

## KEY WINEMAKING AND SALES PERSONNEL

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### MARY BRIDGES

#### Head Winemaker

Mary is Gusbourne's Head Winemaker. She took on the role in late summer 2023, just in time to oversee our largest harvest to date.

Mary joined Gusbourne in 2018 as a talented and ambitious member of the winemaking team. Working under the mentorship of former Chief Winemaker Charlie Holland, Mary quickly made a significant impact. She championed in-house wine analysis, producing data which allowed even more precision in our winemaking. Her eye for detail and finely tuned palate were evident.

Since then, Mary has continued to hone her winemaking skills and pursue her ambitious work in research and development and analysis. She perfectly demonstrates how precise, high-quality winemaking is the confluence of art and science.

In addition to working across the Gusbourne portfolio of still and sparkling wines, Mary has crafted several boundary-pushing Winemakers' Edition wines. Her most recent release, a charity bottling, was a sell-out success.

Before arriving at Gusbourne, Mary worked vintages across the world, including undertaking an influential internship with Merry Edwards in California. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Viticulture and Oenology and WSET Level 4 Diploma.

### AJ (ALASTAIR) BENHAM

#### Head of Wine Operations

Alastair, better known as AJ, is our Head of Wine Operations. He joined Gusbourne in spring 2018, with a focus on bottling, secondary fermentation, dosage and tasting trials, wine storage and disgorging.

AJ's interest in wine was sparked during a year abroad in New South Wales, Australia, while studying for his Politics degree. His head was turned by the idea of crafting something from the land - "a true artisan job".

Following his graduation, AJ moved to New Zealand to complete his tertiary qualification in Oenology in Hawke's Bay in 2015. He then sought out an internship which would take him through a full winemaking year with a fine-wine producer in Missouri USA. There, he worked on the sparkling wine programme - the perfect preparation for his next move to Gusbourne.

As part of the winemaking team, AJ's keen eye for detail and organisation was quickly recognised. He was given responsibility for setting up our secondary winemaking facility in Amsbury. As our Head of Wine Operations, AJ continues to oversee our secondary wine production; in addition, he looks after large-scale trials, lees-ageing tasting and blending. At harvest, you'll find him in the winery working alongside Mary Bridges, our Head Winemaker, assisting with blending and bottling.

### LAURA RHYS MS

#### Head of Wine - Communications, Education & Style

Laura's early years in the wine industry were spent alongside the industry's finest, including World Sommelier Champion Gérard Basset MS, MW. In 2009 Laura won the prestigious "UK Sommelier of the Year" title and in 2010 achieved Master Sommelier status from the Court of Master Sommeliers. Laura's time as a Sommelier saw her visit many of the world's vineyards and head up wine teams for restaurants, including Gerard Basset's Hotel Terra Vinaand Michelin-starred, award winning La Trompette.

Laura joined Gusbourne in 2015, as Global Ambassador, where her role encompasses ambassadorial and development duties both in UK and internationally. She also works closely with our winemaking and vineyard teams, contributing to key blending and trial decisions. Laura judges for Sommelier competitions as well as national and international wine competitions. She is an active member of the Court of Master Sommeliers Europe and a regular host of tastings, wine dinners and seminars.

### NEIL IRVINE

#### Head of UK Sales

Neil started his career in wine over 20 years ago as a wine buyer for one of the country's top restaurants, managing their importing and wholesale division. After establishing a wine retail shop, focussing on English wine, Neil held a sales position for Nyetimber, a well-known English sparkling wine producer. Neil joined Gusbourne in January 2017.

### DUNCAN BROWN

#### Head of International Sales and Global Travel Retail

With 28 years of experience in the wine trade, across both buying and selling roles, Duncan has worked in all key distribution channels for fine wine/luxury brands. Much of this experience has been managing international markets and travel retail operations. Duncan joined Gusbourne in June 2018.



MARY BRIDGES



LAURA RHYS MS