

GUSBOURNE

# VINI-CULTURE

STORIES, ESSAYS AND ARTICLES FROM THE VINEYARDS

SUMMER 2023



SUMMER  
COMES TO THE  
VINEYARD



MAKE A  
WEEKEND OF IT



A LOVE LETTER  
TO ROSÉ



CHALK & CLAY:  
A TALE OF TWO  
TERROIRS



THE PLEASURES  
OF COLLECTING  
WINE





CELEBRATING THE BEST OF  
SUMMER AND ENGLISH WINE



Welcome to the first issue of our Gusbourne magazine.

As Gusbourne's winemaker, I'm biased - but I believe the English wine scene is the most exciting in the world right now. We've come of age. And, over the following pages, we've brought together articles and experts to help tell that story.

Ours is a region of incredible terroir. At Gusbourne, this is especially true as we are fortunate enough to have vineyards in both Sussex and Kent. On page 36, we explore the idea of chalk and clay - and what the ground beneath our feet means for the wine in our glass.

The climate, too, is an essential part of what makes our wine so complex and food-friendly. On page 14, we explore an English summer in the vineyards as seen through the eyes of those who care for the vines. And, if we've managed to tempt you to visit in person, then you'll find plenty more reasons to stay and explore the area on page 20 with our insider's guide to Rye.

Elsewhere, we look at the idea of potential in English wine. On page 40, Geordie Willis - of London wine merchant Berry Bros. & Rudd, gives his take on the collectability and desirability of the world's finest wines, while on page 50 writer Henry Jeffreys takes looks back at the past decade in English wine, and hints at what's to come.

But first, if you're new to English wine, then on page 8 Laura Rhys, a Master Sommelier and our wonderful brand ambassador, helps set the scene with some tips and advice for enjoying the style of wine we make. It's a great place to jump in.

*Charlie Holland*

GUSBOURNE'S CEO AND CHIEF WINEMAKER



# GUSBOURNE

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Henry Jeffreys, drinks expert and award-winning author, gives his view on why England might just be the most exciting wine region in the world right now.









# HOW TO ENJOY ENGLISH SPARKLING

**Laura Rhys, Master Sommelier and Gusbourne's Global Ambassador, shares her tips on how to get more from your glass of bubbles.**

One of the many glorious things about wine is that you need know nothing about it to enjoy it. Pop, fizz, clink, sip, sigh – simple. Your appreciation can stop there.

But if you're inclined to explore a little further, then learning about wine is unbelievably rewarding. The more you discover, the more potential for pleasure there is in every glass.

England is an incredible wine region to delve into – not least because the wine industry here has the enormous benefit of being young. Even Gusbourne – which is one of the most established producers in the market – is still less than two decades old.

This means English producers have come of age knowing that making themselves accessible to customers is essential for success. Wine lovers don't need to untangle centuries of obscure traditions, conventions or complex processes to get to taste brilliant wine. There are no pretensions to navigate.

It also means that we – the producers – are still acquiring knowledge. The learning curve may have flattened since the first vines were planted, but with every vintage that goes by, we're refining our ideas about the soils we work with, our microclimates, our vines and varieties – and so on. As a wine lover, you get to come on this journey of discovery too.

But, aside from the bigger picture, where should you start with English wine? Which is the first bottle you should try? And how should you approach it compared with Champagne or Prosecco? Laura Rhys MS, our Global Ambassador, has these tips.



1

## IN STYLE, WE'RE INSPIRED BY CHAMPAGNE

"We use the same grapes as Champagne for our sparkling wine (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier)," says Laura. "In style, we're inspired by vintage Champagne production. The wines are complex and aged on their lees. Stylistically, we're much closer to Champagne than, say, Prosecco. But because we're English, we're also distinctly different."



4

## KEEP IT COOL, NOT COLD

"I know a lot of people who love ice-cold sparkling wine and there's nothing wrong with that," says Laura. "But if you want to get the most from your wine in terms of the flavour profile and the structure, then I would serve it a little bit warmer." As a rule of thumb, chill it to fridge cold, and then let it come-to out of the fridge for 10 to 20 minutes before serving.



2

## OUR BLEND IS SUSSEX CHALK MEETS KENT CLAY

The location of our vineyards is incredibly important. "In Kent, the soils are clay and sand," says Laura. "This brings intensity and concentration to the grapes. Then we have our Sussex vineyards, which are chalk, flint, loam, sand and a little bit of clay. These wines have much more freshness and structure and heightened acidity. When you bring the two together, you get weight, ripeness, concentration, freshness and elegance. It's why blending is so important. It's what elevates Gusbourne wines."

3

## SOME OF THE MOST DELICIOUS FLAVOURS COME FROM HOW WE AGE WINE

We age our sparkling wines on their lees - the spent yeast. This sounds rather unappealing, but it's important for flavour development. "Because of the length of time we age our wines, they have what we call 'autolytic notes,'" explains Laura. "So, you might expect flavours of fresh brioche or toasted nuts. The lees-ageing also helps to increase the complexity of the wine. At Gusbourne, we have a balance of ripeness and freshness."







## 8 TAKE TIME TO SAVOUR CHARDONNAY

Our Blanc de Blancs, a wine made just from Chardonnay grapes, is a beautiful expression of the quality of fruit that comes from our vineyards. "It has a pure, very elegant fruit character," says Laura. "Think green apple, citrus fruit, blanched almonds. As it starts to age, that complexity builds. The fruit character softens; new flavours of toasted nuts and biscuit emerge." Oysters are a classic match. "Or what about fish and chips? Blanc de Blancs is a perfect foil to the fat," says Laura.



## 5 FLUTES ARE GOOD, BUT WINE GLASSES ARE EVEN BETTER

Classic Champagne flutes are great in their own way. They hold the fizz. But, for fine sparkling wine, opt for a wider glass. "A tulip-shaped or white wine glass would be perfect," says Laura. "It aerates the wine and delivers more of those flavours to your nose and onto your palate."

## 6 GUSBOURNE BRUT RESERVE IS A GREAT PLACE TO START

"Brut Reserve is deliciously easy to enjoy and it's a great introduction to the quality of English wine," says Laura. "It has a soft, round fruit character. There's freshness and elegance from Chardonnay, weight and roundness from the red grapes and lovely autolytic notes such as toasted brioche. With food, it's wonderful with lemon and herb roast chicken, fish or seafood." You can also enjoy it as an aperitif.

