

GUSBOURNE

VINI-CULTURE

STORIES, ESSAYS AND ARTICLES FROM THE VINEYARDS



2025

FLYING HIGH:
PRESTIGE CUVÉE
AT 35,000FT

A DECADE ON:
MATURE VINTAGE
SPARKLING

OAK: THE VITAL
INGREDIENT

FROM FIELD TO
FORK: MEET THE
PRODUCERS

THE ART OF
BLENDING



CELEBRATING THE BEST
OF ENGLISH WINE



Welcome to the latest issue of *Vini-culture*, a magazine designed to take you behind the scenes in the English wine world.

We begin in First Class style as Gusbourne's prestige bottling Fifty One Degrees North takes to the skies this summer. On page 6, we speak with British Airways' buyer, and Master of Wine, Tim Jackson about this landmark moment for English sparkling.

Keeping the tone equally elevated, Henry Jeffreys — writer, podcaster and bon viveur — settles down to open three of our 2015 vintage sparklings on page 10. As compared to Champagne's "museum" wines, this — Henry argues — is where English wine offers its most exceptional quality and value.

Elsewhere, things get a little more grounded: on page 22 we take a closer look at the farmers and producers who supply the exceptional produce to The Nest, our tasting room. From Morghew's earthy heritage potatoes to umami-rich, creamy Ashmore from the Cheesemakers of Canterbury, the quality which can be found on our doorstep is second to none.

Then, on page 46, step behind the scenes in the winery as I take you through the art of blending — one of the most painstaking and skilled parts of the winemaking process. Meanwhile, on page 16, AJ Benham reveals the secrets of the cellar, sharing his expertise on fine wine's unsung ingredient — oak.

If all that inspires you to come and see our vineyard home for yourself, we'd love to welcome you to Appledore, Kent. You can find out more, and plan your visit, at Gusbourne.com.

Laura Rhys

LAURA RHYS, MASTER SOMMELIER
GUSBOURNE HEAD OF WINE - COMMUNICATION

GUSBOURNE

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Champagne has always been more than a drink — it's a symbol of celebration, glamour and wealth. Today, as English wine's quality aligns with that of its French cousins, it might just be time for us to join the party.



HOW TO HOST LIKE A PRO

No one knows how to serve and savour wine quite like a Master Sommelier. Here Gusbourne's Laura Rhys, MS, shares her top tips to ensure your next sparkling-wine-filled celebration goes without a hitch.

LIFTING THE VEIL: A BOUTIQUE VIEW

It's always a delight to partner with leading voices in British luxury. Here, we speak with Emma Marshall, the force behind boutique bridal outfitter Miss Bush to find out more about the cutting edge of bridal couture.

A WINEMAKER'S WEDDING

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Each year, we blend all our wines from hundreds of individual base wines. This meticulous process is part experience, part instinct and part data. Here, Laura Rhys MS explains how we craft wines to be more than the sum of their parts.

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FLYING THE FLAG FOR ENGLISH SPARKLING

As Gusbourne's prestige cuvée Fifty One Degrees North takes to the skies in British Airways' First cabin this July, we speak with Tim Jackson MW, the airline's Master of Wine, to explore how the airline is championing the very best of British winemaking.

When Tim Jackson MW joined British Airways as its first-ever Master of Wine in 2022, he brought with him not just an exceptional palate and technical knowledge, but a clear ambition: to bring the airline's drinks offering to new heights — and to give English wine a stage at 35,000 feet.

"I'd worked in strategy, finance and marketing," he says, "but wine was always my passion." After qualifying as a Master of Wine in 2017 — one of just 375 in the world at the time — Jackson stepped away from corporate life and began writing, consulting and tasting full-time. In 2019, he joined British Airways as a contractor to help shape the airline's drinks strategy and programme, before joining the airline full-time in 2022.

Today, Jackson is responsible for everything from tea and coffee in World Traveller to the prestige cuvées and English sparkling wines served in First. "It's a complete spread," he says. "But the starting point for everything is always quality."

AN INFLECTION POINT FOR ENGLISH WINE

British Airways has been serving English sparkling wine in First for more than a decade. "As the flag carrier, we always want to showcase the best of British," Jackson says. "And what we've done reflects how the wine industry has developed.



The turning point came in 2023, when English sparkling wine was introduced in the airline's Club World cabin. "That reflects a real shift in the industry. If you plot vineyard area and bottle production, there's a real sea change in 2018 — that vintage was two and a half times larger than the previous one, and the quality was outstanding. Suddenly we weren't talking about three to five million bottles a year, but more than 10 million."

More importantly, the 2018 vintage in England was superb — and that convergence of quality and scale gave Jackson the confidence to dial up the spotlight on English wine. "We knew we could find wines that were both excellent and available in the quantities we needed. And that's exactly what we found."

THE RISE OF PRESTIGE CUVÉES

Since April 2023, the airline has gone further — letting English sparkling wines go toe to toe with some of the world's finest Champagnes. In First, British Airways is now the only airline to pour prestige cuvées from England alongside their French counterparts.

"It's a real marker of how far the industry has come," he says. "We've always had world-class wines in First — prestige Champagnes which are beautifully made and globally recognised. But now we have prestige English sparkling too — wines like Nyetimber's 1086 Rosé, and Gusbourne's Fifty One Degrees North — that are on that same quality level."

This summer, passengers flying First will be able to choose Fifty One Degrees North. Later in the year, Nyetimber returns and will be followed with a new wine from Dermot Sugrue of Sugrue South Downs next year.

“And the feedback has been great,” says Jackson. “People say things like, ‘I didn’t know this existed. I tried it and it was fantastic.’ That tells me we’re doing the right thing — and it shows the value of putting the product directly in front of people.”

British Airways sees its wine list as more than just a drinks menu. “We’re a British original; a showcase for the best of British” Jackson says.

Of course, the airline still sources globally. “The UK has always been a wine trading nation. We bring in great wines from around the world — and that will never change. But to showcase British wine — it’s powerful.”

PUTTING ENGLISH WINES ON THE MAP

Jackson firmly believes that English prestige cuvées match the quality of their French counterparts. Introducing English wines to customers is, he believes, about both leaning in to the similarities — as well as marking out difference.

“Other than England, no other sparkling wine region can claim shared terroir with Champagne. The North and South Downs share the same chalk geology. So, in terms of starting points, we’ve got the same grape varieties, geology and — increasingly — the same skill.

“But the signature difference for me is still the acidity. The climate in southeast England today is similar to Champagne’s 40 or 50 years ago — so it’s slightly cooler and that brings more acidity.” In fine wine terms — and especially sparkling — this is a good thing. “It creates wines which are precise, mouth-watering and refreshing and in blind tastings is usually the marker which sets English wines apart.”



IMAGES COURTESY OF BRITISH AIRWAYS

A wine story rooted in the same geology and winemaking as France, but with benevolent climate, modern techniques and increasing expertise? It’s a compelling one.

BUBBLES AT 35,000 FEET

Does altitude affect how wines taste? “Definitely,” Jackson says. “The cabin pressure is lower, so you’ll get slightly larger bubbles in sparkling wines. If want something to keep its finesse, you need something with really fine bubbles at ground level — it’ll hold better at altitude.”

He adds that dryness in the cabin also affects aroma and flavour perception. “That’s true for food and wine. It’s why airlines look for wines with a bit more intensity. But at the prestige level, the complexity and structure are so good that the wines really hold up in flight.”

