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English Fizz

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SUMMER 2021

WWW.LAYWHEELER.COM/ENGLISHFIZZ



Sparkling wines to be proud of

Just a few years ago, the idea of buying English Sparkling Wine for Lay & Wheeler, from not just one but four outstanding producers, would have seemed far-fetched.

Today, it's become a reality, and I'm thrilled to introduce you to these four brilliant estates - Hambledon, Nyetimber, Rathfinny, and Wiston - and their spectacular wines. These are the only opportunities I've had for vineyard visits over the past year, and I've been impressed at every turn: these are serious vineyards and wineries, producing serious wines.

I live in East Sussex, and spending time on the South Downs, as I have done most days during the lockdowns of the last year, it's obvious what makes this a brilliant place for growing grapes. The pure chalk soils are not only free-draining, but reflect the sun's heat back onto the grapes, while south-facing slopes can feel almost mediterranean in the summer sun. Comparisons with Champagne might seem clichéd, but it's no coincidence that we're seeing more and more investment from the Grandes Marques in the vineyards of southern England.

And then you have the people. They're genuine trailblazers, pushing English wine to levels not seen before. Winemakers like Dermot Sugrue and Cherie Spriggs are some of the finest exponents of sparkling wine in the world, while at both Hambledon and Rathfinny the owners, Ian Kellett and Mark Driver respectively, as well as employing incredibly talented winemakers, have also studied winemaking at Plumpton College, such is their passion and commitment to their projects.

While there remains debate as to what we should call it - English fizz, Sussex, even Britagne - the resulting wines are becoming ever more serious and ageworthy. They are undoubtedly competitors to the world's greatest sparkling wines.

In this most English of summers, why not celebrate the best of British produce, and raise a glass of English fizz.

Cheers

Robbie Toothill

Buyer

June 2021



Sustainability

We are proud to work with Healey's Print Group to produce this brochure. Healey's have offset the carbon impact of the paper and printing of this brochure in partnership with the World Land Trust, by preserving ecologically important standing forests. We have chosen recycled paper for both the brochure and envelope. We estimate about 1,600 square metres of endangered forest were protected in this production.



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with the exception of those on
page 6, 7, 8, 16/17 and 23.

Cover image

Rathfinny Wine Estate towards the
English Channel.

Pictured

Nyetimber vineyards in Spring.

Map



Visit these wineries

With these spectacular developments in domestic winemaking, local wine tastings and tours have never been more accessible. All four of these wineries warmly welcome visitors, though some require pre-booking, so please confirm availability on their websites before planning your trip.

We believe there's no better way to appreciate wine than to travel to its very source.



Hambledon

Address:

Hambledon Vineyard, Hambledon,
Hampshire, PO7 4RY

Website:

<https://hambledonvineyard.co.uk/pages/visit-us>

Experiences:

Hambledon offers regular guided tours and tastings, and sells their wine from the cellar door. They are also hosting special, scheduled events throughout this summer, such as Jazz & Fizz, a Fizz & Foraged Vegan Supper Club night, and a Fizz & Chips Pop Up with Frito & Via. Dates, times and ticket details are listed on their website.



Nyetimber

Website:

<https://nyetimber.com/experiences/>

Experiences:

Nyetimber hosts open days from time to time, for which tickets are sold on their website. Nyetimber also participates in various festivals throughout the year, such as the Cowdray Gold Cup, Wilderness Festival and the Dorset Seafood Festival, all of which are listed on their website.

Rathfinny

Address:

Rathfinny Wine Estate, Alfriston,
East Sussex, BN26 5TU

Website:

<https://rathfinnyestate.com/>

Experiences:

Rathfinny welcomes walk-ins to their tasting room, Flint Barns, as well as to their shop, Cellar Door. They have vineyard picnics available to book, from Wednesday-Sunday throughout the summer, and their restaurant is open for lunch and dinner Wednesday-Sunday. They also host guided tours, and have a limited number of rooms available to stay overnight. Tickets and reservation details are available online.



Wiston Estate

Address:

Washington, West Sussex - please note, winery tours begin at their original vineyard, so once you have booked an experience, please see the confirmation details for the correct starting point. As such, we haven't listed the full address here.