## 7 THERE'S MORE TO ROSÉ THAN MEETS THE EYE

You'll find the flavours of Gusbourne Rosé remind you of strawberries, raspberries and cherries. But you don't need a summer's day to open a bottle: "It's delicious with lots of earthy flavours such as smoked duck and beetroot," says Laura. "And, as it starts to age, it develops a beautiful savoury character from the Pinot, along with spices, ginger and orange zest."

## 9 SNIFF LIKE A SOMM

The approach to tasting English wine is universal. First swirl the wine and take a few sniffs. "Often, you'll pick up fruit characteristics before anything else. See what you can identify - it might not be totally specific, but is it a citrus smell, or ripe and tropical? Think about families of flavours. Sometimes you can smell something really familiar, but you can't quite put your finger on it. That's OK. At home, work on building your smell memory - try and focus on different smells in everyday life." After you've identified the fruit flavours, then concentrate again and see if there are any more complex flavours. "Think about toasty flavours, spices and - in older wines - anything more 'tertiary'," says Laura. "Biscuit, pastry, roasted nuts and mushrooms are classic tertiary smells."

## 10 GO BACK TO THE GLASS

Every wine evolves in the glass as it's exposed to air and changes temperature. "When you first pour a wine, you'll often taste and smell those primary fruit aromas. Then, as the wine opens up, sit with the glass and chat with friends. Then return to the wine and smell it again and again. When you pour your second glass, it will taste slightly different to the first - you'll notice it unfold and evolve as time goes on." ♦





# SUMMER COMES TO THE VINEYARD

Each growing season has its own story to tell - and there's no one closer to this than our vineyard team. Here, we step among the vines to hear about the long, light-filled months at Gusbourne.







Everyone has a favourite season in the vineyard. The austere beauty of winter; spring's luminous promise; autumn's ethereal mists. But summer is almost impossible to resist.

The vines, with their full, lush canopies of leaves held aloft by a few gnarled twists of trunk, begin to reveal what the vintage will hold.

With long, bright days under Kent's big wide skies, it's a wonderful time to visit the estate – to walk amongst the vines and enjoy the wines that come from this patch of soil, these plants and this place.

For the vineyard team, the view can never quite feel bucolic. There is too much to do. Jon Pollard, our Chief Vineyard Manager, Jim, Dragos

and Adam, walk the vines carefully – their senses switched on; alert to all the changes.

"I love being in the vineyard first thing, before anyone else has turned up to work," says Jon. "It's a great opportunity to quietly walk a few blocks of vines and check on things without the phone ringing."

In June, as spring fully gives way to summer, the pace of work in the vineyard changes. "Flowering is one of the most rewarding moments in the year," says Adam, who looks after our vines in Sussex. "The flowers are so tiny, you can barely see them, but we watch them open and then it's all hands on deck. We'll select which to take off the vine – by hand – and which to leave on."

From long experience, Adam knows which plants can support several bunches – and which can't. "Some of our Pinot Noir gives huge, beautiful, open bunches of grapes – lovely to work with, but they don't ripen if we leave too many grapes on the vine," he says.

Then, once the vines have flowered, and the fruit is set, the die is cast.

"We'll be scouting the vineyards all summer," says Jon. "Gathering information from the plants – this influences everything else we need to do to keep the vines healthy and look after the environment."

In Sussex, Adam says likewise: "Our summers are a nice walk through the vineyards which

we're paid for," he laughs. "We're constantly in touch with the vines.

"It's the thing that everyone likes: no matter what you do come summer, you're always walking through, just pushing a vine back into the trellis, making sure it's neat. Shaking it up a little. If you're not in touch with the plant, then that's when problems can creep in."

While Jon and his team can't control the weather, they do have a few tools at their disposal to help mitigate mother nature. "Removing the correct amount of leaves can influence the quality of the fruit and the health of the vines," says Jon. "And of course we're always on the look out for disease."



As the season rolls on, with Swifts dive-bombing through summer skies, the cover crops flower and the fruit begins to swell. “In high summer, I love seeing the dragonflies in the vineyard,” says Adam. “They are such hungry little monsters that they need a lot of flies. So we’re obviously doing something right.”

Jon’s team have another – and perhaps surprising – task. The green harvest. To make sure the fruit ripens fully – and is as flavour-filled and concentrated as possible – the team will gently cut away secondary bunches of grapes. Sacrificing quantity in single-minded pursuit of quality.

“We’re considering the level of fruit on the vines, depending on which wine we’re planning to make with it. As the harvest approaches, we make adjustments to make sure that the fruit we pick will be at its best,” says Jon.

Then, in August, there’s a quiet moment. “Just before veraison, when the grapes begin to colour, they seem to pause – the canopy is still moving and growing and we’re all still motoring along, watching and waiting for everything to shift gear.”

Walking, watching, waiting, looking, touching, smelling: it’s a physical job that pulls on all the senses. “Being involved with the plants is what makes a difference,” says Adam. “It’s about being connected. Until you’re actually looking at the vine – really looking, thinking about which canes to prune or tend – you’re not doing your job.

“The key to happy vines,” says Adam, “is being there amongst them.” ♦

## VISIT THE VINEYARDS

There’s no better way to enjoy a glass of Gusbourne than amongst the vines at our Kent estate. Here are the team’s recommendations for your visit this summer.

### For a casual visit

We’ll be delighted to see you at our home in Appledore, Kent. Drop in to say hello at The Nest, our cellar door and tasting room, where you can pick up a map to guide you on a walk through the vines. With far reaching views over towards Romney Marsh – and the age-old Saxon Shoreline footpath to navigate – it’s an incredibly picturesque way to while away half an hour or so. Afterwards, pop back to The Nest where you can enjoy a Sparkling Tasting Flight of our classic wines. It’s a great introduction to Gusbourne.

### For a relaxed picnic in the sun

Another at-your-own-pace way to enjoy the estate is with one of our picnics. We have a beautiful open-air dining space at the top of Boot Hill vineyard, where you can relax at picnic tables nestled under a canopy for some welcome shade. In high summer, you’ll be looking over the lush vines and surrounded by our lovingly planted flowerbeds. Gusbourne picnic hampers come with perfectly chilled Brut Reserve to enjoy alongside local produce such as charcuterie and cheeses, plus delicious homemade bread.

