

12 Sparkling Reasons to buy Great British Sparkling this Christmas

Submitted by: weareco.co.uk

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As we plan at least some festivities to mark this special time of the year, Britain's own award-winning wine industry has put together some great reasons why we should mark this Christmas with a glass or two of British bubbly. English and Welsh wines have been taking the wine world by storm these last few years, and this year has seen an explosion in sales of through the supermarkets, retailers, online and even from the cellar door as more and more consumers turn to buying British and supporting a successful home-grown industry.

Join the #GreatBritishWineNight – a celebration of English and Welsh wine across social media on 4th December from 7-8pm. Further information about this and celebrating a Great British sparkling Christmas on the industry association website www.winegb.co.uk

1. It's widely acclaimed by the critics

Oz Clarke OBE explains what makes the UK such a great wine growing region: "We have the most enthusiastic, passionate, convinced and committed brigade of grape growers and winemakers anywhere in the world. All of this produces wines of delicacy, fragrance, beauty and irresistible flavours that are unique in the world of wine."

Oz has just released a book about the industry - English Wine: From still to sparkling: The NEWEST New World wine country available from all book retailers RRP £16.99

2. It helps the local economy

The UK produces 10.5m bottles¹ a year, which has doubled since 2015, and boasts 770 vineyards and 165 wineries from Cornwall to Kent and as far north as Tyne & Wear; the area under vine has quadrupled since 2000 and the industry now employs over 11,000 people full time (up from 8,012 in 2018²). There are over 200 vineyards open to the public and even more selling their wines online.

3. It's sustainable

Drinking home-grown wines this festive season can help reduce your carbon footprint. The industry has developed its own sustainability programme to ensure its long-term future.

4. It's Award-winning

English and Welsh wines are scooping medals and trophies in all the international wine competitions. In this year's International Wine & Spirit Competition (IWSC), Dorset's Langham Vineyards beat Champagne and other top sparkling wines the world over to take the trophy for Sparkling Wine Producer of the Year. In the International Wine Challenge (IWC), Great Britain was ranked in 8th position worldwide out of 55 countries that entered wines, with 14 wines winning Gold Medals.

5. It's Versatile

You can serve it as an aperitif, but English & Welsh Sparkling wines pair beautifully with so many foods at Christmas. And there are styles to suit every taste – dry, demi-sec, white, rosé and even red!

6. It's Innovative

Traditionally the three Champagne grapes are used (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier) but UK

producers are experimenting with different varieties and with great results

7. It's a true expression of terroir

The cooler English summers and chalk and limestone soils help create crisp, fresh wines with high acidity and delicious orchard fruit aromas, giving our wines their own distinct style.

8. It's a labour of love

72% of our production is sparkling, much of it made using the Classic Method – the same method used in the Champagne region - where the second fermentation, which creates the bubbles, takes place in the bottle

The Classic Method is a craft which requires skill and patience; winemakers must know exactly when to pick the grapes, how to expertly blend wines from reserves they keep from previous years, and the wines must age for minimum of 9 months (in practice this is often much longer) making it highest quality way to produce sparkling wine.

9. We've known how to create the fizz for centuries

The method to create the sparkle in wine by adding sugar it was documented by Britain's Dr Christopher Merrett and presented to the Royal Society in December 1662 – over 50 years before the first Champagne house was founded. Now two Champagne houses have invested in land over here to produce their own English sparkling wine

10. It's a country-wide phenomenon

The UK makes wine in all counties in England, north and south Wales and on the borders of Scotland– to find out how you can visit a vineyard, check out WineGB's guide to exploring the vineyards of Great Britain

11. It's served at the highest tables

From Buckingham Palace and Downing Street, to British Embassies the world over, English and Welsh wines are flying the flag for Britain at home and abroad.

12. It's widely available

English and Welsh sparkling wines are widely available from independent wine merchants, supermarkets and directly from the vineyard. Find out more about where to buy on the WineGB website:

<https://www.winegb.co.uk/shop-local/>

Simon Thorpe MW, CEO, WineGB says:

“This year Britain's vineyards have faced some tough challenges; many had to close their cellar doors to visitors during lockdown and others saw sales suffer due to the temporary closure of their hospitality operations. However, consumers have shown real loyalty to our wines and retail sales both online and via shops saw an impressive rise. More and more wine lovers have been supporting Britain's wine industry. English and Welsh wines are more widely available and easier to find than ever before, from supermarkets to independent retailers and from the vineyards themselves, both online and from the cellar door – Our

message is clear: Buy Local, Buy British this Christmas!"

1 Wine Standards Branch (Food Standards Agency)

2 WineGB

** Spokespeople available for interview **

Further information and images:

Madeleine@weareco.co.uk 07778 702221