

# Damon Lovell

Class of 2017

Sommelier, Viticulturist



## Damon's Story

Although it's already been five years, and he's based in the UK, Damon remains close to a core group of friends from St John's. From his high school years, he remembers rowing training, followed by rugby, coaching the juniors in water polo together with Joe Downey and starting the first St John's Lacrosse team. Summers were spent working for Schick Civil Constructions. But one of his lasting impressions was the fact that everyone got on with each other.

*""Boys will be boys..... Some of us would be sent out of class every now and then, but nobody disliked each other; we all got on."*

Damon wasn't really sure what he wanted to do after high school, but he knew he liked travelling, science, art and people. After discussing this with an external careers advisor, a pathway in viticulture crystallised as the favourite. He didn't even like wine back then, but it ticked all the boxes.



3 years at Lincoln University saw Damon graduate with a Bachelor of Viticulture and Oenology in 2022. During his study, he gained invaluable experience as a Vineyard Operator and Cellar Hand at vineyards in Marlborough and Canterbury. He speaks knowledgeably and passionately about the art of winemaking, the chemistry and the work involved in growing healthy grapes - and he now quite enjoys a Chardonnay, Burgundy style; or a red wine, Bordeaux style.

His career path has now led him to the UK. First to Denbies Wine Estate, a vineyard that grows a large variety of grapes and produces many different styles of wine. It has given him insights into natural ways of winemaking, and it's also introduced him to some amazing and passionate winemakers.

When we caught up online, Damon'd just finished his long shift as a Sommelier in one of London's Michelin-starred restaurants. This position, in a way, completes the viticulture journey, from growing the grape to being knowledgeable about food and wine pairing, the regions the wines come from and helping diners in their wine selection. The following day, he'll be at a wine expo in London, sampling wines from the renowned Burgundy region in France.

Where to next? Travels across Europe and the US are on the horizon. Damon's knowledge and experience in viticulture and oenology will allow him to work in wine regions along the way, such as the famed Napa Valley in California or the Tuscany and Veneto regions of Italy. We wish him all the best.

*""The St John's community is made up of such a diverse group of people from all walks of life. You learn a lot from everyone around you. It made me want to learn more about the world that's out there. ""*