

Naturally Alcohol-Free Sparkling

An Interview with Paul Beavis, Chief Executive Officer, Wild Idol



Paul Beavis

EDITORS' NOTE Paul Beavis is Chief Executive Officer of Wild Idol. Previously, he was Managing Director for Champagne Lanson UK and North America for more than 20 years where he was responsible for growing new markets across Europe and Asia and defining the company's growth strategy. During his time as Managing Director, he oversaw the extension of Lanson's exclusive partnership with the All England Lawn Tennis & Croquet Club, and formed exclusive partnerships with the O2 Arena and other sporting associations. Following his departure from Champagne Lanson at the end of 2019, Beavis was appointed Managing Director of Iconic Wineries of British Columbia, owned by Mark Anthony Group, which includes brands such as White Claw Hard Seltzer in the U.S. Based in the Okanagan wine region, Beavis was responsible for driving business development in both domestic and international markets for the luxury wine brands.

COMPANY BRIEF Wild Idol (wildidol.com) is a premium, alcohol-free sparkling drink of the highest quality. Working with exceptional vineyards, Wild Idol uses winemaking techniques and a superior blend of grapes to produce the finest aromatics and the purest flavor. Vegan, gluten free and low calorie, its ingredients have never included alcohol, and the process is simplistic and pure. Production of Wild Idol is overseen by a team of English winemakers, with production and bottling currently undertaken in the Rheinhessen region of Germany. Wild Idol strives to use sustainable practices and environmentally-friendly materials in its production

wherever possible – from upcycled corks to recycled glass and natural soy printing. Wild Idol is also a member of 1 percent for the Planet – a global organization tackling the world's most pressing environmental issues. As a 1% member, Wild Idol has committed to donating 1 percent of its annual sales to environmental causes that drive true on-the-ground change.

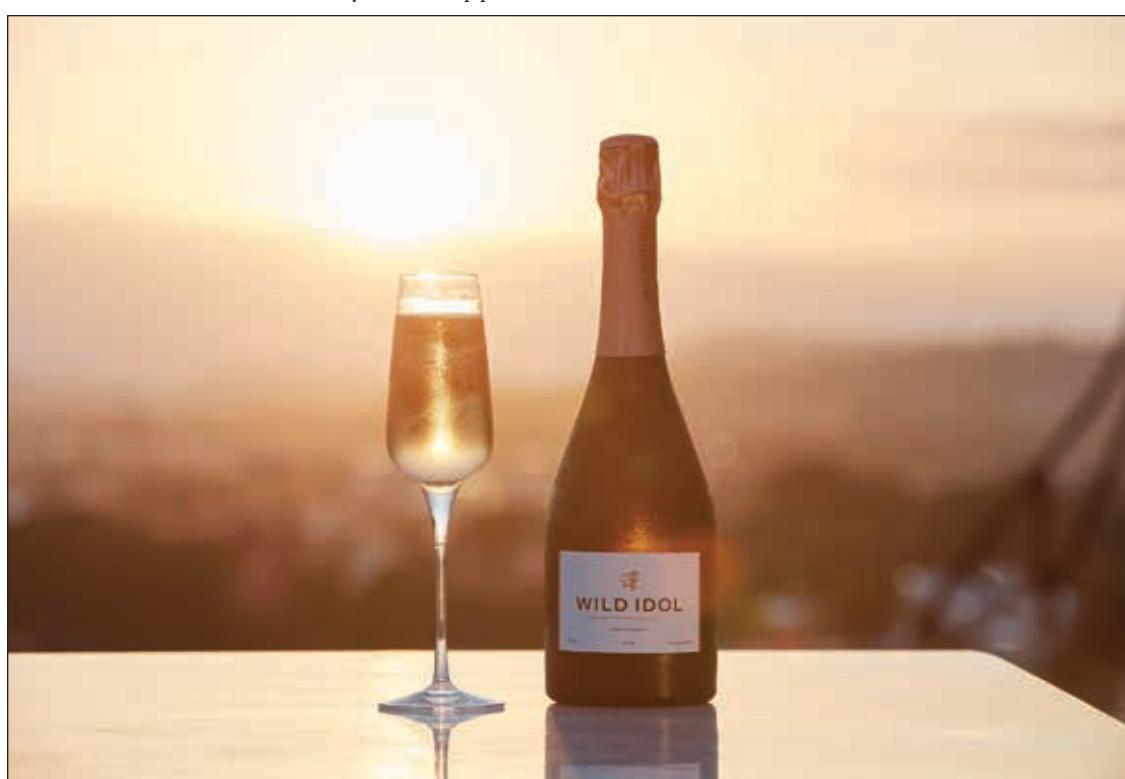
Will you discuss your career journey?

From a frustrated wannabe golf professional to a chef-in-training, my journey has been a huge adventure. During my time at chef school, I studied wine in the evenings and it wasn't long before I became completely captivated by the industry and its extraordinary appeal to millions of people. I actually entered the wine world at 19, technically too young to drink in some countries. I'll never forget winning an incentive trip to Napa Valley that same year, only to be told upon arrival, "Sorry, you can't taste."

