



RATHFINNY



ESTATE MAP & RATHFINNY TRAIL



ABOUT RATHFINNY ESTATE

Rathfinny is a family-owned Estate, started by Sarah and Mark Driver in 2010, dedicated to producing some of the world's finest sparkling wines from its south-facing slopes in the heart of the South Downs National Park.

THE LAND

Chalk is the perfect soil for sparkling wine grapes. Our soil is exactly the same as the soil in Champagne stretching across the English Channel and visible in the nearby Seven Sisters cliffs.

THE CLIMATE

At Rathfinny we have the perfect climate for sparkling wine grapes. England has benefitted from global warming with average annual temperatures rising by about 1°C in the last 30 years.

WINE-MAKING PHILOSOPHY

Our wine is crafted in the Traditional Method, ageing on the lees for a minimum of 3 years (Rosé 2 years) after bottling to develop delicious autolytic notes. We aim to preserve the natural flavours of the grapes with as little intervention as possible.

VINEYARD

We planted our first vines in 2012 and as of 2020 we have 93 hectares (230 acres) under vine. The 385,000 vines all need individual care; hand-pruning and hand-harvesting by our local workforce.

A YEAR IN THE VINEYARD

There is always something to look out for in the Vineyard.

DECEMBER TO MARCH

The vines are dormant, and this is when we do our pruning which keeps the vines in shape and regulates the yields.

APRIL/MAY

As temperatures rise, new buds emerge, and shoots and leaves develop rapidly. We thin out to avoid overcrowding and shift the wires on the trellis for additional support.

JUNE/JULY

Vines, like all fruit, produce flowers and each tiny flower turns into a grape berry. We remove leaves to ensure crucial light and warmth reaches them.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

The grapes change colour from green as they ripen, called veraison. The red varieties go to red and purple while the white varieties go through various shades of green to a translucent yellow gold. We use nets to deter birds in some areas.

OCTOBER

All our fruit is harvested by hand, over 3-4 weeks, using about 200 local pickers.

NOVEMBER

We all get a break to catch up on much needed maintenance jobs.



GRAPE VARIETIES

Look out for the three main grape varieties that we use in our Sussex Sparkling.

PINOT NOIR (RED TAG)

Used for both red and white wines, it provides minerality and red fruit characters of cherries, raspberries and strawberries to a blend.

CHARDONNAY (YELLOW TAG)

We use a number of different clones, some more aromatic while others offer a range of flavours from green plums and apples, through to tropical fruits such as mango and lychee.

PINOT MEUNIER (PURPLE TAG)

The easiest variety to spot in the Vineyard by its dusty/floury leaves ('meunier' means 'miller' in French). It is planted on the more exposed areas as it is a hardy variety.



WILDLIFE INFORMATION

We have fantastic biodiversity at Rathfinny. Please let us know what you see and hear @RathfinnyEstate.

SKYLARK

Often heard calling as it parachutes from the sky using its call to divert passer-bys from its nest.

CORN BUNTING

A declining farmland bird but with a strong foothold at Rathfinny. You can hear its distinctive jangly calls from our wind breaks.

BUZZARD

Listen for its mournful mewing as it glides over the Vineyard.

ADONIS BLUE BUTTERFLY

Electric blue butterfly with two broods per year that can be seen on the grassland banks of Cradle Valley which we manage for wildlife enhancement.

BROWN HARE

Keep your eyes peeled for this elusive runner along the vine rows.



RATHFINNY WINE ESTATE

Alfriston, East Sussex BN26 5TU England

+44 (0)1323 870 022 rathfinnyestate.com @rathfinnyestate

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

We offer tours, delicious food at our Tasting Room Restaurant and at the Flint Barns Dining Room, we have accommodation, and we have a Cellar Door where you can taste and purchase our delicious Sussex Sparkling wines – please check our website for details, as opening times and what's on offer vary throughout the year.

Pre-booking is recommended.

SAFETY

We welcome walkers to the Estate.