### For a foodies’ indulgence

One of the glorious things about a bottle of Gusbourne is the ability to dress it up or down. It’s as at home on the white tablecloths of a Michelin-star restaurant as it is with fish and chips on the beach. This summer, we’ve got a host of weekend street-food style events, such as full-flavour Mexican tacos. You’ll be surprised to taste just how adaptable our fine, complex wines can be in the face of these robust, casual dishes. If you’re after something more fine-dining than fast-food, then why not explore our **Chef Series**, with guest appearances from Tom Kerridge’s two-Michelin star pub The Hand and Flowers and Kent’s Michelin-star gem, The Sportsman.



### Getting to Gusbourne

If you’re arriving by train, we’re just a short taxi journey from Ashford International station. By car, you’ll find us at Kenardington Road, Appledore, Ashford, Kent, TN26 2BE. To browse all our events, scan this QR code.

### For fine-wine fans

We relish nothing more than the chance to show our most exceptional wines to those who love to drink them. For an experience focused on a guided fine-wine tasting, then our **Discovery Experience** or our **Estate Tour** are excellent options that combine indulgence

with a soupçon of education. Our monthly **Icons Experience** is a chance to delve into the most luxurious corner of the cellar as we bring out aged gems and special bottlings. Our Head Chef, Anthony Coppard, has fine-tuned the art of matching these wines with a wonderful menu, brimming with fresh, seasonal produce.



# MAKE A WEEKEND OF IT

**If you're planning a trip to our vineyards, there's no need to rush home. Stay a while and experience this beautiful part of Kent. Here, Gusbourne's Sophie Sturdy shares her local expertise on the best places to eat, stay and enjoy.**

Tucked away in one of the eastern-most corners of the country, miles from any major road, is the little medieval town of Rye. It's a slice of East Sussex that seems to have been designed for a picture postcard, full of English cobbled streets, old churches and higgledy-piggledy Tudor houses.

But look just below the surface and you'll find trendy hotels and a gourmet food scene wedged in among the old buildings and retro tea rooms. It's here you'll find London weekenders exploring the little shops and busy high street.

Although Rye is a great place to visit in its own right, it also makes a great base for exploring the wider area, following the coast road past Camber and across the border into Kent. Hythe and Folkestone are less than an hour's drive and offer a look at another side of coastal Kent, where sea breezes, stunning vistas and delectable seafood are the order of the day.







IMAGES CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: THE GEORGE, CAMBER SANDS, THE GEORGE, THE GALLIVANT, BOYS HALL

## WHERE TO STAY

It wouldn't be Rye without a stay at **The George**, a 16th-century coaching inn lovingly crafted into a boutique hotel with an emphasis on design. Each room is different, and even if you don't stay there, have a drink at the bar and check out the bathrooms downstairs whose walls are completely encrusted with real seashells. The beautiful Georgian building is the real focal point of the high street and one of the best places to eat, with a fabulous restaurant that focuses on amazing local produce (Rye Bay scallops, anyone?) freshly grilled on their wood charcoal grill. A selection of English wines, including Gusbourne, completes the offer.

Just down the road in Camber, a mere 10-minute drive from Rye, is **The Gallivant**. It's positioned just the other side of the sand dunes bordering the famous Camber Sands beach, so provides great access to the water for walks, swims, or, for the more adventurous, even kite surfing (lessons can be taken through the Kite Surf Centre).

It offers a wonderful combination of top service, but with a casual, comfortable vibe – it's the perfect place for recharging your batteries by the beach, without losing all your creature comforts. The gorgeous rooms are complemented by spa treatments, yoga on the beach, and a lovely bar and patio for lounging with afternoon tea or a glass of English wine.

Ashford is a maze of roundabouts and retail parks, but it's got a useful station and is conveniently located near fast roads for getting out to Canterbury, or back inland towards London. In this prime location, **Boys Hall** is an absolute diamond. It's the most beautifully restored 17th-century house – now a restaurant with rooms run by an inspired couple who have a way with design. It combines wonderful food, caring service and stunning gardens, with a great location right in the heart of Ashford. A great place to base yourself to explore both the north and south reaches of Kent, without having to do too much driving.

## WHERE TO EAT

You'd never know about **Hide and Fox** unless you were a keen follower of the best restaurants in the sticks, or you had a local to tell you. This place is where you go for a very special meal, without any of the pretensions of other restaurants of this stature. It's basically a really, really good neighbourhood bistro place, but with a Michelin-star. You'll think you've gone to the wrong place, as their residential location in Saltwood, just

outside Hythe, makes them look like just another shop on a street. But step inside and you'll find yourself in a contemporary, airy space, sleekly decorated, attended by sommelier and restaurant manager Alice and her husband, Allister, the chef. There, you'll be treated to some very, very special cooking, over a five or seven course set menu, with Alice's recommended wine pairings – you can't go wrong.





Back in Rye, I recommend you head to local favourite **The Standard**. It's 'just' a pub, with good food, great beer and a decent wine list. Add in a dollop of history (it dates from 1420), real fires and a cosy, panelled bar area and it reminds me just how hard is it to find a pub that does all that, in normal life. It's probably my favourite of the more casual places to eat in Rye - go for Pie of the Day, Catch of the Day or their house burger, accompanied by a pint of local Three Legs Pale Ale, or a crisp glass of Gusbourne. They don't take bookings, so get there early, or grab a drink and head outside to the little heated pods out back while you wait for a table.

Going further afield, up to Folkestone, you'd be forgiven for wondering why I'm suggesting a visit to the crumbling seaside town that's been labelled 'up and coming' for 30 years. But the harbour arm and surrounding area really are charming and are attracting a new kind of visitor - one looking for awesome views, great art and high-end food and drink. It's beginning to feel like an undiscovered version of Margate. Park at the East Cliff end of town and walk through the country park down to the harbour arm. Get those views across the harbour by dining on epic local fish and seafood at **Rocksalt**, one of the places that gives the area its sense of style. Booking essential. Go for lunch, and then move down to the **The Pilot** beach bar for a relaxing sundowner to finish the day right.



