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Prince Charles visits Denbies wine estate in Surrey

The Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall tasted wines produced at an award winning vineyard during a tour of Surrey.

The royal couple also planted a sapling at Denbies wine estate near Dorking on Thursday.

Denbies Chalk Ridge Rose 2010 was the only still Rose to win a gold medal at The International Wine Challenge 2011.

Prince Charles and Camilla also visited Painshill Gardens in Cobham and Watts Gallery in Campton.

The couple met staff and local school children at Denbies wine estate and were unveiling a cornerstone at the newly restored Watts Gallery.

More than 12,000 wines were entered into the 2011 International Wine Challenge and just 406 gold medals awarded.

Chapel Down in Tenterden, Kent, won a gold with its Rose Brut.

It has been widely reported that the sparkling wine was drunk at the wedding of Prince William and the Duchess of Cambridge.



The Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall tasted the wine produced at Denbies

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Vineyard strikes silver in international challenge



Bedfordshire's only vineyard, Warden Abbey Vineyard, has been given a Silver Award for its Abbot Sparkling Brut 2007 at the International Wine Challenge.

Although Warden wines have won Bronze & Highly Commended awards in previous years, this is the first time one has struck Silver in what is acknowledged as the most prestigious awards in the world of wine, with more than 10,000 wines from 48 countries competing with each other.

Proprietor Jane Whitbread said: "Although the management of the Vineyard is now in the hands of a community partnership we are delighted that a wine from the 2007 vintage has been awarded this accolade".

The wine is available from Southill Estate Office, Summerhill Farm Shop, Cardington and other local retailers.

There will be an opportunity to taste and buy this and other wines from Warden Abbey Vineyard at the Midsummer Wine Sale in the garden of Southill House on Thursday June 16 from 6 – 8 pm.

There were also celebrations among volunteers at the community project that has been managing Warden Abbey Vineyard since 2010.

Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity received a commendation medal in the International Wine Challenge for its debut wine "The Reformer" which will be launched later in the year.

For details visit the project website: www.wardenvineyard.org.uk



Waitrose's new-look Canary Wharf store is luxurious ... and optimistic

Rebecca Smithers
guardian.co.uk
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Chateau Latour at £425 a bottle, 'Pippa Middleton' handbags and a 30-seat wine bar – welcome to Waitrose's biggest and busiest shop

It is an optimistic retailer which splashes out £15m on the refurbishment of a single store – and a brave one which tries to sell fine wines at up to £425 a bottle.

But this is Waitrose and the shop is its store at London's Canary Wharf, where banks including Morgan Stanley, Barclays, Citigroup and HSBC have headquarters.

The business district has grown substantially since Waitrose opened its first store there in 2002. Its new-look branch, under the glass towers of Canada Square, now attracts 80,000 regular weekly customers. It is the biggest and busiest Waitrose in the UK, taking three times as much money as the average, and with more than double the footfall.

On Thursday it reopened as the first 'Waitrose Food, Fashion & Home' store, showcasing top quality food and drink – as well as fashion and furnishings sourced from John Lewis – aimed specifically at the Canary Wharf customer.

There is no lock on the door of the glass-fronted temperature-controlled cellar in the heart of the ground floor, where the finest wines are stored. A bottle of 1988 Chateau Latour, a Bordeaux from Pauillac on the left bank of the Gironde river, is the most expensive on display with an eye-watering price tag of £425.

Pierpaolo Petrassi, head of beer, wines and spirits buying at Waitrose, explains: "This is wonderful vintage wine and the stuff of legend. We don't expect huge numbers of people to buy it, but some definitely will. And there are many more wines at much more affordable prices and which represent very good value for money."

Here, customers have the largest choice of wine in any branch of Waitrose – more than 2,000 wines from 20 countries ranging from £3.99 to £500 a bottle. They include 150cl magnums – which Petrassi says can be good value for a dinner party – including a £200 Chateau Palmer claret.

Petrassi says of Waitrose, which this week clinched the Supermarket of the Year Award from the **International Wine Challenge** (IWC): "We have found that in the recession staying in has become the new going out, and consumers have wanted to have a little luxury by drinking good wines at home. Sales of fine wines have been holding up very well."

