



Wiston Rosé NV, 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 with 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 (15 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, over 2 weeks usually mid-late October.

Winemaking Details

Grape varieties: 96% Chardonnay, 4% Pinot Noir

Vineyards: Wiston Estate Vineyard, Storrington Priory Vineyard.

Pressing: The current Rosé NV is largely from grapes harvested and pressed in 2014 with reserves from 2009 and 2013. The Chardonnay was pressed 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 Pinot Noir was crushed and destemmed, and after a brief cold soak was fermented on its skins to achieve good colour and fruit character. Fermentation was short and quick to avoid extraction of tannins and to gain as much colour and fruit intensity as possible.

Fermentation & 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 July 2015, bringing additional complexity and structure.

Ageing & disgorging: 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 almost 3 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). The bottles from our current release of our Rosé NV were riddled and disgorged in March 2018. To preserve the wine's natural poise and balance a dosage of 10g/l was required to complete the wine.

Given how brilliant the growing conditions were in 2014, astonishingly just 4% of Pinot Noir red wine was required to reach our desired level of colour.

Tasting Notes

Wiston Rosé NV captures the essence of summer, with fragrant notes of rhubarb, raspberry, strawberry, redcurrant, wild roses, lemon zest and a touch of sherbet on the finish. Underlying all of this is a backbone of crushed oyster shells, which reflects the pure chalk terroir where the vines are grown. It is superbly elegant with tiny, persistent bubbles and a refreshing acidity that makes one go back for more.