your own needs – both now and well into the future. You might find you have more than you need, in which case an appropriate course of action might be to spend and give away more money or retire earlier than planned. Either way, speaking to an adviser who is well versed in cashflow modelling and financial forecasting will enable you to make better decisions today, so you can live the life you wish to lead sooner rather than later.

Expert support

Brewin Dolphin has more than 250 years of experience helping families. We have developed an in-depth understanding of the unique needs and challenges that landowners and business owners face. Working alongside your accountant, solicitor and land agent, we can help you understand your financial position today, navigate the uncertainties you may be facing, and sow the seeds for a more financially secure future for you and your loved ones.



Carla Morris
Wealth Director
1762 from Brewin Dolphin
020 3201 3890

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Understanding bird-inflicted grape damage in UK vineyards

NATALIA ZIELONKA IS A PHD STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA, WORKING ACROSS ENGLISH VINEYARDS TO STUDY VINEYARD BIODIVERSITY AND THE FUNCTIONS OF BIRDS AND INSECTS. YOU CAN FIND HER BLOG 'BIRDS IN UK VINEYARDS' ON THE WINEGB WEBSITE.

✉ N.ZIELONKA@UEA.AC.UK

■ **The delightful and the hungry**
Whether it's the melodic song of a blackbird on a misty autumnal morning, the laugh of a green spotted woodpecker that has just burst into flight, or a breathtaking starling murmuration across a striking orangey-pink sky, birds bring us joy and help us connect with nature. However, if you're a winegrower, there may come a time when birds cause you to lose sleep, as seemed to be the case in 2021.

■ Sweet tooth

Going less for the alcohol-content and more for the sugar, birds, like humans, seem to be quite fond of grapes. Across all the grape-growing regions of the world, birds can cause severe economic losses by inflicting significant grape damage. Following the recent UK harvest, I've heard from some winegrowers who saw their entire crop of Reichensteiner and 80% of Phoenix end up in the stomachs of these feathery pests rather than in a press. Other winegrowers expressed joy in seeing birds in their vineyards and admitted to happily sharing a bit of the crop with their visitors.

Bird damage to grapes is spatially variable. Numerous studies from key wine growing regions found the greatest bird damage around field edges, and near hedges or lone trees. These habitat features act as safety blankets for birds,

allowing them to perch quietly and look out for predators before making the short journey to steal a grape or two. This is why it has been suggested that small and isolated fields that are surrounded by non-crop habitat, such as a woodland, are most susceptible to grape damage from birds.

Birds can shift their dietary preferences throughout the harvest season, making grape damage temporally variable. In South Africa, omnivorous species typically feed on early ripening grape varieties before switching to insects when these became available. Reports from UK vineyards indicate a similar pattern, as birds appeared to suddenly take a dislike to grapes over other food sources. This shift may be linked to changes in the availability of alternative food sources such as wild berries, grass and cereal seeds, and insects, or it may

be linked to the grape varieties available, as birds prefer red and sweeter grapes.

The 2021 harvest season was unusual and challenging, as the limited sunlight made ripening slow and the harvest late, providing more opportunity for damage. This made for an anxious wait as winegrowers vigilantly monitored sugar levels. With each Brix degree increase came more birds, which seemed quicker to know when the sugar levels were right. One winegrower joked that he didn't need to bother using his refractometer when birds were around! This preference for grapes with high sugar content was experimentally demonstrated and, taken together with the shift in birds' dietary preferences in response to changing food availability, sheds some light on why the timing of bird damage can be so variable and unpredictable year-on-year.

Article continues >>



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The culprits

Vineyards can be bursting with bird life, so pinning down the key culprits can be difficult. A few species tend to regularly come up in conversation, namely starlings, blackbirds, corvids (e.g. carrion crows and magpies), pigeons and pheasants. These species are common across UK vineyards, which makes them likely candidates, though caution should be taken in pinning the blame on them as losses are not always directly linked to birds' abundance. Relatively rare species with a sweet tooth have been known to inflict a lot of damage.

A novel approach to identifying the offenders, using motion-triggered cameras, was developed and trialled by scientists in Portuguese vineyards. The main damage-inflicting birds were local species of pigeon, blackbird and house sparrow, which were most active in the morning and evening. Pigeons and blackbirds, which are larger, were observed taking whole grapes, while sparrows pecked holes in grapes, leaving the skin behind.

