



Wiston Estate Rosé 2014, Traditional Method, West Sussex, England

Introduction

The beautiful family-run Wiston Estate is nestled in the heart of England's rolling South Downs in West Sussex. The Wiston Estate vineyard lies on an exceptional, south-facing chalk escarpment similar to Champagne, and planted to the classic grape varieties Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier.

Employing time-honoured methods Wiston produces sparkling wines of exceptional finesse and quality.

Background

Wiston Estate has been in the hands of the Goring family since 1743 and is presided over today by Harry and Pip Goring. The estate is managed by their son Richard and both he and his wife, Kirsty, are now involved in the day to day running of the vineyard and winery. It was Pip's long-held conviction that the estate held the potential to grow high quality grapes. The 16-acre vineyard, planted in 2006, was the fruit of her dream and tenacity. Wiston Estate is a family venture, small in scale, impressive in aspiration and unrelenting in pursuit of quality. Under the aegis of award-winning winemaker Dermot Sugrue, the tight-knit team spares no effort in the vineyard or winery.

As part of a larger agricultural estate with the utmost respect for nature, Wiston's vineyard is run according to a strict philosophy of sustainability. The team's pioneering efforts include the installation of solar panels at the winery as a source of renewable energy. Similarly their use of a Boisselet cultivator allows them to manage root and weed growth by returning them gently to the soil, rather than resorting to 'quick fix' chemical herbicides and synthetic fertilisers.

The vineyard is planted on an escarpment of pure chalk, similar to the renowned *Côte des Blancs* in Champagne. Wiston Estate's vintage wines are picked by hand and gently pressed in England's only traditional Coquard press, one of the few outside France's Champagne region. The tiny yields (20 hl per hectare) are critical to Wiston Estate's purity, focus and elegance, and create a new benchmark for English sparkling wine

Vineyard Information

Location: South Downs, West Sussex. A natural sun-trap, and protected from prevailing winds, the south-facing vineyard slope benefits from maximum sun exposure, promoting ripening.

Climate: Moderate rainfall, cool winters and temperate summers couple with cool breezes from the south coast, allowing the grapes to ripen slowly but fully and retain the crucial acidity and freshness vital for the production of high-quality sparkling wine.

Soils: Wiston's vineyard sits on an ancient chalk seam covered by a shallow layer (10-30 cm) of topsoil, an ideal growing medium. As in so many areas producing wines of outstanding quality, it is this chalky soil that is held to impart the complex flavours and structural elegance to the grapes and the wine itself.

Philosophy: Wiston Estate believes in sustainable viticulture, using natural methods to optimise health and balance in the vineyard. The vines require careful tending by hand, one by one, to ensure that the leaf canopy is optimised.

Harvest: carried out by hand by a team of skilled pickers in October 2014

Winemaking Details

Grape varieties: 68% Pinot Noir, 22% Pinot Meunier, 10% Chardonnay

Pressing: The grape varieties are pressed separately using a traditional, gentle Coquard basket press – as used in the Champagne region - to preserve the delicate fruit flavours and aromas in the juice.

Fermentation and maturation process: Two thirds of the juice was fermented in of 10 year old Burgundy barrels with selected yeasts. The barrels, which were sourced from Domaine Jacques Prieur in Puligny-Montrachet, are used to promote a gentle micro-oxygenation process, refining the texture and structure of the wine. There is no oak flavour imparted to the wine, due to the age of the barrels. The wine rested on lees in barrel for 8 months until the end of June 2015, bringing additional complexity and structure.

One third of the wine went through malolactic fermentation before the final assemblage of Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay were then blended together. Still red wine was added at this point before cold stabilisation and filtration. The fact that two thirds did not go through malolactic fermentation has given this wine a natural freshness and latent energy. Yeast and nutrients were added (*liqueur de tirage*) for the secondary fermentation in bottle.

The wine was then kept on its side, under crown cap (*sur lattes*) at cool 9-11 degree temperatures for over 18 months. During this time the wine matured and took on flavour and structure through the process of autolysis. Autolysis is one of the crucial processes in the production of high quality sparkling wines, imparting a unique combination of complex flavours and textural finesse. Current bottles were riddled and disgorged in March 2017. To maximise the wonderfully vivacious character of this wine a dosage of 10g/l was added. A further 14 months' ageing on cork took place prior to release to allow the flavours to marry.

Tasting Note

This is a fruit forward wine which displays rich, spicy notes of morello cherry, redcurrant, cranberry, Seville orange, sweet nutmeg spice and toasted walnuts. Extraordinarily complex, there is great texture and elegance to this wine due to its fermentation and ageing in oak barrels. The fuller body makes it an ideal pairing for game and lighter red meats. It will age very well but this is a wine that is already brimming with individual personality and so is excellent to drink now.

“Exceptional English fizz. Winemaker Dermot Sugrue (who I’m dubbing ‘The Wiston Piston’) here crafts the one to win all hearts with.” **‘Wine of the Week’ Olly Smith, Event Magazine 11th February 2018**

“One of my all-time favourite English Sparkling Wines, it doesn’t get much better than this. There’s ripe notes of peaches, raspberries and a dollop of cream that make me want to re-visit time and time again.” **Adrian Smith, The Independent February 2018**

“A wine clearly at ease with itself, displaying beautiful balance and a vinous nose, delicate and understated. The finish is surprisingly long, longer than the mid-palate suggests, displaying gentle fruit, elegance and finesse.” **Richard Bampfield MW**

“Evocative redcurrant notes play on the nose. They become more intense on the palate where lively fizz lets them mix with lemon and pink grapefruit zestiness. This wine is lively and fresh but the exuberant surface is supported by a firm and taut structure of subtle autolysis that provides the perfect backdrop for all the tart, refreshing berry fruit. It offers freshness,

joy and verve in one tidy, neat package. Lovely now, it will develop.” **Anne Kriebehl MW**, Wine Enthusiast December 2017

“Soaring and bright as a pink meteorite, a twist of spice and a savoury flourish round out this fine fizz of superlative character.” **Olly Smith**, Three Wine Men November 2019