Website:

<https://www.wistonestate.com/visit-us>

Experiences:

Wiston hosts open days as well as vineyard tours and wine tastings, all of which can be booked on their website. Their Wine Barn, overlooking their vines, is also available for private hire.



Hambledon

HAMBLEDON, HAMPSHIRE

@hambledon_vineyard

Founded in 1952, by Major-General Sir Guy Salisbury-Jones, Hambledon is England’s oldest commercial vineyard, with wines even served to French president Jacques Pompidou during an embassy reception in the 1970s.

But it was with the arrival of Ian Kellett in 1999 that the story really begins.

Ian was already a wine lover, with a successful career in banking under his belt, and has since married passion and business sense here.

With his interest piqued by the winemaking history of the estate, he studied oenology at Plumpton College, aiming to restore Hambledon to its former glory.

He was convinced that sparkling was the future, and in 2005 he planted his first Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Pinot Meunier, to test different clones and rootstocks. In 2011, having expanded the plantation with guidance from Hubert de Billy of Pol Roger, he appointed Hervé Jestin, a renowned chef de cave from Champagne, to direct all winemaking.

Hambledon has England’s only entirely gravity-fed cellar, which transforms grapes grown on the estate’s Newhaven chalk soils - the same soils that are found in Champagne. With expansion plans on the way, and a busy tasting room and events calendar, Hambledon’s future is very bright.

The **Classic Cuvée** is the best way to discover the estate. Chardonnay-led, with around 20% reserve wines in the blend, it’s got just 4.5g/l of dosage added. It’s a taut English fizz, with lots of green apple fruit, and a long and savoury finish.

The **Première Cuvée**, meanwhile, is a step up. Again Chardonnay-led, with a small proportion aged in oak, giving a slight smokiness to the wine, this is serious and incredibly long. Ian sought to set it apart by bottling it in gorgeous Krug-style glass. It also stands out in tastings: during a Noble Rot magazine tasting last year, it came second of some 24 top Champagnes and English Sparklings, tasted by a renowned panel including Jancis Robinson OBE.

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
N/V Classic Cuvée	£20.50	£123 per 6	2021 - 2024
N/V Première Cuvée	£33.00	£198 per 6	2021 - 2030



Pictured: Hambledon’s long history of winemaking



Pictured: The winery, Hambledon Vineyard



Pictured: Into the valley, Hambleton Vineyard

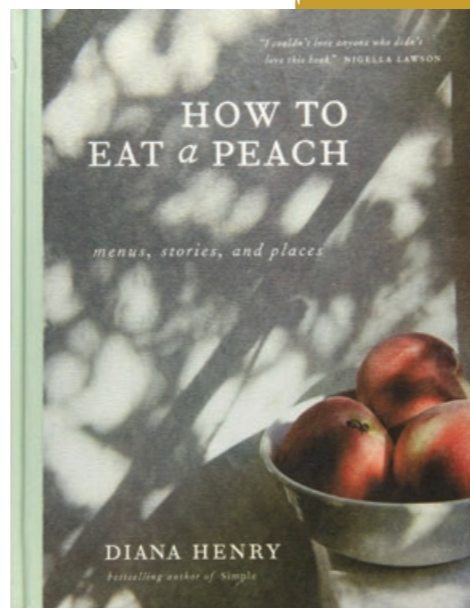
Asparagus, peas & radishes with pistachio pesto

Serves 6



“The pesto here is rich, so you need the radishes to provide a clean contrast.”

Source: Octopus Books from *How to Eat a Peach: Menus, Stories and Places* by Diana Henry is published by Mitchell Beazley (£25)



For the pesto

150g (5½oz) shelled
unsalted pistachio nuts

8 spring onions,
trimmed and chopped

15g (½oz) unsalted butter

1 fat garlic clove, crushed

170ml (6fl oz) extra virgin olive oil

130g (4½oz) ricotta,
preferably fresh rather than UHT

40g (1½oz) pecorino or Parmesan cheese,
finely grated

Sea salt flakes and
freshly ground black pepper

For the vegetables

8–10 radishes, preferably French
breakfast radishes

650g (1lb 7oz) asparagus

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

¾ tablespoon white balsamic vinegar

200g (7oz) fresh raw peas

25g (1oz) pea shoots

Start with the pesto. Boil two-thirds of the pistachios in water for 4 minutes; this softens them and makes the pesto creamy. Drain and dry them in a tea towel. You need to rub off all the papery skin (laborious but therapeutic).