In blind tastings, both Gusbourne’s Fifty One Degrees North and its Rosé stood out. “The Rosé showed real finesse, length and balance — it just sang. And Fifty One Degrees North had that

drive, complexity and texture you look for in a prestige sparkling wine. Both wines really shone in a blind tasting.”

LOOKING AHEAD: THE VINTAGES TO COME

Jackson is incredibly enthusiastic about the future of our home-grown wine. He points to three key trends shaping the industry right now: investment, regional identity and the long-term promise of still wines.

“Inward investment from houses like Pommery, Taittinger and Jackson Family Wines is huge,” he says. “It brings expertise — and with it, higher quality across the board.” He’s also watching emerging regions like Essex’s Crouch Valley, and believes a deeper understanding of England’s terroirs is coming. “We’re not ready yet to market regional differences — right now, the core challenge for the industry is simply, ‘England makes wine.’ That has to come first, before we get into nuances of regional expression.”

On still wines, Jackson is also optimistic. “There are some very good ones. Nothing gets a free pass because it’s English. It has to be good.

“Still wine is definitely one to watch, and there are signs of promise. But I’d say: come back in five or ten years.”

What about any winemaking talent *much* closer to home? Is there anything we should be keeping an eye on? Jackson laughs: “I’ve got four vines in my garden — Chardonnay, and a Muscat Bleu a friend gave me. Last year I made about one glass of wine. I fermented it with Champagne yeast, forgot about it in the fridge, and came back months later to find it had developed a layer of flor. It’s pale green, shrinking in volume, and apparently becoming a London Chardonnay-based Sherry. It’s completely absurd — but a lot of fun.”

A QUESTION OF TASTE

For Jackson — and for the wine industry — the arrival of English prestige cuvées in First is a landmark moment. A signal that these wines can take their place on a global stage, with British Airways championing them every step of the way.

“Where British Airways can help is by putting wines in front of people — in Club World, in First — and letting them taste side-by-side. They can compare English sparkling with Champagne, and decide for themselves. And what we’ve found is that once people taste these wines, and realise the quality, they are happy to back them.”

And when those passengers land? “Maybe they’re inspired to visit Kent or Sussex, stop at a vineyard, walk into a winery,” says Jackson. “That’s a very special connection to help forge.” ♦

To find out more about the Gusbourne wines served on British Airways this summer, go to gusbourne.com. To plan your next flight, go to ba.com.



Henry Jeffreys
 — writer, drinks enthusiast, author of *Vines in a Cold Climate* and *Intoxicating*

History host — is a busy man. We're delighted he took some time out of substack writing and podcast recording to pull the cork from three rather special wines — all from the 2015 vintage. A decade after harvest, Henry gives his view on how this trio are maturing — and what that says about English wines' ability to age with grace.

DECADE ON

When I drink Gusbourne sparkling wine, a little part of me always thinks — yes, this is wonderful now, but would it be even better if I put it in the cellar for five years? Most wine, however, is drunk on the day of purchase — especially celebratory bottles like sparkling wine. You're not going to postpone the party until the wine is at peak maturity.

But there's been an increasing interest in cellaring Champagne of late. Dom Perignon, Cristal and Taittinger Comtes de Champagne are now some of the most-traded wines on the secondary market. These are all wines that cost hundreds of pounds a bottle. A recent tasting with Gusbourne, however, demonstrated that you don't need to spend anywhere near that to get something age-worthy.

The English wine industry is so young that there's everything to learn about how the wines mature. We're now starting to see museum releases from some of the country's established producers while there are private collectors who have been hoarding old vintages. I've been lucky enough to try some rarities, and have been impressed at how certain wines developed over years — even decades.

So when offered the chance to taste three wines from the 2015 vintage, nearly ten years on, I didn't take much persuading.

Immortality and acidity

Ageing wine can be an uncertain exercise, but English wine has the most important thing in ensuring longevity: acidity. Immortal wines — think of the great Rieslings from the Rhine or the Mosel, or Madeira especially — usually have high acidity. Along with this backbone, you need the flesh provided by slowly ripened grapes grown in a great vineyard.

Sparkling wine has a further unpredictable element — the date of disgorgement. This is the moment when the wine — previously ageing on its lees (dead yeast cells) — is rudely awakened, the lees jettisoned, a sweetening liqueur added, and the bottle corked.

Gusbourne's Head Winemaker Mary Bridges explained how ageing on the lees keeps the wine "fresh and energetic" whereas cork ageing creates "dried fruit, nutty and umami" flavours.

Tasting Brut, Blanc and Rosé

It was fascinating to see how this played out on the entry-level Brut Reserve 2015, which was disgorged in October 2018. It was rich, with patisserie and custard notes. Mary also thought that the richness was accentuated by a percentage of red fruit in this vintage, which is higher than in the current Brut Reserve.

The Rosé was disgorged a year later in September 2019. According to Mary this style can show the most intrigue when ageing — what will happen to that vibrant red fruit character that people love? The 2015 had done some remarkable things: it had not lost any of its vibrancy showing a distinct cherry note with added citrus fruit fireworks like marmalade and pink grapefruit. Truly sensational.

It was the Blanc de Blancs that I had the highest expectations for. Mary described it as Gusbourne's flagship because it reflects most clearly the distinct qualities of the vineyards with Chardonnay grown in the warm clay of Kent providing earthy, fruity notes while the chalk brings a saline minerality. This was the most recently disgorged, in 2020, and while the others were showing quite a bit of maturity, the Blanc de Blancs is clearly in it for the long haul. I'd love to revisit it in another ten years.

Mary, who joined Gusbourne in 2018 and took over winemaking in 2023, laments the lack of single vineyard wines from 2015 so she could taste how the specific plots were in that vintage. "I wish we had that information," she says. The single vineyard wines were first launched in 2017 under her predecessor Charlie Holland.

But even without this level of detail, tasting the 2015s was a fascinating exercise in the potential of mature English sparkling. I knew the Blanc de Blancs would impress; I didn't expect the Brut Reserve and Rosé to be quite so good. You're getting complex age-worthy vintage wines for the same price as an entry-level non-vintage from a Grand Marque Champagne house.

To be honest, the exercise has rather spoilt me, I now want all my sparkling wines served with an extra five years of bottle age. ♦

To find out more about access to library release wines, email membership@gusbourne.com

GUSBOURNE BRUT RESERVE 2015

Disgorged October 2018

50% Pinot Noir, 10% Pinot Meunier
and 40% Chardonnay

This has a very rich nose: cinnamon, custard, croissant, peach and baked apple. On the palate, it's creamy and voluptuous — tempting patisserie notes, with lemon and orange peel.

Very long. Just gorgeous!



GUSBOURNE ROSÉ 2015

Disgorged September 2019

54% Pinot Noir, 32% Pinot Meunier
and 14% Chardonnay

The wine is a vibrant copper colour. Take a sniff and there's orange peel, pink grapefruit, and bready notes; it's very fresh. You'll find distinctive citrus notes on the palate, pink grapefruit again and bitter Seville orange with sweet red cherry notes and a creamy almond texture. Long finish.



GUSBOURNE BLANC DE BLANC 2015

Disgorged November 2020

100% Chardonnay

The nose is incredibly fresh with green apple and white peach and richer notes of baking spices and yeast. Take a sip and there's lemon, saline, lean but ripe with a very creamy texture with notes of almond croissant. Vibrant and youthful with a long finish.





