

BEAU

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Drinks



NEW FOREST, NEW WINES

A tunnel vision has led to a surprising method to make high-quality still English wine

There's a new English vigneron to be aware of – and it doesn't make sparkling wine. In 2019, Beaulieu Vineyard was taken over by Sandy Booth. He is the boss of the New Forest Fruit Company, which cultivates soft fruit in polytunnels.

Booth is a pioneer of sustainable practices in tunnel farming – the vines, like his other crops, are grown in aerated tunnels on a bed of coir (coconut fibre). This hi-tech, low-intervention method ripens the grapes early and protects them from mildew and other disease, without the use of chemicals – only the use of coir stops this wine being certified organic.

Now, the first Beaulieu 58 wines (a nod to the year a vineyard was planted on this land) have been released. The 2023 vintages are all still wines – and unusual varieties for England: the white is a gewürztraminer (£30) and the B58 Rosé (£15) is made from Swiss pinotin and cabernet jura, the latter also included in the B58 Red blend (£35). The reason for this Helvetic influence is that winemaker Guillaume Lager learned his craft near Lake Geneva. 'These hybrid varieties are suitable for the English climate as they tend to ripen earlier than traditional varieties and have a high tolerance to disease,' says Lager.

The white and rosé have a subtle acidity to balance more fragrant fruit and floral notes, while the red blend has the tannins and spice to hold up against dark jamminess.

b58winery.com



Cocktails in St Moritz, with or without ice

The newest five-star hotel in the Swiss mountain resort gives the town a contemporary twist on luxury, especially in its bar, and it's open year round

For years, St Moritz's La Margna Hotel lay unused. But what has now emerged is the first new five-star hotel to open in the Swiss resort in five decades. The Grace Hotels group has built a new wing to complement the original 1906 architecture, and operates in ways that might shock regulars at its established rivals, including the famed Badrutt's Palace, such as opening 365 days a year.

Nowhere is the 21st-century luxury ethos more obvious than in N/5 - The Bar. The offering would be worthy of 50 Best Bars consideration, with a list of classics plus a section of true indulgence (champagne cocktail with Louis XIII cognac for £110, anyone?). All the kit for post-molecular cocktail making is also on display – such as a rotovap for creating bespoke spirits with a Swiss twist, a bubble-maker for fun garnishes, and a device for printing pictures onto the foam of a sour.

Beyond the cocktails, the drinks menu shows some interesting choices. Given equal status on the list as a flight of rare Macallans is a trio of single malts from Orma, the Swiss distillery located at the top of Piz Corvatsch, just along the Engadine



Above the Grace La Margna hotel offers modern luxury and (below) a list of creative cocktails 365 days a year

Valley. Given that you can visit the distillery via a cable car included on your St Moritz lift pass, this is unsurprising. More of an eye-opener is Grace La Margna's choice of house fizz – Gusbourne Brut Reserve from Kent. The pick of English sparkling wine is a sign that it's not just at home that people are claiming its quality, as well as a nod to the British role in building St Moritz as a destination.

In 1864, it was a group of Brits whom Johannes Badrutt, of the eponymous Palace, persuaded to try staying on in the mountains through the winter, effectively inventing the ski holiday. When frozen over, the lake still hosts polo and cricket matches, an echo of the English influence.

However, as Badrutt's now closes between the end of March and June, and again from September to December, it is the Grace La Margna currently keeping the year-round resort in luxury accommodation. It's also the destination in the resort for a tea to rival The Ritz's, in a living room with stunning Jugendstil architecture coupled with modern chic furnishings.

gracehotels.com/st-moritz



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