



## Wiston Estate Cuvée Brut 2013, 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.

### 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, 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:** carried out by hand by a team of skilled pickers from 18<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

### Winemaking Details

**Grape varieties:** 33% Chardonnay, 47% Pinot Noir, 20% Pinot Meunier

**Pressing:** The grape varieties were 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. They are pressed as whole bunches.

**Fermentation & maturation process:** The juice was fermented separately in a mixture of average 10-year old Burgundy 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 several months until springtime, bringing additional complexity of structure. The Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier were then blended together and put through malolactic fermentation to soften their natural acidities. Yeast and nutrients were then added (*liqueur de tirage*) for the secondary fermentation in bottle. Bottling took place in July 2014.

**Ageing & disgorging:** The wine underwent a slow secondary fermentation and was kept on its side, under crown cap (*sur lattes*) at cool 11 degree temperatures for 36 months, 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).

Time spent on lees is arguably the most important factor in determining quality. The bottles were riddled, then the first disgorgement took place towards the end of 2016. To preserve the wine's natural poise and balance, dosage was restrained, with only 8g/l required to complete the wine (NB: compare this to the standard Champagne 'Brut' dosage, typically 12g/l). A further 6 months' ageing on cork took place prior to release, to allow the flavours to marry.

### Tasting Note

Refreshing and fine, with the fragrance and fruit of an English orchard, the 2013 displays a more opulent expression of Wiston's Cuvée Brut style. With impressive depth, its filigree texture retains Wiston's signature precision and elegance, that gives more than a nod to French bone structure. A beautifully focused wine with fantastic ageing potential.

*"Pale gold with a hint of baked apples on the nose, even a light note of apricots. Very fine mousse, impressive fruit intensity but still with perfect balance between freshness and depth of fruit. Red apple flavours on the finish, crunchy like a crisp apple. Lots of pleasure and more fruit than I expected, certainly more than a typical champagne. I went back to this on the second and third days and it was holding up amazingly well. Clearly it was a bit less fizzy but it was still so fresh and bright, showing more richness and almost a honeyed character. I increased my score I was so impressed by the way it held up and changed after opening."* **17.5 Points Julia Harding MW**, Purple Pages of Jancis Robinson.com April 2017

*"The 2013 Cuvée Brut is a blend of 47% Pinot Noir, 33% Chardonnay and 20% Pinot Meunier that is 100% fermented in oak barrels. It has a clean and precise bouquet with scents of walnut, smoke and a touch of sea spray, the latter becoming more accentuated with time in the glass. The palate is fresh on the entry with a tang of ginger. This has impressive weight and sense of intent. It fans out nicely on the finish with a slight nettle-like note on the aftertaste. This is excellent!"* **92 Points Neal Martin, The Wine Advocate** June 2017

*“From the chalky soils of the South Downs, this is a lovely wine with ripe citrus and pear fruit with some apple notes. The brisk acidity is countered by a hint of sweetness on the finish. Lemony and linear, this is really serious.”* **Jamie Goode**, Sunday Express June 2017

*“Made by talented Dermot Sugrue, whose wines get better and better, using grapes grown on the South Downs, this white sparkling wine is a pinot noir-based blend (47%) with chardonnay (33%) and pinot meunier (20%). Like all Sugrue’s wines it has taut definition and a lively tang but there are also some lovely, warmer, honeyed notes, too.”* **Victoria Moore**, [The Telegraph February 2018](#)

*“This is huge news - a future ICON for English fizz. Rich, poised, electrifying.”* **Olly Smith**

*“Mmm, Dermot the wild Irish wine wizard has weaved magic spells with this deep, thoughtful, spice and brioche crust beauty.”* **Oz Clarke**

#### **Awards:**

The Platinum Medal for **Best UK Sparkling Wine - Decanter World Wine Awards 2017** (Came 1<sup>st</sup> out of 136 English & Welsh wines entered.)

**English Sparkling Wine Trophy** from the **International Wine & Spirit Competition 2017**

*“Rich and creamy style, with lovely savoury notes from development. Composed and elegant with complex notes of brioche fruit and a long finish, delightful!”* **IWSC 2017 Tasting Panel**