The location of damage depends on the species of bird. Studies found high levels of damage in the topmost grape bunches, which are exposed to birds that perch on the vine. The species most likely to take this approach are medium to large-sized, such as blackbirds, thrushes and pigeons, while smaller birds, such as finches, tend to take refuge among the leaves and perch on the trellis wire. During my visits to vineyards, I noticed that numerous low-hanging bunches take a hard beating, with many having been plucked clean. The most likely culprit is the pheasant, a species that readily feeds on grapes and often jumps up to reach the berries. Damage inflicted by pheasants seems to be closely linked to their abundance as vineyards with neighbouring pheasant release pens tended to be badly hit.

Starlings are interesting because unlike other species, they are comfortable feeding in the centre of fields rather than the edges, and can quickly consume the whole crop of a small field within hours. This can be attributed to their grouping behaviour: starlings travel in groups that can vary between a dozen to several dozen in size. Safety in numbers means that they readily perch in the open on utility wires directly above grape fields and go down as a group to feed on the grapes. Conversely, some UK vineyards are visited by murmurations of starlings and retain high yields. Starlings don't always mean bad news for your wine.

Control methods

Bird damage can be costly, thus many ways of controlling and minimising it have been devised and trialled. Control methods range from visual (e.g. hawk-kites), auditory (alarm call playbacks) and direct exclusion (netting). These techniques are readily used in UK vineyards, though they all come with drawbacks. Simple approaches, such as eye-spot balloons and hawk-kites, have the advantage of being cheap and simple to deploy, but they often lose effectiveness as birds get used to them. Exclusion netting is more effective as it directly prevents birds from accessing the fruits, but it can be costly and laborious to deploy and collect prior to harvest, especially across larger vineyards.

Recent advances in technology have led to the development of more complicated multi-modal devices, such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV, also known as drones). Bird psychology has been exploited to build sophisticated and targeted UAV-scarers that are equipped with a loudspeaker emitting distress calls of the main bird pests, with a taxidermy crow attached beneath to mimic the sight of a bird of prey with a prey item. These UAVs can also be set to mimic flight patterns of birds in attempt to increase their resemblance to real predators. Some studies found these UAVs to be effective for extended periods of time at reducing damage caused by larger birds, such as corvids, though they were less effective at deterring smaller passerines.

There is a growing preference for natural farming practices among consumers and pressure to farm with nature in mind. Natural methods of attracting predatory species of birds, such as the provision of perches for birds of prey, resulted in a 50% reduction in grape damage prey in Australian vineyards thanks to lower levels of bird foraging activity in the vineyard. Encouraging birds



of prey back to UK vineyards is a nature-friendly and a cost-effective solution that warrants further thought.

A positive outlook

Birds are natural components of our landscape and UK vineyards, and a part of me admires how they readily adapt and add grapes into their diets. Of course, it is saddening to see the fruits of one's labour disappear over a few hours when there are arguably alternative food resources available. The decision to invest in bird control methods will undoubtedly depend on the degree of damage, which will vary between sites and years. My research across UK vineyards may help to identify some predictors of bird damage and name the key species responsible, which should help to inform targeted and optimised management. In the meantime, I hope that UK winegrowers and birds find a middle ground where everyone can enjoy the beauty of vineyards, and maybe just a few grapes.

Natalia Zielonka's work is supported by the UKRI Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council Norwich Research Park Biosciences Doctoral Training Partnership [Grant number BB/M011216/1].



Photos ©Natalia Zielonka



How access to capital can fuel the next chapter for UK sparkling wine

November's Vineyard & Winery Show turned out to be the largest industry event of its kind, with over 70 exhibitors, 1,300 visitor registrations and a packed schedule of seminars and tastings.

Some of the key topics included investment in wine tourism to support the growth of the industry, building resilience in a changing climate and optimising quality potential.

The seminar series was sponsored by WineGB's exclusive funding partner Ferovinum. Here, Ferovinum talks about how it is helping producers face these issues.

Investing for growth

As previously reported by WineGB, in 2020 visits to vineyards and wineries rose on average by 57%. Over 28% of UK producers' sales were made at the cellar door, with another 22% made through direct-to-consumer channels.

Producers who are able to invest in creating suitable facilities, training staff to deliver a great customer experience and robust direct to consumer capabilities will be able to take advantage of shifting consumer buying behaviour and home-grown tourism, unlocking the lifetime value of an engaged consumer.

So far, Ferovinum has supported a number of UK producers in making these investments by releasing capital against existing wine stock; a more efficient way to access funding than heavy reliance on owners' equity or bank debt. It also creates a sustainable capital cycle for the industry where the value of the wine itself is used to access funding to be re-invested in cultivating consumer demand.

