

# Brentwood Wine Society

## *The Wine Press*

Summer Edition

July 2025

### EDITOR'S NOTE



Welcome to the Summer edition of the Wine Press.

Many thanks to Amanda for her pieces on her intriguing find in our local area and her visit to a Surrey vineyard - and to Clive for his lyrical quiz – good luck to everyone!



All contributions for the Autumn edition are welcome please send them to Philip Knowles at [knowlespj@btinternet.com](mailto:knowlespj@btinternet.com)

### **IS BRENTWOOD THE NEXT BIG WINE REGION?**

Last year whilst taking a stroll over the fields surrounding Hutton towards Middle Road in Ingrave, we came across a field planted with what appeared to be young vines.



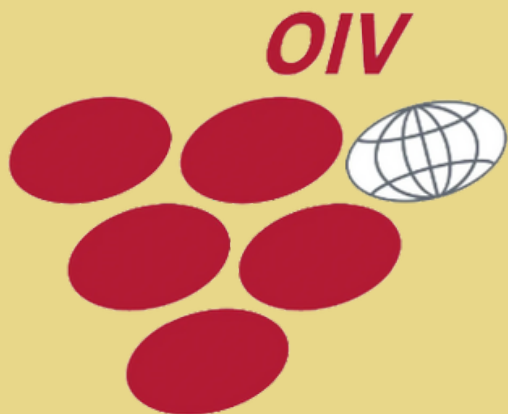
It appears to be a professional project, the vines are slowly growing, we would be very interested to hear if anyone knows anything about them.

Amanda Spinks

## Pour Decisions

Consumption has sunk to its lowest level globally since 1961, but which countries are drinking the most wine?

The US continues to easily top a key ranking of which countries drink the most wine in terms of total volume. On average though, people in Portugal drink more wine per person than anywhere else. That's according to the latest preliminary figures released in April 2025 by the International Organisation for Vine & Wine (OIV).



The 10 countries that drink the most wine, according to OIV's preliminary figures for 2024, are:

- US: 33.3mhl, down 5.8% from 2023
- France: 23mhl, down 3.6%
- Italy: 22.3mhl, up 0.1%
- Germany: 17.8mhl, down 3%
- UK: 12.6mhl, down 1%
- Spain: 9.6mhl, up 1.2%
- Russia: 8.1mhl, up 2.4%
- Argentina: 7.7mhl, down 1.2%
- Portugal: 5.6mhl, up 0.5%
- China: 5.5mhl, down 19.3%

Globally, consumers are buying fewer bottles. World wine consumption fell 3.3% in 2024 to 214 million hectolitres (mhl), its lowest level since 1961.

The OIV published a list showing consumption per capita in major wine-drinking countries, as of 2024:

- Portugal: 61.1 litres per capita
- Italy: 42.7 litres
- France: 41.5 litres
- Switzerland: 29.7 litres
- Austria: 28.6 litres
- Australia: 24.5 litres
- Germany: 24.5 litres
- Hungary: 24.4 litres
- Spain: 23.8 litres
- UK: 22.3 litres

The US has per capita consumption of 11.8 litres, slightly behind Canada on 13.7 litres and above South Africa, on 9.2 litres, according to the OIV data.

## Alcohol-free Prosecco drives success for sparkling wine giant

A potentially game-changing finding from Henkell Freixenet's latest financial results is the significant leap made in sales of its alcohol-free sparkling wine. Henkell Freixenet, one of the world's leading sparkling wine producers, saw 23.6% growth in its alcohol-free sparkling wine last year, lending further weight to the argument that no / low could be the future of fizz.

According to the German company, whose full-year results for 2024 show it reached €1.25 billion in revenue (excluding excise taxes), sales of its Mionetto 0.0%, Freixenet 0.0% and Mionetto Aperitivo non-alcoholic increased by 23.6%. This towers over the growth of Henkell, for example, which is the most exported sparkling wine brand from Germany, which grew by 8.3%.



Zero alcohol wines are outpacing low ABV wines, suggesting that consumers are increasingly preferring 'no alcohol' rather than 'low alcohol'. In the UK, the overall no-and-low category is expected to have more than doubled in 2024 compared to 2023, and to grow at a rate of 7% through 2028, according to the IWSR. But for wine, specifically, low-alcohol sales fell by 5% in 2024, while no-alcohol wine sales rose by 8%.



