Product specification for Sussex

Demarcation: East and West Sussex

PDO GB number: W0006

1. Applicant(s)

Name: Sussex Wine Producers (SWP) -spokesperson Mark Driver

Address: Rathfinny Wine Estate

Alfriston

East Sussex

BN26 5TU

England

Telephone: 01323 871031

Email: info@rathfinnyestate.com

2. Country to which the demarcated area belongs

Great Britain

3. Details of protection

3.1 Name of product to be registered

'Sussex'

3.2 Equivalent name(s)

'Sussex' Sparkling, 'Sussex' Still, 'Sussex' Origin

3.3 Geographical indication type

Protected designation of origin (PDO)

4. Type of product

Wine

5. Category of the grapevine products:

'Sussex' sparkling wine

Traditional method quality sparkling wine (as defined by Retained (EU) Regulations 1308/2013, 2019/934, 2019/935, 2019/33 and 2019/34 as amended)

'Sussex' still wine

Quality still wine (as defined by Retained (EU) Regulation 1308/2013 as amended)

6. Description of the wine(s)

'Sussex' sparkling wine is a traditional method quality sparkling white, rosé and red wine made from classic sparkling wine grape varieties grown within the administrative boundaries of the counties of East and West Sussex.

'Sussex' still wine is made from grapes grown within the administrative boundaries of the counties of East and West Sussex.

This particular terroir produces a wide selection of mainly light (low alcohol) still wines form crisp dry whites to fruity red wines and elegant rosé wines.

Sussex has a long history of growing grapes and the still wine producers within Sussex have won many awards for their still wines both in the UK and in international competitions.

Both wines are made and finished within the same boundaries.

6.1. Analytical characteristics

'Sussex' sparkling wine

i. Actual Alcoholic Strengths: a minimum of 11%

ii. Reducing Sugars: no set parameters

iii. Total Acidity: a minimum of 5.5 grams per litre expressed as tartaric acid.

iv. Volatile Acidity: a maximum of 0.7 grams per litre (expressed as acetic acid) for each bottled white or rosé wine.

v. Total Sulphur Dioxide: the maximum is 150 mg per litre.

vi. Copper: a maximum of 0.5mg/l

vii. Iron: a maximum of 6mg/l

viii. Stability: no crystal deposits when held at -2C for 36 hours.

ix. Pressure: not less than 3.5 bars when measured at 20C*.

Note *: Half-bottle to Magnum (1.5 litres) the secondary fermentation must take place in the same bottle and same pressure rules apply. Smaller and larger bottles must meet retained (EU) requirements for traditional method quality sparkling wine.

'Sussex' still wine

i. Minimum alcoholic strength of 10%.

ii. Reducing Sugars: no set parameters.

iii. Total Acidity: minimum of 5g/l for white and rosé wine and 4g/l for still red expressed as tartaric acid.

iv. Volatile Acidity: a maximum of 0.7 grams per litre (expressed as acetic acid) for each bottled white, red or rosé wine.

v. Total Sulphur Dioxide: The maximum Total Sulphur Dioxide -

- For wines with residual sugar below 5g per litre - Red 150mg/l, White & Rosé 175mg/l
- For wine with residual sugar above 5g but below 45g per litre - Red 175mg/l, White & Rosé 200mg/l
- For wine with residual sugar above 45g per litre - 250mg/l

vi. Free Sulphur Dioxide: Bottled at a minimum of 15mg/l; maximum of 40mg/l for dry wines as defined in retained (EU) Regulations as amended.

vii. Copper: a maximum of 0.5mg/l.

viii. Iron: a maximum of 6mg/l.

ix. Cold Stability: no crystal deposits when held at -2C for 36 hours.

x. Protein stability: The wine must remain unchanged in appearance after being held at 70°C for 30 minutes and subsequently cooled to 20°C.

xi. Sterility: There must be no indication of yeast or bacteria liable to cause spoilage of the wine.

6.2 Organoleptic characteristics

'Sussex' sparkling wine

Visual appearance: For chardonnay dominant blends, the colour can range from light lemon or pale golden, through to deep golden hues, depending on the age of the wine. For pinot blends the colour can range from pale gold or honey to deep golden hues that are more common, depending on the age of the wine. Rosé wines range from a blush (rose petal) hue to a stronger salmon pink, sometimes with a slight golden hue for wines with more age. Red wines will be from light red to dark mostly pale ruby / violet through to mid ruby / violet and purple red hues.

All the wines will be clear and free from visible haze and sediment.

Aroma and Taste: crisp lemon citrus and green apple acidity from the chardonnays, while the pinots can have a more earthy mix of red berry and baked apple flavours. The longer on-lees bottle aging produces wines with developed autolytic notes of brioche, fresh toast, melon, baked brioche and honey aromas on the nose and palate. Sparkling reds have soft tannins and hints of red and black fruits, leather, juicy plums and wild berry on the palate.

