



A Conversation with **Fraser Mayfield Key** *Mayfield Vineyard*

By Mike Beckett

On a very hot and sticky July afternoon, I paid a visit to meet Fraser Mayfield Key, who established and runs Mayfield Vineyard at Burton Pedwardine near Sleaford.

What I learned during my visit bore only a little resemblance to what I thought I would be seeing. But first, a few facts about the English Wine Industry. In 2025, the UK produced 16.5 million bottles of wine from some 1,100 vineyards, and covers around 4,209 hectares. So, who is Fraser Key? "Well, I'm a fourth-generation farmer at Glebe Farm, but also an evolving one who has instigated many changes over the years. We had around 1,500

to 1,800 acres in the early years of my working life, but now we are in the region of 500 acres. My daughter has just completed her second-year degree in Agriculture at Cirencester, and will become the fifth-generation of the family to farm here. I can also remember my grandfather saying to me: "Fraser, never forget that one third of the farm needs to produce the energy for the rest." But as far as the wine production goes, this has always been my hobby. I studied at Ecole se Viticulture

de Dijon in the early 1980s, looking closely at varieties that could best be suited to our Lincolnshire soils. In 2011, I planted Phoenix, Villaris, Solaris, Bolero, Rondo and Regent vines, thus creating Mayfield Wines. The first harvest was in 2017 and in 2018 the Owl Collection became a commercial reality," Fraser told me. It was slowly becoming clear to me, that Fraser was far from adopting the run-of-the-mill way of going about wine production. A strong believer in