THIS PAGE: HIDE AND FOX / OPPOSITE PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SCALLOPS AT THE MARKET, THE STANDARD IN RYE, SUNSET AT THE BEACH, ROCKSALT IN FOLKESTONE



An aerial photograph of Rye Harbour, showing a wide, sandy beach curving along the coast. The sea is a clear turquoise color, and the sky is bright blue with scattered white clouds. In the distance, a long pier or breakwater extends into the water. The land behind the beach is green and flat, with some buildings and a road visible. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

## DON'T MISS

**Rye Harbour.** The Sussex Wildlife Trust has a new Discovery Centre with lovely views across the sea, and plethora of information about the local plants and bird life, and a couple of bird watching hides. There's an easy circular walk, and a good café and shop to finish up.

**Church Square.** A walk around Church Square in Rye, taking in a climb to the top of St Mary's church tower for far-reaching views. Follow up with a trip to the gun gardens (just by the castle), and a pint of hipster beer or local bitter at The Ypres Castle, hidden down some tiny steps next door.

**Winchelsea and Pett Level beaches.** Shingle, not sand, but blissfully free of the crowds at Camber in summer. Wait for low tide at the Pett Level end of the beach to see the petrified forest – the remains of a great stone age forest, preserved when sea levels rose and evidence of how much the shape of the coastline has changed around here. If it's a weekend, get a Pett Leveller (foot long hot dog), coffee and home made cake from The Red Pig food truck parked in a layby opposite the beach. ♦





# BRIGHT YOUNG THINGS

**Mary Bridges, one of the UK's rising-star winemakers, is a long way from her Scottish home. Here, she tells us how a combination of grit, drive and focus took her around the world and back again to become Gusbourne's Oenologist.**

When we speak one bright May morning, Mary Bridges is dazzling. Not just because her regulation hi-vis jacket sits in luminous contrast to the bright blue sky and lime-green vines behind her. But rather because of her effortlessly dispensed knowledge, infectious energy and unabashed enthusiasm for absolutely everything wine related.

Mary is Gusbourne's Oenologist – a job title which, for many of us, is hard enough to pronounce, let alone understand. At the winery, her focus is on the chemistry and research side of winemaking. It's a complex, enviable role which she stepped into, slightly nauseatingly, around the same time she turned 30.

"It's about being determined," Mary says when we talk about how she got to where she is so quickly. "And I say 'yes' a lot – give stuff a go. I hate letting anyone down, so if I say yes to something then it means I have to find a way to do it."





“ You can't just make wine by numbers. Sometimes it's more about do we like the wine or do we not? ”

It's a commendable attitude – and it's one that's taken her from her childhood home – “a tiny place near Inverness; very much malt whisky country” – to just about the farthest point south in England.

“In Scotland, I was working in hospitality, but it was the wine side of things I loved,” Mary says. “So, I made this big change. I went to Plumpton to do a degree in viticulture and oenology.” It was quite the leap, but to Mary it made perfect sense. “My dad was a farmer, and my parents spend all their time in the outdoors, so there's a bit of that in me,” says Mary. “Even though I'm mainly in the winemakers' office, I have this connection with the vineyards.”

Before finishing her studies, Mary worked the 2018 vintage in the South of France. “Then by chance, Charlie [Holland, the Chief Winemaker] got in touch. Someone had dropped out of harvest at Gusbourne, so I went straight into the UK harvest. And that was it: I got the bug. It was a really easy choice to go into the production side of things.”

Before she joined the team full-time in 2020, Mary spent another stint abroad at influential Californian producer Merry Edwards. “I was just an intern, but I learned so much,” says Mary. “Heidi, the deputy winemaker, tasted everything every day, every ferment, every bit of juice. And although she did look at the numbers [the chemical analysis], even things like deciding when to pick the grapes was mainly done by looking at the colour of the juice.

It was a really important lesson – and one of the hardest things you learn. You can't just make wine by numbers. The numbers can look really good, and you might make a decision based on them, but you've got to know when to shut that off and get back into the tasting. Sometimes it's more about do we like the wine or do we not?”

In just a few short years, Mary has gone from a shy student of winemaking (“I needed a lot of hand-holding; a lot of guidance,” she says) to playing a key role in a small but hugely talented team. Alongside her colleagues, Tom, AJ and Sara, she's put her name to a number of our Winemakers' Edition releases. These small-scale bottlings are designed to let our young

winemakers follow their own instincts and ideas outside of the classic Gusbourne range.

But of all the projects so far, one sits closest to her heart. It's officially called Winemakers' Edition Pinot Meunier 2022, but Mary dubs it “Baby Rôtie”. Late on in the 2022 harvest, Mary went out into the Kent vineyards to hand-pick the ripest, longest-hanging Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay, which she made into a single barrel of precious wine. It was a true labour of love, which is why the wine will be sold to raise money for a charity close to Mary's heart.

“It's deeply personal. But making it – being in the vines and making the wine – is a massive reflection on how actually spending time in the vineyard made me feel better. There's a little bit of me in this wine.

“For me, it's a big achievement. And you know, it's just one barrel of wine. It's not going to change the world. But I'm pretty proud of it.” ♦

Our Winemakers' Edition wines can be purchased and tasted at our cellar door in Appledore, Kent. To be amongst the first to try these wines, you can become a Gusbourne member. Scan here to find out more.





Drinks writer and Gusbourne staffer  
Emily Miles takes an indulgent look at the  
easy, effortless charm of rosé.

# A LOVE LETTER TO ROSÉ

*I can pinpoint the exact moment that  
I fell in love with rosé. It happened - like many  
of my most intense affairs -  
at university.*





It was late May. The seemingly endless weeks of exams were over and I received a note from the college office announcing the arrival of a parcel. My darling, decadent father had sent me a case – six glorious bottles – of Provence rosé.

I can't recall the name of the producer – only that the label was beautiful. Like a Liberty lawn print, highlighted with gold. And the wine itself? Palest pink and absolute heaven. I've mercifully forgotten almost all of what I drank during my undergraduate degree, but I remember every single bottle of that wine.

My friends and I treated each bottle with a combination of reverence and Bacchanalian abandon – drinking it at dreamy, heat-hazy picnics on the riverbank, over long, late-evening conversations in the gardens and at spontaneous barbecues.

We guzzled it with nothing but bread and cheese. We drank it with cold roast chicken dressed with lemon, mayonnaise, green apple, toasted almonds, slivers of celery, cucumber and walnuts. We had it with burned sausages. It was utterly delicious.

I don't suppose it was an extravagant wine. It was classic, summer-fruit laden, mouth-watering, dry Provence rosé. But it was most certainly an extreme contrast to the “three for £10” bottles which were our standard go-to.