# UNCORKING SURREY

## A VISIT TO DENBIES WINE ESTATE - JUNE 2025

Amanda Spinks

We would like to share with you a brief review of a fantastic break we recently enjoyed at Denbies Wine Estate. A short drive, located on the North Downs of Dorking and Box Hill, the estate is the largest in England with 265 acres under vine, lots to see.



We stayed for one night and had chosen to enjoy a lunchtime Wine Tasting of five wines accompanied with a charcuterie and cheese board. The wines that we tasted included a Sparkling Brut, Sparkling Demi-Sec, White Bacchus, Orange Solaris and Redlands, a red blend including Pinot Noir.

All wines were excellent, although the orange wine is an acquired taste. The hands down favourites of the weekend were their sparkling brut and Rose and we thought they were good value for money.

The charcuterie and cheese were all locally sourced and we have to say the local fresh bread was outstanding! The dining and hotel rooms have tremendous views of the vineyards, which you are free to wander around at any time.



After a very comfortable night, we enjoyed a lovely full English breakfast, healthy options were available, all locally sourced. Again, with views of the vineyards we enjoyed watching a run which was happening around the vineyards as we ate!

Having filled ourselves with excellent wine and food, it was time to enjoy a long walk along part of the National Trust North Downs way which is accessible from the hotel, so no need to drive anywhere. We also spent a good amount of time walking around the vineyard and were able to admire various vines of differing ages. They have a land train for anyone not wanting to walk up the hills to see the vines and get a great view of the estate.

# WINE TIMES

## MOMENTS IN HISTORY

### Hidden in Plain Sight

Before World War Two broke out France produced 79 million hectolitres of wine each year.

Great Champagnes, Bordeaux, Burgundies and Cognacs or Armagnacs were much sought after by German elite society. It is reputed that Hitler was teetotal or at least disliked wine much preferring beer, but Hermann Goring, Joachim Ribbentrop and Joseph Goebbels were very much admirers and consumers of top French wines and they shaped the policy that saw French wines as one of the precious spoils for the Third Reich.

In June 1940 Germans divided France into the southern 'free' and northern occupied zones. The demarcation line is interesting since it deviated from the straight to ensure Bordeaux and Cognac were in the occupied zone.

At the outset of the war French wine was simply looted: two million bottles of Champagne in the first weeks of occupation alone. However, soon the industry was regulated by Germany through the appointment of wine agents dubbed Weinfuhrers by the French.

They were tasked with sourcing the best French wine and sending it back to Germany and by 1945 tens of millions of hectolitres had been forcibly purchased at below market rates or simply stolen outright.

By 1942 the French wine industry was in terrible trouble, shortage of men, animals and materials caused wine production to plummet from 69,015,071 hectolitres in 1939 to 35,022,362 hectolitres. It is against this background that the resistance among French winemakers to Germany develops.



*German officers celebrate New Year's Eve with champagne in 1940*



*Moët & Chandon hid their best champagne from Nazis*

Along with acts of collaboration and co-operation with Germany on the part of wine producers there had been small acts of resistance from the start – some famous wineries like the de Nonancourt family of Champagne's Laurent-Perrier wine label hid their best wines behind hastily built walls in their caves.

Robert Drouhin of Burgandy recalls how as an eight year old he collected spiders to place before a newly built wall to disguise and make safe his father's famous Romanee – Conti wines.

As the French Resistance movement grew under the unifying leadership of General de Gaulle so did the heroics of the French vigneron. Stories abound, I like the one about Jean

Monmousseaux who lived close to the demarcation line between the north and south zones and regularly crossed it with wine shipments and also many members of the Resistance encased in wine barrels.

Others adulterated, watered down or simply mislabelled their wine, making out that 'ordinary' wine was really a vintage. The Marquis Suarez d'Aulan head of the Piper-Heidsieck champagne house turned his caves into arms depots which supplied the Resistance with munitions to cause havoc and diversions in the days leading up to the D-Day landings.

Many of these heroes paid the ultimate price. Maurice de Nonancourt of the Laurent -Perrier Champagne house, Gaston Poittevin of the Poittevin Champagne house and Henri Martin, the legendary Champagne winemaker, along with many others died in concentration camps.

Perhaps it is fitting that Germany surrendered in the Champagne producing town of Reims. But there was one positive legacy of Germany's pillaging of the French wine industry. As more and more men were drafted to work or fight for Germany, women suddenly found themselves in charge of famous and less famous wine businesses a trend which has continued to this day.

