



Wiston Estate Blanc de Noirs 2010, 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 a sparkling wine of exceptional finesse and quality.

2010 was a benchmark year at Wiston: a vintage of ideal balance between yield and ripeness of fruit.

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 in October 2010.

Winemaking Details

Grape varieties: 100% Pinot Noir from Burgundy clones, planted in Wiston Estate's vineyard. These clones were chosen for their smaller grapes and resulting higher level of maturity.

Pressing: The grapes were pressed in a traditional, gentle Coquard basket press – as used in the Champagne region - to preserve the delicate fruit flavours and aromas in the juice. They are pressed as whole bunches.

Fermentation and maturation process: 100% of the grapes were fermented in a mixture of 5 and 6 year old Burgundy oak barrels with selected yeasts. Barrels are used to promote a gentle micro-oxygenation process, refining the mouthfeel and structure of the wine; there is no oak flavour imparted to the wine, due to the age of the barrels. The wine is rested on its lees for 9 months, bringing additional complexity of structure.

Due to the ideal ripeness of the fruit malolactic fermentation was blocked leaving the wine with natural malic 'energy'. This not only brought verve and focus to the final blend but also gives the wine fantastic ageing potential.

Bottling took place in July 2011, where the yeast and nutrients were added (*liqueur de tirage*) for the secondary fermentation in bottle.

The wine underwent a slow secondary fermentation and was kept on its side, under crown cap (*sur lattes*) at cool 11 degree temperatures for 5 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 compared to Wiston's goal of 3-5 years).

Current bottles were riddled and disgorged towards in July 2016. To preserve the wine's natural poise and balance, dosage was restrained, with only 9g/l required to complete the wine (NB: compare this to the standard Champagne 'Brut' dosage: typically 12g/l). A further 1 year's ageing in the cellar took place prior to release, to allow the flavours to marry.

Tasting Note

Made from 100% barrel-fermented Pinot Noir and aged on its lees for 5 years, with a further year in cellar before release. This very special, limited edition Blanc de Noirs 2010 is a favourite of ours. Coming from a benchmark year at Wiston, this rich and complex single vineyard wine is brimming with nectarines, strawberries and rhubarb, overlaid with delicious brioche, toasted hazelnut and savoury mineral notes. With its persistent stream of tiny bubbles and a long, fruit-laden finish, we're very excited about this release.

"Tangy, focused and complex, this is fine, bready and long, with subtle red fruits and a mouth-watering finish." **Tim Atkin MW** Three Wine Men, May 2018

“The 2010 Blanc de Noirs from Wiston, which was disgorged November 2018, consists of 100% barrel-fermented Pinot Noir. It has a lovely nose of strawberry, grilled walnuts and just a touch of honeycomb, maturity imparting a subtle honeyed aspect that is only revealed with aeration. The palate is well balanced with a lovely, fresh, slightly honeyed opening, joined by orange pith and mandarin notes later on. Lovely weight and balance. The finish is harmonious and persistent, with a dab of dried honey and orange zest lingering on the aftertaste. Wonderful.” **Neal Martin**, Vinous July 2020

“This makes every bit of me tingle. Bring me a slice of champion cheese and I'm in heaven!” **Olly Smith** Three Wine Men, May 2018

“Cream, dairy, honey and ripe apple with a touch of spice – this is full of flavour and substance with delicious maturity showing on the finish – mushroom, forest floor and cereal. Still going strong, and should age for many more years.” **Richard Hemming MW**, Purple Pages of JancisRobinson.com

“What is there not to love about this wine? The stunning black and gold label oozes opulence, matching the amber gold nectar that sits inside the bottle waiting patiently for release.

The bubbles on this are fine and so very persistent, lifting the elegant aromas of toasted hazelnut, lemon zest with hints of fresh red berries and wild strawberries.

To taste, this wine is a masterclass in balance. It's refined and demure like a vintage Grand Marques Champagne, paired with that driving English acidity that gives the wine huge presence and freshness.

[...] this may just be [Dermot's] best wine to date, especially in the eyes of lovers of Pinot-based sparkling wines. A must try!” **John Mobbs** [Great British Wine](#), December 2017

Awards

Most Outstanding Blanc de Noirs in the WineGB Awards 2018

Top Sparkling Wine in the WineGB Awards 2018

Supreme Champion 2018 in the WineGB Awards 2018

Gold Medal in The Drinks Business Global Sparkling Masters 2018