

## Royal family to produce its own wine from Windsor Great Park grapes

Fizz from Sussex is often seen on the banquet tables at Buckingham Palace; Kate and William had wine from Chapel Down in Kent.



The fledgling vineyard will be planted with champagne varieties: chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier Photo: REUTERS

**By Victoria Moore**

But now the Royal Family is going one step further with plans to make an English wine of its very own, the Telegraph has learned.

This Sunday, or early next week, depending on the weather, 16,700 vines will be planted in a section of Windsor Great Park, the former hunting park to which Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were so devoted.

The fledgling vineyard will be planted with champagne varieties – chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier, too – with a view to making an English sparkling wine from grapes grown on this corner of Crown Estate.

The Duke of Edinburgh is said to be closely involved and it's understood that Master of Wine and viticultural consultant Stephen Skelton – who planted the first vines at Chapel Down, now Britain's biggest producer, back in 1976 – has been advising on the project, which has been greeted with great excitement by the English wine trade.

"It is quite simply the biggest boost the English wine industry has ever had," says Bob Lindo of Camel Valley vineyards who had a royal visit in 2008. "It's fantastic."

English wine is certainly having quite a moment. As recently as 1984 just 325 hectares of land were producing grapes that were being made into wine but over the past few years there's been a huge increase in planting.

"It's not all in production yet but we've now got 75 per cent more land under vine than we had in 2004," says Julia Trustram Eve of English Wine Producers. "The official figure stands at 1,323 though we estimate that the actual figure is even higher than that."

The royal plantings couldn't be more on-trend. "There's been a lot of investment in sparkling wine particularly," according to Trustram Eve. "People have really embraced it – and they've been planting a lot of chardonnay and pinot

noir to make that. In 2009 roughly half of the total grape production was intended for sparkling wine of one kind or another. ”

Figures released yesterday [Wednesday] also show that last year English wine had its biggest ever year: a record 30,346 hectolitres of wine were produced, the equivalent of just over 4million bottles, smashing the previous record of 3.5million bottles.

The Windsor Great Park wine will be just a small drop in this English wine ocean. As vineyards take three years to produce grapes that can be made into wine, it'll be quite a wait before anyone can try it. But perhaps by the time Harry gets around to getting married there'll be a royal wine to toast the royal wedding.

**English wine on the table for Kate and William's big day... and it only costs £8.50 a bottle**  
By [FAY SCHLESINGER](#)

Wine made in English vineyards and costing as little as £8.50 a bottle will be served to guests at the royal wedding, the Mail has learned.

Chapel Down white wine, made in Tenterden, Kent, is expected to be served at Buckingham Palace during one of the private receptions following Prince William and Kate Middleton's ceremony on Friday.

Such is the level of secrecy that the firm itself has been kept in the dark about its role, but sources confirmed that a large order was delivered to the Queen's residence in recent weeks.



British tippie: Chapel Down wine, from this vinyard in Tenterden is expected to be served at a Buckingham Palace reception on Friday

The decision is in keeping with the couple's desire to show off 'what Britain does best' in all aspects of the ceremony, from Kate's dress down to the cake maker Fiona Cairns who began her career on a kitchen table in Leicestershire.

A senior royal aide said: 'The theme will be British wherever possible.'

The wine, costing between £8.50 and £14 a bottle, is an even thriftier choice than the £30 Pol Roger non-vintage champagne that has already been unveiled as the bubbly of choice to be served ahead of a dinner hosted by Prince Charles.



CHAPEL DOWN

FLINT DRY

— NV —

*Crisp, fruity and yeasty "sur lie" style*