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## five english wines and what food to pair them with

*As English wine enjoys a blossoming, here's our introductory guide to a few of the best homegrown tipples and what to pair them with. Including Nyetimber, Sixteen Ridges Vineyard, Biddenden, The Bolney Estate and Three Choirs Vineyards.*

English wine is on the rise, driven by bumper sales, a steady stream of industry awards, and a growing number of high-quality vineyards.

A new festival, [English Wine Takeover \(http://www.englishwinetakeover.co.uk\)](http://www.englishwinetakeover.co.uk), brings together a host of producers and wine enthusiasts to enjoy and learn about wine from this fair isle.

Here's a bite-sized look at what five stellar English vineyards have to offer, and how to match their tipples with the perfect food pairing.

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*classic cuvee 2009* from [nyetimber \(http://nyetimber.com\)](http://nyetimber.com) (sparkling)



From their picturesque base in rural West Sussex, Nyetimber has launched an effervescent assault on the wine world with their sparkling wine, widely slated as a challenger to champagne.

They and other English sparklers owe their ascendancy in part to geography. The terroir of Southern England is blessed with the same green sand and chalky soil of France's Champagne region, lending the grapes a similar character.

The *Classic Cuvee* is a good place to begin. This wine has a wonderful tiny bubble texture, with aromas of melon, lemon and vanilla. Complex and structured, this is a wine that will age well, but can also be enjoyed straight away.

Pair it with delicate white fish, poultry and English game birds.

***pinor noir 2013* from [sixteen ridges vineyard](http://www.englishwineproducers.co.uk/vineyards/midlands/worcestershire/sixteen-ridges-vineyard/)**  
[\(http://www.englishwineproducers.co.uk/vineyards/midlands/worcestershire/sixteen-ridges-vineyard/\)](http://www.englishwineproducers.co.uk/vineyards/midlands/worcestershire/sixteen-ridges-vineyard/)

Sixteen Ridges is based in Worcestershire, proving that English wine production is by no means limited to the southern counties. In fact, vineyards can be found as far up the country as Yorkshire and Cumbria.

Back in the Midlands, Sixteen Ridges is onto a winner with this pinot noir varietal, a crisp and fresh white wine that is all softness and subtlety.

The palate contains hints of fragrant honeysuckle, lemon peel, and coconut, followed up by vanilla and peach notes to create a wonderfully summery character.

Pair it with grilled prawns or pan-fried seabass for a perfect combination.

*gribble bridge rosé 2013* from [biddenden \(http://www.biddendenvineyards.com\)](http://www.biddendenvineyards.com)



Biddenden's vineyards can be found on the south-facing slopes of a Kent valley, where 11 different varieties of grape are cultivated – chiefly sweet German ones like Ortega and Dornfelder.

The estate also produces traditional Kentish ciders, along with farm-pressed apple and pear juices. But it's the wine that sets it apart – the Barnes family business produces a broad range including white, red, rosé and sparkling.

*Gribble Bridge Rosé* is a delicious medium dry, with full and well-balanced character and delicate aromas of cherry and red berry fruits.

This is most definitely a wine for summer, so enjoy it chilled and pair it with a crayfish salad, or a bowl of fresh strawberries and cream.

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For a long time it was thought that England couldn't produce any decent red wines. It was the weather that let us down, the story went, with red grapes demanding long, sunlit summers in order to ripen into worthy wine material.

But in recent years, this orthodoxy has been challenged by a combination of warmer summers, and clever variety selection by English winemakers.

*Lychgate Red* is made using the Rondo grape, which is successfully grown as far north as Sweden. Blending it together with German Dornfelder, Bolney have produced a juicy, red-fruit-flavoured wine with warm leather notes.

The winemakers declare that it's 'unbeatable with roast beef and Yorkshire pudding'. Certainly the rich and plummy character goes perfectly with robust meats – try it with a juicy rack of lamb.

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*bacchus 2011* from [three choirs vineyards \(http://three-choirs-vineyards.co.uk\)](http://three-choirs-vineyards.co.uk)



With estates in both Gloucestershire and Hampshire, Three Choirs have been winning awards for their bottled creations, which are in the main a selection of medium to dry white wines.

One of these is *Bacchus*, made from the early-ripening grape of the same name. This variety gives a great quality of wine, sometimes compared to Sauvignon blanc, when grown at cooler climes.

This wine is dry and aromatic, infused with flavours redolent of the English countryside. You've got hints of elderflower, nettles, fresh asparagus and herbs contributing to a heady and delicious bouquet.

Pair it with something that has cool, fresh flavours – like a celery risotto, or a quintessentially English cucumber sarnie.

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### try english wine for yourself...

Founded with the aim of showcasing the best of English wines and producers, the [English Wine Takeover](http://www.englishwinetakeover.co.uk) (<http://www.englishwinetakeover.co.uk>) festival takes place in Birmingham from 23-26 May.

Written by Ahmed Ahmed, editor of food and drink guide *Dine Birmingham* (<http://www.dinebirmingham.co.uk>)

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