The inventory funding platform has now formed the key institutional partnerships that will support the deployment of over £100 million of funding into the drinks sector in the UK in 2022 and is expected to add further banks and institutional capital providers to its platform in the coming months.

Building resilience and reducing liquidity risk in a changing climate

While climate change creates the potential for increased yields, it also brings the threat of freak weather events and unpredictability. Producers must expect the unexpected. Having both flexible access to liquidity to weather the storms and the capacity to profitably capture the opportunities created by record yields is crucial.

As well as creating a buffer against liquidity risk, Ferovinum's funding platform has also enabled producers to take advantage of opportunities in an agile way, such as financing the purchase of additional stock at short notice and also funding the bottling and finishing costs of larger vintages like 2018.

Optimising our 'fine wine' potential.

Matthew Jukes hosted a tasting showcasing some of England's 'fine wines'; those with the potential to evolve with longevity and complexity over many years. These age-worthy credentials were demonstrated beautifully by wines such as the 2010 Nyetimber Classic Cuvée and 2014 Hattingley Valley King's Cuvée.

While the cash-flow pressure of extended lees-aging is already well-known, as the industry matures the aspiration to hold back some stocks in reserve creates further capital constraints. Inventory finance can help support opportunities for late releases and for multi-vintage cuvées to benefit from the complexity of older reserve wines.

The future

It's clear that the UK wine industry has some significant opportunities and challenges ahead and that flexible, cost-efficient access to capital will be a key driver of success.

Building consumer demand, developing wine tourism and export markets, weathering the inevitable storms and enabling producers to achieve their highest possible quality product. All of these investments will ensure the long-term health and potential of the industry.

"We've now funded over a million bottles through the platform, for wine producers, whisky distillers, importers and wholesalers, and our clients love the flexibility it creates for their business," said Ferovinum co-founder Mitchel Fowler.

"The use case is particularly strong for UK sparkling wine producers and we're proud to be supporting such an exciting industry", added Dan Gibney, co-founder.



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Can blending increase efficiency of MLF?



DETERMINING WHETHER BLENDING BEFORE MLF IMPACTS THE KINETICS, THE CHEMISTRY AND THE SENSORY ANALYSIS OF BASE SPARKLING WINES IN THE UK BY **ZOË DRIVER** MSC (VITICULTURE AND OENOLOGY)

Background and aims
In high acid/low pH wines typically found in cool climate regions such as the UK, malolactic fermentation (MLF) is widely used to control the acidity. It can be notoriously difficult to achieve, due to the fastidious parameters MLF requires to successful complete. Problems with MLF cause significant and unwelcome expenditure of time, money and resources.

Around 72% of all UK wines produced are sparkling, and the widely accepted method for producing these is to blend the base wines after MLF is complete. Due to the youthfulness and small size of the UK wine industry, and the high proportion of fruit being grown versus the lack of space and options for processing it, many producers ultimately blend all their varieties together, despite processing them separately.

Each grape variety has its own varying degrees of MLF success, and these are very often then blended with other varieties that have also seen MLF, successful or otherwise. This project aims to investigate the possibility that blending the base wines for sparkling before MLF can increase the overall efficiency of MLF and consequently improve sensory properties of sparkling base wines.

Methods and results
MLF was employed on the three most commonly grown grape varieties in the UK (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier) as separate ferments, and as a blend of the three. The rate of MLF was monitored for all four treatments, and after MLF was complete, a fifth treatment of a blend of the three separate varieties now finished MLF was created. Chemical and sensorial analysis was performed for all treatments.

The blend of the three varieties had a significantly faster rate of MLF than the separate treatments. Furthermore, the chemistry of the base wine that was blended before MLF was significantly different from the chemistry of the wine blended after MLF; it had more favourable pH and titratable acidity values, and lower levels of spoilage compounds. However, the sensory analysis found no significant differences between any of the treatments.

Significance of the study
Blending sparkling base wines before MLF has not previously been investigated in the UK. With the importance of MLF and the production of sparkling wine, and the sheer number of small and contract winemaking producers in the UK, the results of this study have shown the need for further research into MLF on sparkling base wines.

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Flavour and aroma compounds



EFFECTS OF VINEYARD MANAGEMENT ON FLAVOUR AND AROMA COMPOUNDS IN VITIS VINIFERA CULTIVARS: A REVIEW WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR BACCHUS BY **TAMASINE HERRIOTT**, BSC VITICULTURE AND OENOLOGY

Tamasine Herriott reviewed flavour and aroma compounds with a focus on the cultivar Bacchus. Included here is the condensed abstract and the major recommendations from her review. A full list of references is available on request.