For me now, the sight of a crystal-clear bottle filled with salmon-pink wine, conjures instant pleasure. It's shorthand for friendship and shared experience. For decadent, sunshine-filled, high-contrast days with the smell of crushed grass and sun-kissed skin. For pure, unadulterated happiness.

It's not simple nostalgia. There have been many memorable bottles of rosé since, each tapping into that same rich vein of enjoyment. And I'm not alone. The whole world is infatuated with rosé – as it should be. This is a more-the-merrier kind of wine.

Because the thing about rosé is that we reach for it on certain kinds of occasion. It's easy and unpretentious. It's relaxed and fun. It asks nothing of you in terms of concentration or attention or fine food pairings. It is just pure pleasure.

Of course, the dial has shifted since my naïve introduction to Provençal wines. In 2006, Whispering Angel arrived on the scene – transforming the rosé of my (pretty-well-spent) youth into a vinous fashion accessory. Brangelina's Miraval followed suit, adding more star-quality to the category.

These luxury bottlings gave rosé licence to escape the birdcage of summertime-only drinking to become a year-round staple. And not just as a chic mountain-top tippie served in snow-packed icebuckets either. Sommeliers and restaurateurs added it to their lists, relishing its versatility and approachability.

There's aged rosé, which is interesting, and most certainly has its place (although I can't help but think what you gain in complexity you lose in joie de vivre). There are fantastic different grape varieties and styles moving to the fore. Deeper colours; more intense flavours. There are new rosé-producing regions emerging – Spain and the USA have elbowed their way past Italy in the top-producing countries.

And then, oh then, there is England. A new chapter in my particular love story.

When, on a beautiful light-filled May day, amongst old friends and new colleagues, I was first poured a lightly chilled glass of Gusbourne's English Rosé 2022, it was like coming home. Pleasure-filled memories flooded back. Crisp, refreshing and uncomplicated, this summer-fruit-filled, gorgeous wine was easy to love.

For me, there's a luscious symmetry to all of this. That a new wine can transport me back to a treasured place is magical. Just as sharing a bottle with new faces makes those memories part of another story too. And this is the beauty of good wine, good friends and life lived in the moment. ♦



## TWO STYLES FOR SUMMER

### Gusbourne English Rosé 2022

As delicious as it is stylish, the debut vintage of our still English Rosé is “bottled sunshine” says Charlie Holland, our Chief Winemaker. A delicate pale pink in the glass, this gorgeous wine brims with flavours of juicy strawberries, raspberries and redcurrants, with blossom and ginger on the finish. This is a wine to enjoy young, while its fruit flavours are vibrant, mouth-watering and delicious. Our English Rosé is incredibly simple to match with food. Think: sushi, grilled seafood, barbecue, salads, cheeses or lightly spiced dishes. Plus, it's sensational served lightly chilled on its own.

£25 at [Gusbourne.com](https://www.gusbourne.com)

### Gusbourne Rosé 2018

This multi-award-winning sparkling Rosé comes from the stellar 2018 vintage – and is drinking beautifully right now. Delicate salmon pink in appearance with a fine mousse, it shows bright red fruits, red apple and white peach. The palate is fresh, vibrant and dominated by red cherry, ripe strawberry and raspberry notes. A creamy texture and lively citrus streak combine to create a long, elegant finish. This is a versatile and delicious fine wine which matches well with a huge range of flavours, from sweet to gently spicy.

£55 at [Gusbourne.com](https://www.gusbourne.com)





# CLAY &

## A TALE OF TWO TERROIRS

Many English winemakers build their reputations on chalk foundations, but Gusbourne's is different. Ours is an estate of two parts, one in Kent and one in Sussex. These distinct sites are separated by (approximately) 100 miles above ground – and (even more approximately) 100 million years beneath.

In Sussex, at Selhurst Park vineyard, we're in Eric Ravilious country, surrounded by the chalk pathways and rolling downland which back onto the Goodwood Estate. But journey east, and you come to Kent's Wealden clay. Here, the profile of the coastline changes from towering cliffs to a gentle taper towards the Saxon Shoreway, the lowlands of Romney Marsh and, beyond that, the sea.

These two discrete terroirs are key to Gusbourne's winemaking and to understanding our wines. Why? Because you can taste the difference between the two sites in the glass.



# CHALK

“The clay in Kent builds more muscular wines, with roundness, fullness and body,” says Laura Rhys Master Sommelier, our Global Ambassador. “In Sussex, a predominance of chalk builds elegance and poise.”

Charlie Holland and his winemaking team can bring together these complementary styles to create beautifully balanced blends. Or, perhaps more excitingly, to dial in on the differences between our sites, and showcase these in our fascinating still and sparkling single-vineyard bottlings.



# What lies beneath

## OUR KENT CLAY

Clay soils are responsible for some of the world's most extraordinary and expensive wines. Take Bordeaux's Pétrus, for example. Today, purchasing a six-bottle case from this – relatively new – star of Pomerol requires several thousand pounds and a first-name-terms relationship with your wine merchant.

But what makes Petrus so seductively delicious? Accepted wisdom points to the fact that (unlike its near neighbours) it's located on clay.

The point here is not that Kent and the Right Bank of Bordeaux share the same geology – far from it. But rather, there is something very special about clay's ability to nurture vines which yield impressive, delicious and distinctive fruit.

"The clay holds plenty of moisture and also it's rich in nutrients," says Jon Pollard, our Chief Vineyard Manager. "This means our winter rains are held in the soil, supplying the vines when there's a dry spell."

Clay also comes into its own in cooler vintages too, thanks to its ability to retain heat. "This is really beneficial in the marginal British climate and helps to explain the levels of ripeness we see in our vineyards in Kent," says Laura.

"Plus, our altitude, being between two metres and 40 metres above sea level means we are not losing too much heat," says Jon. "We're in a sweet spot."