THE VITAL INGREDIENT

AJ Benham, Head of Wine Operations, shines a light on winemaking's unsung ingredient: oak. From tradition to innovation, discover how careful oak management refines and defines each wine.

In the first weeks of my first full-time role working in a winery cellar, I was given the laborious task of ensuring that the recently emptied wine barrels were cleaned spotlessly, both inside and out. Once cleaned, these barrels were painstakingly lifted into place onto old railroad sleepers and chocked into position. Then came the really tricky part. Using a length of string and a spirit level, the Cellar Master and I had to ensure that every barrel was lined up to millimetre perfection. Once a row was done, we started on the layer above — stacking cask upon cask until we had finished these pyramids of oak. They had to look flawless. This job was taking place in limestone tunnels buried deep in the foothills of the Ozark Mountains, in a cellar that was the crown jewel of the winery above. And the smell — heady, intoxicating, and addictive.

The whole experience left a mark on me as I moved forward in my career. The care and attention to detail these vessels received were

remarkable, but perhaps understandable, given the crucial role they have played in shaping winemaking for around 2,000 years.

A HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP

Humans have been using wooden vessels to store wine for centuries. The exact date seems lost to the mists of time, but Pliny the Elder wrote about the Gauls using wooden barrels for transporting wine in AD 77, so it's safe to say that wood and wine have been paired together for quite some time. Originally, wood was used primarily for practicality — being more readily available, lighter, more durable, and, most importantly, watertight. Over time, winemakers began to understand that oak also imparted positive characteristics to the wine in barrel. Regions around Europe, and later the United States, developed their own cooperage traditions, passing down barrel-making techniques from generation to generation, each perfecting its own style of toasting, shaping, and seasoning barrels.

The beauty of oak is that it does more than impart flavour; it also helps wine breathe. Oak staves are porous, allowing small amounts of oxygen to interact with the maturing wine. Historically, winemakers figured this out empirically: they noticed that a stint in barrel softened the harsh edges of younger wines while also adding complexity. In many ways, oak acts as seasoning — gently nudging a wine along to its fullest expression. It remains an art as much as a science; each barrel is unique, and each producer has their own signature. For centuries, that relationship has played a key role in the development of many of the world's greatest wines.

WHY OAK MATTERS

If you've ever noticed the subtle notes of vanilla, spice, or toast in a wine, chances are oak was involved in some capacity. Different oak species contribute different flavour profiles. French oak (*Quercus Robur* and *Petraea* — most famously from forests like Allier, Vosges, Nevers, Limousin, and Tronçais), with its tighter grain, brings elegance with delicate aromas of baking spices, minerality, or even gentle sweetness. American oak (*Quercus Alba* — from the Appalachian Mountains to Missouri), by contrast, delivers stronger notes of vanilla, coconut, and dill, with a more robust profile. Other European oaks, such as Hungarian or Slavonian, have their own unique traits, though they are sometimes less commonly seen outside particular regions or styles.

Beyond flavour, oak influences structure. Yeast cells left over from fermentation break down, imparting richness and complexity, while gentle oxygen exposure helps integrate flavours, softening some edges and polishing others. The tannins in oak also contribute to a wine's mouthfeel, shaping how it feels on the palate and how it evolves over time. The degree of toasting on a barrel's interior surface — from light to heavy — brings additional notes such as smoky, coffee-like aromas or even hints of chocolate.

The age of the oak also plays an important role. Brand-new barrels are full of flavour compounds and tannins, whereas older barrels have imparted much of this over previous vintages. While they no longer contribute strong flavours, they remain

crucial to the winemaking process, often used for a decade or more. These neutral barrels allow wine to develop texture and complexity through micro-oxygenation without altering its core aromatic profile. Like seasoning in cooking, ensuring the right combination of new and old oak is vital — particularly in England, where wines are prized for their elegance and finesse.

Beyond the type and age of oak, the size of the vessel also influences how a wine develops. At Gusbourne, we work with a range of barrel sizes — from standard barriques (225L and 228L) to puncheons (500L) and foudres (4,000L). Size dictates the surface-to-volume ratio, or in other words, how much impact the oak has on the wine. Larger vessels mean a gentler interaction, allowing for slower, more integrated maturation.

When you consider the infinite combinations of grape variety, barrel origin, toasting level, barrel age, and aging duration, it's easy to see why oak plays such a fascinating role in winemaking.

OUR APPROACH AT GUSBOURNE

At Gusbourne, we focus on the small details, and this extends to our use of oak. We carefully select barrels from specific tonnelleries (cooperages) whose craftsmanship complements our style, choosing toast levels that best serve our fruit. Our cool, maritime climate in Kent and West Sussex gives our wines vibrant acidity and subtle nuance. Our job is to coax out that delicacy, not mask it.

Some sparkling blends respond beautifully to a touch of new oak — perhaps 1% to 5% of the overall blend, adding subtle sweetness or spice. A further 5% to 15% may come from older, neutral oak barrels that allow for gentle oxygen exchange without strong woody flavours. The dominant percentage of wine comes from stainless steel, but that small portion aged in oak is vital in adding depth and complexity.

For our still Guinevere Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, the approach is different. These wines are typically aged entirely in oak, resting on the lees in barrel for nine to ten months to build texture and richness. Each vineyard block, each tonnellerie, each format — each barrel gets its own 'conversation' with the wine.

AJ BENHAM INSPECTING FRENCH OAK BARRELS IN OUR APPLIEDORE WINERY, KENT



THREE GUSBOURNE WINES TO EXPERIENCE

Gusbourne Brut Reserve 2021

This vintage showcases how older oak contributes to texture. Made without new oak and with 13% aged barrels, its subtle influence enhances the full, ripe orchard fruit notes, with hints of toasted brioche and hazelnut.

Gusbourne Fifty One Degrees North 2016

Here, oak takes on a more noticeable role. With 5% new oak and 16% old oak, the wine unfolds in layers — vanilla and baking spice merge with elegant fruit and tertiary characteristics. Older oak complements the extended lees aging, adding weight and body.

Gusbourne Chardonnay Guinevere 2023

A still Chardonnay aged entirely in oak, with 20% new barrels imparting sweet spice and 80% old barrels adding depth. Bright citrus and mineral notes pair beautifully with subtle smoky characteristics and plush orchard fruit.

What's next at Gusbourne?

Our journey with oak continues to evolve. We have introduced English oak barrels into our process, including one sourced from our own ancient woodland. Felled in 2016 and matured at Tonnellerie de Champagne, it returned to our cellar in 2020, alongside barrels from Herefordshire made by England's only master cooper.

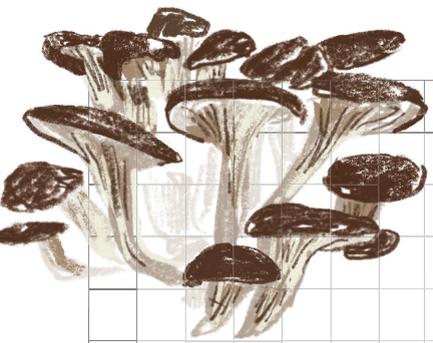
We're also increasing our use of larger puncheons, which allow for a more restrained interaction between wood and wine, preserving vibrant fruit expression.

Later this year, we'll unveil Oak Reserve 2019, a 100% oak-aged sparkling release. The culmination of years of careful experimentation, it showcases the depth and complexity that oak can bring when used with precision.