The once familiar sight of City traders publicly blowing their bonuses on bottles of Dom Perignon (on sale here for £100) may thankfully be long gone. Petrassi hopes that people in celebratory mood might come to the 30-seat wine bar and enjoy a good bottle of wine which attracts only a £7.50 corkage fee (rather than the usual fee of three times the retail price).

The chain has expanded its range of mini bottles of wine and is also trialling 'mini carafes' (a quarter of a bottle – 18.75cl) of red, white and rosé for £2, which might appeal to City workers who fancy a French-style tittle with their lunch.

Takeaway food for desk-bound lunches will remain a core, high volume business. With the average worker taking a 17-minute lunch-break, Waitrose serves 4,000 customers between 12–2pm.

The store is also opening one hour earlier on weekdays, at 7am, to cater for 'early bird' workers and has an Italian-style 'stop and perch' espresso bar – with standing room only for its customers.

Very busy and very wealthy

And there are even more to come. The population of Canary Wharf is expected to increase to 120,000 over the next few years as new companies move in to occupy vacant offices. In December Shell will move into Jubilee Place, bringing an additional 1,700 workers. And next year JP Morgan will take over the building occupied by the collapsed Lehman Brothers, boosting the working population by 8,000.

Diana Hunter, Waitrose's director of store development, said the demographics were "fascinating", and the rest of the store reflects their needs: "A large proportion of shoppers are renting flats, so they are looking for colourful accessories like cushions, bedding and towels. We know that, despite the recession, there are a lot of very wealthy people with money to spend. They are also very busy as they are working hard. So they want an edited choice which is what we have tried to give them."

The Reebok gym above Waitrose is the biggest in Europe, and on the first floor keep-fit aficionados browsing through the extensive range of sportswear will be able to use a gait analysis machine to advise them on the best running shoes to wear.

The store has a slightly higher proportion of male shoppers, at 51%, than the average – but the top floor has been designed as a luxurious fashion temple for women. Among the 110 top brands, for example, are handbags from names such as Longchamp, Osprey, DKNY and Modalu, including its famous 'Pippa bag' carried by Pippa Middleton.

At 6pm on a weekday evening, Canada Square is buzzing and the bars and restaurants outside are packed. But there is no escaping the sense of gloom that hangs over those working in the financial sector.

One HSBC employee, who wished not to be named, said: "It's not a time for extravagance. The bank has announced today that it is going to axe 3,000 staff in Hong Kong and wants further, massive job cuts. I don't know if I will have a job next year. I might buy a can of lager and packet of crisps from Waitrose, but I wouldn't buy a £500 bottle of wine and I don't know anyone else who would."

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BREAKING:

Sir George Fistonich receives IWC Lifetime Achievement Award

Written by Carol Emmas

Wednesday, 07 September 2011 12:14



Sir George Fistonich, owner and managing director of Villa Maria Estate, has received the International Wine Challenge Lifetime Achievement Award.

Sir George Fistonich, owner and managing director of Villa Maria Estate, has received the International Wine Challenge Lifetime Achievement Award.

Other former industry figures to have previously received this award, include: Peter Lehmann, Peter Lehmann Wines (2009) and Miguel Torres, Bodegas Torres (2010).

Sir George Fistonich founded Villa Maria Estate in Auckland in 1961 and has steered the company to a position where it has become New Zealand's leading wine award winner, both locally and overseas.

Fistonich was knighted for his services to the New Zealand wine industry in 2009.

He said: "It is very humbling to be recognised by the wine industry for Villa Maria's achievements.

"We've worked hard promoting our premium New Zealand wines to the world so it's a great feeling to be among such an elite group of wine industry icons.

I founded Villa Maria Estate nearly fifty years ago and feel very lucky to be part of an exciting and stimulating industry."

The International Wine Challenge Awards ceremony took place last night at The Hilton Park Lane.

The judging panel was chaired by Tim Atkin MW, Oz Clarke, Charles Metcalfe, Sam Harrop MW and Derek Smedley MW.