Lightly toast the rest of the nuts in a dry pan for about 30 seconds. You will be able to smell the toasted aroma. Immediately transfer to a plate. Cook the spring onions in the butter in a small saucepan until soft, but not coloured. Add the garlic and cook for another 30 seconds or so.

Blitz all the nuts with the spring onions and garlic in a food processor, gradually adding the extra virgin olive oil. Stir in the ricotta and pecorino or parmesan. Season and taste.

Now for the vegetables. Shave the radishes using a mandoline, or cut them very finely with a sharp knife.

Break or cut off the base of each asparagus spear (if you use your hands rather than a knife, you can feel where the natural break is). Bring a pan with about 7.5cm (3in) of water to the boil. Stand the asparagus in this, bases in the water, spears leaning against the side (they cook in the steam). Cover with a lid. Cook until only just tender, testing with a point of a knife. How long it takes depends on the thickness of the asparagus. If it's of average thickness, I reckon on 7 minutes, but I usually start checking after 4.

Lift the asparagus out of the pan, then quickly dry it of excess moisture by patting it with a clean tea towel. Add a little of the asparagus cooking water to the pesto to loosen and thin it.

Mix the extra virgin olive oil and the white balsamic vinegar together and season. Divide the asparagus, raw peas, radishes and pea shoots between 6 plates — or put them all on a platter — and drizzle with the white balsamic dressing. Spoon on some of the pesto and offer the rest at the table.



Nyetimber

WEST CHILTINGTON,
WEST SUSSEX

@nyetimber

First recorded as a settlement in the Domesday Book as Nitimbreh, the first vines were planted at Nyetimber in 1988: Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Meunier, with a view to making sparkling wines. In 2006, Eric Heresma purchased the estate, and his investment has been a gamechanger for this historic property.

In 2007, an unprompted letter from Canadians Cherie Spriggs and her husband Brad Greatrix (pictured together, right) led Eric to appoint her head winemaker, with Brad alongside, a decision that's lifted Nyetimber to the very top table.

They immediately implemented changes, such as allowing all the wines to go through malolactic fermentation. This has resulted in a house style which impresses with its roundness and creaminess, while preserving the freshness you'd expect from England's finest.

In 2018 Cherie's efforts were recognised when she was named Sparkling Winemaker of the Year at the International Wine Challenge, the first such accolade for someone making English wine.

Nyetimber own vineyards across a number of sites stretching along the green sandstone and chalk hills of the South East of England, from Kent to Hampshire, and all the wines come entirely from estate grown fruit.

The **Classic Cuvée** is a multi-vintage blend, coming from the hundreds of hectares of vineyards owned by Nyetimber. It's a brilliant introduction to the range here. Creamy and fruit forward, there's lovely structure, with a long and chalky finish.

Prior to 2010, it was a single vintage wine, and we've liberated a few bottles of the gorgeous **2009 Classic Cuvée**, a wonderful vintage in England. Late disgorged just for Lay & Wheeler, it shows the ageing potential of this brilliant wine.



Pictured: Cherie Spriggs, head winemaker at Nyetimber
and her husband, winemaker Brad Greatrix
Image kindly supplied by Nyetimber



Pictured: Spring day at Nyetimber



Pictured: In the vineyards at Nyetimber

Tillington, meanwhile, is a vineyard in West Sussex, from where the Pinot Noir particularly shone during Cherie’s tastings of the 2009 vintage. She decided to bottle an individual cuvée, and this Pinot Noir-led wine is red-fruited, structured, and wonderfully ageworthy.

The **1086** is their *prestige cuvée*, produced to be the pinnacle of the estate. A careful selection of dozens of separate wines from the 2010 vintage, carefully blended together, it then spent six years on the lees before being disgorged. It’s not cheap, but it’s undoubtedly the most ambitious, and most complex, sparkling wine produced in England today.

