



## ENGLISH SPARKLING

BY SEARCYS



## WELCOME TO THE SEARCYS ENGLISH SPARKLING WINE GUIDE

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With English sparkling wine growing rapidly both in quality and popularity, we have prepared this guide as an introduction to this exciting category.

At the heart of Searcys is our British heritage which sits aside a modern approach and a focus on sustainability. We are passionate about English sparkling wine and we are thrilled to share our love through this guide.

JOEL CLAUSTRE, MCA  
Searcys Drinks Ambassador

## HISTORY OF ENGLISH SPARKLING WINE

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Wine grapes have been grown on British soil for over 1,600 years. Though it is debated as to whether they brought vines to the United Kingdom, the Romans wrote about growing wine grapes in Britain in the first century. There are now over 700 vineyards across the England and 68% of the wine produced is sparkling.

The invention of sparkling wine is often accredited to monk Dom Perignon, who pioneered the process of the traditional method as we know now. However, it could be argued that it was first discovered 30 years earlier by an Englishman. In 1662 Christopher Merret, an English winemaker, presented a paper detailing his discovery that adding sugar to a finished wine could result in a sparkle.

Before English wine production had the opportunity to take off, WWI and WWII led to the cease of commercial wine growing. In 1952 the first commercial vineyard was planted since 1875 and over the following decades the number of vineyards increased rapidly.

Due to the cool English climate original growers planted grapes which prioritised fast-ripening over quality. Climate change has led to warmer weather and a revolution, as well as quality focused wine makers and investment, in English sparkling wine. More often than not the same grape varieties which are used to produce Champagne - Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier are now cultivated to make English sparkling wine.





## ENGLISH SPARKLING WINE GLOSSARY

**AGEING ON THE LEES ('SUR LIE' IN FRENCH)** – lees, leftover yeast particles, are left in sparkling wines whilst they mature as they release tiny amounts of sugar and amino acid whilst it matures which add texture and flavour

**BLANC DE BLANCS** – a wine made entirely of white grapes, rather than a mix

**BLANC DE NOIRS** – a white wine made from red or black grapes without skin contact

**BRUT** – a relatively-dry sparkling wine

**CUVÉE** – refers to wine of a specific blend or batch

**DEMI-SEC** – a medium-sweet sparkling wine

**EXTRA BRUT** – a dry sparkling wine

**GYROPALLETE** – the cage which slowly rotates the bottle as part of the process to remove sediment

**TRADITIONAL METHOD** – the traditional French method of sparkling wine-making, where the first fermentation takes place in a barrel or stainless steel vat, the second in a bottle and the bottle is turned  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a turn, daily

**NV** – a non-vintage wine, often a blend from the produce of different years

**MV** – multi-vintage



**RIDDLING ('REMUAGE' IN FRENCH)** – the process of moving the sediment to the neck of the bottle for the easy removal

**ROSÉ** – a wine made from red grapes, with limited skin contact which colours the wine

**SECOND FERMENTATION** – a winemaking process entailing a second period of fermentation in a different vessel

**VINTAGE** – refers to the year in which the grapes were picked, and the wine was produced



## INTRODUCING OUR PARTNERS

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English sparkling wine has been growing in both popularity and quality over the last few years.

The Wine and Spirit Trade Association (WSTA) project that English Sparkling Wine production will double by 2022 to approximately 10 million bottles annually. This can be credited, in part, to a warming climate which has led to riper grapes, as well as an increase in expertise and awareness.

Although the rising temperatures and longer ripening times are producing more complex wines, the unpredictable frosts and moving seasons have led to fluctuating and unreliable yields.

In 2018, at the Sommelier Wine Awards, 3,000 wines were blind-tasted by expert judges and more gold medals went to wines from England than from France. Taittinger even announced that they were buying a vineyard in Kent to produce English sparkling wine!



We are thrilled to have partnered with three different producers of English sparkling wine – Greyfriars, Furleigh and Nyetimber. These three vineyards all differ in size and production rates, but we think the versatility ensures a well-rounded selection of English sparkling wines in our different venues.

## GREYFRIARS

The original, tiny Greyfriars vineyard was planted in 1989 on the slopes of the Hog's Back, a few miles outside Guildford in Surrey. The vineyard was taken over by husband and wife, Mike and Hilary, in 2010 with the aim of expanding Greyfriars to become a boutique, commercial scale, producer of world-class sparkling wines.

Since 2013, when the first Greyfriars wine was released, the wine has won numerous awards and accolades and the vineyard has grown to over 40-acres over two sites. The estate now includes a storage 'cave' dug into the side of the Hog's back and a world class winery.