As we continue exploring the balance between tradition and innovation, every decision — from barrel selection to aging techniques — reflects our commitment to crafting wines that express both our vineyard and our vision. This is just one part of the ongoing journey at Gusbourne, and we look forward to what comes next. ♦



OAK BARRELS RACKED IN GUSBOURNE'S WINERY IN APPLIEDORE, KENT



From field to fork

Meet the incredible producers whose artisan produce stars on our tasting room menu. These local food heroes — all working within 20 miles of the estate — prove the best ingredients are found right here in the Garden of England.

**Words Matthew Hope
Illustrations Kendall Wright**

Here in the heart of Kent, we're surrounded by a landscape that yields a year-round bounty. From the Romney marshlands on our doorstep to the broad expanse of the Kentish coast, Head Chef Anthony Coppard sources sensational seasonal ingredients from producers just a stone's throw from the vineyard.

We're proud to work with suppliers who share our commitment to sustainability, craftsmanship, and — perhaps most importantly of all — time. Whether farming, cheesemaking or baking, these are artisans who take the time they need to do things properly, bringing the very best of Kent to the table.



CHEESEMAKERS OF CANTERBURY, DARGATE

20 MILES FROM THE NEST

Twenty miles northeast of our estate, in the rolling chalk hills of the North Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, lies Lamberhurst Farm in Dargate — home to one of the British cheese industry's hidden gems, Cheesemakers of Canterbury.

Founded in 2007 by cheesemaker Jane Bowyer, the dairy is dedicated to traditional methods and handmade recipes. Step inside, and you'll find a space steeped in heritage, with cast-iron presses and wooden racks stacked with wheels of ageing cheese. Among them is Ashmore, a nearly lost English cheese that, thanks to Jane's expertise, has been revived and reclaimed its place on the table.

Originating in Sevenoaks, the Ashmore recipe was passed from cheesemaker to cheesemaker, eventually reaching a couple in Wiltshire, who gave it the name 'Ashmore'. Then, ready to hang up their aprons, they passed the recipe and their years of knowledge to Jane, who brought it back to its home county of Kent. Now, using unpasteurised milk from a local herd of British Friesian cows in Petham, seven miles from the dairy, Jane has put her own stamp on this award-winning cheese.

Jane explains, "It's interesting to see that just on the other side of Canterbury, the area grows rich pastures from a wetter microclimate. Here at the dairy, we're in a much drier part of Kent, and just seven miles make a huge difference. This



reflects in the milk, giving a richer style of cheese due to the higher fat content. Using high-quality milk from a single farm allows greater control over the finished product, and you can even see subtle changes in the milk with seasonal shifts on the farm."

Head Chef Anthony Coppard says, "Jane's care and attention to her craft, along with her focus on celebrating the raw ingredients, is a joy to work with in the kitchen. When you're using produce of this quality, the best approach is a hands-off one, allowing the natural flavours to shine.

"We love using their Ashmore Farmhouse cheese; aged for a minimum of six months, it has a rich, complex flavour that's perfect when gratinated with buttered leeks as part of a warming Welsh rarebit."

Laura Rhys, Master Sommelier, adds: "This is a lovely match with our Chardonnay Guinevere. I love to pair rich, creamy cheddar with an elegant, lightly oaked Chardonnay. The wine is fermented in barrel, giving it a little more weight and a creamy texture in the palate, but with a lovely freshness to cut through the richness of the cheese."

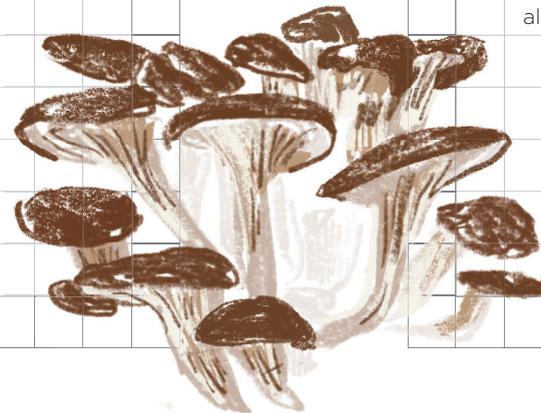
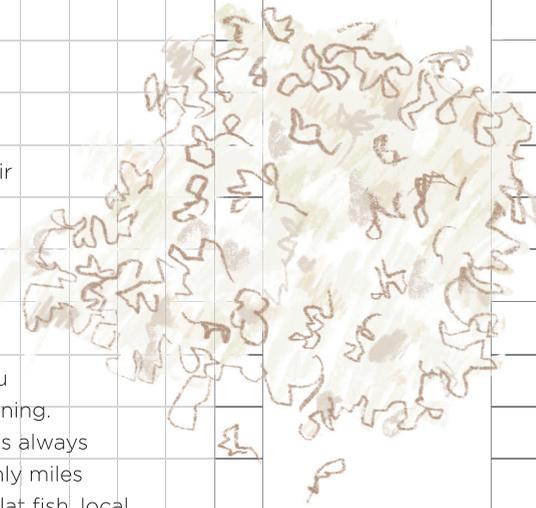


PH FISH, HASTINGS

16.2 MILES FROM THE NEST

Operating from the heart of Hasting's renowned fish market, Paul Hodges sources fish daily from a small fleet of boats which land their catch from the waters off the coasts of Folkestone, Rye, Hastings and Eastbourne.

Hastings is home to one of the oldest beach-launched fishing fleets in Britain, with a rich fishing industry dating back to the 16th century. Today, the iconic "Hastings luggers" are still launched directly from the beach, just as they have been for as centuries. "You can't get fresher than the daily catch, landed on the beach that morning. Our menus are dictated by what the boats bring in, and as a chef, it's always exciting to work with such fresh ingredients, caught off the coast only miles from our estate," says Chef Coppard. "Whether it's seabass, cod or flat fish, local seafood is an unbeatable pairing with our sparkling wines."



OWLEY FARM MUSHROOMS, STONE IN OXNEY

2.7 MILES FROM THE NEST

Follow the winding lanes a few miles southwest from The Nest Kitchen, across picturesque farmland and towards the edge of the Isle of Oxney, and you'll discover Owley Farm, home to third-generation farmer and mushroom enthusiast, Harvey Piper. Harvey's passion for fungi led him to branch out from the family business and begin growing specialty mushrooms. Stepping into his world feels like entering a winery lab rather than a farm. And much like our own winemaking practices, you quickly learn that there is a great deal of science and meticulous detail behind growing the perfect crop of mushrooms.

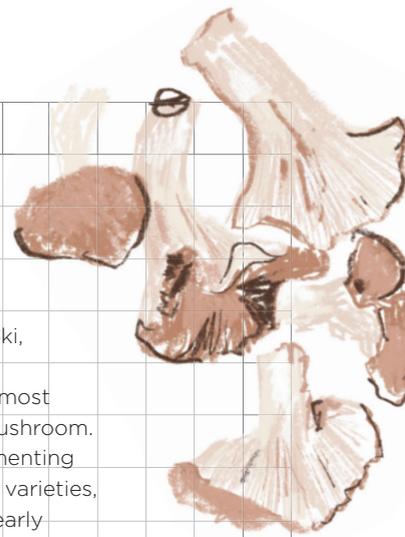
"The beauty of mushrooms is that they are nature's decomposers. Their job in the environment is to break down complex molecular structures, like trees, and return them to their constituent parts. They play an important role in nature." Harvey adds, "The process for us begins with sawdust briquettes, a by-product of the timber milling industry, primarily from hardwoods like oak and beech. We add wheat bran and hemp straw, which help aerate the substrate, adding nitrogen, carbohydrates and balancing the pH. We are also arable farmers, so the beans we grow that don't make the grade for feed or seed are also milled down to help add protein and fats. This cycle of waste and reuse allows us to repurpose by-products from the industry, creating the perfect medium for mycelium and fungi to work their magic. From this substrate, we grow several varieties of mushrooms, including the popular Lion's

Mane, Grey Oyster, Nameko, Golden Enoki, Velvet Shank (a wild UK mushroom), and most recently, the Coral mushroom. We're always experimenting with new and elusive varieties, some of which are nearly exclusively grown in the UK by us."

