



Wiston Brut NV (Non-Vintage), 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. 2014 saw the launch of their first non-vintage sparkling wine, which winemaker Dermot Sugrue has been working on since 2009 – the Wiston Estate Brut NV.

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 (15 hl per hectare) are critical to Wiston Estate's purity, focus and elegance, and creating 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 (10-30cm) 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: Hand-harvested by a team of skilled pickers, over 2 weeks usually mid-late October.

Winemaking Details

Grape varieties: 34% Chardonnay, 33% Pinot Noir, 33% Pinot Meunier

Pressing: Grape varieties are pressed separately in whole bunches using a traditional, gentle Coquard basket press (as used in the Champagne region) to preserve the delicate fruit flavours and aromas in the juice. The current Brut NV is largely from grapes harvested in 2014 with reserves from 2009 and 2013.

Fermentation and maturation process: The juice was fermented entirely in stainless steel tanks. Each component of the final assemblage wine went through malolactic fermentation and was allowed to rest on its lees prior to bottling in 2015.

After blending, cold stabilisation and bottling (*tirage*), the wine underwent a slow secondary fermentation and was then kept on its side, under crown cap (*sur lattes*) at cool 9-11 degree temperatures for 3 ½ years, while it 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 (it is worth noting that Champagne must spend only 15 months on its lees). Time spent on lees is one of the most important factors in determining quality. The bottles were riddled and disgorged in the autumn of 2018. To preserve the wine's natural poise and balance, and allow the wines naturally elegant fruit-driven mid-palette to emerge, a dosage of only 8g/l was required to complete the wine.

Tasting Note

Wiston Brut NV is a refreshing, elegant and complete sparkling wine, with a fine complex finish that combines youthful purity of crisp green apples and ripe lemons with richer, mature characters from extended lees-aging. Made from a blend of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier in equal parts, this beautifully balanced wine is a fantastic expression of our house style.

Used by Her Majesty The Queen in 2015 to launch P&O's Britannia cruise liner:

"I selected Wiston Estate to launch Britannia thanks to its impeccable quality and for its poise between modernity and tradition. Wiston stands for passion and pride as a technically masterful English sparkling wine producer since 2006 with heritage as a farming estate stretching back to 1743. But the main reason is because its bubbly is irresistibly delicious!" **Olly Smith**

"So pure!" **Richard Juhlin**, Decanter World Wine Awards Regional Chairman, 2016

"With the talented Dermot Sugrue at the winemaking helm, West Sussex's Wiston Estate has surged to the front of the increasingly competitive English fizz pack, this non-vintage blend showcasing a super-dry, incisive, multi-layered house style." **David Williams, The Guardian June 2017**

"A cuvée of Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay made on the South Downs by Irish winemaker, Dermot Sugrue, this is a complex, toasty, savoury fizz with fine bubbles, lots of yeasty, bready autolysis and a bone dry, tapering finish." **Tim Atkin MW, TimAtkin.com**

"Tremendous zingy acidity proudly cutting through the restrained but soothing, creamy yeastiness. Long, cream and apples finish. Very English style." **International Wine Challenge 2017**

Awards

Gold at the International Wine Challenge 2017