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## Wine country 酒鄉

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High quality produce from England's green and pleasant land has contributed to the growing reputation of British food, but the country has also been making a name for itself in wine – particularly sparkling – and is stealing the crown from many better-known sites. 英格蘭鄉郊田野出產的優質農作物不僅讓英國食物名聲漸響，連該國釀製的葡萄酒，特別是氣泡酒，也在品質上勝過許多知名度更高的產酒區。 **By Rachel Duffell**

# Wine 酒鄉 country

It's a summer's day in the English countryside and ten of us have gathered for lunch. A cork pops and golden bubbles slide into glasses. We pass them around, revealing nothing as to what they contain.

"Delicious champagne," says one guest.

"It's English Sparkling Wine," is the response, which is followed by all-round surprise, and talk turns to England's burgeoning wine industry.

England has been producing wine for centuries. Roman vineyards have been found in Northampton, and by the 12th and 13th centuries – there were a number of vineyards around the country. That was until the climate changed and temperatures cooled. Later, disease came – powdery mildew in 1845, followed by phylloxera and downy mildew. Not long after, the outbreak of World War One curbed production, and grape-growing and winemaking didn't return until the 1940s, with a further revival of sorts following in the 1960s.

某個和煦的夏日，我們十人在英格蘭鄉郊共進午餐，「卜」的一聲後，金黃色的氣泡酒滑進玻璃杯裡。我們將盛著酒的玻璃杯傳開去，但沒有告訴大家那是什麼酒。

「很好喝的香檳。」其中一位客人說道。

「這是英格蘭氣泡酒。」有人回答道，其餘的人莫不一臉驚訝，然後大家開始談論起英格蘭迅速崛起的釀酒業。

英格蘭的釀酒歷史可追溯至多個世紀以前，現時在諾威頓仍可找到羅馬時期的酒莊，而在12、13世紀，全國各地更有許多建於中世紀的酒莊。不過，後來氣候轉變，氣溫變冷，疾病隨之而來，包括1845年的白粉病，以及其後的根瘤蚜蟲和露菌病等。不久之後，第一次世界大戰爆發，生產停頓，及至1940年代，葡萄種植和釀酒業才捲土重來，1960年代開始更稍微有點復興迹象。

過去20年，英格蘭釀酒業集中改良氣泡酒，向全球最著名及最受推崇的氣泡酒產區香檳學習，並採用傳統的香檳釀製方法。這實在是明智之舉，因為氣泡酒其實是英格蘭人Christopher Merrett於1662年發明。

Nyetimber Estate in  
Sussex  
位於薩塞克斯的  
Nyetimber Estate







This page, from top: The selection of English Sparkling Wine produced by Ridgeview; Head Winemaker Simon Roberts

Opposite page, from top: The Ridgeview Tasting Room overlooking the vineyards; cellaring the wine

本頁上至下: Ridgeview釀製的一系列英格蘭氣泡酒; 主釀酒師 Simon Roberts

對頁上至下: Ridgeview試酒室坐擁綠悠悠的葡萄園美景; 將一瓶瓶新釀的酒放進酒窖

The last 20 years or so have seen a particular focus in England on sparkling wine made using the traditional method that is required in Champagne, the most famous and highly regarded sparkling wine region in the world. England's recent focus is apt given that sparkling wine was in fact first made by Englishman Christopher Merrett in 1662.

English Sparkling Wine, as it is known, has grown in renown to challenge Champagne in more ways than just at our small lunch gathering; its recognition by international wine bodies is expressed in an increasing number of awards.

In 2010, a sparkling wine produced by a vineyard in England won the International Trophy for Sparkling Wine at the Decanter World Wine Awards. It was up against bottles from a selection of renowned French Champagne houses and its crowning showed that English Sparkling Wine really could compete on the world stage. The wine in question was the Grosvenor Blanc de Blancs made by Ridgeview, whose sparkling wine we were drinking on that fine summer's day.