Chef Coppard says, "I always enjoy visiting Harvey at Owley Farm. You never know what new and exciting mushrooms he's trialling, and when he opens the door to the fruiting rooms, the ethereal sight of rows of gourmet mushrooms engulfed in a cloud of mist never gets old.

"This year, we're excited to be working with his coral mushrooms. The increased surface area of their sponge-like flesh makes them perfect for housing a Gusbourne wine tempura batter," Anthony adds. "The firm texture holds its shape beautifully while carrying a mild, sweet flavour with subtle undertones of salinity. To accompany this, we use our own locally foraged wild garlic pesto and pair it perfectly with our sparkling Brut Reserve."

Laura adds: "This is an exciting new pairing. The subtle sweetness and earthiness of the mushroom, as well as the texture from the tempura element makes this dish a perfect match for Brut Reserve — with its richer stone and citrus fruit notes, rounder texture in the palate and bright acidity on the finish."



CHERRY TREE FARM, APPLIEDORE

1.2 MILES FROM THE NEST

Take a short stroll through our ancient woodland, and you'll emerge at Cherry Tree Farm. Originally a dairy farm, James Perkins repurposed his family's land in 2000 to grow high-quality salad leaves and edible flowers, now supplying some of the finest restaurants in London and across the country. Specialising in unique baby leaf salads such as Tatsoi, Mizuna, Wasabina, the edible flowers of violas, and his prized 'candle flame' courgette flowers, James and his small team take a meticulous, "by hand" approach to farming. This mirrors our dedication to quality: just as we do in the vineyard, the team at Cherry Tree hand-harvest, selecting only the finest produce for market.

"We sell our courgettes as what we call a 'candle flame flower,' which means you get a decent-sized courgette with a flower that's just closed," James explains. "Unlike the Dutch ones you typically buy, which have flowers that are fully open, we pick ours in the evening to ensure the flower stays closed, maintaining its structure and freshness. If you wait

until the morning, the flower opens, causing the delicate petals to collapse, like blotting paper."

This seasonal flurry is highly anticipated by Chef Coppard and a welcome addition to our summer menus. "We love working with James' courgettes; they have a great texture, and the flowers make the perfect vessel for holding local goat's curd, ground black pepper, and freshly squeezed lemon. This delicate filling sits beautifully alongside the flowers' equally delicate sweet flavours, and pairs wonderfully with fennel, kohlrabi, and orange salsa verde — creating a vibrant and fresh dish, perfect for those warm summer days on the estate."

Laura notes "Blanc de Blancs is a beautiful match for this dish. The bright citrus fruit and saline mineral notes pair nicely with the delicate flavour of the courgette flower and the vibrant, creamy notes of the goat's curd. It's a firm favourite with guests when these two hit the menu side by side!"



THE LONDON HONEY COMPANY, GUSBOURNE ESTATE

0.4 MILES FROM THE NEST

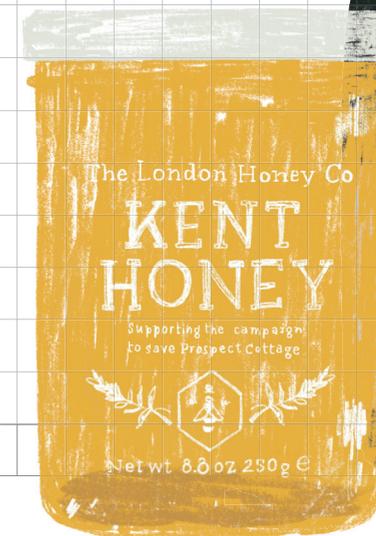
You get a real sense of the beauty of our estate on a clear spring morning — gentle birdsong in the air and blossom in the hedgerows. During the spring and summer months, the estate comes alive with the hum of honeybees, carefully tended by the family-run business, The London Honey Company. Sharing a passion and vision for bringing unique landscapes to life through pure single-origin honeys, Steve Benbow and his nephew George tend to their 20 hives. These are nestled in our sheltered vineyards, where the bees enjoy an abundance of nectar from hawthorn blossom, bramble and ancient chestnut trees.

Steve explains, "We have an ethos we like to call 'full hive — zero waste,' which we've been evolving over the last ten years. We use as much of the seasonal harvest as possible throughout the year. Normally a by-product of the honey extraction process, we're specialist producers of honeycomb, straight from the hive. It's raw honey in its full entirety, never pasteurised or overheated."

Chef Coppard says, "The estate honey showcases a gentle sweetness from wildflower blossoms, with underlying notes of bramble and chestnut, giving it a mild, bittersweet finish that creates balance and a well-rounded flavour. It's such a versatile ingredient, and we're fortunate to have hives so close to our kitchen.

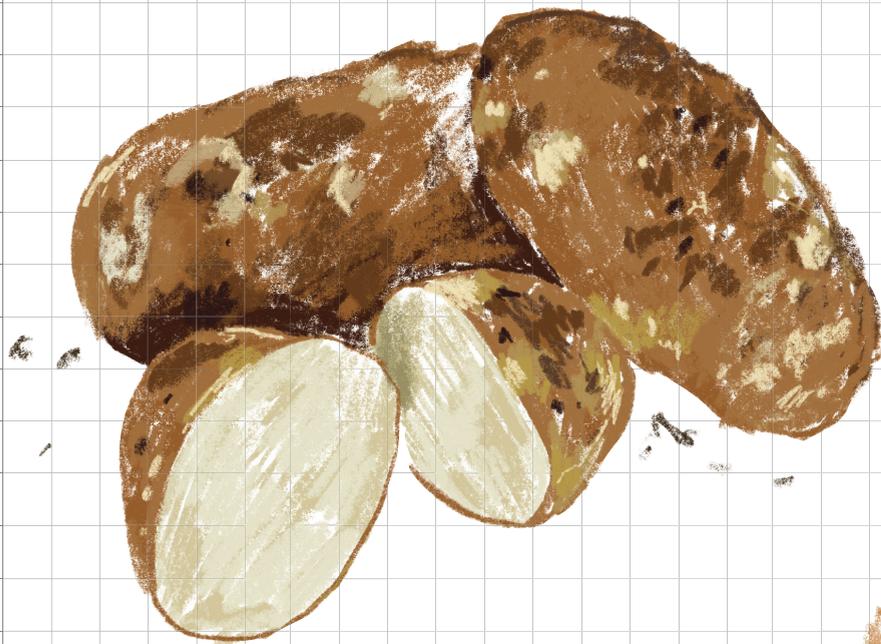
The freshly extracted honey pairs beautifully with cream-based desserts, delivering a subtle sweetness that we look for as we aim to bring a soft, more natural sweetness to these dishes. We love to use the estate honey in our buttermilk pannacotta with raspberries, honey tuille, sesame and basil."