The award is given annually to one senior industry leader for significant contributions to the wine industry internationally.

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How do you follow a £110 cheese sandwich, see Martin Blunos for details

June 30th, 2011 [No Comments](#)

One of the country's great chefs, Martin Blunos, is heading to Kendal in September 2011 to make two gastronomic guest appearances as a chef demonstrator and then Masterclass tutor at state-of-the-art Lake District cookery school LucyCooks. The "Baltic giant" from Bath, whose cooking is influenced by both his Latvian heritage and the recipes of Russian [...]

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Trophies announced for the World's Best Wines

June 30th, 2011 [No Comments](#)

The world's most prestigious and influential independent wine competition, the International Wine Challenge (IWC), announced the eagerly awaited results of the 2011 Trophy and Great Value Wine Awards at the Lord's Nursery Pavilion. With 15 Great Value Wine Awards, along with 107 wines and 7 Sake awarded Trophies, it has been a great year for [...]

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A light pretty pink colour with wild strawberries, freshly cut pears, cracked pepper and thyme leaping from the glass. A dry, serious rosé with great length and a fine line of acidity that carries these

GOLD INTERNATIONAL WINE CHALLENGE

London 00:29 / 02:41

Top wine from Surrey

6.16PM Wed May 18 2011

There is a top tippie from Dorking that has won over the international wine buffs.

Grapes from Surrey are the toast of the wine world, after seeing off hundreds of competitors from 20 other countries.

They are grown to make a now award-winning rosé at the Dorking vineyard.

By: Glen Goodman



Witchcraft meeting

1.59PM Thu, 19 May 2011

A meeting's being held today



Logue green plaque

1.59PM Thu, 19 May 2011

The man who helped King



Men face Lawrence trial

6.00PM Wed, 18 May 2011

Two men are to stand trial

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English Wine Wins Top International Award

Amy Jameson, Thursday 19 May 2011

An English rosé has beaten off world-class competition, and won the top prize at this year's International Wine Challenge.

The Chalk Ridge Rosé, produced by Denbies Wine Estate in Surrey, was the only rosé out of 367 different varieties from 21 countries to be awarded a highly-coveted gold medal at the IWC. The competition is widely regarded as the most prestigious in the wine industry.

Family-owned and run Denbies Wine is Britain's biggest wine estate, with 265 acres of vines. General Manager Christopher White said: 'This is a huge success for Denbies...this award reinforces the fact that English wine producers can and will continue to produce internationally recognised

wine'.

Chalk Ridge Rosé is priced at £11.99, and will soon be available for purchase directly from Denbies Wine Estate. Denbies is also the first English estate to produce a wine for Tesco's finest range - Tesco Finest Denbies Estate English White 2010 (£8.79) is currently available in Tesco stores nationwide.

Chapel Down wins wine award

Chapel Down, the PLUS-quoted company, has won a gold medal at this year's International Wine Challenge.

Last month the company supplied wines for the Royal Wedding.

Royals visit our winner wine estate



ROYAL VISIT: The Prince of Wales will meet local schoolchildren at Denbies Wine Estate

By Sam Blackledge Sam.blackledge@Essnmedia.co.uk

DENBIES Wine Estate will receive a royal visit today.

The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall will meet staff and schoolchildren at the wine lodge in London Road this morning, before planting a tree to commemorate their visit.

Denbies marketing manager Jeannette Simpson said excitement is building.

"We are delighted to have the chance to welcome their royal highnesses to the estate and for them to have the opportunity to meet local schoolchildren," she said.

The visit will cap a successful period for Denbies, after its Chalk Ridge Rosé won gold at the International Wine Challenge.

After leaving Dorking, the couple will move on to Painshill in Cobham, where they will learn about the continuing restoration of the landscape garden, which the Prince has been a patron of since 1987.

The Duchess will visit the Molesey Centre for the Community in East Molesey, where she will meet clients, volunteers and staff.

Their final stop will be the Watts Gallery in Compton, near Guildford, where they will unveil a commemorative cornerstone ahead of the gallery's grand re-opening next month.