Vitis vinifera (L.) cv. Bacchus, bred in Germany in 1933, is a widely planted and commercially significant cultivar in the UK, where it accounts for a sizable percentage of all still wine production. Wines resulting from UK-grown Bacchus display aromatic profiles which are often compared to those displayed by *V. vinifera* cv. Sauvignon Blanc – the aromatic expression of which is known to be influenced by both vineyard and oenological manipulations. While the aroma constituents responsible for the varietal character of Sauvignon Blanc and their modification have been studied, limited research exists into the same for Bacchus. Terpenes and thiols as principal aroma compounds present in wines produced from *V. vinifera* were reviewed: their synthesis within the berry and the potential to manage them in the vineyard. The review then formed a basis for a proposed programme of study on Bacchus within the UK to equip viticulturalists with knowledge of how to manipulate final wine styles through vineyard management.

■ Aromatic profile of Bacchus in the UK

Originating from a breeding programme in Germany, Bacchus is the result of a crossing between Silvaner and Riesling X Müller-Thurgau. Early-ripening and highly productive, the cultivar exhibits pronounced flavour and aroma, yet in warm climates it can suffer from low acidity (Robinson, 2015). In the UK, Bacchus rarely suffers from low acidity. Though Bacchus wines are produced in a range of styles, dry, fresh, aromatic wines make up the main body of production. They are

commonly described as having citrus, stone fruit, elderflower, grassy and floral characteristics (Huntington, 2017). Vineyard decisions can impact the aromatic profile. Winemaker Ben Witchell highlighted this potential variation when quoted in an article in *Harper's Magazine*. He described wines produced from overripe Bacchus grapes as "tropical" and "almost sweaty" and those produced from underripe grapes as "citrusy" and "more austere" (Gilbert, 2019).

The aromatic profile of Bacchus is commonly compared to that of Sauvignon Blanc, due to similarities in their thiol and terpene profiles (Milanowski, et al., 2018). Terpenes and thiol precursors are located predominantly in the skin and pulp of the berries, with specific compounds occurring in different concentrations in each region. During vinification – through berry processing and yeast metabolism – these precursors are volatilised, further enhancing the varietal character of the grape (Maslov Bandić, et al., 2020). Terpenes present and implicated in the production of varietal expression in Bacchus wines include: geraniol, linalool, -terpineol and hotrienol. These compounds are commonly associated with rose, lilac, citrus, spice, and elderflower aromas (Krebiehl, 2020). Volatile thiols present in Bacchus wines are only found in trace amounts in grapes and musts. Those usually present in finished wines include 3MH, 3MHA and 4MMP (Milanowski, et al., 2018).

■ Proposed programme of study for UK-grown Bacchus

There is significant ongoing research into the aromatic profile of Sauvignon Blanc grapes at harvest and the final wines produced from them. Much of this research has been focused on identifying the terpenes and thiols responsible for its characteristic aroma and the potential methods available in the vineyard and



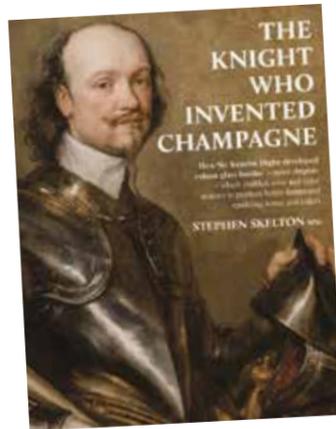
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winery to enhance or modulate them. With the aromatic profile of UK-grown Bacchus often compared to that of Sauvignon Blanc, much of this existing research is pertinent to Bacchus. The limited research into Bacchus indicates the presence of both thiols and terpenes, yet some results regarding the presence of terpenes are conflicting (Milanowski, et al., 2018). There are similarities between the aromas present in these two cultivars, but genetic and physiological differences do exist and the regions in which they are cultivated show differing climatic and environmental pressures. Further investigation into Bacchus is important to enable greater understanding of how to best manage and maximise its aromatic potential in the UK. Two potential studies to investigate the impact of vineyard manipulations on the aromatic profile of UK-grown Bacchus are recommended.

