

# WINERY TO VINEYARD SELF GUIDED TRAIL

Penn Croft Winery & Vineyard are located on the outskirts of Crondall Village and on the land of Penn Croft Farm.

Crondall is a village and large civil parish in the North East of Hampshire, England (in a similar location to the Crondall Hundred surveyed in the Domesday book of 1086). The village is on a gentle slope of the low western end of the North Downs range.

Penn Croft Farm owns and manages 540 hectares of arable land and woodland. The farm grows a variety of crops.

**Farming for the environment** - The Farm provides fields of naturally rich soil, ideal for the growth of grapes for winemaking. This is because of an innovative type of agriculture called Regenerative farming, which has been implemented here for the past 20 years. Regenerative farming is principally concerned with building carbon in the soil. Plants absorb carbon from the atmosphere through photosynthesis and convert it into carbohydrates and sugars which are deposited back into the earth. These plants eventually die and decay and their organic matter builds the humus of the soil. Carbon storage is a vital ecosystem service, and how we treat the soil dictates the efficacy of this process. Regenerative farming encourages carbon storage and soil health through three ways:

1. Minimum soil disturbance.
2. Providing natural cover for the soil at all times.
3. Using diversity of cropping and including animals if possible.

Tussocky grass is planted alongside arable fields to create a good environment for voles, field mice and insects, all of which also help barn owl numbers. Other areas will be planted with crops to provide wild bird food in the winter, and we also plant strips of wild flowers and a pollen and nectar mix to support the population of insects.

1. Winery & Wetlands
2. Penn Croft Farm
3. Sheep
4. Vineyard
5. Horses
6. Woodland



**DISTANCE**  
5.6 KILOMETRES

**ELEVATION GAIN**  
56 METRES

**DURATION**  
1 HOUR (APPROX.)

## WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR (SEASON DEPENDANT)

**Wetland Ponds** - It takes approximately 5 litres of water to make one litre of wine. Once used, the water becomes acidic and cannot go into the main drains.

Situated behind the winery, we have got three wetlands which are designed by Living Water Ecosystems Limited. We start by aerating the liquid in the big green storage tank and then filter the water through a biofilter made from straw bales. The water is then gravity-fed through the wetlands. There are 20 species of plants in each wetland, which are producing oxygen and will purify the water. By the time the water comes out of the third wetland, it's ready to flow through a pipe across the track to a willow coppice at the front of the winery. The willows help transpire the water back into the atmosphere or it soaks into the ground.

Our wetlands system means that no waste water leaves the site. We work with a basic principle that in nature there is no waste because one organism's waste is another's food. Inherent within this are concepts of nutrient balancing carrying capacity, completing and linking cycles and the food web.

**Wetland Pond Plants** - Sweet scented rush, marsh marigold, slender spiked sedge, meadowsweet, yellow flag, purple loosestrife, water mint, reed canary grass, water dock, common bulrush, lesser reedmace.

**Coppicing & Hedge Laying** - In Lee Wood you will see areas where the hazel has been coppiced. This is done in a 5/6 year rotation, which rejuvenates the woodland floor, providing different plants for bird food and nectar. Coppicing is sustainable and doesn't threaten the environment in any way. The coppiced hazel is split and woven into hurdle fencing or for natural hedge laying. The hurdles are sold over quite a wide area. Later in the walk, you will see some examples of hedge laying. The reason that we practice hedge laying is to thicken the base of the hedge making it more suitable as a habitat for hedgerow birds.

**Hedgerows**- Blackberries, elderflower, wild clematis, hazel, hops, blackthorn, spindle and others.

**Ground Animals** - Hares, rabbits, muntjac, roe deer, badgers, foxes, fallow deer, weasels.

**Birds** - 85 species have been recorded on the farm. Listed below are a few to look out for: yellow hammer, pheasants, grey English partridge, chiff chaff, plover, swift, house martins, swallows, goldfinch, chaffinch, buzzard, red kite, peregrine falcon. In the early evening you may see barn owls, and at Penn Croft you will be never be out of ear shot of a singing skylark!

**Crops** - Linseed, oil seed rape, wheat, barley, oats, beans, peas, ahi flower and grapes. At certain times of the year you will notice that fields have been planted with cover crops. This is a mix of species that improve the soil and creates a good environment for birds and insects.

**Wild Flowers** - Bluebells, primrose, cowslips, rocket cress, garlic mustard, woodland strawberry, carpet bugle, wood spurge, early purple orchid, wood anemone, hairy St. John wort periwinkle, common dogwood, wild basil, bladder campion, teasels.

**Bee Hives** - There are approximately 20 hives located around the farm, including the vineyard. They make the most delicious Crondall honey, which is available to purchase from our cellar door.

**Penn Croft Vineyard** - We believe this is one of the UK's first vineyards run on fully Regenerative practices. In 2018 we planted just over 9,000 vines by hand on 12 acres: Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Meunier and Bacchus. The field is south facing and sits on chalk and some clay cap. You will notice that between the vine rows we have an area where we can grow cover crops. These are different species that are planted to improve soil fertility and are then used as mulch around the base of the vines. We have deliberately kept the row widths wide to improve air flow and sunshine around the vines. You may also notice the unusual height of the trellis. This extra height is because we use a trellis system called Scott Henry. The Scott Henry system is designed to improve grape yields and quality in a high-capacity, cool climate site. The basic strategy of Scott Henry training is vertical canopy division with shoots being trained upward and downward. All of the above helps us reduce chemical use in the vineyard. The grass around the outside is deliberately left long for insects to colonise. We believe scruffy is good!

## PENN CROFT HAMPSHIRE ENGLAND

### WINERY TO VINEYARD SELF GUIDED TRAIL

This walk will take you through woodlands, open fields and past Penn Croft vineyard back to the winery.

#### DISTANCE

5.6 KILOMETRES / 3.5 MILES

#### ELEVATION GAIN

56 METRES

#### DURATION

1 HOUR (APPROX.)

