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Uncorking potential

AAT fellow member Becky Glover has already had a varied career, but a holiday in Cornwall led her to start her own wine merchant, specialising in UK produce

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It was almost by chance that Becky Glover and her school friend Sara Thake came to found Elizabeth Rose Wines. Glover had always wanted to start her own business, but it was when the pair were on a holiday in Cornwall two years ago and heard they could go on a wine tour in the area they were staying in that things started to fall into place.

Intrigued, they went and were pleasantly surprised by the quality of the wines they were served.

“That was my first visit to an English vineyard and I thought ‘this is amazing!’. It’s such a peaceful place, with rows and rows of vines – and to think this is all in our country.”

AAT grounding

After deciding that sixth form and university wasn’t for her, Glover made the decision to enrol with AAT, and was qualified at just 17.

“My father had done AAT back in the day and he recommended it,” Glover explains.

“My first job was in the accounts department of a solicitors’ office, so I was getting some experience but it wasn’t technical.

Then I moved into practice because I felt that to get good finance and accounting knowledge, that would be better. I qualified with AAT there, but I always knew I wasn’t going to leave it there, so I then went on to ACCA qualifications.”

She then went into the technology industry, joining a bio-tech business as its accountant, where she spent more than two years before joining her current employer, VNC Automotive.



Elizabeth Rose Wines’ Becky Glover FMAAT explores a vineyard

It was the practical nature of the AAT qualifications and her subsequent varied career choices that put Glover in a position where she felt able to found Elizabeth Rose.

“My passion has always lain more in wider business, not just in technical accountancy,” she notes, highlighting that AAT qualifications gave her the opportunity to develop her business acumen.

“You’re learning cash flow, budgeting, forecasting. These are all things you need day-in, day-out if you’re running your own business.

“The module on spreadsheets in Level 3, for example, was absolutely vital and it gave me the confidence to take those steps and actually do it.

“You get a sense of business in AAT. The way it’s set up is for people in business. It widens your horizons.”

“I asked myself: Why isn’t there a website I can go to where I can just pick a bottle of this and a bottle of that? That’s when it came to me.”

English wine

It’s safe to say, though, that England is not known for its wine. That was particularly evident when, having enjoyed the wine on offer in Cornwall, Glover decided to buy some.

“I wanted to explore it a bit more, and I was on my sofa one night trying to buy some English wine. I found that while you can go from one vineyard website to another, a lot of the time they wanted to sell to you in cases of six of the same type. I thought, well, if I don’t like it, that’s a bit dangerous. The postage fees were high and the wine was expensive, too. Then I



to everyone. On our site, you can sort by county and we're working on an interactive map. I'd much prefer to help family businesses down the road than ship some wine over [from another country]."

A fine balance

Although Elizabeth Rose Wines has enjoyed success since its launch last year, it's something Glover has to balance with her full-time role as finance director of VNC Automotive, which produces the technology that allows our mobile phones to pair with vehicle interfaces.

It's proven no impediment, though, with low overheads owing to her ability to store the stock at her home and do work for Elizabeth Rose in the early mornings and evenings.

"It fits in really nicely with our full-time work because we can bend it to what we need it to be. At the moment, we take days off and visit three or four vineyards in one day."

Lockdown, in particular, has allowed the enterprise to grow as people seek to source their produce locally.

"As we're internet-based, we can do contactless deliveries and, because it's better for the environment, it's ticked a lot of boxes for people," she explains. While people are buying for consumption at home, though, Glover is also setting her sights on the hospitality market.

"We're trying to get more restaurants to take on the wines too. A lot of restaurants will publicise the fact their menus are all really local. They will say the chicken or the lamb is locally sourced, but their wine list will be made up of wines from Australia or Chile, and that's a conflicting message. Hopefully that's something we can change." ■

asked myself: Why isn't there a website I can go to where I can just pick a bottle of this and a bottle of that?"

She had identified a gap in the market. That, Glover says, was in March 2019 and by April, she and Thake, who specialises in marketing, had set up Elizabeth Rose (taken from their middle names). By September, they had a fully-fledged online wine merchant.

There is plenty of product for them to sell, too. There are more than 700 vineyards across the UK, including one in Scotland – though, understandably, they are concentrated in the south of the country.

"We tried the wines, visited as many vineyards as we could and, if we liked it or could imagine a friend enjoying it, we stocked it," Glover explains. "We wanted it to be very normal and we wanted people to see there are local vineyards

Shorts

BOOK

***Boss It: Control Your Time, Your Income and Your Life* by Carl Reader (out October)**

This handy guide will take you through everything you need to establish and run your own business.

BOOK

***The Psychology of Money: Timeless Lessons on Wealth, Greed, and Happiness* by Morgan Housel (out September)**

How to make better sense of one of life's most important topics.

BOOK

***The Extra Hour* by Will Declair, Jérôme Dumont and Bao Dinh (out now)**

Advice from more than 300 busy contributors on the best strategies to create more time in your day.

WEBINAR

Bitesize briefing: implications of Covid-19 for micro-entities (icaew.com)

ICAEW explores the financial reporting implications of Covid-19 for micro-entities.

WEBINAR

Forecasting in a time of uncertainty (accglobal.com)

This ACCA webinar will provide tips and guidelines to help you build a path through the fog of uncertainty.

WEBINAR

The fraud implications of Covid-19 (cipfa.org)

CIPFA runs through current fraud risks and what public sector professionals can do to mitigate these risks.

PODCAST

From The Trenches: Real Life in the Accounting Industry

David Boyar and Paul Meissner give accountants in practice helpful support and information.

PODCAST

Accounting Influencers

Top accounting growth specialist Rob Brown interviews world class accounting leaders. Topics include growth, digital, leadership and culture.

PODCAST

Presenting Accountants with Alexandra Bond Burnett

Professional speaking coach Alexandra Bond Burnett explores how accountants can boost their presentation skills.

PODCAST

Secrets of the Side Hustle

Helpful advice from conversations with inspiring female founders about their career stories. Spanning industries from art and activism to tech and fitness.

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