### *Did you know?*

Greyfriars' sparkling wines are made using the traditional method – utilising a secondary fermentation and subsequently ageing the wine in the bottle in the cellar for at least three years.

Their vineyards are planted on solid chalk, which produces vibrant, rich and elegant sparkling wines.

45,000 man-hours went in to building the Greyfriars chalk cave, where they store and age a quarter of a million bottles of wine.



The south-facing chalk slopes provide the perfect terroir for producing world-class, sustainably produced sparkling wine. In order to aid this process Greyfriars restrict their yields in order to boost quality and ripeness and, in the winery, minimal intervention is practiced in order to let to showcase the fruit.



## NYETIMBER

Nyetimber produces award-winning English sparkling wine from its nine vineyards in West Sussex, Hampshire and Kent. First mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086, The Nyetimber Estate has an illustrious history and was even gifted to Thomas Cromwell by Henry VIII.

Eric Heerema has been the driving force behind Nyetimber since 2006, and is committed to producing sparkling wines of exceptional quality. His vision and pioneering spirit are shared by Cherie Spiggs and Brad Greatrix, the husband and wife winemaking team who have been integral to building Nyetimber into a sparkling wine producer that has been rivaling the best in the world for over 11 years.

The first vines were planted in 1988 and they now stretch over 260 hectares in West Sussex, Hampshire and Kent. Nyetimber was the first producer of English sparkling wine to exclusively grow the three celebrated grape varieties of Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay.

Cherie Spriggs, Head Winemaker at Nyetimber, won the Sparkling Winemaker of the Year 2018 award at the International Wine Challenge. Cherie has made history by becoming not only the first female to have won this prestigious accolade, but the first person from outside of Champagne to take the title.



## *Did you know?*

Nyetimber is named after the old name of the valley in which it sits - Nitimbrea, which likely referred to a newly timbered house or a small timber plantation.

The estate was part of Henry VIII's divorce settlement with Anne of Cleves.

Nyetimber produced England's first ever prestige cuvée in 2018 with the release of Nyetimber 1086 2009 and 1086 Rosé 2010.

## FURLEIGH ESTATE



Furleigh Estate, Dorset, is planted with over 53,000 vines made up of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier over 50 acres of vineyards. Ian Edward and Rebecca Hansford bought the land in 2004. Previously owned by Rebecca's father, a dairy farmer, the land is where she grew up. Rebecca's father sold the land to retire, but by chance it came up for sale in 2004, providing the perfect opportunity for Ian and Rebecca to take the leap. They converted the old milking barn into a visitors' tasting-room and installed presses, steel tanks and cold fermentation systems.

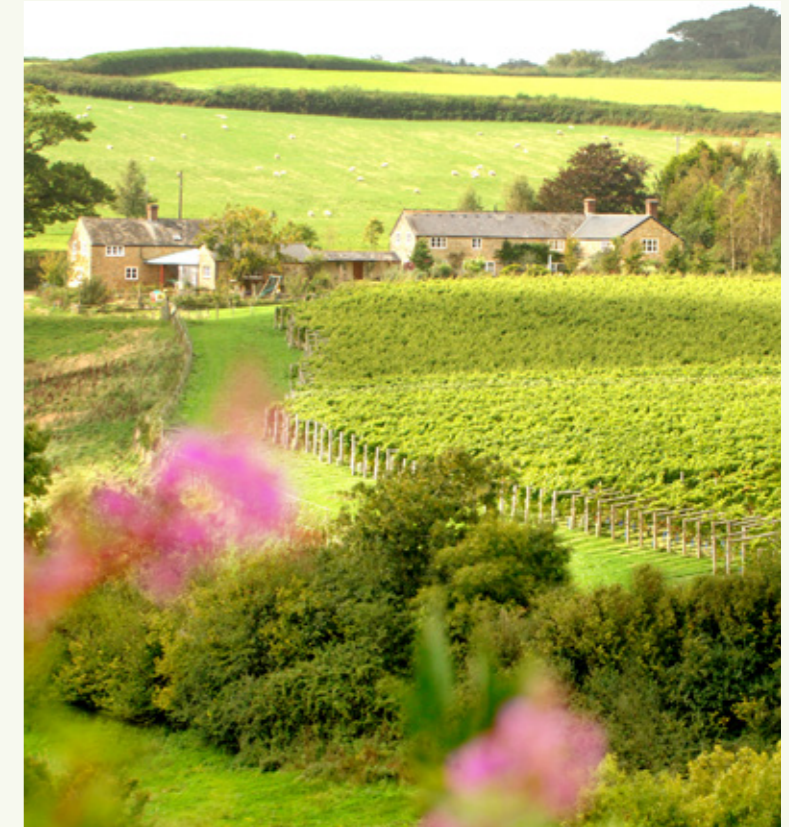
The first vines were planted in 2005 and now produce an average of 40,000 bottles of sparkling wine and 10,000 bottles of still wines a year. Furleigh's flagship wine is their Classic Cuvée, a blend of 30% Pinot Noir, 30% Pinot Meunier and 40% Chardonnay.