To pair, Laura suggests our Brut Rosé. She says "It's a perfect match to lighter, summer-fruit based desserts, with its delicate red fruit and fresh orange citrus zest, alongside ginger spice notes and a soft, elegant texture, pairing beautifully with the creamy pannacotta, fresh raspberries and the gentle sweetness of the honey. Certainly, a luxurious finish to any meal."



MORGHEW, TENTERDEN 5.2 MILES FROM THE NEST

Morghew Park is an ancient agricultural estate with a history dating back to 968 AD, located on the outskirts of the market town of Tenterden, also known as 'The Jewel of the Weald'. It specialises in growing a staggering variety of incredible potatoes in the fertile soils of its 35-acre estate. The focus here is on heritage varieties lost to time, such as Arran Victory, British Queen, Golden Wonder and Red Duke of York which range from ink-black and beet red through to rich, butter yellow. In addition to its potato production, Morghew Park also produces award-winning cold-pressed rapeseed oil, made from the golden fields of rapeseed that bloom during the summer. "Morghew potatoes offer a huge variety of unique flavours and textures, giving us great flexibility in the kitchen when creating menus that require a richness and weight," says Chef Coppard.



GARY'S ARTISAN BAKERY 8.5 MILES FROM THE NEST

There are few pleasures more satisfying than a perfectly baked sourdough, its golden crust giving way to the delight of chewy, airy, textured bread. And when it comes to crafting the best, Gary's Artisan Bakery is in a league of its own.

From his bakery in Ashford, Gary has built a reputation for exceptional bread, rooted in traditional techniques and the finest ingredients. His ever-changing selection — pillowy focaccia, slow-fermented sourdough, rich and buttery brioche — has made him a favourite at local farmers' markets and a trusted supplier to Kent's top-tier delis and restaurants.

At the Nest, we love his traditional sourdough loaves, slathered in Anthony's home-whipped butter. Mouthwateringly good. ♦



FEELING PECKISH? HERE ARE OUR TOP FOODIE EXPERIENCES TO ENJOY AT THE ESTATE

Gusbourne Icons Tour

A rare chance to taste Gusbourne's most limited-edition wines — including still, sparkling and prestige cuvées — in an intimate masterclass followed by a lavish four-course lunch. Hosted at The Nest by one of our experts, it's a journey from vineyard to glass, paired with seasonal Kentish produce.

Our sell-out Chef Series

Gusbourne's Chef Series brings exceptional guest chefs to the vineyard for exclusive dining events. Expect inventive seasonal menus, elegant pairings, and intimate settings — all partnered with the best our cellar has to offer. This year's Michelin-star line-up includes London's Restaurant Story and Tom Shepherd from Lichfield's Upstairs.

Casual Dining at The Nest

When the sun's shining and the weekend rolls around, enjoy a glass or two of wine on the terrace with our new light snack menu — no booking needed. Think Kentish crisps, salted almonds, olives, charcuterie and local cheeses, baguette and chutney — plus some sweet treats too. Available Fridays to Sundays, it's the most relaxed way to visit the vineyards in the summer.

Plan your perfect visit at gusbourne.com/tours

ESCAPE TO THE VINEYARDS



Plan your perfect day at Gusbourne – whether it's a luxurious, special-occasion tasting and lunch, or a casual stroll amongst the vines followed by a light bite on the terrace.
[GUSBOURNE.COM/TOURS](https://www.gusbourne.com/tours)

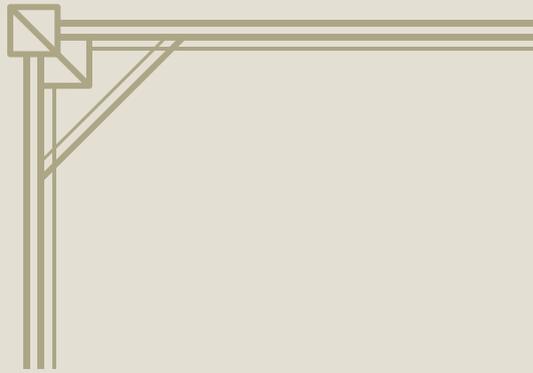




WHILE THE BUBBLES STILL RISE

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From Gatsby's parties to Truman Capote's black-and-white ball, Champagne has long been the drink for those who know how to live, love and celebrate. But it's time for English wine to share some of the fun, writes Emily Miles



Some drinks are made to quench thirst. Others are crafted to signify something greater — an arrival, a declaration, a celebration. Champagne has always belonged to the latter category.

It is a drink of theatre and excess, of whispered conspiracies in candlelit ballrooms and long, decadent afternoons on sun-drenched terraces. No other wine has been so thoroughly draped in the mythology of glamour, wealth and seduction. “Champagne is the only wine that leaves a woman more beautiful after drinking it,” Madame de Pompadour, mistress to Louis XV, famously quipped.

It’s the calling card of the beautiful and the damned, the powerful and the reckless — think F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *Tender Is the Night*, Ian Fleming’s Bond with his taste for Taittinger Blanc de Blancs. Picture Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman locking eyes over glasses of Mumm Cordon Rouge in *Casablanca*. Or fast-forward five decades to the rather less misty-eyed moment when Richard Gere offers Julia Roberts strawberries to “bring out the flavour” of her Champagne in *Pretty Woman*.

And it’s not just Hollywood. When writer and socialite Truman Capote hosted his legendary Black and White Ball in 1960s New York, he set the gold standard for high society style — as immaculate mask-clad A-listers quaffed copious amounts of Champagne and dined on chicken hash and scrambled eggs.

At its best, a freshly poured glass of Champagne is the liquid promise that something wonderful is about to happen.



Which is all well and good. But what of English sparkling? Where do our home-grown bubbles fit among this storied glitz and glamour?

Perhaps we are simply too British for all this seduction and excess; too reserved for the hedonistic and overstated. Instead, we’ve chosen safer ground — literally — rooting the way we talk about our wines in terms of terroir. Hampshire, Surrey and Sussex downland; Kent and Essex clay. While Champagne speaks of feeling, English wine speaks of provenance.

And this earnest articulation of soil and climate isn’t wrong. It’s been the foundation of the English wine industry as we’ve spent the past few decades earning our stripes on the world stage. And yet the game is changing.

Today, English wines regularly outperform Champagne at global competitions. Back in 2023, our Blanc de Blancs clinched Best in Show at the Decanter World Wine Awards. This year, Nyetimber 1086 and Gusbourne’s 2016 Fifty

One Degree North topped the podium at the London Wine Fair’s Battle of the Bubbles.

So, with the medals and trophies won, isn’t it time we stopped being quite so earnest in our storytelling — and whisper it — had a bit more fun with our wines? To be less dutiful and more daring. To remember that sparkling wine, above all, is about delight, decadence and enjoyment.

Next time you slide a bottle of English sparkling from the wine rack, take a moment for that first palate-piquing sip. That second joyful glass. If Champagne is all whisper and murmur, then let English sparkling be laughter and light.

Because our wine is more than just a reflection of soil and climate. It deserves its own mythology — and the promise which comes with every glass: that while the bubbles still rise, the night is young. ♦

For expert tips on how to host your next party effortlessly, turn to page 36.



HOW TO SERVE SPARKLING WINE LIKE A HOST IN THE KNOW

Laura Rhys, Master Sommelier, shares her expert tips for effortless parties.

1. Preparation, preparation, preparation

Nothing dampens the mood like an empty glass, so always prepare more bottles than you think you'll need — make sure they're chilled and ready to pour. Remove foils in advance, but leave the wire cages on until the moment you serve. (No one wants to damage the chandeliers...)

