

# Interview with William and Kelsey Seymour, Earl and Countess of Yarmouth



St Maur is a hand-crafted premium elderflower liqueur from the Heart of England, made from responsibly sourced ingredients and flavours gathered in ancient family-owned woodlands. A versatile, award-winning drink, St Maur is perfect for sipping or mixing. A beautiful aperitif on its own and sublime in brunch and pre-dinner cocktails, any time of the year.

In just 18 months since its launch, St Maur has already won four awards - The Great Taste Award 2 Star rating; International Spirits Challenge Silver Award; The World Liqueur Awards' Best English Floral' and, most recently, Gold at Las Vegas Global Spirits Awards.



## What made you choose to start a business in the beverage industry?

You have always got to play with the hand you've been dealt, and for us, this was one of the best opportunities that presented itself. The stars aligned here. We see the world in terms of people and relationships, and we wanted something we could be personally associated with that has something of us in it.

That is why building a consumer business starting with a craft product had such appeal for us. We also wanted to create a brand that was going to work and which would have lots of potential. We want what we do to be authentic, and of course, we want to make an offer to consumers which we could differentiate.

If you are going to go into a consumer business, you need to make sure you have a good consumer product. We knew we had the makings of that when we first served the drink that became St Maur to guests at our wedding. It has been borne out subsequently by the awards we have won with our product.

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Serendipity pointed us towards a drinks business. And for a consumer brand, you need a great story to tell, and we really don't need to make ours up. Finally, the St Maur business enables us to bring together our individual strengths into a business partnership too. It's all there for us to mine.

## How do your values show up in the work you do?

We describe our purpose as offering our consumer a little drop of England's heart to share and enjoy, wherever she is in the world. We combine that purpose with a focus on "the triple bottom line": people - planet - profits, in that order.

As we are a family business, we can genuinely make sure we stick to the script and drive the business in the way we want. We don't have to answer to others outside the family. We set out to build a responsible business, and that feeds through even to the number of wild elderflowers we will pick from any one bush! We have a strong ethos, which finds its way into everything we do and try to do.



## What has been the biggest obstacle you've had to overcome?

It won't surprise anyone that we would put the pandemic on our list here. Of course, as a start-up business and as parents with two small children, us listing time as a major constraint won't be a surprise either!

Then there is uncertainty. As human beings, we are so deeply shocked and distressed to witness the tragedy unfolding in Eastern Europe. As business managers, there is also now, of course, a shock to our world that cannot but hit our economy, and the fall out will shape consumer habits and our market in ways we don't understand yet. Neither of us started this with a history in the drinks industry, so it has been a steep learning curve from the very start. That is set to continue for some time.

## How do you manage your time between family and business?

The very reason for being in business in the way we are is for family, but we fully recognise the need to keep a careful balance between the short and long-term goals that implies. It needs constant management, and we try to help this by reminding each other of why we are doing this, from time to time, to make sure we are not focusing on business to the detriment of the family.

Work-life balance is important for everyone, but it is especially important to bear in mind in a family business like ours. At the moment we work from home, in a beautiful part of the country, and we are very lucky in that regard. We hope that as the business grows, so too does our family-friendly work-life balance.



## How do you keep yourself motivated?

It has not been difficult up to now. It really has been fun to be involved in starting our own business from scratch. It is hard work and very demanding, but we know that everything we do is about building benefits for our family now and for the future. That is highly motivating in itself. For William especially, with the background he has, coming from one of the oldest families in England, the sense of building a legacy to be proud of also matters a lot.

## What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

We've started a new business and a young family. What is spare time? Doing this is not for the faint hearted! Joking aside, we do enjoy downtime. We are so privileged where we live, and there is always something to do on a farm.

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## Who or what inspires you?

Neither of us would wish to single out particular individuals. One of the expressions we have picked up on, though, and which we use in the business is a maxim attributed to Eleanor Roosevelt: "Make the best of what you have, when you have it, where you are." We are continually inspired by people we see doing just that. We even have a cocktail unique to St Maur called the "Can Do Cocktail." We made it with the Riding for the Disabled charity, whose mantra is "It's what you can do that counts." We'll buy that!

[www.drinkstmaur.com](http://www.drinkstmaur.com)

THE SPIRIT OF  
**ST. MAUR**