Situated at the foot of East Sussex's rolling South Downs, Ridgeview is dedicated solely to the production of English Sparkling Wine, growing only the classic Champagne varieties: Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier. Founded in 1995 by the Roberts Family, its sparkling wine has been served to guests of Queen Elizabeth II; it's also the official sparkling wine of No. 10 Downing Street, where the British Prime Minister resides. To further cement the reputation of English wine – and of Ridgeview – the winery was awarded the coveted title of International Winemaker of the year in the IWSC 2018, the first time in the award's history that it has been bestowed upon an English winemaker.



"That was especially rewarding, both for Ridgeview and our industry," says Simon Roberts, Head Winemaker at Ridgeview. "The IWSC not only looks at this year but your history over the years, and we have had a high level of consistency, hence the award. To be judged to such a standard by your peers is an amazing feeling. As for our industry, it shows the world the quality we are producing and on a consistent standard."

English Sparkling Wine is increasingly reaping awards, pipping many that have for decades been won by winemakers and wines out of Champagne. This shouldn't be a huge surprise given that the south of England has much in common with Champagne, including similar chalky soils and climate to the region that lies just 90 miles across the English Channel. Even the French have recognised the potential in the lands of their rivals across the



☞ All those flavours that are so intrinsic to England are often in our wines  
所有英格蘭熟悉的味道基本上都可以在我們的葡萄酒裡找到 ☞  
– Cherie Spriggs, Nyetimber

英格蘭氣泡酒媲美香檳的實力，不僅在我們的小型午餐聚會上受到肯定，更從獲得國際葡萄酒獎項越來越多這點得到引證。

2010年，一款由英格蘭酒莊釀製的氣泡酒在Decanter世界葡萄酒大賽中，擊敗一系列著名法國香檳酒莊的佳釀，贏得國際氣泡酒獎，這意味著英格蘭氣泡酒已能夠在國際舞台上與對手一爭長短。那次得獎的氣泡酒是Ridgeview釀製的Grosvenor Blanc de Blancs，而我們在那個和煦的夏日喝的，正是該酒莊出品的氣泡酒。

坐落於東薩塞克斯郡連綿不絕的南唐斯山山腳的Ridgeview，只種植用來釀製香檳的經典葡萄品種：Chardonnay、Pinot Noir和Pinot Meunier，並且只出產英格蘭氣泡酒。酒廠由Roberts家族於1995年創辦，其氣泡酒曾經用來款待英女皇伊利沙伯二世的客人，也是唐寧街10號首相府的官方指定氣泡酒。Ridgeview在

2018年的國際葡萄酒暨烈酒大賽 (IWSC) 中獲選為年度國際釀酒商，成為歷來首家奪得這個獎項的英國釀酒商，進一步奠定Ridgeview以至英格蘭葡萄酒的地位。

Ridgeview主釀酒師Simon Roberts表示：「這對Ridgeview和我們的釀酒業來說，都是特別的榮譽。IWSC不只看這年的表現，歷年的參賽歷史也會一併考慮，我們能夠一直保持高水準才會獲獎。能夠獲得同業這麼高的評價，感覺很棒。至於對業界來說，我們向世界證明了英格蘭也能夠生產水準穩定的優質佳釀。」

英格蘭氣泡酒屢奪殊榮，當中包括過去幾十年一直由香檳區釀酒師和佳釀壟斷的獎項。不過，這其實並非完全無迹可尋，因為英格蘭南部跟香檳區只距離90哩，相隔了一個英倫海峽，兩地均屬於白堊土質，氣候也相近。法國釀酒業也明白這片一海之隔的土地潛力無窮，香檳酒莊Taittinger於2017年開始在肯特郡種植葡萄，帶頭進軍英格蘭，並打算以Domaine Evremond的名稱生產其英格蘭氣泡酒。



## Duffell: Wine country ??

water. Taittinger became the first Champagne house to plant vines in the UK in Kent in 2017 with plans to produce its own English Sparkling Wine under the label Domaine Evremond.

