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UK wine experts tour Rias Baixas to boost spanish wine profile in Britain

Visit aims to deepen industry ties and promote galician wines as UK remains key export market for the region

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A group of five leading wine professionals from the United Kingdom is currently touring the Rias Baixas region in Galicia, Spain, as part of a promotional initiative organized by the Denomination of Origin (D.O.) Rias Baixas. The visit, which began on Monday and will conclude on Wednesday afternoon, is designed to deepen their understanding of the region’s wines and production methods. The group includes Andrew Catchpole, editor of Harper’s Wine and Spirit; Daniele Arcangeli, a London-based sommelier; Kate Hawkings, a wine writer for both trade and consumer media; Jenni Middlehurst, a wine journalist and influencer; and Jimmy Smith, founder of West London Wine School.

The itinerary started with visits to several wineries in the Salnés subzone and included a boat tour through the Pontevedra and Arousa estuaries. Over the next two days, the group will explore other key subzones such as Condado do Tea and O Rosal. These visits are guided by local producers and winemakers who are showcasing their vineyards during peak flowering season. The professionals will have the opportunity to observe traditional vine training systems and the small-scale farming that characterizes viticulture in Rias Baixas.

This mission is part of a broader promotional plan targeting the UK market, which is the second-largest export destination for Rias Baixas wines globally and the top market in Europe. The UK accounts for nearly 15% of all exports from this Spanish appellation. In 2024, sales to the UK approached 1.2 million liters. Out of 177 wineries registered under D.O. Rias Baixas, 115 are engaged in export activities, with 77 exporting directly to the UK.

The promotional strategy includes not only these annual visits by key industry figures but also participation in major international events such as the London Wine Fair, which took place last week. The goal is to strengthen relationships with British wine professionals and increase awareness of Rias Baixas wines among consumers and trade partners in the UK.

Each member of the visiting group brings significant expertise to the mission. Andrew Catchpole has an extensive background writing about wine, food, and travel for both consumer and business audiences. Daniele Arcangeli is an Italian sommelier based in London, certified by the Court of Master Sommeliers, with experience at Michelin-

starred restaurants and currently serving as head sommelier at Gordon Ramsay’s River Restaurant. Kate Hawkings contributes regularly to Olive magazine and advises award-winning restaurants on their wine lists. Jenni Middlehurst combines her work as a wine writer with social media campaigns for brands and manages her own micro-vineyard. Jimmy Smith leads one of the UK’s top wine education centers and has been recognized by Drinks Business magazine as “Man of the Year.”

The visit will conclude with a lunch on Wednesday after tours of eight wineries across three subzones. Organizers hope that these firsthand experiences will translate into greater visibility for Rias Baixas wines in the competitive UK market.