

# The best wines will come from Scotland, warn French chefs

Mirazur

By Henry Samuel  
in Paris

PROMINENT French chefs have given warning that the country's wines will lose their complexity and the best produce will come from Scotland if the effects of climate change are not tackled.

A group of chefs, sommeliers and chateaux has issued a call to action, urging the country to secure ambitious targets in the months ahead to limit global warming.

President Nicolas Sarkozy was posed a stark choice: save French wine by clinching a deal at the international climate conference in Copenhagen in December, or see generations of viticulture slowly die out as vineyards cross the Channel and head north.

"As flagships of our common cultural heritage, elegant and refined, French wines are today in danger," 50 leading names from the world of French wine and food wrote in an open letter. "Marked by higher alcohol levels, over-sunned aromatic ranges and denser textures, our wines could lose their unique soul."

Among the signatories were Marc Veyrat, a chef with three Michelin stars, Mauro Colagreco, the award-winning chef, and Franck Thomas, who was voted the best sommelier in the world. The message was also supported by a host of domains from Champagne to Languedoc-Roussillon.

Climate change has been blamed for degrading French vineyards, with heatwaves, giant summer hailstorms in Bordeaux and new plant diseases.

The signatories said that if glo-



Commentary

**Jonathan Ray**

Wine critic

FRENCH winegrowers have never fallen for their leftist president and his anglophile ways.

So it's an irony that Nicolas Sarkozy has received their rallying cry against the loss of the industry to the British.

The French are finally waking up to the fact that we already make pretty decent stuff of our own.

The likes of Nyetimber, Ridge View and Chapel Down have proved that Britain can make world class sparkling wine and it's no surprise to learn that Champagne houses are investing in land around the chalky South Downs.

As for further afield, there are a dozen or so commercially viable vineyards in Wales and others as far north as Derbyshire and Yorkshire, where Cistercian monks made wine in the 12th century. Why not Scotland?

Richard Sealey, Emeritus Professor of Geology at Imperial College and author of *The Winefarms of Britain: Past, Present and Prospective*, has suggested that the north shore of Loch Ness, with its south east-facing slopes, fluvial glacial sand and gravel and sun-reflecting water could be perfect for grapes.

The French might get a taste for the wines of the Côtes d'Ecosse, after all, they drink 10 times more whisky than they do Cognac.

bal temperatures rose by more than two per cent before the end of the century, "our soil will not survive" and "wine will travel 1,000 kilometres beyond its traditional limits".

"We will have new wine producing regions in zones where one doesn't normally cultivate vineyards like in Brittany and Normandy," said Jean Pierre Chaban, a climatologist at France's National Institute for Scientific Research, in an accompanying online film. "It will spread to Great Britain. One can imagine vineyards in southern Sweden and Scotland."

The signatories want the government to push for a global deal to cut industrialised countries' greenhouse gas emissions by 40 per cent by 2020 and set up "solid aid mechanisms" for developing countries.

According to the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, there are now 416 vineyards in England and there are 2,732 acres of vines under cultivation – an increase of 45 per cent in the past four years.

Julie Trustram Eve, from English Wine Producers, said: "There are as far as we know no vines yet in Scotland, although there have been rumours. It's gradually creeping up. It depends how accurate the predictions are for the long term, but some say by 2080 it will be too hot to grow grapes in southern England."

However, Roxanne Camvan Schayk, who runs a traditional fruit and flower wine shop at Lambholm in the Orkney islands, said the French had nothing to fear from where she was standing. "It's far too windy for a start," she said.