Please be aware of your safety and remember that we are a working vineyard, with heavy machinery, and it is really important that you:

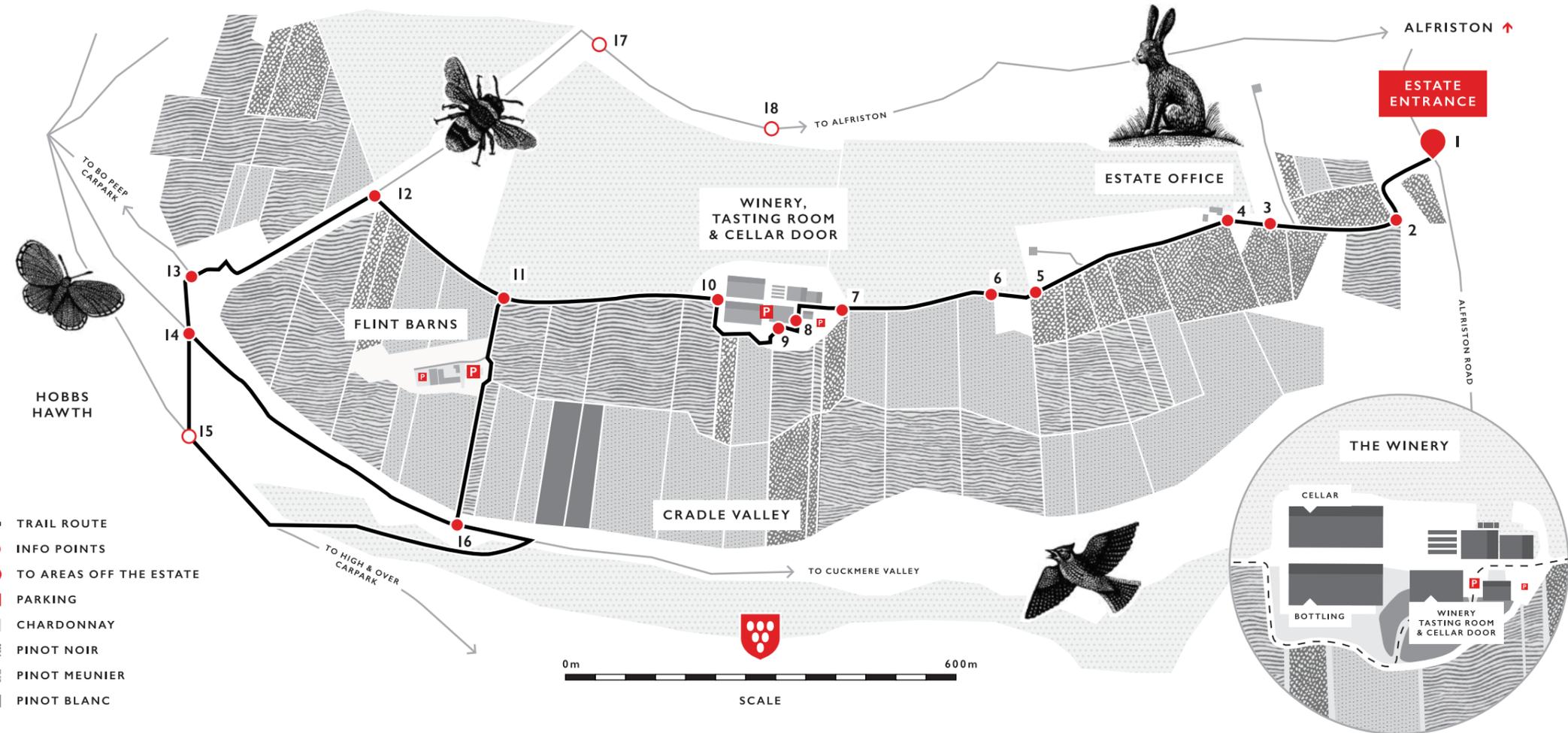
- Keep to the path
- Follow the signs at all times
- Keep dogs on leads and clear up their mess
- Take care when crossing roads
- Follow the Countryside Code



Please park only in designated car parks and not in lay-bys, which are constantly in use.

The Rathfinny Trail is officially classified as a "permissive footpath" running across the Rathfinny Wine Estate, and is subject to closure on certain days for Vineyard work in accordance with the *Highways Act 1980*, s31 (3). Please visit our website for further details.

OS map 123 is useful to show longer walks in the Cuckmere Valley.



