

Wines with Breakfast? Yes, and it's not just Champagne!

When we think “wine”, we usually picture lunch or dinner. But breakfast, especially on a proper Big Breakfast weekend, has its own kind of magic: slower mornings, a table full of favourites, and that rare feeling that you’re allowed to treat the first meal of the day like an occasion.

The good news is: breakfast and wine can work beautifully together. The secret is choosing wines that feel fresh, bright, and light on their feet, and pairing them with the right kind of breakfast.

Below are a few ideas from *Michele Longari IWA*, Sommelier at Hay Wines in Ledbury, to help you go beyond the obvious bottle of Champagne (though we’ll happily never discourage that).

Traditional Sparkling: the classic for a reason

Let’s start with the headline act. Champagne (or any high-quality traditional-method sparkling) works so well at breakfast because of one thing: acidity. That refreshing lift cuts through rich foods like butter, eggs, smoked fish and even sausages.

Perfect with: smoked salmon, eggs benedict, buttery pastries, or anything involving hollandaise.

Try: Champagne, English Sparkling Wine, Crémant (Loire, Alsace, Burgundy), Blanquette, Franciacorta.

Tip: go for a Brut style rather than something sweet, it’s cleaner and more food-friendly.

The “Brunch Fizz” upgrade: Prosecco, Cava & friends

If you want the celebratory feeling without the full Champagne seriousness, Prosecco and Cava are fantastic breakfast companions, especially for larger get-togethers.

Prosecco tends to be fruitier (think pear and apple), while Cava often leans more citrusy and savoury.

Perfect with: fruit salads, pastries, light egg dishes, granola bowls, and “buffet-style” breakfasts.

Try: Prosecco (extra dry can be great), Cava, or any Charmat Method sparkling wine with a good level of acidity and freshness.

Pét-Nat: relaxed, fun, and made for daytime

If Champagne is “black tie”, Pét-Nat (Pétillant Naturel) is “come as you are”. These naturally sparkling wines are often slightly cloudy, super refreshing, and generally lower in alcohol.

They’re brilliant if your breakfast is more “modern brunch” than “full English”.

Perfect with: avocado toast, breakfast tacos, veg-forward plates, and anything with herbs and fresh acidity.

Try: Pét-Nats made from semi-aromatic varieties, or local/lesser-known varieties.

Dry Riesling: the secret weapon with breakfast

This one surprises people... but it shouldn't! Dry Riesling is all about precision: citrus, green apple, incredible freshness, and often a gentle aromatic lift.

It's a dream with salty, smoky, or spicy breakfast elements, and it has the acidity to handle rich foods without feeling heavy.

Perfect with: smoked salmon and eggs, spicy shakshuka, or anything with chilli, herbs, or tangy sauces.

Try: dry German Riesling (look for "Trocken"), Alsace Riesling, or Austrian Riesling.

Sherry (Fino or Manzanilla): breakfast's most underrated match

If you're thinking "sherry at breakfast sounds odd", trust us, it's a revelation. Fino and Manzanilla are bone-dry, lightly salty, and incredibly refreshing. They love savoury food and pair beautifully with eggs and anything a little briny.

This is the sort of pairing that makes people stop mid-bite and go: "Wait... that works." Perfect with: omelettes, smoked fish, mushrooms, tomatoes, and tapas-style breakfasts.

Try: Fino or Manzanilla served well chilled (like white wine).

Light reds, slightly chilled: yes, even with a full English

Red wine at breakfast isn't for every morning, but for a Big Breakfast weekend, it can be surprisingly good if you choose the right style. The trick is low tannin, juicy fruit, and a light chill.

Think of it like the wine equivalent of a morning Bloody Mary: savoury, comforting, and a bit cheeky.

Perfect with: bacon, sausages, roasted tomatoes, mushrooms, black pudding (if that's your thing).

Try: Beaujolais (Gamay), lighter Pinot Noir, or slightly chilled Sicilian Frappato.

Off-dry sparkling or lightly sweet styles: pancakes, pastries & fruit

If breakfast is leaning towards the sweet side (pancakes, waffles, pain au chocolat, jam, fruit) a totally dry wine can feel a bit sharp. That's where a touch of sweetness becomes your friend.

Perfect with: pastries, fruit, pancakes, brioche, anything with maple syrup.

Try: Moscato d'Asti (low alcohol, gently sparkling), Demi-Sec Champagne (for the full celebration), or an off-dry aromatic white.

A few simple “rules” for breakfast wine

- Keep it fresh: acidity beats heaviness in the morning.
- Go easy on tannin: big, grippy reds can feel like too much.
- Chill matters: even light reds can benefit from 20 minutes in the fridge.
- Smaller pours work brilliantly... you're matching the mood, not committing to a “night out” at 10am!

Pop into Hay Wines (Ledbury) for Big Breakfast weekend picks

We love that Ledbury Food Group's Big Breakfast brings the town together, and we'd be delighted to help you choose a bottle that suits your version of breakfast, whether that's smoked salmon and eggs, a full English, or a stack of pancakes.

If you're in town for the Big Breakfast weekend (Friday 6th – Sunday 8th February), pop into Hay Wines in Ledbury and tell us breakfast you are planning to create, and we'll match the wine to the breakfast.