A terpene study to ascertain the following:

- The rate of accumulation post-veraison for each of the terpenes present in Bacchus
 - The various terpenes in Bacchus and their concentrations at differing harvest points
 - If significant correlations between any of the terpene profiles in Bacchus and other berry compositional factors exist.
- A thiol study to investigate the following:
- Fruit zone leaf removal as a potential tool to manipulate the varietal thiol character of Bacchus wines. This could potentially enable growers to non-chemically manipulate wine profiles before grapes reach the winery.
 - Extent of fruit zone leaf removal carried out at veraison and the impact this has – if any – on the varietal thiols present in final Bacchus wines.
 - Whether the levels of thiols present in the final wines are experienced as desirable or undesirable.

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WEB: www.carpenterbox.com/vineyards

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WEB: www.fastllp.com

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WEB: www.lallemmandwine.com

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WEB: www.mapman.ltd

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WEB: www.vineyardmagazine.co.uk

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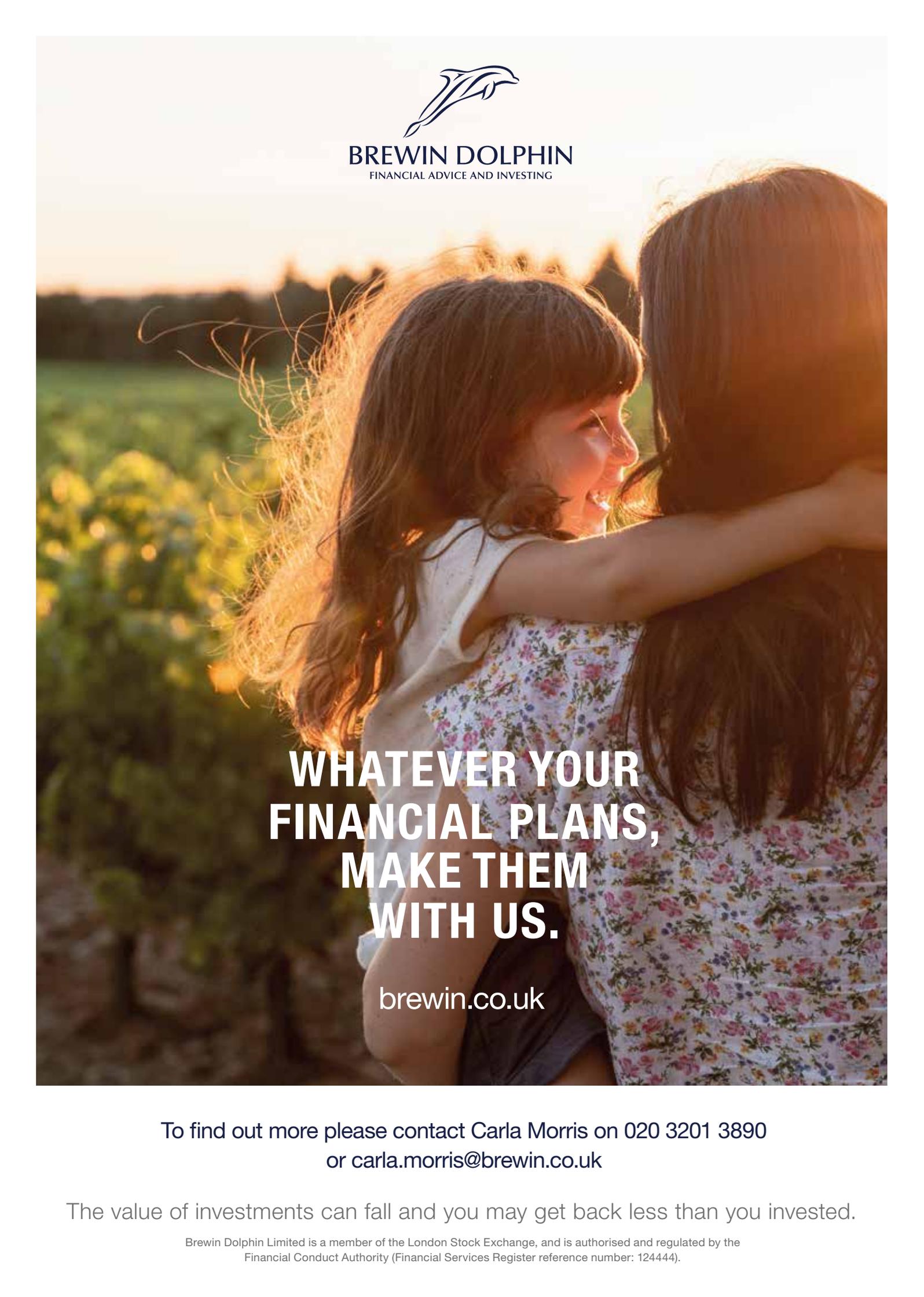


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