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Britain’s expanding wine industry leans on laboratory testing

Campden BRI says producers now prioritize stability and repeatable quality after more than 50,000 tests on 7,000 samples.

Tuesday, September 29, 2026



The rapid expansion of British wine production is pushing wineries to rely more heavily on laboratory analysis, process controls, and technical advice as the sector moves from early growth to a more established stage, according to Campden BRI, the food and drink research group.

In a blog post published Monday, Campden BRI said the UK wine industry is placing greater emphasis on consistency, quality control, and data-led decision-making as vineyard acreage expands and production volumes rise. The organization said the shift reflects a broader change in the sector, where producers are no longer focused only on increasing output but also on making wines that are stable, repeatable, and commercially reliable from one vintage to the next.

Campden BRI opened its Wine Services laboratory in Guildford in 2024 to serve wineries and vineyards in the UK. Two years later, the group said its lab has carried out more than 50,000 analytical tests on more than 7,000 samples. It said the work has supported both established producers and wineries preparing their first commercial vintages.

The organization described the change as part of the maturing of British winemaking. As producers scale up, it said, they are asking more detailed technical questions about how vineyard and winery decisions affect style, stability, and long-term quality. That includes closer attention to fermentation management, acidity control, maturation, and the handling of wine faults and taints.

Campden BRI said wineries increasingly want more than raw test results. According to the group, producers are asking for faster analysis and for help interpreting what those numbers mean in practical terms inside the winery. The organization said that need has become more important as winemakers work through increasingly variable vintages and try new approaches while maintaining consistency in finished wines.

The UK wine sector has developed quickly over the past decade, Campden BRI said, citing advances in vineyard site selection, clone and rootstock choice, disease management, and sustainability practices in both vineyards and wineries. It also pointed to a stronger understanding of the profile of traditional method English sparkling wine, along with rising interest in other production styles, including Charmat-method sparkling wines and a broader range of still wines such as aromatic whites, fuller-bodied whites, rosés, and reds.

That expansion in styles has commercial implications beyond the cellar. As more British wines reach the market and more domestic producers sell through retailers, restaurants, and other hospitality channels, the pressure to verify stability, comply with regulations, and assess shelf life is likely to grow. More testing can help reduce the risk of quality problems that may otherwise affect wineries as well as bars, restaurants, and other beverage buyers handling those products.

Campden BRI said UK producers are also becoming more aware of technical risks that can affect wine quality, including potassium and calcium instability. It said there is now a more informed approach to sulfur and additive management, stronger maintenance of testing equipment in vineyards and wineries, and a better understanding of defects that can emerge during production and storage.

The organization said British winemakers are becoming more confident in experimentation and innovation, but it added that technical data is increasingly being used to judge whether those experiments improve final wine quality. In its account, producers are using analysis not only to troubleshoot problems but also to refine style decisions and make more informed choices across changing harvest conditions.

Campden BRI said that trend is likely to continue as more vineyards move from early production into commercially significant volumes. In the UK, where weather and growing conditions can vary sharply from year to year, the group said reliable testing and expert interpretation become especially important during fermentation and maturation, when small adjustments can have a large effect on the final product.

The organization also described a wider professionalization of the sector, with more investment in technical capability, laboratory services, and structured quality management systems. It said wineries are increasingly looking for access to testing, training, and advisory support through a more integrated model rather than treating analysis as a one-off service.

As part of that shift, Campden BRI said it has introduced a new membership option for UK wineries and vineyards that combines analytical services, technical support, and training. The group said the program is intended to fit the operational realities of British producers and to connect them with wider industry research. It also said it is working

with international bodies including the Australian Wine Research Institute, which it said helps keep UK producers linked to developments in wine science and technology overseas.

The blog post was written by Gregory Dunn, Campden BRI's industry development and technical manager, and Robert Pride, the group's senior analytical chemist and wine specialist. Campden BRI said Pride manages the Guildford wine laboratory and previously held technical roles in the Australian wine industry, including work with ISO/IEC 17025 accredited laboratories and a global proficiency testing network for wineries.

The group's description of the market suggests that the next phase of British wine growth may depend less on proving that the sector can expand and more on showing that it can deliver consistent quality at scale. For producers, that means technical decisions in the vineyard and winery are becoming a larger part of commercial strategy, especially as domestic volumes rise and buyers expect dependable performance from grape to glass.