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# English sparkling wines gain global recognition as Northamptonshire vineyards shed novelty status

Local producers see rising demand and critical acclaim, with regional wine trails boosting tourism and industry reputation

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Vineyards in Northamptonshire are reporting a shift in how English wine is perceived, with local producers saying their bottles are now seen as premium products rather than novelties. This change comes as English wines, especially sparkling varieties, continue to receive praise from critics and consumers alike.

Rebecca Beveridge of New Lodge Vineyard in Earls Barton explained that the reputation of English wine has grown significantly in recent years. She said that more people have started to recognize the quality of English wines, moving beyond the idea that they are simply a curiosity. New Lodge Vineyard, along with Stonyfield Vineyard in Blisworth, has been included on a new East Midlands wine trail, highlighting the region’s growing importance in the industry.

Beveridge pointed out that English sparkling wine is now regularly ranked by critics just behind Champagne from France. She noted that Cava from Spain and Prosecco from Italy are often rated below English sparkling wines. This recognition is partly due to changes in climate, which have allowed English vineyards to grow grape varieties traditionally associated with established sparkling wine regions.

John Vaughan of Stonyfield Vineyard said that Northamptonshire is becoming known for its wine production, among other things. He estimated there are about a dozen vineyards operating in the county. Vaughan admitted that when he and his team started making wine 15 years ago, they had little experience and faced a steep learning curve. He emphasized that English sparkling wine is produced using the same methods as Champagne and offers a similar taste profile.

New Lodge Vineyard was founded by Beveridge’s late mother, Joyce Boulos-Hanna, who passed away in 2023. Beveridge said she is committed to continuing her mother’s legacy as interest in English wine grows. She recalled her mother’s passion for tending the vines and enjoying the landscape, even if she did not initially see herself as a winemaker. Beveridge described how her mother’s energy and inspiration continue to guide her work at the vineyard.

The rise of English wine has been noted by critics who have ranked it alongside some of the best sparkling wines in the world. The inclusion of Northamptonshire vineyards on regional wine trails reflects both their increasing quality and their role in local tourism. As more vineyards open and existing ones expand, producers say they hope to further establish English wine as a respected choice for consumers seeking high-quality bottles.