England's climate helps to differentiate its sparkling wines from Champagne's. Summers are moderate and there's generally a longer growing season than in Champagne, if only by a few days. "This slightly longer, cooler growing season allows you to develop beautiful, delicate and complex flavours and the full array of flavours that we look for," says Cherie Spriggs, winemaker at acclaimed vineyard Nyetimber in West Sussex. "The overall flavour profile of English Sparkling Wine is generally more delicate. The acidity is a little higher, so it's a very crisp, refreshing style. And you somehow get flavours that you associate with things we naturally find in England, like great English apples, the wonderful strawberries and raspberries you get here, the beautiful floral aromas found in the natural hedgerows – all those flavours that are so intrinsic to England, amazingly, are often in our wines."

Spriggs' sparkling winemaking was honoured last year in another world-first for English wine when she was named Sparkling Winemaker of the Year at the International Wine Challenge 2018, not only becoming the first woman to receive the award but also the first winner outside Champagne.

Spriggs believes it's all about England's sparkling wine as opposed to still wine, because she sees – and has proved that – sparkling is an area where England can compete with the best on an international level. However, England is also producing some top-notch still wines.

"We have gained good recognition globally from the sparkling wines, but the still wines are getting more popular each year," says Jeremy Mount, Winemaker at Woodchester Valley vineyard in the Cotswolds. "A variety of styles of wines made in England are now gaining high accolades in internationally recognised competitions, so the rest of the world is beginning to realise we don't just produce quality sparkling wines."

Woodchester Valley's own Sauvignon Blanc is one such wine. In May, the Sauvignon Blanc 2018 won Gold at the IWSC, the first such award for an English wine of this varietal.

**This page, from top:**  
Nyetimber Estate; the vineyard's Blanc de Blancs 2013 English Sparkling Wine

**Opposite page, from top:** Tasting time at Nyetimber Estate; harvesting the grapes for sparkling winemaking

本頁上至下: Nyetimber Estate酒莊; 酒莊釀製的英格蘭氣泡酒Blanc de Blancs 2013

對頁上至下: Nyetimber Estate的試酒室; 採摘用來釀製氣泡酒的葡萄



由於氣候稍有差異，英格蘭的氣泡酒跟香檳也略有不同。這裡夏季氣候溫和，生長期比香檳區長，雖然只是數天。西薩塞克斯著名酒莊Nyetimber的釀酒師Cherie Spriggs解釋：「這裡的生長期稍長，氣溫亦稍涼，因此可以讓葡萄發展出怡人、細緻和層次豐富的味道，基本上我們想要的味道應有盡有。總括而言，英格蘭氣泡酒的味道一般比較柔和，稍微有點酸，因此酒味非常清爽。另外，這裡的氣泡酒會擁有英格蘭熟悉的大自然產物的味道，例如英格蘭蘋果、士多啤梨、紅桑子等，還有怡人的大自然花香……所有英格蘭熟悉的天然香味基本上都可以在葡萄酒裡找到。

Spriggs釀製氣泡酒的技藝，讓她在2018年的國際葡萄酒挑戰賽（IWC）中，獲頒年度氣泡酒釀酒師獎，是首次有人憑英格蘭出產的葡萄酒奪得此獎。她同時也是首位獲此殊榮的女性，並打破香檳酒廠一直以來的壟斷局面。

她認為比起無氣葡萄酒，英格蘭釀酒業的重心顯然是氣泡酒，因為她覺得，英格蘭氣泡酒已經可以媲美世界一流的對手，事實上也是如此。不過，英格蘭其實也有生產頂級的無氣葡萄酒。

Cotswolds區酒莊Woodchester Valley的釀酒師Jeremy Mount表示：「我們的氣泡酒無疑已在世界各地獲得肯定，但無氣葡萄酒也一年比一年受歡迎。英格蘭釀

製的各種葡萄酒，在國際認可的比賽上開始得到很高的評價，因此世界上其他地方的人也開始留意到我們不只生產優質氣泡酒。」

Woodchester Valley的Sauvignon Blanc白酒正是其中一款備受肯定的英格蘭無氣葡萄酒，其Sauvignon Blanc 2018在5月時更成為首款在IWSC上獲得金獎的英格蘭Sauvignon Blanc白酒。

