

London's Most Famous Luxury Property Developer Invests in Nonalcoholic Wine

Nick Candy says he wants his Wild Idol brand to be the Rolls-Royce of NA booze.

By Sarah Rappaport

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Wild Idol and the rosé version. *Source: Wild Idol*

Luxury property tycoon Nick Candy, whose track record includes the pricey, celebrity-filled One Hyde Park, has announced that he's the founder of the two-year-old sparkling nonalcoholic wine label Wild Idol.

“Quite a lot of my friends don’t drink now,” says Candy, speaking to Bloomberg Pursuits exclusively from his Mayfair office. “And my wife also did a year off alcohol completely, so I wanted to create something which was truly at the top echelon of the space.” The goal, he says, was to craft a quality alternative for those who don’t want to imbibe. “I wanted to create the Rolls-Royce or Dom Pérignon of zero alcohol. That was the aim, and everything from the cork to the foil to the cage to the glass bottles is supposed to feel like that.”

Candy says he brings the same attention to detail to Wild Idol as he does to his high-end property projects. To do that, he enlisted Paul Beavis, the former UK and North America managing director of Champagne Lanson, as chief executive officer and brought in advisers such as Paul Walsh, who was CEO of drinks giant Diageo Plc for more than a decade, and James Blyth, the booze conglomerate’s former chairman.



A pour of Wild Idol, served at top hotels and restaurants. Source: Wild Idol

“When you look at the Champagne world, the top products are for the most part either owned or partnered with either LVMH or Diageo,” says Candy. “We wanted that expertise to make sure we are going in the right direction.” He notes that the market for nonalcoholic wine is in a “good place” at the moment and points out that LVMH bought a stake in nonalcohol wine competitor French Bloom in October. Superstar Kylie Minogue has also invested in alcohol-free sparkling wine, with her products sold in UK supermarkets.



Candy and his wife, Holly Valance. *Photographer: Hollie Adams/Bloomberg*

Wild Idol’s wine, which is bottled in Germany’s Rheinhessen region, is sold in two varieties, an alcohol-free sparkling white wine and a coral-pink alcohol-free sparkling rosé, both for £29.99 (\$38). Like traditional fizz, there’s a distinctive pop when the cork is disgorged and a profusion of soft bubbles when the wine is poured in the glass. The white has a fresh, crisp taste with apple notes; it’s made with Muller-Thurgau grape. The rosé is made with merlot and tastes of rhubarb and vanilla.

Candy says Wild Idol was launched in the UK in 2022, and two years on, has produced and sold around 150,000 bottles, with distributors in both the UK and the Middle East. Its being poured at hotels and restaurants such as Claridge's, Nobu, the Ivy and the Dorchester in London and Atlantis the Royal in Dubai. Candy, who's working on superluxury property projects across the Middle East, says Wild Idol has proved popular in the United Arab Emirates. "It works, because it's a zero-alcohol and not a low-alcohol product," he says. "If you're low-alcohol, a lot of people won't touch it in the region."

Next, Candy says, he's bringing his label stateside. "We want to be big in America, because obviously America's the king, but it's a big place to conquer." He plans to start in New York and in Miami, in properties where he has existing hotel relationships.

Candy plans to produce 250,000 bottles by the end of 2025, with more than a million bottles as a long-term goal.

"I'd like it to be the most premium zero-alcohol Champagne brand. Yes, I know I can't call it Champagne, but that's what I'd like it to be," he says.