### *Did you know?*

All the grapes Furleigh Estate use are from their own Dorset vineyards - this is unusual - many larger producers supplement their own crop with grapes from other locations.

Located near the sea, they ensure that their wines will work well with seafood.

After hand-picking their grapes, they are 'whole-bunch' pressed in order to obtain the finest juice which is then left on its lees for at least 18 months, and for a further two months in the bottle.



## JOEL'S TIPS AND PAIRINGS

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We have asked Joel Claustre, Searcys' Drinks Ambassador, to share his top pairings for English sparkling wine.

### **FURLEIGH ESTATE, ROSÉ, BRUT NV, DORSET**

From Furleigh Estate, this is elegant sparkling rosé has steady, fine bubbles. It reveals aromas of wild strawberries, and the palate is dry with citrus acidity.

An excellent match with seafood, but also with fruit-based puddings.

### **GREYFRIARS, CUVÉE BRUT, NV, SURREY**

This delectable English sparkling wine comes from a very chalky part of the UK, on the edge of the Surrey hills. It's a classic blend of the three traditional "Champagne" varieties, offering generous citrus flavours and a toasty finish.

Tastes great with fish and chips.

### **NYETIMBER, CLASSIC CUVÉE, BRUT NV, WEST SUSSEX**

Nyetimber is a must-try, the quality of the Classic Cuvée is excellent, with small bubbles that release aromas of fresh melon, lemon and vanilla. On the palate you will experience a delicious texture which carries the complex notes on the long finish.

Matches perfectly with a creamy fish such as monkfish or with white meat dishes.





With the advance of the Nation's prosperity and culture entertaining has not only become more general, but almost one of the necessities of social life.

Introduction to Searcy's catalogue, 1896.

## ABOUT SEARCYS

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Searcys was established in 1847 by Victorian entrepreneur and the Duke of Northumberland's confectioner, John Searcy. We have an illustrious history providing fantastic dining and event experiences, as well as setting the trend in the food and drinks industry due to our bold concepts and creative spirit.

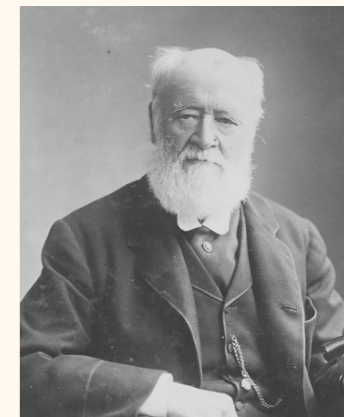
1837 marked the year Princess Victoria ascended the throne. It was also the year that the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland employed a new confectioner at their home in Alnwick Castle – John Searcy. Catering for the Duke and Duchess required a skill and artistry that few people possessed, as the high society and royalty who made up this prestigious set consistently expected the best.

John Searcy's talent caught the attention of his guests and after 10 years he approached the Duke and Duchess about starting his own catering company so his skills and confections could be enjoyed by others outside of Alnwick Castle. The Duke and Duchess agreed and loaned him the funds to begin his company.

John Searcy went on to cater for weddings and parties for highly esteemed clientele from London and the surrounding areas. In 1870, John Searcy & Sons received a Royal Warrant from the Prince of Wales – a mark of recognition for the company's outstanding service. Each event was an intricate performance, designed to entertain and amaze guests. These same values for dining and entertaining that we uphold today in to ensure we are as consistently excellent as John Searcy was.

Today Searcys restaurants, cafes and Champagne bars can be found at The Gherkin, The Pump Room in Bath, the St Pancras Brasserie, The Design Museum, the Barbican, The Alnwick Garden, Blenheim Palace, Kenwood House, Exbury Gardens, St Paul's Cathedral and Westfield Stratford. Searcys event venues include 30 Euston Square, One Moorgate Place, 30 Pavilion Road, Vintners' Hall, 10-11 Carlton House Terrace, Inner Temple and The HAC.

In 2018, we launched our first ever CR pledges to buy the best ingredients available, working closely with British producers and growers. Our work has been awarded a Two Star rating by the Sustainable Restaurant Association in recognition of our commitment to serve customers food and drink that is delicious, ethical and sustainable.



John Searcy





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