



**DEFINED WINE LTD**  
**EAST ANGLIA SITE BUSINESS PLAN**

**Business background**

1. Defined Wine Ltd (DW) was set up in 2018 to support the rapid growth of the English wine sector – the National Farmers Union report that viticulture is the fastest growing agricultural sector in England. However whilst there has been much planting, the number of wineries has lagged behind. This is partly because there is a delay between vines being planted and becoming mature (typically 2-4 years) but also because of the capital costs in setting up a winery; the expertise required; and the requirement to have a building in a rural area, which often requires planning permission.

2. DW has no vineyards or brands of its own. Instead it has been set up to make wine for others. This reduces the requirement for wineries at every vineyard site, minimising the number of buildings required (important when many vineyards are sited within Dedham Vale and other AONBs); improving the quality of the wine, as we are able to invest in staff (our Head Winemaker was previously at Cloudy Bay and Dom Perignon) and technology; and achieving economies of scale that reduces the cost of making wine. Fundamentally, it reduces the capital requirements for new vineyards, allowing more entrants into the sector.

3. Viticulture can have a significant impact on the rural economy. WineGB have found that whereas an arable farmer will employ, on average, one person per 1,000 acres, a vineyard will employ, on average, one person per 25 acres; plus others in the winery; in the tasting room/visitor centre; in sales and marketing; and visitors will stay in local B&Bs, eat in local pubs etc. More information on the likely scale of this growth can be found at Enclosure 1.

4. From employing 5 people in its first harvest in 2019, DW employed 34 people for the 2023 harvest and now has 27 permanent employees (in a mix of full and part time roles). Additional people are employed for busy periods (bottling and harvest). Whilst the winemakers are generally recruited internationally (one is English, the other three are from respectively New Zealand, Germany and South Africa); the cellar team are mainly locals who we have trained, often with experience of hospitality or brewing; all our production and admin staff are recruited locally, predominantly via neighbouring village social media sites and some local recruitment agencies. Additional production staff for bottling etc are generally students with no previous winery experience. The minimum salary paid is the Living Wage.

**Expansion into East Anglia**

5. Until now DW has been based in Kent. However the conditions in East Anglia (warmer and drier than other parts of the country as well as a variety of soil types) make it well suited to growing grapes. This has led to an increase of vineyard plantings in the area, especially since the publication of academic research proving this (Nesbit et al paper: 'A Suitability model for viticulture in England and Wales' published in Nov 2018). Areas that have been identified as particularly suitable include:

the Dedham Vale; between Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket; the Crouch Valley in Essex; and the Royston/Cambridge area.

6. In 2023 DW made wine from 15 different vineyards in these areas, of whom 7 were within 15 miles of the proposed new site and 13 within 30 miles. DW have been approached by another 7 vineyards who have recently planted in the local area. Having a local winery will help the vineyards market the wines as grown and made in East Anglia; reduce the distance the grapes have to travel (improving quality); and reduce their carbon footprint, making the wines more sustainable. This will help to raise the profile of local wines and reinforce East Anglia as an emerging wine growing region. Which will in turn encourage others to diversify into growing grapes.

7. As DW have no brands of their own but just make wine for others, the winery will not be open to the public for tours or tastings.

8. DW chose the site at Holton Hall Farm for a number of reasons:

- a. It is well positioned to support existing and new vineyard planting in East Anglia;
- b. It is outside the AONB;
- c. It very close to the A12, minimising traffic on the local road network;
- d. As a working farm there will be minimal change to existing use;
- e. There is a secondary access route for tractors coming from vineyards that avoids the local village;
- f. The site is large enough to process expected demand and there is room to expand in future without impacting residential areas;
- g. It has easy access to rural and urban areas where staff can be recruited from and live;
- h. It already has buildings, hardstanding and a weighbridge suitable for winery use, minimising the carbon cost of a new build.

#### **Activity on site**

9. The following activities will be carried out on site:

- a. **Grape receipt.** Whilst larger clients may deliver grapes by articulated lorry (up to 20 Tonnes load), the majority of grapes will arrive by trailers pulled by cars (~1 Tonne) and small lorries (up to 7 Tonnes). The closest vineyards will deliver grapes by tractor pulled trailers (there is secondary access avoiding the village for tractors), similar to current agricultural practices on the farm. The grapes need to be stored temporarily before pressing, under cover so that the grapes are not damaged by rain or sun. The empty grape bins are then stored before being collected. This requires a mix of covered and external hard standing. The pressed grape skins will be composted on the farm.
- b. **Pressing and fermentation.** Grape presses need to be under cover, with a roof of at least 6-7m to allow the loading of the presses (depending on size). Fermentation tanks are approx. 4-6m high and need to be on a sloping floor to allow water runoff during cleaning. Barrels can be stacked up to 4 high.
- c. **Bottling.** Bottling will be done onsite using a mobile bottling line (mounted onboard an articulated lorry). Covered space is required to store empty glass bottles and other dry goods prior to bottling and packaging.
- d. **Bottled wine storage.** Finished wine will need to be stored in temperature controlled bonded storage prior to dispatch/collection.

e. **Offices and lab.** The winery needs to include room for an office and lab. (Other staff facilities are available elsewhere on the farm).

f. **Constraints.** The nature of wine production means that areas need to be contiguous, so that juice/wine can be pumped between presses and tanks.