## OUR SUSSEX CHALK AND FLINT

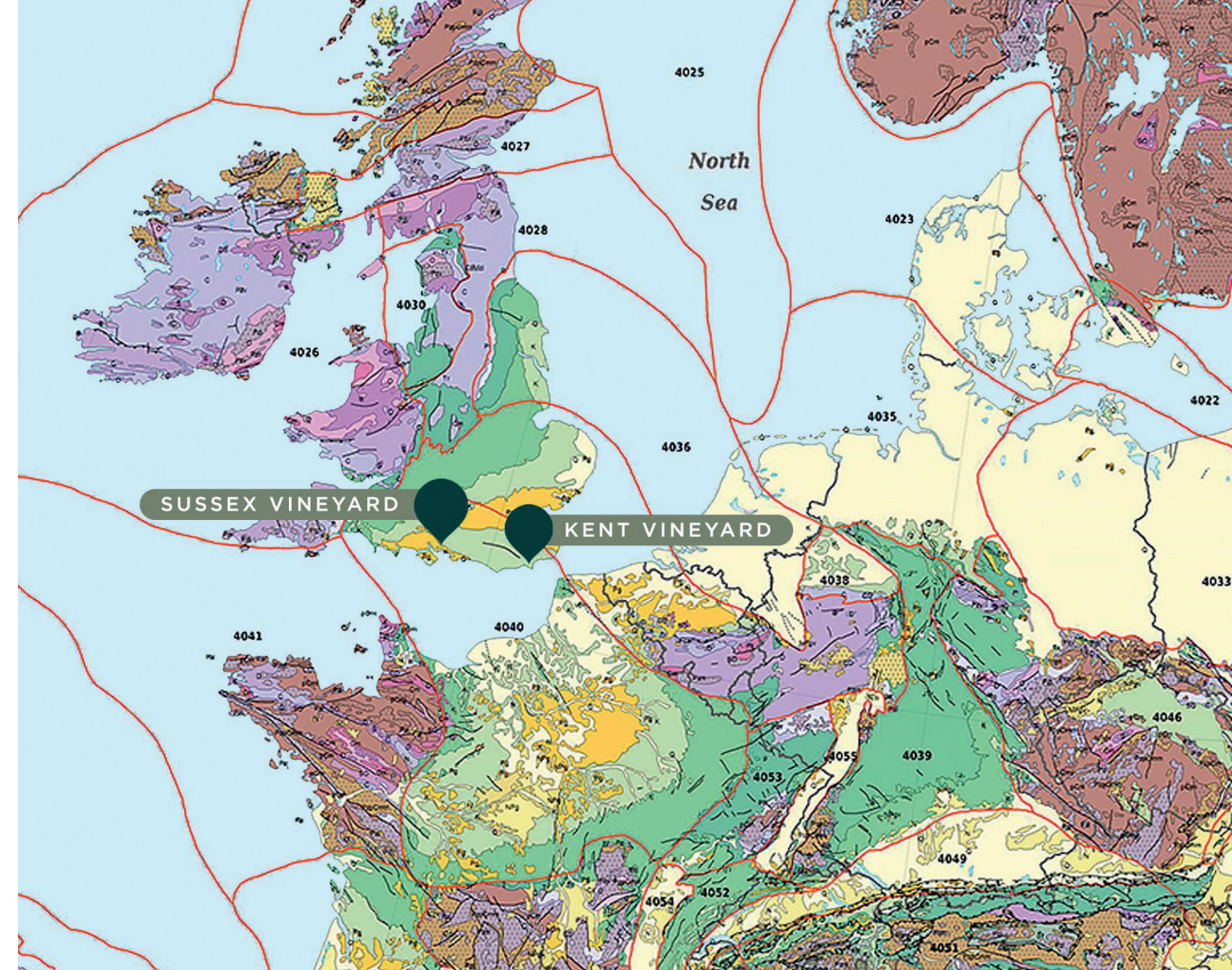
Back in 2015, famed Champagne producer Taittinger invested in Kentish vineyards, establishing their first holding in England. A wave of French investment followed as other houses staked their claim on this side of the pond. This vote of confidence in English terroir was based, largely, on the incredible chalk soils of the south, which share much with their Champagne counterparts.

Chalk lends itself to viticulture for a few reasons: it's mineral-rich, giving alkaline soils with lots of nutrients for vine growth; it holds and reflects heat and it is incredibly well-drained which minimises risk of disease.

At 100 metres above sea level, just a stone's throw from Goodwood Estate, you'll find our highest vineyard. Here, a deep vein of chalk sits just a few inches below the topsoil. This is where we reliably grow fruit that forms the core of our sparkling. "This is traditional South Downs planting," says Adam Foden, our Vineyard Manager. "Come harvest time, the Chardonnay in Sussex is the last to be harvested. Selhurst Park vineyard, being our highest block on shallow chalk and flint, is generally harvested about 10 days after our Chardonnay in Kent."

Head down the slopes though and you'll find a sheltered hillock and a large rectangle of a vineyard, with lots of woodland on the western sides and hedgerows on the southern side. This is Down Field, home to a different soil – and arguably our most desirable fruit.

"The soil here takes its time to warm up each spring," says Adam. "And it is trickier to farm, and the vines don't look like they thrive in the same way as elsewhere," he says. "But the fruit here tells a different story; this is the vineyard that all the winemakers want for their projects."



Our two sites are separated by around 100 miles, but in terms of soil and terroir, they're worlds apart. In Sussex, we're on sweeping chalk downlands. In Kent, the vines thrive on what was once the coastline. As a result, the grapes we grow have wonderfully distinct characters.

## IN SEARCH OF OUR MONOPOLE

Amongst our expanse of Wealden clay, Tunbridge Wells sand and Sussex chalk we've identified a number of especially expressive parcels of vines.

There are so many variables at play as to why a particular vine has perfect synergy with a particular location – soil is certainly a part of this, but so too is aspect, altitude and microclimate. Add to this the seasonal variations that come with producing vintage-only wines and it's a complex picture.

But with each year that passes, we get closer to our fruit and our wines, understanding a little more about the science – and the art – of making incredible wine from these special places. This is why we love bottling single-vineyard expressions: the purest way to enjoy a taste of our terroirs.

And, whether it's Down Field in Sussex, Boot Hill in Kent – or somewhere else we're yet to identify – we know the potential of our incredible vineyards is only just beginning to be teased out.

A number of our single-vineyard wines are available to purchase at [gusbourne.com](https://gusbourne.com). Alternatively, you can enjoy a guided tasting at one of our special lunches or dinners at our estate in Kent. ♦



# THE PLEASURES OF COLLECTING WINE

Whether you'd love a Grand Cru nest-egg, or a cellar filled with gems to enjoy for years to come, a wine collection can be a huge source of pleasure. Here, Geordie Willis, of wine merchant Berry Bros. & Rudd, shares his advice on getting started.