- TRAIL ROUTE
- INFO POINTS
- TO AREAS OFF THE ESTATE
- P PARKING
- CHARDONNAY
- PINOT NOIR
- PINOT MEUNIER
- PINOT BLANC

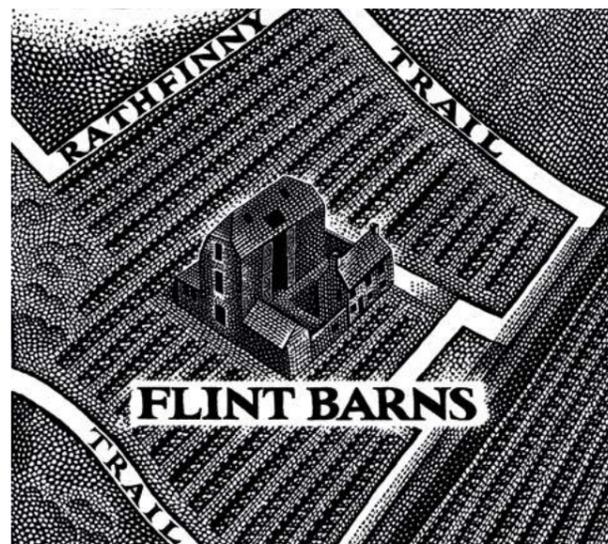
RATHFINNY TRAIL

The Trail can be walked as part of a larger walk in the area, in its entirety starting at 1 or by starting at the Cellar Door or the Flint Barns.

TIMINGS

Entrance (1) to the Cellar Door (8) – approx. 25 minutes/1.25 miles.

Cellar Door (8) past Winery (10) through Estate and loop (11-16) and back to Cellar Door, taking in the view (at 15) – approx. 1 hour 15 minutes/3 miles.



NOTE 1 Estate entrance.

NOTE 2 Look out for coloured row tags for each grape variety on the vine posts – Chardonnay (yellow), Pinot Noir (red), Pinot Meunier (purple).

NOTE 3 The Romans said the perfect place to grow grapes is 3 miles from the sea, which we are! To the left of the mouth of the Cuckmere River you can see Haven Brow, the first of the Seven Sisters, which are shown on our sparkling wine label.

NOTE 4 Keep on walking – you are on the right track!

NOTE 5 Please take care here on the road – look out for farm machinery and Estate traffic!

NOTE 6 The vines you can see from here to the Winery were the first we planted in 2012. Notice how even all the rows are – they are planted with a GPS-driven tractor, 2.2m wide with the vines planted 1.1m apart. There are about 4,100 vines/hectare (100m x 100m) or 1,640 vines/acre.

NOTE 7 See the distinctive shape of our Winery with its wildflower roof. Beyond are our Bottling building and Cellar. We hand-process, bottle and store all our Sussex Sparkling wine on the Estate.

The next section of the walk takes you through our most active and potentially dangerous part of the Estate – please take care!

NOTE 8 Cellar Door – you can taste and buy our Sussex Sparkling and still wines, as well as our Seven Sisters range of spirits, and other gifts. Don't worry if you can't carry the wine, you can order it at our online shop.

NOTE 9 A panoramic view of the Estate. The name Rathfinny comes from the Celtic word 'rath' meaning 'enclosure' and 'Finny' the name of the original farmer.

NOTE 10 The Cellar – with space for up to 4 million bottles, with each one aged for a minimum of 3 years (Rosé, 2 years).

NOTE 11 You can see our lovingly-restored Flint Barns that were destroyed in the storm of 1987. A 'home away from home' we have 10 en-suite rooms, a beautiful courtyard and we offer delicious, locally sourced food (not all year around – check our website for further details). It is available for exclusive hire.

NOTE 12 This area was used as training grounds for the Canadian troops during both world wars. On your right, you'll find one of our 'talking posts' with further information. You can walk the loop back to 11 or head up to 17/18 for great views and access to Alfriston.

NOTE 13 Here lies Hobbs Hawth, one of the 3 original farms which make up Rathfinny. The route splits, follow the left bridleway up the hill to continue the Trail and to High & Over, or the right bridleway to Bo Peep carpark.

NOTE 14 Kissing gate. Carry on up to 15 with its panoramic view or walk along the bottom of Cradle Valley to 16.

NOTE 15 A panoramic view of the whole Estate, Cradle Valley and the Vineyard with the red-roofed Flint Barns below and the state-of-the-art Winery in the distance. You can re-join the Estate by following the path down to point 16 or leave the Estate by walking on to High & Over.

NOTE 16 Re-enter the Estate by our 'talking post'. As you walk up the hill, notice the trees (right) which act as windbreaks from coastal breezes. These breezes help against spring frosts, which can devastate vines, and keep the vines free of fungal diseases. Go through the gap in the hedge at the top and head up to 11 where you can re-trace your route back to the Cellar Door.

NOTE 17 An expansive view across the Estate both to the North Downs and to the south where Seaford, Newhaven and Brighton are all visible.

NOTE 18 Path to Alfriston Village.