	£ Bottle	 Case	 Drink
N/V Classic Cuvée (2016 base)	£25	£150 per 6	2021 - 2024
2009 Classic Cuvée (Late Disgorgement)	£30	£180 per 6	2021 - 2025
2013 Tillington Single Vineyard	£79.50	£477 per 6	2021 - 2035
2010 Cuvée 1086	£120	£720 per 6	2021 - 2038

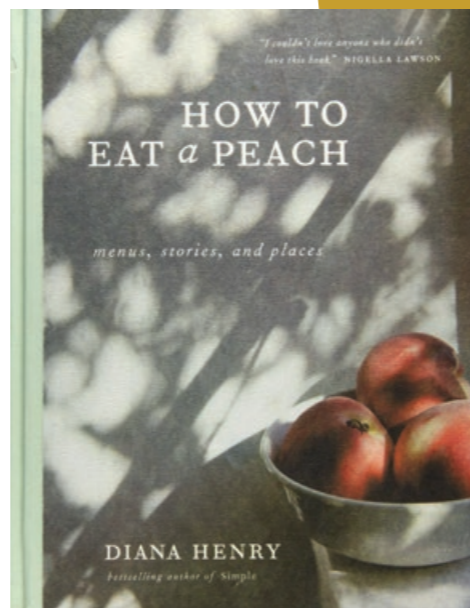
Crab, tomato & saffron tart

Serves 6 - 8



“This is one of my best dishes and I've been turning it out every summer for years. It's rich, but the custard is delicate. Prepare the components the day before, then you just have to fill the tart case and bake it.”

Source: Octopus Books from *How to Eat a Peach: Menus, Stories and Places* by Diana Henry is published by Mitchell Beazley (£25)



For the pastry

250g (9oz) plain flour, plus more to dust

150g (5½oz) chilled unsalted butter, chopped

Good pinch of sea salt flakes

1 egg yolk

For the filling

4 plum tomatoes

15g (½oz) unsalted butter

½ tablespoon regular olive oil

1 small onion, very finely chopped

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

Sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper

Pinch of caster sugar (optional)

Squeeze of lemon juice (optional)

200ml (7fl oz) double cream

Generous pinch of saffron threads

100ml (3½fl oz) creme fraîche

1 large egg, plus 3 egg yolks

200g (7oz) white crab meat

50g (1¾oz) brown crab meat

Put the flour, butter and salt into a food processor and whizz until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Mix the yolk with ½ tablespoon of very cold water, add it and whizz again. The pastry should come together into a ball. Wrap it in cling film and allow to rest in the fridge for 20 minutes or so, then roll out on a lightly floured surface and use to line a 23cm (9in) loose-bottomed tart tin. Prick the bottom with a fork, then chill in the fridge or freezer until cold and firm.

Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/gas mark 4 and put in a metal baking sheet to heat up. Line the pastry with greaseproof paper and fill with baking beans. Bake the pastry case, on the hot baking sheet, for 14 minutes, removing the paper and beans after 7. Leave to cool.

Plunge the tomatoes into boiling water and leave for 20 seconds, then remove. Skin, halve, deseed and cut the flesh into slivers. Heat the butter and regular olive oil in a frying pan and cook the onion and tomatoes gently until soft but not coloured. Add the garlic, season and continue to cook until you have a thick purée. Taste. If the tomatoes didn't have the best flavour to begin with, it will benefit from the tiniest bit of sugar and a squeeze of lemon juice. The purée should be dry, not at all wet. Spoon it into the pastry case.

Put about 50ml (2fl oz) of the double cream in a saucepan and add the saffron threads. Heat until just under boiling, then stir until you can see the saffron colouring the cream. Leave to cool. Mix this with the rest of the double cream, the creme fraîche, and egg yolks. Season well and gently stir in all the crab. Slowly pour into the tart case.

Return the tart to the hot baking sheet and cook for 45 minutes, or until the pastry is golden and the filling just set in the middle (it should still have a little give, as it will continue to cook out of the oven). Leave to cool for 15 minutes, then remove the tart tin and serve.

I think this only needs a green salad, but green beans with toasted almonds are also good, and some people always want potatoes.