All the wines will demonstrate a fine and persistent mousse, synonymous with ‘Traditional Method’ sparkling wine.

'Sussex' still wine

Visual appearance: Mostly pale yellow or lime through to pale golden for the white wines. Rosé wines can be blush - pale pink, rose petal, wild strawberry and pale through to mid salmon; with the red’s appearing mostly pale ruby / violet through to mid ruby / violet and purple red hues.

The wine will be free from visible haze and sediment and clear to the observer.

Aroma & Taste: Characteristics such as lemon, lime, elderflower and other floral notes, apple, pear and gooseberry strongly apparent in the white wines. Rosé wines can be delicate and floral with hints of white flowers, rose petals, melon and strawberry. Reds will generally be lighter in style with soft tannins and hints of red and black fruits, leather, juicy plums and wild berry on the palate.

6.3 Organoleptic testing

'Sussex' sparkling wine

Prior to bottling: Each blended wine, or cuvée, of Sussex sparkling wine must be analysed by an accredited organization (defined in section 13 D below) prior to bottling. Two sample bottles of this wine will be kept for comparison to the finished wine as the need arises. The winemaker must keep records and must be in possession of the samples for each day’s bottling until PDO status is granted.

Post-disgorgement: Prior to release, all Sussex sparkling wines must be tested by the Scheme Manager (Corkwise, Campden BRI), who will carry out a qualitative assessment and laboratory test:

Qualitative assessment: (To be carried out by a panel, organised and certified as independent and competent by the Scheme Manager)

In order to pass quality status each wine must pass all 4 sections and achieve a grand total of 12 or more (out of 20).

- Colour / Clarity – score out of 3 (require a score of 2 or more to pass)
- Bubble characteristics including mousse / longevity – score out of 3 (2 to pass as above)
- Nose – score out of 7 (4 to pass)
- Palate including overall balance – score out of 7 (4 to pass)

Laboratory analysis:

All finished wine must have a laboratory analysis carried out by the Scheme Manager, that is detailed enough to show that the wine meets the required standards both of the Sussex sparkling wine PDO and the UK standards for traditional method quality sparkling wine.

Rejected wine: A consultant, chosen by the winemaker, will review any wine rejected and remedial action may be suggested. If the wine is rejected for a second time the winery

must not dispose of the wine (finished or unfinished) in any way that could jeopardise the Sussex sparkling wine name.

'Sussex' still wine

Each 'Sussex' still wine will also be subject to an organoleptic test, by the Scheme Manager, Camden BRI, who will carry out a Qualitative Assessment on each still wine:

In order to pass quality status each wine must pass all 3 sections and achieve a grand total of 12 or more (out of 20).

- Colour and Clarity - score out of 3 (requires score of 2 or more to pass)
- Nose - score out of 7 (requires score of 4 or more to pass)
- Palate (Taste including overall balance) - score out of 10 (requires 6 or more to pass)

Rejected Wines: A consultant, chosen by the winemaker, will review any wine rejected and remedial action may be suggested. If the wine continues to be rejected the winery must not dispose of the wine (finished or unfinished) in any way that could jeopardise the 'Sussex' Still wine name.

7. Method(s) of production

7.1 Oenological practices

'Sussex' sparkling wine

Minimum permitted sugar levels at harvest: Grapes, from the vineyard as a whole, must have a combined minimum natural alcohol of 8% (62o Oeschle,15.0 Brix), with no single grape parcel below 7.5%.

Vintage declaration: 85% of the grapes used to make Sussex sparkling wine must be of the nominated year of any vintage.

Single variety wines:

Must contain at least 90% of the stated variety.

Blanc de Blancs will contain at least 90% Chardonnay.

Blanc de Noirs will similarly contain no less than 90% as a combination of either Pinot Noir and/or Pinot Meunier.

Pressing: The pressing will be of whole bunches only, except for Rosé and Red, which may be made from wine made from partially crushed destemmed grapes.

Note* – except in vintages when a mechanical harvesting dispensation is granted - see section 7.2

Maximum yield: of the must, before enrichment, is 80hl/ha measured over the whole vineyard.

Enrichment: The process of enrichment shall not increase total alcoholic strength by more than 3% volume. In exceptional years, enrichment up to 3.5% by volume may be authorised. The actual alcoholic strength of the finished enriched wine shall not be less than 10% ABV.

Vinification: In addition to the rules specified above and otherwise by the Sussex Wine Producers (SWP), the wines must meet the minimum standards as specified by the legislation in force for traditional method quality sparkling wine.

Malolactic fermentation: Will be at the discretion of the winemaker.

Tirage: The total alcoholic strength of each cuvée intended for preparation shall not be less than 10% vol.

The addition of tirage liqueur may not cause an increase in the total alcoholic strength of the cuvée of more than 1.5% vol. This is measured by calculating the difference between the total alcoholic strength of the cuvée and the total alcoholic strength of the Sussex sparkling wine before any expedition liqueur is added.

