

## **Rathfinny Estate appoints Gonzalez Byass UK as its UK Distributor**

Rathfinny Estate, the major English sparkling wine producer located in East Sussex, has appointed Gonzalez Byass UK as its exclusive UK distributor with immediate effect.

Rathfinny is one of the newest and largest single estate vineyards in England, with a RIBA-nominated, state of the art winery. Its first sparkling wines, a Blanc de Blancs and a Rosé, are set to be released in June 2018.

Established in 2010 by ex-Hedge Fund Manager Mark Driver and his wife Sarah, herself an ex-City Solicitor, Rathfinny has developed from a working arable farm to its current incarnation as one of the most significant sparkling wine producers in the country.



Announcing the distribution partnership, Mark Driver commented, *“we are delighted to be embarking on this exciting journey with Gonzalez Byass. Having had numerous recommendations citing their professionalism, outstanding level of service and focus on ‘family’, once we met with Martin and the team, we felt an immediate affinity and knew right away they understood our brand”.*

Sarah Driver continued, *“our business revolves around building relationships and our partnership feels right. We very much admire the other family-owned producers in their portfolio, most of whom have been with them for many years. In addition, we have close ties with Spain so the connection feels very natural.”*

Martin Skelton, Managing Director of Gonzalez Byass UK stated, *“we are extremely proud to be working as exclusive UK distributors for Rathfinny Estate. Rathfinny will become one of England’s most important sparkling wine producers and my colleagues and I are excited to be a part of that journey. I really admire what Mark and Sarah have achieved; the attention to detail in every aspect of the brand, their empathy in including the local community in their project, together with their foresight and energy in furthering the category by driving the Sussex PDO. I see them as leading lights and exemplary in the industry.”*

Rathfinny joins a Gonzalez Byass UK portfolio of winemaking jewels including Quinta do Noval, Champagne Deutz, Domaine Zind Humbrecht, Wirra Wirra, Jackson Estate as well as Gonzalez Byass Sherry and owned wineries such as Bodegas Beronia and Veramonte.

Melissa Draycott, Gonzalez Byass’ Sales Director concluded, *“having had a pre-release tasting of Rathfinny’s wines, I can honestly say they are some of the finest English sparkling wines I’ve ever tasted, and I can’t wait for the trade’s reaction when we launch in June next year. In my view, the chalk soil of the Sussex Downs has imparted a terrific minerality, which together with a round and supple house style, makes Rathfinny a unique proposition.”*

-Ends-

## NOTES TO EDITORS:

### About Rathfinny

Rathfinny Estate in East Sussex was founded in 2010 by husband and wife, Mark and Sarah Driver. Once a working arable farm, the first vines were planted in 2012 and today Rathfinny comprises 185 acres of predominantly Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier, with a further 215 acres to be planted by 2021.

Located on a perfect, south-facing slope in the South Downs National Park just three miles from the sea, Rathfinny enjoys a climate, chalk soil and aspect that are perfect for producing world-class sparkling wine. Its RIBA-nominated winery is the largest and greenest purpose-built winery in the UK, self-sufficient in both energy and water.

With renowned winemaker Jonathan Médard from Épernay, and Cameron Roucher from New Zealand managing the Estate, Rathfinny looks set to achieve quality levels that will see their Sussex Sparkling wines winning awards the world over.

Rathfinny's first sparkling wines, a Blanc de Blancs and a Rosé are due for release in June 2018, targeted at premium On-Trade and Independent Off-Trade accounts. A plan for international export will see Rathfinny selling up to 50 per cent of its production to key overseas markets within Europe, Asia and North America immediately upon release.

<http://rathfinnyestate.com/>

### About González Byass

González Byass is a family-owned, collection of wineries founded in 1835, which spans across Spain's most important wine producing regions. From its foundation, the González family have been dedicated to making fine Sherries and brandies in Jerez, Spain, creating such well-known brands as Tío Pepe, Croft, Soberano 5 Brandy and Lepanto Brandy de Jerez.

Today, the fifth generation of the family are the custodians of these exceptional brands having built the company into a family of wineries which produces wine in some of Spain's most famous regions; Bodegas Beronia (wineries in both the Rioja and Rueda), Cavas Vilarnau (Barcelona), Finca Constancia (Vino de la Tierra de Castilla), Viñas del Vero (Somontano) and Pazo de Lusco (Rías Baixas). In each of these regions, the family strives to make the best possible quality wines respecting the local *terroir* and the environment. Recently the company acquired the renowned Chilean winery Veramonte, based in the valley of Casablanca.

At the same time, the company has also expanded its interests further in the premium spirits business and has created pioneering brands such as The London No.1, MOM Gin, and Nomad Whisky. In December 2016, the company, in a 50/50 joint-venture with Grupo Emperador Spain, acquired the Domecq trademark and related brandy, sherry and wine brands.

González Byass has its own distribution companies in its principal markets including the UK, Spain, Mexico and the USA. Gonzalez Byass UK was established in 2004 in St Albans. It now has 26 people mostly working in sales and marketing and, apart from its own brands mentioned above, GBUK represents a number of leading wineries from around the world.

<http://gonzalezbyassuk.com/> | [www.gonzalezbyass.com](http://www.gonzalezbyass.com)