These are similar to other agricultural processing activities. With the exception of loading/unloading vehicles, all activities will take place inside.

## Staff

10. It is anticipated that the following staff will be employed onsite:

a. **During harvest (training from 1 Sep to mid November washup).** Winemaker; assistant winemaker; cellar hand x4; forklift drivers x4; lab technician x2. During the busiest 2-3 weeks these will operate in 2 shifts (of 8-12 hours). **12 total.**

b. **Outside harvest.** Winemaker; assistant winemaker/cellar hand; cellar hand; lab technician. **4 total.**

c. Administrative functions (accounts etc) will initially be covered from Kent.

11. **Skillsets.** Of these staff, the winemaker and assistant winemaker will typically have a MA/BA in Viticulture and winemaking (from UK or international); the cellar hands can be trained onsite, although some will need harvest experience from elsewhere; the lab technicians will need lab experience but can be trained onsite in winery lab testing; the forklift drivers require no previous winery experience.

12. **Recruitment.** As in Kent, staff will primarily be recruited from the local area using village social media sites. If people with the right skillset (or willingness to learn a new trade) cannot be found, local recruitment agencies will be used and international agencies if necessary for the most skilled winemaking staff.

## Vehicle movements

13. The following vehicle movements are anticipated (see para below for timings):

a. **Staff.** Numbers as above. DW leased cars are all electric and staff are encouraged to cycle to work.

b. **Grape delivery (mid Sep – end of Oct).** Grapes are delivered in loads of between 1T and 20T. Assuming a worst case average of 2T (typical trailer/tractor load), and press capacity of 200T this will be 100 loads spread over 4-6 weeks or 2.3 loads per day. It is assumed that if more grapes are pressed (up to 400T), then the majority of loads will be larger – the average load to Kent in 2023 was 5T. Plus collections of bins (empty bins are usually collected in batches and often on delivery of the next day's grapes). Estimated total movements during harvest of 3 deliveries per day.

c. **Bottling.** Bottling will be run over a 2-3 week period using a mobile bottling truck. Bottles are usually delivered by articulated truck in loads of 26,000 bottles. If 200T is pressed, ~200,000 bottles will be required, 9 deliveries per year.

- d. **Dispatch.** Vineyards may either choose to collect all their wine at once (by lorry), or smaller dispatches (by car or van). These are estimated at 3-4 collections per month across the year, outside harvest.
- e. **Deliveries.** Royal Mail, suppliers (vans) etc 2-3 per week.
- f. **Client visits.** Vineyard owners/staff will typically visit by car 2-3 times per year to taste wine in tank, discuss harvest etc. Note that the winery will not be open to the general public.

14. **Space required for vehicles.** The following space will be required for vehicles:

- a. **Staff/visitor parking.** Up to 6 spaces for staff during harvest (working on alternate shifts, with worst case of 12 spaces if all staff are on site at the same time. Space has been designated for this to the north west of the winery.
- b. **Deliveries.** There needs to be room for up to articulated lorries (delivering glass) to be unloaded. This exists in the Holton Hall Farm yard.

### Working hours

15. Unlike other agricultural activities, which are dictated by the weather and often mean late night and weekend working, the winery will generally only be open during the working week (and there will be no tourism, so no weekend visitors). Normal working hours will be as follows:

- a. **Outside harvest.** 8 am to 4.30pm, Mon – Fri (excl Public Holidays).
- b. **During harvest** (approx. 4-6 week period from mid Sep to end of Oct). During the peak of harvest (approx. 10-14 days), the winery may operate 24/7, although for the first harvest in 2024 it is not anticipated that the winery will operate longer than 16 hours: 8 am to midnight. There will be no deliveries during harvest after 8pm, as the grapes will be picked locally and are usually collected from the vineyard between 4pm and 6pm.

### Sustainability

16. DW is a Founder Member of Wines GB's sustainability scheme. Using an existing building for the winery, rather than building a new one, minimises our carbon footprint. Wherever possible, second hand machinery will be purchased. The building already has solar panels, which will meet the majority of our energy requirements. We will be investing in rainwater harvesting and applying protocols to minimise our water use. We are working with various businesses to explore additional uses for grape skins. Our policy is to use lightweight bottles and recycled cardboard boxes to minimise the carbon footprint of finished wine. Having a winery in East Anglia will reduce the road miles of the grapes and finished wine for all the local vineyards. We are also keen to ensure that the change of use leads to biodiversity net gain, not least as recent research has underlined the important role that bats play in reducing vineyard pests.

Henry Sugden  
CEO  
[henry@definedwine.com](mailto:henry@definedwine.com)

Enclosure:

1. Wine GB Industry Report 2022-2023