It's a busy day on Pall Mall. Tourists pose in front of St James's Palace. Flags flutter against a bright spring sky. But just around the corner, as you step through the doors of Berry Bros. & Rudd, you enter another world. It takes a moment to adjust to the darkly wooded, dimly lit interior.

Wine and spirit devotees have been coming to this corner of St James's for centuries, not just to buy, or drink, a special bottle - or to be weighed on the giant coffee scales which stand sentry in the corner - but also to lay down wine and create their own personal cellars.

Tucked away at the back of the old shop is the quiet, still sanctuary of the Parlour. A space suspended in time. Here, we meet Geordie Willis. Geordie is a custodian of the 325-year-old wine and spirits merchant and an eighth-generation Berry. There's no one better placed to share expertise on starting a wine collection.

#### **What it takes to be a wine collector**

We start by talking about who "should" collect wine. Over the years, rock stars and Royalty have built their wine collections with Berry Bros. & Rudd. "But these days, there's no such thing as an 'average' wine collector," says Geordie. "The idea of collecting wine is something that is interesting to all different ages, genders and demographics. The only real criteria are a love or an interest in wine."

But investing in a wine collection - rather than, say, an artwork which you can hang on the wall, or cars you can drive, or watches you can wear - takes a certain kind of mindset. After all, the greatest pleasure of a wine collection is drinking it. "True," says Geordie. "But the pleasure of collecting wine isn't just about owning something. It's about the whole experience."

And, whether people stumble into collecting wine by accident - "following a passion for a region or producer after they've travelled somewhere, say," says Geordie - or with more of a game plan, one thing holds true. Even the most casual interest can quickly become a deep fascination.

“  
Each wine  
is a story.  
It's a moment  
in time. ”

"Each wine is a story," Geordie says. "It's a moment in time - the year it was grown, the person who made it... If you've been somewhere and stood in a vineyard and felt the sun in your face and the gravel beneath your feet, then you have an inherently closer link to the wine. Undoubtedly, this sense of connection is also true of vintages: a particular year can hold a significant meaning too."

#### **Collecting wine is about the luxury experience**

While most of us like the idea that the wines we buy will increase in rarity and perhaps even value, Geordie is seeing a different pattern unfolding. "The enjoyment of fine wine is an interesting area - I think it aligns to what is increasingly important in terms of buying luxury as an experience. It's the equivalent of high-end travel."

"Even though there is immense pleasure in owning something wonderful, ultimately what you're buying is the experience of drinking that wine - and sharing that experience with those you choose to enjoy it with."

#### **In search of the newest fine wine region**

As fine wine collectors seek out this luxury experience, are they changing where they are looking to invest? "It may sound very traditional, but I can't see that Bordeaux and Burgundy will go out of fashion," says Geordie.

"For us, these are the key regions where customers want to buy the very finest wines. Of course, there's Champagne, Italy and California: as it becomes harder to secure the most coveted wines, people naturally look a little further afield."



And customers aren't just turning to the New World in search of collectable fine wine – especially when one of the most exciting new regions is on the doorstep.

“There's no doubt that the perception of English wine has transformed in the past 20 years,” says Geordie. “I think that we'll see increased demand – especially as people take pride in what we're producing. Locally sourced, British produce has a growing appeal, especially amongst the category leaders like Gusbourne.

“The great benefit of English sparkling wine in the past has been its vibrancy and freshness and immediacy in some respects. But, at the prestige level, if you have the ageability and the quality – if the wine is likely to improve in bottle – then people will want to keep it.

“If some of these prestige cuvées are as good as we know they are, then what's going to be interesting is drinking them in 20 years rather than just enjoying them as they're released. So, I suspect we'll see more and more of these prestige wines finding their way into collections.”

#### **Provenance is key when it comes to your wine collection**

When we talk about building a fine wine collection, we're not talking about tucking away the odd bottle under the stairs. It's important to understand the idea that fine wine will only improve if it's kept in the right conditions. And it will only increase in value if its provenance is perfect.

Not all wines are right for a collection. “The best collections, of course, are filled with those wines which you want to drink,” says Geordie. “But, generally, these should be wines which will improve with age, and which are best secured on release because of their limited quantity and desirable quality.”

Most commonly, fine wine is stored In Bond (where the Duty and VAT has not yet been paid) “And, to do this successfully, your fine wines need to be kept in the right conditions.” For a fine wine, the “right conditions” are somewhere consistently cool and dark, with stable humidity and free from vibrations or movement, but that's not all: “Storing wine

In Bond – before Duty and VAT have been paid – means you're able to easily sell wine on the secondary market,” Geordie says.

“Although most of our customers will buy wine to enjoy, you do occasionally find yourself with a surplus. If you have any intention of selling a wine at a later date, it's really important that its provenance is perfect. When it's been kept In Bond, that's guaranteed.”

#### **The future of fine wine**

Those who collect fine wine instinctively have an eye on the future – when will a particular bottle be coming into its drinking window? Which are the new producers to watch? What do the changes in climate mean for a particular region? These conversations naturally come round to sustainability and winemaking.

When you're talking to a merchant that's traded for more than three centuries, you're in the hands of a business that knows a thing or two about sustainability. “We very much see our role as a merchant as one where we can bring people together to create a conversation around the future of wine. This is fundamentally important to the wine trade going forward.

“These days, our customers expect our producers to work in a low-impact way. It's a hygiene factor,” says Geordie. “And it goes hand in hand with fine wine. We see that those wines which are made in a relatively low-intervention way with great care and love for the product all the way back to the vine tend to taste better.” Win win.

“Where we can help producers and customers – where we can connect them to help share knowledge about working sustainably – well, that's part of our future as a wine merchant too.”

**If the idea of building a wine collection appeals to you, you can find out more at [bbr.com](http://bbr.com). The 2016 vintage of our prestige sparkling wine, Fifty One Degrees North, will be available to fine wine customers wishing to store In Bond through Berry Bros. & Rudd this summer. ♦**

“ There's no doubt that the perception of English wine has transformed in the past 20 years. I think that we'll see increased demand – especially as people take pride in what we're producing. ”







The debut vintage of Fifty One Degrees North was released in autumn 2022 to critical acclaim. It marked a watershed in English winemaking, demonstrating that Gusbourne sparkling wines have the complexity and character to mature beautifully for years to come.





## GUSBOURNE MEMBERSHIP

# BECOME A MEMBER

We're pleased to offer two Gusbourne memberships,  
Explored and Collectors.