英格蘭酒莊一直拿不同的葡萄品種做試驗。位於薩塞克斯的Bolney Wine Estate嘗試種植各種葡萄，包括有性生殖、無性繁殖和嫁接品種等，從中尋找最適合酒莊土壤的葡萄品種，其中Pinot Gris尤其成功，獲得多個獎項肯定。

Bacchus是英格蘭最常見的葡萄品種之一，這種由德國的Riesling-Silvaner和Müller-Thurgau雜交而成的葡萄，可以釀製出冠絕英格蘭的白酒。

Mount說：「它是德國品種，源於德國的Riesling，但英格蘭的氣候、土壤和風土非常適合種植這種葡萄。Bacchus白酒香氣清新、乾淨，帶有新鏟的草香味，以及接骨木花和忍冬的芳香，我覺得這些香味很有英格蘭特色。」Woodchester Valley出品的Bacchus 2017白酒，在2018年Decanter世界葡萄酒大賽中獲頒銀獎，另外亦在其他比賽上獲得多個獎項。







England's winemakers have been experimenting with different grape varieties. Bolney Wine Estate in Sussex has tried growing a number of grape varieties, clones and rootstocks to find the best matches for its site, succeeding in particular with Pinot Gris, for which it has won a number of awards.

One of the most common grape varieties planted in England is Bacchus, a German cross between Riesling-Silvaner and Müller-Thurgau that is becoming synonymous with the best English whites.

"It's a German variety that is in the shadows of Riesling in Germany, but the climate, soil and overall terroir of England seems to lend itself very favourably to the variety," says Mount. "The aromas are very fresh and clean, showing cut grass, elderflower and honeysuckle, which I think are extremely representative of England." Woodchester Valley's Bacchus 2017 is a 2018 Decanter World Wine Awards Silver medal winner and has won several additional awards.

There are other areas that still hold great potential for English wines. "There is scope for the still wines to make an impact globally, not just the still whites that have fresh acidity and clean, vibrant flavours, but also the rosé wines," says Mount, whose rosé – a blend of Regent and Pinot Noir grapes – won Bronze at the Wines of Great Britain Awards 2018. "There is also no reason that in the future Pinot Noir can't improve to produce good red wines as well as the sparkling wines it is already well known for."

Red wine hasn't had such success to date, but Pinot Noir as a varietal wine in particular is improving. At Hush Heath Estate and Winery in Kent, winemaker Victoria Ash sees great potential in this area. "I think people have this notion that you can't make red wine in England, but actually, if you



英格蘭出產的其他葡萄酒也潛質優厚。Mount表示：「除了味道清新酸爽的白酒，其他無氣葡萄酒如玫瑰紅酒等也有機會在國際上闖出名堂。」他採用Regent和Pinot Noir兩種葡萄混釀的玫瑰紅酒，在2018年的英國葡萄酒大賽上獲頒銅獎。「現時已知道Pinot Noir可以釀製優質氣泡酒，因此有理由相信，假以時日也可以改良到適合釀製紅酒。」

雖然目前來說，英格蘭紅酒的表現還遠遠落後，但這裡釀製的Pinot Noir單一品種葡萄酒在持續改善。肯特郡酒莊Hush Heath Estate and Winery的釀酒師Victoria Ash深信其潛力，「我想大家都認為英格蘭不可能釀出優質紅酒，但事實上這裡的Pinot Noir已相當不錯。」Hush Heath的Pinot Noir 2015，在2017年的侍酒師葡萄酒大賽上獲頒金獎和評論員之選獎，在同年的獨立英格蘭葡萄酒大賽上也捧走銀獎。

英格蘭不僅證明自己可以釀出能夠與國際佳釀平起平坐的有氣和無氣葡萄酒，其基礎設施也足以應付這個發展迅速的行業。

Ash是其中一個於Plumpton College受訓的英格蘭釀酒師，這家受到葡萄酒大師Jancis Robinson推崇的頂級葡萄酒學院，讓學員到世界各地的頂級葡萄酒產區學習釀酒技術，它是目前歐洲唯一以英語授課的釀酒學校。學校設有自己的商用釀酒廠和葡萄園，釀有一流的Bacchus、Ortega和Pinot Noir單一品種無氣葡萄酒及一款氣泡酒。

