

RATHFINNY



First harvest at the Rathfinny Wine Estate

14th October 2014

We are delighted to be harvesting our first small harvest of Chardonnay grapes today.

To date, 64 hectares (160 acres) of the Estate's 160 hectares (400 acres) have been planted with vines and these first grapes will be used to produce the first Rathfinny Sussex Sparkling Wine to be released in 2017.

There could not be a better time to be launching a new English wine as English Sparkling Wine is winning substantial international awards. Earlier this year, the International Wine Challenge (IWC 2014) awarded English wine producers a record five gold awards and two trophies for English Sparkling Wine.

Mark Driver said: "After four years of careful planning, planting and tending our young vines it's nice to finally get going and pick our first grapes."

"The Winery is ready, the presses are waiting and we are ready to make what I believe will be a world class Sparkling Wine from Sussex."

Sarah Driver added, "We are just at the beginning of this fantastic journey, where we hope to witness Sussex Sparkling Wine becoming as well known and globally respected as the likes of Champagne is today."

Rathfinny recently completed work on its Flint Barns, which have been lovingly converted into accommodation for up to 46 seasonal workers, as well as other special interest and educational groups visiting the South Downs National Park. The Winery is now open for tours, which can be booked online, or through the Gun Room, the retail outlet of the Estate in Alfriston Village.

The Winery is the largest, greenest, purpose built Winery in the UK and it is hoped that by 2020 the Rathfinny Wine Estate will be producing more than a million bottles of Sussex Sparkling Wine per year by 2020 that will be sold around the globe to rival the best sparkling wines in the world.

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About Rathfinny

The Rathfinny Estate was founded by husband and wife team Mark and Sarah Driver to be England's newest and largest single-site vineyard.

The first 50 acres of vines were planted in April 2012 and the first wines will be available to purchase in early 2017. By 2020, Rathfinny will produce about 1 million bottles of premium quality bottle fermented, Sussex Sparkling Wine a year.

The aspect, chalky soil and climate at Rathfinny are perfectly suited for producing high-quality sparkling wines.

Rathfinny aims to eventually sell up to 50 per cent of its production to key overseas markets in Europe, Asia and North America.

The Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier are the three principle grapes varieties traditionally used for top quality sparkling wine, but Rathfinny may also use small quantities of Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris in its Sussex Sparkling Wine.

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