These memberships are designed to help you deepen your  
appreciation and enjoyment of English fine wine.

They come with a host of benefits, such as preferential pricing  
on our classic wines, exclusive events and – of course –  
regular deliveries of exceptional wines.

To find out more, scan the QR code below  
or speak to one of the team on 07425 841610.







# COMING OF AGE

Drinks writer Henry Jeffreys takes us on a whistlestop tour of the current English winemaking landscape – and looks ahead to what’s to come.



During the past two years, I’ve visited dozens of vineyards around the country researching a book about English wine. The final question I asked every winemaker was: “Which other producer do you admire?” One name came up more than any other. Gusbourne.

Ever since it released its first wines in 2010, this producer – based on the edge of Romney Marsh in Kent – has consistently made some of England’s finest wines.

I can still vividly remember my own first experience with Gusbourne: it was ten years ago at an event put on by a merchant. One of the wines I tasted turned my view of what English wine was capable of on its head. Looking back at my notes, I enthused

about its apple fruit and nutty elegant oak, and compared it to something lean and sophisticated from Margaret River in Australia. The wine in question was the Gusbourne Guinevere Chardonnay from 2011 made from grapes grown in Kent.

Around this time, English sparkling wine was becoming well established. Three years previously, a Ridgeview Blanc de Blancs had won the Decanter Award for best sparkling wine in the world ahead of Piper Heidsieck and Charles Heidsieck. And it was 16 years since the first vintage at Nyetimber had amazed critics by beating Champagne in various blind tastings. So, as a budding wine writer, sparkling wine from England was if not quite old hat, certainly not the latest thing.



But a wine like that Gusbourne Guinevere? I didn't know anyone was trying to make still Chardonnay in England but had assumed that it wouldn't be possible to get the grapes ripe enough. There were more surprises that day. The wine next door was also from Gusbourne, and it was a Pinot Noir. Again, it was a revelation – light and fruity, not green and raw like you might expect. I'd had English reds before and found them somewhat unloveable, but this could have come from Germany or Alsace.

Gusbourne's main business was (and still is) sparkling wine. Those early still wines were made in tiny quantities and functioned a bit like concept cars, a pointer of what might be possible in the future. Since then, I have followed these two wines as they have got better and better. Some good vintages such as 2014, 2016 and 2018 helped. But what's even more impressive is what Gusbourne's winemaker Charlie Holland can do with lesser vintages such as 2019. This was a tough year with a wet autumn ruining things for many, yet he crafted a Pinot Noir with bright red fruit, delicate floral notes and not a trace of under ripeness.

Today, the future is here, or very nearly. English still wines made from Burgundian grapes are no longer a surprise. There are fine Chardonnays produced all over southern England from producers ranging from the giants such as Chapel Down, with its Kit's Coty range, to tiny operations like Blackbook wines in London. We are now seeing increasingly delicious rosés too. The climate is just right to make pale wines with lots of flavour from red grapes. Proper red wines, however, are still rare and likely to remain exclusive for some time, except in the hands of a few – at Danbury Ridge in Essex they clearly have a bright future.

That rarity means that the best reds are beginning to attract the interest of collectors. Tom Harrow from wine merchant Honest Grapes recommended buying Gusbourne's Boot Hill Pinot Noir in a vintage like 2018 to people starting a cellar alongside the more obvious choices from Bordeaux, Burgundy and Piedmont. The same wine also had the honour of being the first non-sparkling English wine to be traded by brokerage firm Liv-Ex.

“ Those early still wines were made in tiny quantities and functioned a bit like concept cars, a pointer of what might be possible in the future. ”

The key to getting these noble grapes to ripen fully in England's marginal climate is to find the right places to plant them. Certain vineyards or even plots within vineyards are more suitable for making still wines, and it's important to not only plant the right grapes, but the right clones of grapes. This is something that is only just beginning to be discovered, mainly by a process of trial and error.

In Burgundy and wine growing parts of Germany, winemakers have been mapping their vineyards for centuries. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote, back in 1880, about how Californian vine growers were still at the “experimental stage” but at some point would find “their Clos Vougeot and Lafite. Those lodes and pockets of earth, more precious than the precious ores, that yield inimitable fragrance and soft fire... The smack of Californian earth shall linger on the palate of your grandson.” Swap the word “Californian” for “English” and you have some idea where we are now.

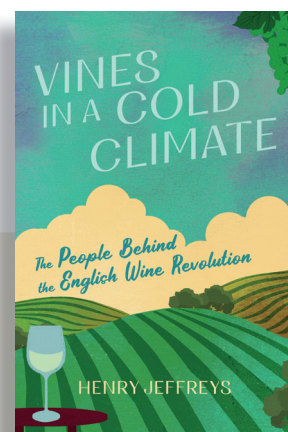
It's not just in still wines where England is beginning to find its terroir. Producers making sparkling wine are thinking seriously about which bits of land taste different and why. Gusbourne's single vineyard sparkling wines highlight its main soil types: Kentish clay and

Sussex chalk. The heavier clay soils take time to warm up but when they do, they ripen grapes much faster according to Charlie Holland, whereas vines grown in chalk ripen more slowly. And lo, the Blanc de Blancs from Commanders vineyard in Kent was noticeably fuller than its elegant cousin from Selhurst Park in Sussex – though I couldn't say which I preferred.

“ There's still everything to be discovered. ”

This is the exciting thing about English wine. There's still everything to be discovered. The industry may look well-established but it's still tiny: England produces at most 15 million bottles a year in an unusually good vintage like 2018. Compare that with Champagne which churns out around 300 million bottles.

And the roots of quality wine making are so young: Gusbourne was only planted in 2004, but England's best producers are now making wines which can be compared with historic regions. That this has been achieved so quickly is, frankly, astonishing. It's only a decade since English wine first turned my head – and both as a wine lover and a writer, I am full of anticipation about what the next 10 years will bring. ♦



**Vines in a Cold Climate: The People Behind the English Wine Revolution by Henry Jeffreys is published 3 August 2023 by Allen & Unwin**



# VISIT US IN THE VINEYARDS

Come and explore our home in Appledore, Kent to experience summer in the vineyards, meet the people behind Gusbourne and enjoy some of our award-winning English wines.

[GUSBOURNE.COM/TOURS](https://gusbourne.com/tours)







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