2. Glassware plays its part

Flutes are elegant, and coupes look pretty, but a tulip-shaped glass — or even a white wine glass — will let the wine open up, capturing every nuance of aroma and texture. Your guests will be able to experience the wine more fully if you opt for this generous shape.

3. Temperature matters

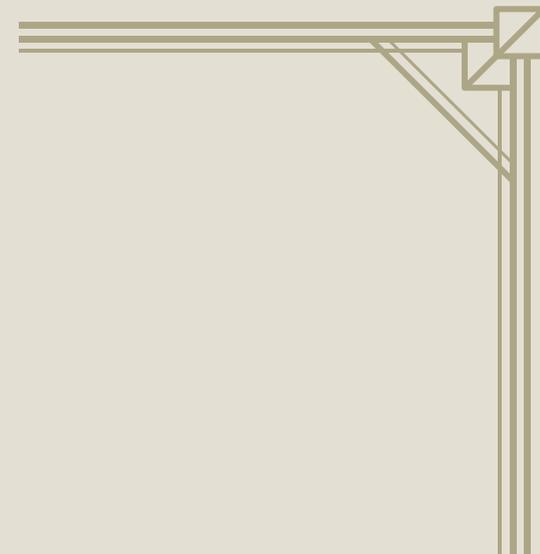
Too cold, and the flavours are muted. Too warm, and the bubbles won't be as elegant. Keep sparkling wines between 8-10°C — an ice bucket filled with equal parts ice and water will chill a bottle to perfection in 20 minutes.

4. Size up

Magnums aren't just for show — they allow a wine to mature more gently — but there's no doubt that at party, they make a statement. They look fun, generous and extra decadent, plus there's something irresistible about pouring from a large-format bottle.

5. Match the mood

I like to serve a wine such as our Blanc de Blancs or Rosé as guests arrive to set the tone. Both these styles are refreshing, complex and partner nibbles beautifully. Then move on to something bolder and richer as the evening deepens. Our Blanc de Noirs, Fifty One Degrees North or a late-disgorged style would be perfect. Choose a wine that complements the rhythm of the night, from first toast to final pour.



Lifting the veil: behind the scenes at Miss Bush Bridal

Emma Marshall is the whip-sharp, opinionated driving force behind bridal boutique Miss Bush — the place where “modern, highly educated, fiercely independent” brides go to find The Dress (and to drink a glass or two of Gusbourne if they wish). Here, we delve into her world to discover what it takes to cut through in the hyper luxury world of bridal fashion.



For nearly four decades, Miss Bush has been a cornerstone of British bridal fashion, offering a curated selection of designers who share its commitment to quality, craftsmanship, and integrity. At Gusbourne, our approach to winemaking is similarly detail-oriented, rooted in British craftsmanship and a commitment to provenance. It's why our collaboration with Miss Bush feels so natural — both of us believe in creating something truly special, without compromise.

Here, we sit down with Emma Marshall from Miss Bush — brilliant, opinionated, and refreshingly candid — to talk about why the boutique has stood the test of time, what it means to be a bride today, and how weddings continue to hold significance in a changing world.

A modern approach

Emma is the first to acknowledge the paradox of the wedding industry. “If you had to invent it now, it'd be like reinventing a cigarette. Everyone would say, ‘That's really toxic, why would you do that?’ Stand in a white dress, be judged by people, pretend to be a virgin — no thanks.”

And yet, she says, weddings persist, precisely because they tap into something fundamental. “Our clients are modern, highly educated, fiercely independent women — but they also value family, tradition and identity. A wedding is one of the few moments in life where all of that comes together.”

Post-pandemic, Emma has noticed that weddings have only grown in importance. “Journalists kept writing that Covid would kill weddings. The opposite happened. People realised how much they missed them, and now they're going bigger than ever.” She says, “Everyone wants a Chelsea wedding, a countryside wedding and a Portuguese wedding now.”

Dressing with integrity

Miss Bush is known for its discerning, no-nonsense approach to bridal fashion. Emma stocks only designers who meet her exacting standards — not just in style, but in production ethics. “I have an absolute dedication to only buying from people who can physically hold my hand and show me where their dresses are made. No opacity, no shady supply chains.”

This level of detail extends to every aspect of the Miss Bush experience, from the selection process to the fitting room. “A wedding dress isn't just about looking nice,” she says. “It's a totemic thing. It represents who you are at this moment in your life. And if you don't get it right, it niggles at you forever.”

At Gusbourne, we feel the same way about our wines. Every detail — from vineyard site to final blend — is painstakingly considered to create something timeless. Like Miss Bush, we believe that knowing where something comes from, and the hands that made it, adds to its meaning.

The art of choosing well

While Emma's irreverence is part of her charm, her commitment to making brides feel extraordinary is unwavering. The Miss Bush process is meticulous. “We don't do self-booking,” she says. “Clients apply online, we read their enquiry, and we decide if we're the right fit. By the time they walk through the door, we've already done a lot of the thinking for them.”

This level of curation means the boutique attracts women who know their own minds. “Our clients are bright, stylish, and selective. They're not bringing an entourage to say ‘yes to the dress.’ They're here because they trust us to guide them.”

That guidance, Emma says, is all about helping a bride see herself clearly. “The best advice? Don't



try to be someone else. Weddings make people over-think everything, and in 25 years, you'll look back at your photos and realise you were at your most beautiful then. Just be yourself.”

It's all in the details

If there's one thing Miss Bush and Gusbourne have in common, it's an obsession with detail. Emma puts it perfectly: “The detail level in what we do is off the scale. It has to be. You're working with fabric that can either make someone look luminous or drain them of colour. Necklines, waistlines, silhouettes — all of it matters. Even the smallest detail can completely shift how a bride feels in her dress.”

And that, ultimately, is what makes Miss Bush more than just a bridal boutique — it's a place where every element is considered, every decision made with intent. Just as every detail in our winemaking contributes to the final glass, every choice in a bride's journey at Miss Bush is about crafting something meaningful.

For those who care about provenance, craftsmanship, and the magic of getting things just right — whether it's in a bottle of English sparkling wine or the perfect wedding dress — Miss Bush and Gusbourne share a philosophy: every detail matters.

A winemaker's wedding wine list

For Mary Bridges, Head Winemaker at Gusbourne, choosing wines for her own wedding is simple — she's picking the bottles she truly loves.



Brut Rosé 2019

"It's so important to have things that you love at your wedding and for me, that's our sparkling Rosé. I adore its bright citrus and delicate red fruit flavours with a touch of rich shortbread from time on lees.

"It's complex, fun and super energetic — I can't think of a better wine to share with my mum and sister as we get ready for the big day."

Blanc de Blancs 2019

"After the ceremony, we will toast with Blanc de Blancs 2019 and enjoy it with fresh oysters — another favourite of mine.

"The fresh, zesty citrus and minerality make this such a dreamy aperitif and the perfect pairing for seafood-based canapés."

Chardonnay Guinevere 2022

"We're getting married abroad next summer and there will be plenty of bottles of our still Chardonnay Guinevere for guests to enjoy with dinner.

"Its white peach, orchard fruit and saline notes combined with a creamy texture pair beautifully with the Mediterranean dishes we'll be serving — olives, fresh seafood and almond cake will all be staples at our wedding!"

