

# Kent, the Garden of England: Fruits, Flowers and Spirits [C1]

Situata nel sud-est dell'Inghilterra, questa contea guarda verso il continente ed è famosa per il suo mosaico vivace di paesaggi, aree coltivate, fattorie e pub. Con un clima temperato e un suolo fertile che produce frutta, vino frizzante e birra, è una regione molto attraente per turisti e buongustai.



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If you buy fresh [cherries while in](#) England, there's a strong possibility that they were [grown](#) in Kent. This beautiful South East [county](#) is known as 'the Garden of England'. It has the warmest climate in Britain, and its fertile agricultural land and country [estates](#) grow a variety of fruit, vegetables, flowers, herbs and other plants.

## 2.4 MILLION BOTTLES OF WINE

Kent is a big [producer](#) of English wine, beer and [spirits](#) such as gin and vodka. The [county](#) has many award-winning [wineries](#) and [vineyards](#), including the country's largest, Chapel Down. Based in the picturesque market town of Tenterden, Chapel Down has over 950 acres dedicated to [grape](#) growing and [produces](#) up to 2.4 million bottles of white,

[sparkling](#) and [rosé wine](#) a year. Like many other [vineyards](#) in Kent, it is open to the public for seasonal tours and wine [tastings](#).

## **[HOPS AND PUBS](#)**

The cathedral city of Canterbury was the first place that [hops](#) (the plants used in [brewing](#) beer) were [grown](#) in England, in around 1520. Today, you can visit historic [oast houses](#) where the [hops](#) were [dried](#). Some of them are now pubs, while others have been converted into private homes. Visit some of the [county](#)'s one hundred and eleven [breweries](#) to try the huge variety of local beer.

## **[GLASS OF WINE, SIR!](#)**

Celebrated author Charles Dickens had a love-hate relationship with the English [county](#) of Kent. In his 1837 novel *The Pickwick Papers* characters alternate between genuinely admiring the [county](#)'s history and landscape, and savagely satirising its inhabitants. "Kent, Sir — everybody knows Kent — apples, [cherries](#), [hops](#), and women. Glass of wine, Sir!". Known as the Garden of England, this historic [county](#) in the South East [boasts](#) picturesque countryside, [quaint](#) rural villages, a [dramatic](#) coastline and a rich [heritage](#). To find out more, we spoke to Yvonne Leach. A long-time resident, Leach gives private tours in which she shares her expertise on Kent's history and present. We began by asking Leach what it was that so fascinated Dickens and herself about the [county](#). \*\*Yvonne Leach (English accent): \*\*I always think of it as being two things. It's where England begins. We're 21 miles from the rest of Continental Europe. You stand on the [cliffs](#) and you can see France. [With] binoculars, you can see the time on the clock tower in Calais. So we're very near to Continental Europe. So we've got this wonderful [heritage](#) and history of everyone coming: the Romans, the Saxons, and Normans... All have come to this part. But then we've got this wonderful countryside and farmland and [rolling hills](#) and so many [stately homes](#) and castles.

## THE BELGIAN CONNECTION

And as Leach explained, Kent owes its reputation as the Garden of England to its relationship with its European neighbours. **Yvonne Leach:** It's many hundreds of years ago. Some people say it goes back to the time of at least our first Protestant Queen, Elizabeth I. She gave sanctuary to a lot of immigrants that were coming from — I suppose we'd now say Belgium and Holland, the Low Countries. And they helped us with fruit production.

Thank goodness for them! We've got these lovely cherries here, for example. And because of our geographic situation, we're near enough to London to get fruit to the court. We've got a good climate, we've got a good terrain. It's ideal for growing.

## SPARKLING AND STILL

Kent boasts beautiful country estates, landscape gardens and extensive vineyards. Leach tells us more. **Yvonne Leach:** There are beautiful gardens — Sissinghurst, for example —, various castles: Hever Castle, and where Sir Winston Churchill lived, Chartwell, is here — beautiful grounds! Penshurst Place, lots of gardens and castles and stately homes. But the vineyards... when I first trained we had about two vineyards. And now nearly every town and village has a vineyard, and they're award-winning: sparkling wines, red wines now... And the tasting is great fun. And then try the local produce as well, with the wines.

## OYSTERS!

We then asked Leach to recommend her favourite local products. **Yvonne Leach:** We also have Whitstable, which is not very far from Canterbury, and that's famous for its oysters. That was the original place that started the oysters that went up to London in wheelers. So oysters, seafood. We have the marshes, which have their own breed of sheep, the Romney marsh lamb. So at certain times of the year, the pubs will advertise that they're selling Romney marsh lamb, which is a speciality. And something that's quite interesting, you love it or hate it, it's a particular kind of tart

called '[gypsy tart](#)'. And it was invented by a lady who felt sorry for the local gypsies. So she [came up](#) with this thing that had all things that are good for you in there: lots of sugar and cream, one thing or another... and eggs. And she [fed](#) that to the local [gypsy](#) children.

## THE WHITE CLIFFS

There are many beautiful spots in the [county](#) but one is [deservedly](#) world-famous, says Leach. **Yvonne Leach:** There are two things. One is not perhaps so much the garden, but it is standing up on the White Cliffs of Dover. Looking out and it [brings home](#) the recognition of the fact that we are an island, but how close we are to France. And my local town is Sandwich, and I love Sandwich: medieval, the character, the houses... But you've also got all around you those [orchards](#) and [hops](#) and things like that. And in the middle of Kent as well, a bit further away from me, are [rolling hills](#), and you can go for miles and just enjoy the countryside.

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# Glossary

- **grown** = coltivare
- **grape** = uva
- **rolling hills** = dolci colline
- **marshes** = paludi
- **brings home** = rendere chiaro
- **estates** = tenute, residenze
- **oast houses** = essiccatoi per il luppolo
- **produce** = prodotti agricoli
- **gypsy** = gitano
- **brewing** = preparare, fermentare
- **cliffs** = scogliere
- **breed of sheep** = razza ovina
- **boasts** = vantarsi
- **spirits** = bevande alcoliche
- **sparkling** = frizzante
- **dried** = seccare
- **cherries** = ciliegie
- **wineries** = enoteche, cantine
- **vineyards** = vigneti
- **wheelers** = carri trainati da cavalli
- **advertise** = fare pubblicità
- **deservedly** = meritatamente
- **heritage** = spettacolare
- **stately homes** = residenze signorili
- **oysters** = ostriche
- **marsh lamb** = agnello delle paludi
- **orchards** = frutteti
- **tastings.** = degustazioni
- **breweries** = fabbriche di birra
- **quaint** = pittoreschi, caratteristici
- **hops** = luppolo
- **dramatic** = spettacolare
- **Thank goodness** = grazie al cielo

- **trained** = formarsi professionalmente
- **tart** = tortino
- **while in** = mentre sei in
- **county** = contea
- **rosé wine** = vino rosé
- **came up** = escogitare
- **fed** = dar da mangiare