Opposite page, from top: Hush Heath's English Sparkling Wines; practising barrel ageing at Plumpton College in East Sussex; winery tanks waiting to be filled at Woodchester Valley in the Cotswolds

This page, from top: Vines at Woodchester Valley; pouring the vineyard's Rosé Brut; Hush Heath's Nannette's Rosé

對頁上至下：Hush Heath的英格蘭有氣葡萄酒；位於東薩塞克斯的Plumpton College用來陳年的木桶；Cotswolds酒莊Woodchester Valley的葡萄酒酒缸



本頁上至下：Woodchester Valley的葡萄園；該酒莊的玫瑰紅酒；Hush Heath的玫瑰紅酒Nannette's Rose







🗨️ 2018 was an amazing year so I expect to see some great still wines coming out soon

2018的葡萄收成非常棒，我相信很快就會有優質的無氣葡萄酒推出 🗨️

– Simon Roberts

look at Pinot Noir, it can do really well here," she says. Hush Heath's Pinot Noir 2015 was awarded the Gold Medal and the Critic's Choice Award at the Sommelier Wine Awards in 2017 and was a Silver Medal winner at the Independent English Wine Awards in 2017.

Not only is England proving that it can produce wines – both sparkling and still – capable of competing on an international level, but it has the infrastructure in place to support its growing industry.

Ash is just one of England's many winemakers who trained at Plumpton College, a top-level wine school praised by Master of Wine Jancis Robinson for training winemakers in top growing regions around the world, and currently the only English-language winemaking school in Europe. It also has its own commercial winery and vineyard, producing high-quality Bacchus, Ortega and Pinot Noir varietal wines and a sparkling.

The rate of grape growing is continuing to rise across England, which can now count vineyards across the country from the east to the west coast

in the south, and as far north as Yorkshire. Licence applications to the HRMC for new vineyards were up 40 per cent in the last year, and since 2000 acreage dedicated to vines has tripled, with 1.6 million new vines planted in 2018.

It's not all plain sailing with English wine. Vintage variation is high thanks to what can be an unpredictable climate. But when it's a good year, the wines can be superb, and there is all-round excitement in particular for last year's harvest, which may just see English wine further propelled into the spotlight.

"2018 was an amazing year in the vineyard, so I expect to see some great still wines coming out soon," says Roberts

If you haven't given English wine – still or sparkling – a taste yet, it's time to fill your glasses. Like the international wine awards bodies, we're sure you'll be raising a glass to its finesse and quality. As Mount expounds, the future of English wine is "bright, fresh and full of flavour." 🍷

英格蘭的葡萄園面積不斷增長，由東岸到西岸的南部地區以至北面約克郡等比比皆是。英國稅務與海關署收到的開辦新葡萄園的申請書去年上升四成，種植葡萄的耕地面積自2000年起增加了兩倍，2018年新種植的葡萄多達160萬株。

英格蘭葡萄酒一路走來並非一帆風順，由於氣候變化大，收成變化也同樣大。然而，在收成良好的年份，葡萄品質可以非常優秀，去年的收成就各方面而言都讓人喜出望外，英格蘭葡萄酒說不定可以憑這個年份的佳釀受到注目。

Roberts說：「2018的葡萄收成非常棒，我相信很快就會有優質的無氣葡萄酒推出。」

如果你還沒試過英格蘭葡萄酒，不管是有氣還是無氣，那就給自己倒一杯試試看，我們相信，你也會像各大國際葡萄酒比賽機構一樣，向英格蘭葡萄酒的精緻和優質舉杯致敬。正如Mount所說，英格蘭葡萄酒的未來將是「光明、清新而味道馥郁的」。🍷



Opposite page: Thriving vines at Bolney Wine Estate

This page, from top: Plumpton College's wine education, training and research facilities; blind tasting wines as part of the institution's education programme

對頁：Bolney Wine Estate 生氣盎然的葡萄藤

本頁上至下：Plumpton College的教學、訓練和研究設施；學院的教學課程包括蒙瓶試酒