A wine that becomes part of your story

Choosing the wines for your wedding — whether for a grand-scale breakfast or the special toast — should be a really enjoyable experience. All our wines are vintage-only — they capture a moment in time and place, so when you've found your favourite Gusbourne, you'll be able to revisit it — and the place it was crafted — for years to come.

If you're planning your celebration, we'd be delighted to host you in Appledore, Kent, to help you find a style to suit your day. *To find out more, email gusbourne@gusbourne.com* ♦





GUSBOURNE

MEMBERSHIP



Enjoy hand-picked selections of our fine English wines, regularly delivered to your door



Become part of a community of fine wine lovers with exclusive members-only events



Be the first to access our rarest wines — plus, enjoy preferential pricing on our classic range

To find out more, scan the QR code below or get in touch at membership@gusbourne.com.



“I love the exclusivity of Gusbourne membership. It’s not just the wines — it’s everything that wraps around them. The events are fantastic — you feel like you’re part of an exclusive club. And I love the in-the-know access to wines that you can’t buy anywhere else. It’s a little bit of luxury.”

ANOUSHKA, KENT



In perfect balance

Laura Rhys, Master Sommelier, takes us behind the scenes in the winery to explore the art of blending. This, one of winemaking's most intricate challenges, is where nature and craft collide.

Wine is often seen as a product of nature. Wander through the vines, look at the perfectly ripe grapes ready to be picked, and it's easy to believe that it is simply the result of soil, sun and time. But when it comes to making traditional method sparkling wines, the human touch is just as crucial.

Once harvest is over and the wines are safely tucked into their tanks and barrels, the winemaking team turns its attention to blending — a process which marries technical precision with artistry, intuition and experience.

Put simply, for us blending is the process of combining different base wines — those wines made from individual blocks and vineyard parcels — to create wines which are more than the sum of their parts. Blending is intricate, intuitive and spellbinding, with sometimes unexpected results from the smallest addition or tweak.

As a Master Sommelier, I've spent years tasting wines from all over the world, at every stage: straight from the tank, aged in barrel or poured from bottle. At Gusbourne, this allows me to bring another perspective to our blending sessions, where I have the chance to see the knowledge and skill of our winemaking team at work. Every vintage, I learn something new from this incredible process.

Shaping the vintage: grading begins

Each year, in the first months, the winemaking team and I lock ourselves away for weeks to taste and assess around 250 individual base wines. Each has its own unique character, structure and style, making it suited to a specific blend.

For me, this is the first real study of the wines from the previous harvest — a moment I always find hugely exciting. It's my first opportunity to understand last year's fruit.

We sit down together, laptops open, taking notes at speed. In front of us, rows of base wines wait, each bottle lined up and labelled, ready to be graded. Even though Mary Bridges, our Head Winemaker, and her team have been tasting these wines since the grapes were pressed, there's something special about seeing them all together for the first time — getting the full picture of the vintage.

We taste individually, then come together after each flight to discuss. The days are a mix of intense concentration and lively debate. After years of tasting together, we know each other's palates well, but we all bring our own perspectives, which is fascinating.

Only once each base wine has been graded — assessed for its flavour profile, structure, ageing potential and suitability for different blends — can the blending itself begin.

Blending for balance

English sparkling wine has cemented its place on the world stage as one of the most exciting regions for top-quality traditional method sparkling wines.

A key reason for this is our cool climate, which produces grapes with bright acidity, delicate fruit and subtle nuance. These are wines that lend themselves to blending, where layers of complexity and elegance can be carefully built.

Ask our Head Winemaker Mary about her approach to blending and she'll talk passionately about balancing consistency with the unique character of each vintage.

And it's true. We use the blending process to create complex, elegant wines that reflect a particular time and place. Every vineyard, every block within it, has its own story to tell. Since we only make single vintage wines, blending is crucial. It allows us to capture the essence of each harvest while maintaining the style and signature of our cuvées.

Instead of blending across vintages, we blend across different sites, clones, soils, grape varieties, fermentation vessels and winemaking techniques. It's a process that creates a true mosaic of blending components, each bringing its own aromas, textures and structures.

Our Kent vineyards characteristically produce fruit with weight, richness and roundness. But



HEAD WINEMAKER MARY BRIDGES, LEFT, TASTES FROM BARREL WITH LAURA RHYS

even within a single vineyard, different blocks — sometimes planted with different clones of the same grape — can produce strikingly different wines. Multiply that variation across all our vineyard plots and it's easy to see how we end up with hundreds of different blending components each year.

I'm always amazed at how six wines in a single flight, all made from the same grape variety and sometimes grown just a few hundred metres apart, can taste so dramatically different.

Highlighting the details

The key to great blending is not just about finding balance — it's about highlighting what makes each base wine special and showcasing it to its fullest potential.

It could be a precise, mineral-driven Chardonnay that's destined for Blanc de Blancs, or an intense, brooding Pinot Noir that brings structure to a blend.

Once grading is complete, it's time to blend. The winemaking team spends weeks tweaking and refining, adding a little here, shaving a little off there. The goal is to create a wine that achieves perfect balance — between fruit character, structure and style.

Each of the three grape varieties grown in our vineyards have their own distinct characters. We love Chardonnay for its citrus and orchard fruit notes, sometimes sliding into riper stone fruits in warmer years and a distinct mineral character. With acidity and a great ability to age, these wines often form the structure of a blend, whilst bringing freshness and elegance. Pinot Noir brings a little more body, more weight and a roundness in the palate, often with notes of red fruits, red apples, stone fruits and sometimes with darker, spicier tones too. Finally Meunier, a grape that producers softer, supple wines with perhaps less structure than the previous two but attractive, delicate fruit character and often some lovely floral notes.

Blending isn't just about combining different grapes, as in our Brut Reserve which is blend of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. Even in single varietal wines like Blanc de Blancs, blending is vital. It allows us to select Chardonnay base wines that express poise, elegance and finesse while layering in complexity from different parcels and fermentation styles. Some of our wines have as many as 60 different blending components.

When we blend, we think not just about how the wine tastes today but how it will evolve over years — sometimes decades — of lees aging and bottle maturation. We're looking into the future, predicting how these wines will knit together, develop and reveal their full potential.

The final composition

Blending is a craft that exists at the point where science, nature and intuition meet. And that's its magic. It transforms individual components into something greater, crafting wines that will be poured, shared and celebrated for years to come. ♦

WORKING SUSTAINABLY: TODAY AND FOR THE VINTAGES TO COME



We're proud to be a founder member of Sustainable Wines of Great Britain.



Our winery energy comes from 99% renewable sources.



We used 72% less water at harvest 2023 compared with harvest 2022.



In spring 2024, we planted 16 varieties of cover crop to improve vineyard biodiversity.



Our vineyards are alive with different species: we count more than 30 different plants on the vineyard floor.



Our biodegradable natural corks sequester carbon dioxide.



We've reduced winery bottling waste to zero.



We provide wildflower forage for two sets of bee hives in our Kent vineyards.



We released our first-ever charity wine bottling in 2023.



At The Nest, we source the majority of our produce locally, working with nine local producers and suppliers in our kitchens.



We maintain 9.2 hectares of ancient woodland.

At Gusbourne, we work as sustainably as possible — today, and for the vintages to come. We're building a business for the long term, founded on our deep-held respect for nature.

We planted our first vines in 2004, and we've been working in a low-intervention way ever since.

But, in the vineyard and beyond, we're always looking for ways to do things better.

We know there's more to do and, as we improve the ways we work, we'll share updates on our progress.

Scan to read a more in-depth report on sustainability.





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