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English Wine Producers Face a Supply Glut After a Record 2025 Harvest

Output jumped 55% to 124,377 hectoliters as exports rose and still wine gained ground, intensifying pressure on prices and smaller wineries

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English wine is entering 2026 with a larger harvest, broader production and stronger export momentum, but the industry is still dealing with excess supply and price pressure that are testing producers across the market.

The latest figures cited by The Drinks Business show that U.K. wine production reached 124,377 hectoliters in 2025, equal to more than 16.5 million bottles. The Food Standards Agency confirmed the total in March, and it represented a 55% increase from 2024. White wine production rose by more than 131%, underscoring how sharply output expanded after a favorable growing season.

WineGB's harvest data described 2025 as an unusually strong year. Growing degree days reached 1,051, above a five-year average of 1,008. Average potential alcohol increased to 10.48% from 9.47%, while tartaric acid levels eased to 10.22 grams per liter from a 10-year average of 10.47. Together, those measures suggest not only higher volume but also fruit ripeness and balance that could support quality.

Weather played a central role. An early and dry spring advanced budburst, followed by sustained heat in June and July in southern England, including four official heatwaves. Yields rose in several varieties. Bacchus reached 9.5 tonnes per hectare against a five-year average of 6.75. Solaris came in at 7.20 tonnes per hectare compared with 4.20, while Pinot Noir reached 5.90 tonnes per hectare, slightly above its historical norm.

The sector has also continued to expand in scale. The number of vineyards registered with the Food Standards Agency rose to 1,158, up 4.3% from the previous year, with 4,357 hectares of active vines now in production. More than 10,000 people work across the industry, which has been valued at about £14 billion.

One of the clearest shifts inside that growth is the rise of still wine. According to the most recent WineGB bottle production figures cited by The Drinks Business, still wine accounted for 31% of total production in 2024, or about 3.3 million bottles out of 10.7 million. Sparkling wine still dominated with 69%, but the gap is narrowing as producers invest more heavily in still styles.

Essex has become central to that change. Already one of England’s largest planting areas by vineyard surface, it is gaining ground as a leading region for still wine, especially in the Crouch Valley. Producers there benefit from conditions that growers say reduce frost risk and support ripening, including proximity to the River Crouch, clay soils that retain moisture and nutrients, and one of the warmer and sunnier microclimates in Britain.

International attention is following. Danbury Ridge Wine Estate recently announced a joint venture with Domaine Duroché of Burgundy, one of France’s established estates. The article also pointed to Marbury, the English label backed by Jackson Family Wines, as another sign that major global wine groups see long-term potential in England beyond sparkling wine.

At the same time, growers are debating how far to embrace fungus-resistant grape varieties known as PiWis. These vines can reduce the need for treatments and may offer practical advantages in a country where wet summers remain a risk even after recent hot seasons. Solaris is already among the six most planted varieties in the U.K., and Divico has also begun appearing in tastings. Supporters see these grapes as part of a broader sustainability strategy, though questions remain about how they fit with the premium image many English producers have built around classic European varieties.

That sustainability push is extending into vineyard management more broadly. Some estates are testing regenerative practices such as cover crops, fewer tractor passes and biological sprays intended to strengthen natural pest resistance and protect soil structure.

Wine tourism is also becoming a larger part of the business model. A new digital platform called the UK Vineyard Guide launched in May to help visitors explore wine regions in England and Wales through maps, listings and editorial content. WineGB’s industry report said wineries hosted 1.5 million visits in 2024 and projected that wine tourism and cellar-door sales could help generate a 21% increase in full-time equivalent roles by 2028.

Yet behind the growth story lies a difficult commercial reality. The large 2023 harvest had not fully cleared through the market before the much bigger 2025 crop arrived. That has added to oversupply concerns at a time when sales remain concentrated among a small group of producers. WineGB data cited by The Drinks Business showed that just 24 companies accounted for 88% of sales.

That concentration has sharpened pressure on pricing. Larger producers and supermarkets have relied on deep discounting, squeezing margins across the category and making it harder for smaller wineries to move stock without cutting prices themselves. For the beverage sector more broadly, that matters because persistent surplus in English wine can weigh on pricing power, affect promotional activity across retail channels and limit how quickly wineries can absorb rising production unless domestic demand or exports grow fast enough.

The hospitality trade offers some relief but not enough yet to solve the imbalance. The on-trade accounts for 26% of sales and has been recovering slowly after a difficult period for British hospitality following tax and cost pressures that contributed to heavy job losses across the sector.

The strain became visible last year when Ridgeview, one of England’s best-known sparkling wine producers, entered administration in September. It was acquired in February by an investor group led by The Quantum Beverage Company, and operations continued under co-founder and head winemaker Simon Roberts. Even so, the episode showed that size alone does not shield producers from financial stress in a market where supply has risen faster than demand.

Exports are one of the brighter points. Volumes grew 35% in 2024 and reached 9% of total sales, according to the figures cited by The Drinks Business. That growth could help relieve some domestic pressure if overseas demand continues to build, especially as English wine gains more recognition for quality.

Recent tastings have supported that message. The Real Review’s latest ranking of Great Britain’s top wineries placed English wines across all top 30 positions, reflecting both depth and consistency at the upper end of the market. Industry observers also continue to point to high-profile blind tastings where English sparkling wines have

competed successfully against prestige Champagne labels.

The result is an industry at an important stage of development: producing more wine than ever before, attracting outside investment and widening its reputation beyond sparkling styles, while still trying to build enough market strength at home and abroad to absorb rising volumes without eroding value through discounts.