A very accessible history of the French wine industry in the Second world war is to be found in the book *Wine and War* by Don and Petie Kladstrup, available from Amazon for £9.82 in paperback or £3.99 for the Kindle edition.

***Two million bottles of  
Champagne were looted  
in the first weeks of  
occupation alone***





# FROM VINEYARD TO VINYL



## Quiz by Clive Waddington

The drinking of wine has featured in numerous songs, both popular and classical. Dean Martin must have been responsible for at least a dozen such songs, with Frank Sinatra almost as prolific. Many of these songs celebrate the enjoyment of drinking wine, although just as many record the tendency to use wine as a solace in times of emotional vulnerability.

Below are lyrics which contain 'wine' within them (for whatever reason!).  
Your task is to name the song and the singer / group who recorded it.

- 1 'When I get older, losing my hair  
Many years from now.  
Will you be sending me a valentine  
Birthday greetings, bottle of wine?'
- 2 'There must be some kind of way outta here  
Said the joker to the thief  
There's too much confusion  
I can't get no relief.  
Business men, they drink my wine  
Plowmen dig my earth  
None will level on the line  
Nobody offered his word.'
- 3 'So I called up the Captain, "Please bring me my wine"  
He said, "We haven't had that spirit here since 1969."  
  
and  
'Mirrors on the ceiling, the pink champagne on ice  
And she said, "'We are all just prisoners here of our own device".'
- 4 'Once upon a time, I drank a little wine  
Was as happy as could be  
Now I'm just like a cat on a hot tin roof  
Baby, what do you think you're doing to me.'
- 5 'I'd have sworn  
That with time  
Thoughts of you  
Would leave my head  
I was wrong  
And I find  
Just one thing  
Makes me forget.'
- 6 'Come taste the wine  
Come hear the band  
Come blow your horn, start celebrating  
Right this way your table's waiting.'
- 7 'I can make you mine, taste your lips of wine  
Anytime, night or day  
Only trouble is, gee whiz  
I'm dreaming my life away.'
- 8 'A bottle of white, a bottle of red,  
Perhaps a bottle of rose instead.  
We'll get a table near the street  
In our old familiar place.'
- 9 'I'm praying for rain in California  
So the grapes can grow and they can make more wine  
And I'm sitting in a honky in Chicago  
With a broken heart and a woman on my mind.'
- 10 'I sat on a rug biding my time  
Drinking her wine.  
We talked until two and then she said  
"It's time for bed."  
She told me she worked  
In the morning and started to laugh.  
I told her I didn't  
And crawled off to sleep in the bath.'

**Answers on the last page**

# The Corkscrew Corner

## Corkscrews with Character: Brass Figurals



For the first 40 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century 'brass figurals' were extremely popular. Essentially they are castings in brass of a whole range of subjects from animals, landmarks, ships, famous people etc. and were produced for the souvenir market. They often featured the name of a town or famous location and were cheap and produced in large numbers.

They were almost exclusively produced in Birmingham and the vast majority by Pearson-Page-Jewsbury Co. The brass figurals were not designed simply for corkscrews, the same casting was used for door knockers, toasting forks, bottle openers, fire place tools and range of novelty items.

To protect their product, from copying, the companies registered their figural design. They could not patent the figural because there were no mechanical parts but the registration gave five years' protection and further years could be purchased. The list of registrations allows one to date when each figural was first produced.

The earliest was in 1914 known as the Lynton / Lynmouth stag (featured in the image above). I am lucky enough to have one in my collection of 50 plus figurals. Originally designed as a door knocker it was also used as a corkscrew.

Sometimes during the registration period the registration number was stamped on the back of the figural. I have this lovely Clovelly lady with pannier, with reg number, so I know it was made between 1926 and 1931.



Dogs were particularly popular subjects – a good example of which is 'just good friends' (featured in the image on the left) registered in 1933.

Ships are a favourite of mine, one being produced as a souvenir of Wisbech. Mine has a reg number 815152, stamped on the back, dating it as 1936.

In 1939 production stopped – metal being needed for less peaceful purposes. After the War a few were produced but this soon fizzled out.

**Originally designed as a door knocker it was also used as a corkscrew**

Because they were produced in such large numbers and were very popular they are still easy to find. so a great way to start a corkscrew collection.

Common designs of English figurals sell for as little as £5 to £10 though more normally £10 to £20. Rarer items or those with a registration number stamp are between £20 and £50 - so don't forget to check the back before you buy it, you could pick up a bargain if it has a reg stamp.