My early career was shaped by a decade working at a large wholesale business that sold more than 2,000 different wines. With little formal framework of "what you're supposed

to know," I learned the hard way by selling, brand building, and understanding customers by rolling up my sleeves and figuring it out as I went. Sometimes, not knowing the rules allows you to break through barriers you might otherwise never challenge. The toughest lessons often are learned when you're faced with driving yourself and having to self-motivate in a tough environment. During that time, I studied for a business degree, specializing in marketing, another long-held passion. At 30, I joined Champagne Lanson (a true dream job) and spent the next 20 years immersed in the world of champagne. The last decade was dedicated to managing global markets, including leading Lanson's first major foray into the U.S.

At 49, I took myself to the other side of the world to work in the beautiful Okanagan Valley of British Columbia, a gem of a wine region. It allowed me to return to what I truly loved – the viticulture, the land, the people, and the privilege of helping bring the Iconic Wines of BC to the global stage. Then COVID hit. With my children stuck in the U.K., my priorities shifted, and I knew I needed to return to London.



Wild Idol naturally alcohol-free sparkling drinks (above and following page)



What was the vision for launching Wild Idol?

The vision for launching Wild Idol was simple yet ambitious: to produce the world's finest, naturally alcohol-free sparkling rosé and brut. I didn't want something artificially manipulated to mimic flavor. I wanted to take everything I had learned from Champagne and fine wine – craft, precision, authenticity – and apply it to produce the first-ever single-vintage, single-varietal, from-source "naturally alcohol-free sparkling."

At the time, the market for premium alcohol-free sparkling simply didn't exist. But I was becoming increasingly conscious of my own health, and I was surrounded by friends who couldn't drink, chose not to drink, or simply wanted to enjoy moments of celebration without the peer pressure to consume alcohol. That combination turned the idea into a genuine mission, to create something that had never been done before.

What excited you about the opportunity to lead Wild Idol, and made you feel it was the right fit?

I truly believe that in any career, special moments come along and you either seize them or they slip away. After 31 years in the industry, I felt this was a "now or never" moment. Start-ups are challenging at any age, but at 51, you don't always have the energy of youth.

What excited me most was the opportunity to create something that had never been done before – the challenge, the drive, the hunger, and the sheer dogged determination. I knew in my gut that Wild Idol was the right brand. Even at a time when the market didn't exist, I had an unwavering belief that we were building something meaningful, something that could make a positive impact for the greater good.

How do you define Wild Idol's mission?

Wild Idol's mission is to create the best "naturally alcohol-free sparkling" in the market, allowing people to celebrate without compromise or the pressure to drink. For me, it's about genuinely helping people enjoy life, being present, savoring the luxury of sharing bubbles during life's special moments, and feeling included regardless of their choice to drink. In our own small way, I think we're enhancing people's lives, and that's truly inspiring.

Will you provide an overview of Wild Idol's offerings?

At Wild Idol, we craft naturally alcohol-free sparkling rosé and white alternatives, made with the same care, precision and integrity you would expect from a fine wine or champagne house. Our focus is on purity and provenance: each release is single vintage, single varietal, and created without any alcohol ever

being introduced or removed. This allows us to preserve the natural aromatics, texture and balance of the fruit, delivering an experience that is vibrant, elegant and genuinely comparable to traditional sparkling wine, simply without the alcohol.

Our sparkling Rosé is beautifully expressive, with bright wild berry notes and a refined, dry finish, while our sparkling White offers crisp orchard fruit, delicate floral aromatics and a clean, lifted profile. We also create seasonal gifting editions which celebrate the craftsmanship behind the brand. This December, we released a limited one-month-only 750ml Twin Gift Pack, featuring one bottle each of our Rosé and White, accompanied by a complimentary candle.

How critical has it been to educate the market about Wild Idol as a naturally alcohol-free sparkling alternative to wine?

Education is absolutely essential in this space, but equally important is building a brand that customers can trust. We educate through sampling experiences and hosting events, but ultimately, people vote with their feet, or in this case, their palates. Our responsibility is to produce the best wine alternative possible, vintage after vintage, so that people know they can rely on our quality.

Quality is always our priority over quantity. We work with what nature gives us each year, which makes the natural element of our wines central to everything we do. Wild Idol is the only single-vintage, single-varietal, naturally alcohol-free sparkling on the market, and we are proud of that distinction.

Being a start-up has been a humbling and invaluable experience. It teaches you that there are no shortcuts when building legitimacy and a lasting legacy in the world.

How do you focus your efforts leading Wild Idol?

People, passion and purpose come to mind. Everything else is all part of the day job. I remain focused on never getting complacent and striving each day (not always easy), but at the same time we have a choice each day how we want to show up. As part of a small team, we all wear multiple hats, which means caring deeply about everything we do, pivoting when needed, and being obsessive about our brand and our clients. It's not easy, but the emotional reward of seeing our efforts come to life, and knowing we're making a difference, is incredibly fulfilling.

What are your priorities for Wild Idol as you look to the future?

Sensible growth – we have spent three years building the brand in the U.K. and in selected markets, and the next phase will be to work in the U.S. and I am thrilled to be coming back here after so many years. We will be looking to produce an ultra-premium version in the future, to show the versatility of naturally alcohol free and how the wine can age. Without ever having alcohol in it, we are building a new blueprint for the industry and as we see the customers change, their expectations are very high and so they should be. ●