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ENGLISH WINE



## English wine – latest discoveries



*For [English Wine Week](#), Tam shares her new discoveries from an ever-evolving wine region.*

### Lost in a Field

One recent sunny afternoon, [Tim Wildman MW](#) and Ginny (his beautifully decorous golden Wirehaired Vizsla) rolled up on our driveway armed with bottles of wine and a story. Wildman told me, a tad dramatically, or so I thought, that the second vintage had been one of loss and betrayal, grief and conflict. I settled in for the story. It was every bit as dramatic as he'd intimated.

Wildman lost three of his (tiny, tiny, tiny) heritage vineyards in a single year. One, in north Wales, to shoot-released pheasants (an environmental conflict across the whole of the UK). The second was lost to the naively optimistic ambitions of a banker, who, after not being interested in his parents' hobby vineyard for years, realised (thanks to Lost In A Field) that there was commercial potential and decided to bottle own-brand wine and sell direct instead of selling grapes to Wildman. Consequence: a lot of unsold, unsellable bottles of wine (the wine game is not like the banking game). The third loss was [Bee Tree Vineyard](#) – a tiny plot making beautiful, high-quality wines and from which Wildman bought some of his best grapes for his first pet-nat. Bee Tree Vineyard has recently been sold to [Dermot Sugrue](#), who may well be described as one of the UK's rock-star winemakers (his fiery nature, hair and bear hug all contribute to the legend).

Then, just days before harvest, Offbeat, who had previously rented Wildman space to make his wine, suddenly announced that they didn't have the capacity to process his wines.

But it wasn't all bad. Every tragedy has its heroes. For Wildman, it was in the shape of Balbina Leeming of [BSixTwelve](#). Although this half Spanish, half Venezuelan firebrand of a winemaker obsessed with the story of The Little Prince (hence the name) didn't know Wildman, she said, yes, come, I'll make space for you. She gave Wildman a corner of her cellar with just a day's notice and no caveats, quite literally saving his vintage. He drove fruit and juice to her winery in the middle of the night.

Wildman calls 2022 his 'difficult second album'. Musicians reading this will know what he means and wince in empathy. But Wildman is no victim. He's a poster-child for positivity. [His smile is wider than wide](#) and he is determined. He gives the distinct impression that pretty much nothing short of the apocalypse will break him down.



Tim Wildman MW and Ginny

His 2022 pet-nat is a blend of 14 varieties, from five vineyards and five counties. 60% is Madeleine Angevine from Broadfield in Herefordshire; whites from Broadfield make up 90% of the blend. The red component is 5% Triomphe d'Alsace (from a crazy old carpenter who farms in a very negligent organic way, a couple of acres of old vines, 'we had to pick on a day pissing with rain – the carpenter had an apprentice, a lad about 19 years old who picked with us for six hours solid in the pouring rain and never stopped smiling!'). Another 5% comes from 11 varieties: Phoenix from Court Lane in Hampshire, a little bit of Rondo from Lamberhurst, and then a vineyard in Devon with nine inter-planted varieties (Bacchus, Huxelrebe, Ortega, Madeleine Sylvaner, Siegerrebe, Schönburger, Seyval Blanc, Dornfelder, Léon Millot).

It's sharper, leaner and [much more grippy](#) than the [2021](#), but it's just as fun. Proper ceviche wine. One swig of this and you're singing to [Summertime](#) from DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince.

Both bottles (£33) and magnums (£60) are sealed with a crown cap and come in six packs ('just for fun we've waxed the tops of the magnums sky blue, sunflower yellow and bubblegum pink'). Email [tim@lostinafield.com](mailto:tim@lostinafield.com) for terms and delivery details. Stock is held and delivered by London City Bond and you can find a list of stockists on the [website](#), which will be added to over the coming weeks.

### **Mad Ang and friends**

One of the most exciting things that is happening is the [renaissance of 'heritage' varieties](#) that have long been spurned and scorned by modern, well-bank-rolled wineries. Great English wines don't have to have Chardonnay or Pinot Noir on the label. I've developed a bit of a soft spot for [Madeleine Angevine](#) (nickname Mad Ang), [Solaris](#) and [Rondo](#).