



RATHFINNY

LEADING SUSSEX ESTATE RATHFINNY EMBARKS ON BUILDING THE ENGLISH SPARKLING WINE CATEGORY IN ASIA PACIFIC

PRESS RELEASE
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Following the recent announcement that Rathfinny has partnered with ASC Fine Wines to build the category of English Sparkling wines in China, Rathfinny is pleased to announce another exciting new partnership with Vin Passion to build Sussex Sparkling in Japan and introduce Japanese consumers to the outstanding quality that these wines represent.

This September, Mark and Sarah Driver, Rathfinny Co-owners, embark on a trip to APAC to launch Rathfinny award-winning sparkling wines into both markets, continuing to build the English sparkling wine category as they make big export moves globally.

China and Japan are gradually recovering from the impacts of the global pandemic and with consumer interest in wine stronger than ever, Rathfinny's visit offers consumers an introduction to this exciting new category of exceptional quality wines.

Husband and wife, Mark and Sarah Driver, established the Rathfinny Wine Estate in 2010 on a working arable farm with the express intention of producing some of the world's finest quality

sparkling wines. Their ambition has always been *"In twenty years' time you will walk into a bar or restaurant in New York or Beijing and you'll be asked, "Would you like a glass of Champagne or a delicious glass of Sussex? I can recommend Rathfinny."* Their ambition is becoming a reality with the upcoming trip and the opportunity APAC is presenting for Rathfinny to introduce new consumers to Sussex Sparkling wine.

Rathfinny occupies a top-five position within the domestic UK wine market, both in terms of sales and reputation and will be investing with Vin Passion to achieve the same result in Japan. Vin Passion, one of Japan's leading on-trade specialist importers, with its strength in supplying Champagne and Burgundy to the fine dining sector, is the perfect partner for Rathfinny in their pursuit to build brand visibility and reputation through Japan's top bars and restaurants.

Sarah Driver, Rathfinny Co-Owner stated: *"We are absolutely delighted to be working with Vin Passion as our exclusive importer and distribution agent for our Sussex Sparkling wines in Japan."*

Mark Driver, Rathfinny Co-Owner went on to say that *"Vin Passion has one of the finest portfolios of wines and grower Champagnes in Japan and this will allow Rathfinny wines to be served in the top restaurants, bars and hotels across Japan."*

Releasing their first sparkling wines only in 2018, Rathfinny's staggering success in the UK market has been especially noteworthy. With listings at The Dorchester, Dinner by Heston, The Fat Duck, Claridge's, The Savoy, Le Gavroche, The Ritz, Harrods, Harvey Nichols and Selfridge's, to name a few, Rathfinny is proving its viability to be present in the finest dining and retail establishments in the world.



Daisuke Kawakami, CEO of Vin Passion is confident that Rathfinny is the right choice for the Japan market. *"Japan has the third largest Champagne market in the world after France and the UK,"* he commented. *"Considering our total population, the Japanese people could be defined as 'Sparkling lovers'. In addition, it is not only a huge market, but also a sophisticated, professional market."*

He went on to say, *"while most of the Japanese market for Champagne is dominated by the major houses with widely recognised brand names, there is a niche market here that understands the lesser known but excellent RM Champagnes. Vin Passion has remained committed to offering authentic RM Champagne to such customers. One aspect in particular is that Japanese cuisine is a great match for sparkling wine. A great English sparkling wine like Rathfinny will be an exhilarating experience for gourmet consumers who appreciate real taste. We expect it will take time to educate people, but we are confident that our customers will realise its great value."*

Mark and Sarah Driver will travel to Japan and China this September to present Rathfinny Sussex Sparkling wines for the first time to Japanese and Chinese wine lovers. The wines will be shown at a number of hotly anticipated events in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Hong Kong including educational seminars on the English Sparkling Wine category, tastings, team trainings,

visits to key accounts and winemaker dinners at top flagship accounts such as Ritz Hotel Osaka, Il Ghiottone Koyoto and a launch event at the stylishly British Harrods Shanghai The Residence.