# World OF WINE

## A Taste of Slovenia

Madeleine and I have recently returned from a trip to the beautiful country of Slovenia, if you get a chance go... go!

While we were staying in the oldest Slovenian town of Ptuj – pronounced Ptuuueee – we took a trip to the second largest city of Maribor. There we saw the oldest vine in the world. It has been authenticated by vine genetics experts and since 2004 it has featured in the Guinness Book of Records. It was planted at least 400 years ago.



*World's oldest vine*



*Oldest vine in 17<sup>th</sup> Century painting of Maribor*

The grape variety is Modra Karcina also known as Zametna Crnina; a red grape. The annual harvest from this vine, is celebrated with a local fete.

The small amount of wine produced is bottled in special decanters and presented to the great and the good (and the not so good) around the world.

We then visited the wine growing region of Jerusalem, about an hours drive from Maribor. The area is reputed to get it's name from returning Crusaders who passed through the region bringing religious relics from Jerusalem.



*Jerusalem vineyard*

We visited the vineyard of the Puklavec family. It is claimed to be the largest in Slovenia. The family own 600 hectares and buy in grapes from a further 240 hectares. They employ 150 people. The vines are almost exclusively grown on terraces on rich mineral soil between 250 and 350 meters above sea level. 80% is hand picked, perfect, they claim, for white wines for which they are most famous.



We had a wine tasting, full glasses!!! of an excellent Sauvignon and an even better Chardonnay. Their Rose Penina and sparkling Brut Penina, while a welcome accompaniment to local cheeses and bread, were less impressive.

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Waitrose stock their Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Grigio blended wine. This was their cheapest wine for sale at €8 – Waitrose retail it at £10. We did not try this wine so no guarantees.

Later on our tour of the country we encountered their Laski Rizling, handed out as a welcome-drink on board a sea cruise, but as it was 10:00am I am not sure our palates were quite in the mood.

Our trip introduced us to a range of excellent Slovenian white wines and one or two good reds. Worth keeping an eye out as the vigneron start exporting more.

## A BARREL OF LAUGHS

*It doesn't matter if your glass is half full or half empty there is room for more wine.*

*It's funny how drinking 8 cups of water a day seems impossible but finishing a bottle of wine in 30 minutes is a normal Friday night.*

## FROM VINEYARD TO VINYL – ANSWERS

1 'When I'm 64' - Beatles (Written by Paul McCartney, probably when he was 14 years old, and included on the Beatles' 'Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band' album. Kenny Ball and his Jazzmen also had a minor hit with the song.)

2 'All Along The Watchtower' - Jimi Hendrix Experience (Written and recorded by Bob Dylan in 1967, it was a big hit for Hendrix in the following year.)

3 'Hotel California' - Eagles (The Eagles described the song as their 'interpretation of the high life in Los Angeles'. The song won the Grammy Award for Record of the Year in 1978.)

4 'Get Down' - Gilbert O'Sullivan (In 1973, the record spent two weeks at the top of the British charts. The lyric 'get down' does not refer to a dog, but to a girl who had jumped on O'Sullivan!)

5 'Red Red Wine' - UB40 (A massive hit in 1983. The song was originally written and recorded by Neil Diamond in 1967 in London.)

6 'Cabaret' - Lisa Minelli (Sung by the character Sally Bowles in the musical. It has been recorded by numerous artists, although Lisa Minelli's version on the 1972 film soundtrack is probably the most famous.)

7 'All I Have To Do Is Dream' - Everly Brothers (Written by Felice and Boudleaux Bryant in 1958, it provided the Everly Brothers with their first number one record. There have been numerous cover versions down the years.)

8 'Scenes From An Italian Restaurant' - Billy Joel (A song from Billy Joel's 1977 album 'The Stranger', although never released as a single. It's regarded as 'a 7 minute epic (!)' and highly regarded by Billy Joel aficionados through the world.

9 'Little Old Wine Drinker Me' - Dean Martin (Although the song had been recorded by many singers before him, Dean Martin made the most well known version in 1967 and it became a staple of his stage act.)

10 'Norwegian Wood' - Beatles (Written mainly by John Lennon with a little bit of help from Paul McCartney, the song appears on the 'Rubber Soul Album'. The song is autobiographical, recalling an extramarital affair that John Lennon had experienced in London.)

Quiz by Clive Waddington

**The editor accepts no responsibility for gramatical,,, speling, factual errors or the quality of any wine mentioned**