



<b>Title:</b>	<b>Trade Visit Report -2025</b>
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<b>Location</b>	<b>Albury Vineyard 31<sup>st</sup> July</b>



A group of eighteen Pattenmakers and their consorts, including the Master, Renter Warden and no fewer than five Past Masters accompanied the Trade Warden on this year's Trade Visit to the Albury Vineyard in the Surrey Hills near Guildford.



The weather was, after weeks of endless sunshine, unseasonably damp, but this did not hamper our guide, Estate Manager Alex Valsecchi, from giving the group the full tour of the vineyard.

Alex is one of the few female vineyard estate managers in the UK and whilst she was born in Italy has spent thirty years here. Her knowledge about and enthusiasm for viticulture was infectious.

She explained the lengthy process the vineyard had gone through to achieve organic certification by careful curation of the soil. She then explained the differences between the Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Pinot Meunier vines that are grown in the vineyard, the growing cycle, and the harvesting whilst walking backwards uphill!

The protection of the grapes from the spring frosts using candle lanterns that are all lit by hand was fascinating.



After an hour in the rain, the members retired indoors to dry off and then adjourned to the tasting area.

Three Albury varieties, the Classic Cuvee, Blanc de Blancs and the Still Rose were presented in turn and their constitution and preparation method explained as we savoured them.

Members were then fortunate enough to have the opportunity to meet the vineyard owner Nick Wenman and his daughter Lucy. Nick explained the history of the vineyard and his personal journey from leaving the IT Industry to the establishment of the vineyard and the planting of the first vines in 2009 to today.



After a convivial lunch with the opportunity to savour more Albury products and buy some to take home from the shop.

After lunch and in slightly drier conditions (!), a smaller group including the Master walked the short journey to the Silent Pool Gin Distillery where we joined a public tour of the site and listened to the history of Gin consumption, the building of the distillery at the Silent Pool, and the importance of the botanicals and the impact they have on the taste of the products. Whereas some gin manufacturers use only 4 botanicals, Silent Pool uses up to fourteen!





Members had the opportunity to taste amongst others their Kaffir Lime, Citrus Gin, Black Juniper Gin, and a Navy Strength Gin that was so strong it nearly took the tops of our heads off!

Silent Pool has developed an enviable customer base and in 2022 was awarded a Queens Award for International Trade that was presented to them by our patron The Duke of Gloucester.

MW-S