Daisuke Kawakami highlights that *“The September events will be the first step towards building English sparkling wine awareness in Japan’s premium wine market. It will be an opportunity to convey the exceptional terroir of Rathfinny and its passion. We are also organising a prestigious winemakers’ dinner in Kyoto, Japan’s ancient capital and sophisticated cultural centre. We plan to invite some of the key figures from the Japanese market to experience a very special evening at one of the best Italian restaurants in Kyoto, with a touch of Japanese cuisine that will work very well with Rathfinny sparkling wine.”*

This step towards building English Sparkling wine awareness will be the same across China. Sarah Driver said *“We are both so excited about our upcoming visit which is a true testament to the global recognition that English Sparkling Wine is beginning to gain. We are thrilled to be building the momentum for Sussex Sparkling across the region as a whole”.*

She went onto say, *“I first visited Beijing in 1979 with my Father on a semi-official visit with the HK Urban Council and who would have thought all these years later we’d be selling our Sussex sparkling into China, I’m thrilled. Along with an incredible itinerary set up by ASC Fine Wines in Shanghai and Guangzhou, I am particularly excited about going back to Hong Kong, where I grew up, on our first visit with Fine Vintage to build on the success that has been growing there since our launch, actively supporting key F&B partners such as Caprice.”*



Makoto Nagae, Chief Executive Officer of ASC Fine Wines, expressed his utmost enthusiasm for the value-based partnership in joining forces with Rathfinny to introduce their remarkable English sparkling wine to the Chinese market. He commented: *"As a B Corp certified winery, Rathfinny exemplifies an unwavering commitment to crafting extraordinary wines and experiences that showcase the unique essence of their Sussex family estate. They employ methods that prioritize the well-being of the land, people, community, and the wider environment, aligning perfectly with ASC's corporate philosophy centred around the value of 'Growing for Good' and 'giving back to society', balancing purpose with profit, taking account of environment and social impact in our corporate governance. By embracing these shared values, we look forward to making a positive impact in our respective communities while delivering exceptional wine to our stakeholders in China."*

Mario Aron, Chief Operating Officer, also confidently conveyed his thoughts, stating, *"Mark and Sarah have shared their ambition, that not too long in the future, patrons of bars and restaurants in China will be presented with English sparkling wine representing true British lifestyle and appreciation for high quality. Of course, it's Rathfinny. This brand fits perfectly into ASC's fine wine aspiration. With ASC's extensive and efficient distribution network in China, coupled with our team's renowned professionalism, I have no doubt that Mark and Sarah's vision will swiftly become a reality."*

Mark and Sarah Driver begin their APAC tour on September 4 starting in Tokyo.

For more information about Rathfinny across APAC, please contact:
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Notes to Editors

Located on a breath-taking south-facing slope in the South Downs of Sussex, Rathfinny Estate is found on the same band of chalk that forms the Paris Basin, running from Northern France into Southern England. Here, the semi-continental climate, with high levels of sunshine, long, warm sunny days and less rainfall than the rest of the UK, along with the free-draining chalk soils and southern aspect, form the perfect 'terroir' for the production of world-class sparkling wines.

The first 50 acres of vines were planted in 2012 and there are now 230 acres under vine predominantly planted with Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier. Rathfinny low-intervention, Traditional Method, vintage Sussex Sparkling wines are a true expression of their Sussex terroir. Produced from hand-harvested grapes that are whole-bunch pressed and patiently matured, on lees and in bottle to develop rich, autolytic notes, with a low dosage that emphasises the purity of the fruit.

Pinot Noir's rich flavours and multi-layered texture combined with a low dosage and long lees ageing characterizes the Rathfinny wines which are fast building a reputation for being the finest Pinot-Noir based sparkling wines in the UK. Indeed, Neal Martin writing for Vinous has quoted: *"Impressive energy and sophistication are clear to see in what might be one of England's best Blanc de Noirs."*

Rathfinny is regarded as the most innovative Winery in the UK, having been a key driver in ratifying the Sussex PDO in 2022, thereby protecting the name Sussex for quality wines that are made in both East and West Sussex, status similar to the other wine growing regions around the world such as Burgundy and Champagne, Rioja and Tuscany. Allowing consumers of any wine labelled as Sussex a sense of provenance but also a mark of quality. Also, most recently Rathfinny has joined a growing list of over 1600 UK businesses that have achieved B Corp status, the gold standard for ethical and sustainable business practices, verified to high standards of social and environmental performance, transparency and accountability. Rathfinny is the first grower-producer of sparkling wine in the world to achieve the accolade.

