

Stopham Estate,
Pinot Gris 2018
West Sussex, Southern England, England



PRODUCER

"Precision, Passion, Craft and Sustainability" is the apt motto of Simon Woodhead's, Stopham Estate. Having begun his career as an engineer, designing parts for Formula One racing cars, Simon discovered a passion for wine while living in Spain and in 2005 he enrolled at Plumpton College to study winemaking. In 2007 Simon planted six hectares of vines, predominantly Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc, at Stopham Estate, near Pulborough West Sussex. The estate is known locally for its ancient buildings that were recorded in the Domesday Book, as well as the swans that swim the River Arun, the banks of which form the lower boundary to the vineyards. Their small winery is in a converted barn on the estate that Simon leases from the owners, the Barttelot family.

VINEYARDS

The main challenges in the vineyard are deer, which roam the parkland (meaning Simon's first job was to fence the vineyard to protect the vines from damage) and, unsurprisingly, the weather. Simon practises sustainable farming. This is helped by the south-facing vineyards, which maximise sun exposure and ripening, and the proximity of the Stopham farm animals, which provide copious amounts of organic fertiliser to boost the sandy soils. Grapes were harvested by hand.

VINTAGE

The 2018 vintage was a perfect year for English Wine. The intense cold brought on by the "Beast from the East" delayed the growing season so any early frost damage was avoided. This was coupled with the unusually warm and sunny conditions throughout the summer enabled the fruit to ripen with out having to rush the harvest.

VINIFICATION

The grapes were pressed directly on entering the winery and there was no skin contact. They were fermented in stainless-steel tanks under strict temperature control. Fermentation was stopped prematurely to obtain the perfect level of sweetness. As expected from highly aromatic varieties, there was no malolactic fermentation. Storage was on the fine lees until early summer. The wine is closed with Stelvin Luxe Plus to preserve the impeccable purity of fruit.

TASTING NOTES

The Pinot Gris is off-dry and pale lemon in colour, with aromatic peach and pear fruit alongside the floral character on the nose. On the palate, it has excellent balance with crisp acidity. It is full in bodied, with plenty of juicy fruit intensity, but is refreshing and long, with a lively citrus and stone-fruit finish.

Grape Varieties	90% Pinot Gris 10% Bacchus
Winemaker	Simon Woodhead
Closure	Stelvin Lux
ABV	11.5%
Residual Sugar	7g/L
Acidity	8g/L
Wine pH	3.11