

## Visiting English vineyards

23 Jun 2005 by JR

There are about 350 vineyards in England, most of them concentrated in the south but one of them in Durham, the most northerly outdoor vineyard in the world, and 10 in south Wales. The grapes they manage to ripen, thanks to the warming influence of the Gulf Stream and, increasingly, global warming, are vinified in more than 100 wineries, some of them producing dozens if not hundreds of different labels. See more at [www.englishwineproducers.com](http://www.englishwineproducers.com)

Wine tourism is an increasing phenomenon worldwide and many English wine producers, like their counterparts across the Atlantic, depend almost entirely on sales made at the cellar door or farm gate. Only the wineries with real critical mass such as the English Wines Group at Chapel Down, Denbies and Three Choirs are big enough to be even granted an audience with the big retailers. But most of these small wine enterprises are in beautiful countryside, which is currently looking its best.

Just in time for the perfect time of year for visiting England's plucky/ valiant/ long-suffering/ crazy (strike out the one that do not apply, to paraphrase Ronald Searle's *Down with Skool*) vigneron, comes *The 2005 Wine Guild Guide to English & Welsh Vineyards*. This full colour, 79-page booklet is well worth its £4.50 (inc postage). It lists more than 130 English vineyards, giving contact details and maps together with articles on England's grape varieties, geology, winemaking education, appellation system and wine styles. Most space is devoted to the 25 most prominent UK wineries but there are details of many more. No mention of the vine that grows in our front garden but some of these vineyards must be pretty small as the whole of the UK has less than 800 ha/2,000 acres of officially registered vineyard.

I have so far been most impressed by the best fizz from the likes of Nyetimber and Ridgeview but the quality of the still wines is improving all the time – and they never lack refreshing natural acidity.

*The 2005 Wine Guild Guide to English & Welsh Vineyards*

£4.50 inc postage from [info@englishwineproducers.com](mailto:info@englishwineproducers.com)