



## Chase Cricket – Traditional bat-making techniques creating modern, high-performance cricket bats.

The Cricketer met Daniel Swaine, the owner and inspiration behind Chase Cricket at his workshop on Dummer Down Farm in the heart of the Hampshire countryside. As you walk into the workshop, you are surrounded by the traditional tools of the bat-maker, the aroma of machined willow and hundreds of cricket bats in varying stages of the manufacturing process. It's like walking into Aladdin's cave, were he a bat-maker.

Following a seven-year apprenticeship with the MOD, Dan qualified as a precision engineer, and has built most of the equipment and machinery in the workshop himself. His keen eye for detail and precision is also apparent in the quality and design of his bats. "Because our bats are all handmade each one is unique," explains Dan. "Yet we always maintain a consistent style, shape and uniformity that our customers expect."

Founded in 1996 by ex-Hampshire and England international Robin Smith, Dan joined as manager in 2005 and bought the company with his wife Julie in October 2007. "We seized the opportunity to buy the business and in doing so we've ensured that a traditional bat-maker continues to make English willow cricket bats in the UK in an ever-declining industry."

"There is of course the temptation to source finished bats from overseas, but we prefer to remain true to our core values and produce handmade products supporting British manufacturing, guaranteeing quality and customer satisfaction."

As you enter the farm, the first thing you notice is the

willow tree-lined driveway. "We planted our own willow in 2005 and in 2016 we felled our first two trees which were up to the correct diameter," Dan explains. "It is brilliant that we are able to offer our customers a product that was grown and manufactured right here where we stand."

Dan is very positive about the future of Chase and UK manufacturing. "Our company has seen steady growth year on year. As sales have increased we have been able to expand the business to keep up with demand and I am extremely positive about our future."

"Because we make our bats, we are in the fortunate position to be able to make bespoke designs for our customers, giving us an edge over many competitors. We understand that not everybody can find an 'off the shelf' bat that suits their playing style and other customers just enjoy that custom experience."

"We constantly re-grade and refine our bats through every stage of manufacture ensuring that we get the best from each cleft. This is a time-consuming process but one I believe is essential if our customers are going to own the perfect cricket bat."

Dan was also keen to show a selection of bats which were in the process of being repaired and refurbished. "We offer a comprehensive repairs service and we receive a lot of other manufacturers bats to repair or refurbish."

Chase welcomes anybody who wishes to visit and see the process first-hand to book an appointment with the workshop, you may end up walking out with a bat under your arm.



## CHASE

### Vortex

RRP: £250

Another hugely popular bat with our testers, from the now world-recognised brand from Hampshire. Jim and Guy were united in their praise, and Sinan was full of praise. "The middle was everywhere, with big edges," he said. Although Joe questioned the bat's heaviness, Nancy loved the simple design and said the ball "flies like a bullet". That completed an almost uniformly outstanding set of reviews.

**Weight:** 2lb 12oz  
**Edge width:** 36mm

**If it was a celebrity...**  
Al Pacino

