

# CUVÉE CORNER WINE BLOG

## BRITISH FIZZ UNCORKED: SIX TASTY ENGLISH SPARKLING WINES

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Image: Chapel Down

If you don't know much about English Sparkling Wine, the chances are that in the next year or so, you'll be hearing about it a lot more. After an incredibly warm summer in the U.K., the harvest of 2018 has exceeded all expectations and it is already set to be a very special vintage.

Believe it or not, the reputation of English Sparkling Wine is fast gaining credit all around the world, alongside the prestige to match; being served at two recent Royal Weddings has certainly done the industry no harm – in fact, quite the opposite.

Yet, the excitement around British fizz isn't down to some excellent high-profile marketing, leaving us to wait for the bubble to pop; these wines are award winners, some are even beating top Champagne houses to the gold medals. At the Ultimate Wine Challenge last year, Chapel Down's Three Graces 2010 took the top prize of the Chairman's Trophy and the wine was judged to be outstanding, receiving **94** points.

Just to add fuel to the fire of winemaking rivalry, evidence suggests that an English scientist, Christopher Merrett, discovered how to make wine sparkle thirty years before the French monk, Dom Perignon. It was Merrett who first described a secondary fermentation and documented his discovery in 1662.

But what about the lousy English weather - surely England can't grow grapes to rival Champagne? Well, the vineyards in the south of England, in particular, Kent, experience a very similar climate to those in Champagne. Both regions are on the northern edge of **50 degrees** latitude and they also possess the same chalky soils.

The terroir in Kent is so Champagne-like that the prestigious French Champagne house, Tattinger, have started to plant vines there. Both regions can grow Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Pinot Meunier successfully and the English wineries are also using the Traditional Method and lees treatment in their winemaking process. Additionally, as the summers become warmer in the U.K., more grape varieties can be grown that traditionally would suit warmer climates, such as Albariño, which is now being planted at Chapel Down.

We've picked out some of the best **British bubbles** out there to taste and test. If you're new to English Sparkling wine, just think of this as us doing the hard work for you.

### **Bride Valley Blanc de Blancs 2014**

Young and fresh, this pale Blanc de Blancs is made from 93% Chardonnay and 7% Pinot Noir. Green apple and under-ripe pear hit the nose, alongside light toasty aromas. The palate is perked up with its fine mousse and racy acidity, as well as some zesty citrus and sweet brioche. A beach picnic on the Jurassic Coast in Dorset.