Rathfinny

ALFRISTON, EAST SUSSEX

@rathfinnyestate

While we get to travel to many of the world’s most beautiful wine regions, it’s hard to think of a more stunning estate than Rathfinny. It’s situated right in the heart of the South Downs, within sight of the English Channel, just three miles as the crow - or raven - flies from the sea.

Mark and Sarah Driver founded Rathfinny in 2010, on a working arable farm just outside the picture-perfect village of Alfriston. They planted their first 50 hectares of vines in 2012, with an end goal of 350 hectares planted on this single site.

Mark studied winemaking at Plumpton, making him a hands-on owner, and everything - from the state of the art cellar to the labels that show off Sussex’s famous Seven Sisters, just a few miles down the road - has been very carefully thought out.

With plenty of wind blowing across the vineyard, Rathfinny are able to pick later than most, allowing the grapes to reach an impressive level of maturity. That results in wines that balance purity and ripeness of fruit with an incredible freshness.

Mark is a huge believer in the power of Pinot Noir-led sparklings, grown on the pure chalk of the Rathfinny farm. So their **Classic Cuvée** is Pinot Noir-led, and spends 36 months on the lees. Rathfinny only produce vintage wines, and the 2017 is crisp and fruit forward, with just 5g/l of dosage, and a long, chalky, delicious finish. At this price, it’s a bargain.

The **Blanc de Noirs** is, for Mark, the pinnacle of the estate. It’s a complex and structured Pinot Noir, with stunning purity of red apples and a lovely leesy complexity. It’s the best English Blanc de Noirs we’ve come across.

	£ Bottle	 Case	 Drink
2017 Classic Cuvée	£21	£126 per 6	2021 - 2027
2017 Blanc de Noirs Brut	£29	£174 per 6	2021 - 2030

A bottle of Rathfinny’ Classic Cuvée enjoyed with a platter of local produce.
Image kindly supplied by Rathfinny





Pictured: Rathfinny Wine Estate's coastal location



Wiston
WASHINGTON, WEST SUSSEX
@wistonestate

The Goring family have owned the Wiston Estate, which straddles 6,000 acres of chalky South Downs and clay soils of the Weald, since 1743. But it was only with the arrival of South African born-and-bred Pip Goring in 1972 that they broached the idea of planting vineyards.

Still, it took Pip and her husband 34 years to decide exactly where and how to plant a vineyard on the estate. The first vines went into the soil in 2006. At the same time, Wiston appointed Irish winemaker Dermot Sugrue, who'd worked at L'Eglise-Clinet in Pomerol and Château Léoville-Barton, as well as at Nyetimber.

He's clearly an incredible talent: the late, great Steven Spurrier dubbed him "the best winemaker in England."

The wines show off both Dermot's sheer ability and Wiston's incredible, chalky terroir. The **N/V Brut** is a blend of near-equal parts of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Meunier, that spends three and a half years on the lees, prior to disgorgement. Ample and creamy, with plenty of richness, it's a lovely introduction to the house style.

The **Estate Cuvée Brut** is a step up in quality. The first fermentation is in old Burgundy barrels, which gives a different texture to the wine, which is led with 45% Pinot Noir. From the outstanding 2015 vintage, it's an opulent, impressive expression of English Sparkling.

Meanwhile, the **2015 Blanc de Blancs** comes from tiny, 15hl/ha yields from the steepest, chalkiest part of the Wiston vineyard. 50% is fermented in old barrels, and the resulting wine is remarkable: focused yet rich, with a long, chalky, delicious finish.

The plaudits have followed. Neal Martin wrote, "Wiston's 2015 Blanc de Blancs is one of the finest English sparkling wines that I have encountered...to date...Now this is how you make a great Blanc de Blancs."

	£ Bottle	Case	Drink
N/V Brut	£21	£126 per 6	2021 - 2026
2015 Estate Cuvée Brut	£30	£180 per 6	2021 - 2030
2015 Estate Blanc de Blancs	£33	£198 per 6	2021 - 2033

Pictured:
The Wine Barn at Wiston Estate overlooks the vineyards



Pictured: Vines at Hambledon Vineyard

**READY FOR
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READY TO
DRINK**



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