The tirage liqueur used for the production of Sussex sparkling wine may contain only:

- Sucrose
- Concentrated grape must
- Rectified Concentrated Grape Must (RCGM or MCR)
- Grape must or partially fermented grape must
- Wine

Any wine used must be sourced from the same Protected Designated Origin as the cuvée to which it is added.

Tirage may be done by the winery or by a bottling unit.

Bottle: The choice of bottle is at the discretion of the winery (but must comply with UK Regulations as amended).

Note: At bottling, 2 bottles of cuvée, plus 2 bottles of each separate days bottling must be kept (until PDO status granted) and indelibly marked for traceability.

Maturation: The minimum time a Sussex sparkling wine must stay in the bottle prior to release is 15 months*.

(Note*: Of this time there must be a minimum of 12 months on tirage lees, in which case the wine must have a further 3 months post disgorgement time to make up the 15 months.)

Disgorgement: The practice used for disgorgement must be carried out in accordance with EU Regulations, as amended, that fulfils the traditional method quality sparkling wine definition.

Expedition Liqueur: is at the discretion of the winery within the regulations then in force. Any grape must or wine used must be sourced from the same Protected Designated Origin as the cuvée to which it is added.

'Sussex' still wine

Minimum natural alcoholic strength: The minimum natural alcoholic strength shall not be less than 8% before enrichment.

Enrichment: The process of enrichment shall not increase total alcoholic strength by more than 3% volume. In exceptional years, enrichment up to 3.5% by volume may be authorised. The actual alcoholic strength of the finished enriched wine shall not be less than 10% ABV.

Acidification, De-acidification: The conditions and limits on acidification/de-acidification are those laid down for the production of wine:

- De-acidification of fresh grapes, grape must, grape must in fermentation and new wine still in fermentation is permitted.
- De-acidification of wines is permitted only up to a limit of 1g/l expressed as tartaric acid.
- Acidification is not allowed, but in exceptional years and at the discretion of the Commission this may be authorised.

Sweetening: Sweetening after fermentation is a separate process from enrichment. The total alcoholic strength of the wine can be raised by sweetening by up to 4% volume, subject to a limit of 13.5% for enriched wines.

Sweetening must conform to the conditions of Annex I D, of Regulation 2019/934 concerning the production of Wine and must take place within the PDO region. The sweet-reserve used shall be limited to grape must, concentrated grape must or rectified concentrated grape must which, with the exception of rectified concentrated grape must (RCGM or CGM), shall originate in the same PDO as the wine being sweetened.

7.2 Viticulture practices

'Sussex' sparkling wine

Permitted Grape Vine Varieties: Sussex sparkling wine shall be made from the following grape varieties:

Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier, Arbanne, Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Petit Meslier and Pinot Noir Précoce.

The vineyard owner must keep detailed records of yield and size of each parcel of vineyard land and make those available for inspection by Wine Standards and the Scheme Manager to confirm PDO status.

Trellising and training: Will be at the discretion of the vineyard owner.

Harvest yields: Under normal conditions the maximum harvest yield shall be 12 tonnes per hectare.

The absolute maximum harvest yield is 14.0 tonnes per hectare*.

(Note*: This level will only be authorized in exceptional circumstances, when it can be proved to the SWP that sugar levels, acidity and flavour are not being jeopardised, or in

fact where conditions are such that reducing yield could be detrimental to the quality of the crop. Notification of such an increase will be sent by SWP to producers, the Scheme Manager and Wine Standards.)

Hand harvesting: All grapes must be hand harvested*.

Note*: Dispensation may be given by the SWP in exceptional years for machine harvesting to mitigate logistical, seasonal, environmental or quality impacts.

'Sussex' still wine

Permitted Grape Vine Varieties: The following grape varieties are permitted within the Sussex PDO for still wine production:

Acolon, Albarino, Auxerrois, Bacchus, Chardonnay, Dornfelder, Gamay, Huxelrebe, Müller- Thurgau, Orion, Ortega, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Pinot Meunier, Pinot Noir, Pinot Noir, Précoce, Regent, Regner, Reichensteiner, Riesling, Rondo, Roter Veltliner, Sauvignon Blanc, Schonburger, Siegerrebe, Solaris.

Harvest yields: Under normal conditions the maximum harvest yield shall be 12 tonnes per hectare.

The absolute maximum harvest yield is 14.0 tonnes per hectare*.

(Note*: This level will only be authorized in exceptional circumstances, when it can be proved to the SWP that sugar levels, acidity and flavour are not being jeopardised, or in fact where conditions are such that reducing yield could be detrimental to the quality of the crop. Notification of such an increase will be sent by SWP to producers, the scheme manager and Wine Standards.)

Harvesting: grapes used for Sussex still wine may be harvested by hand or machine.

8. Definition of the demarcated area

East and West Sussex

The Kingdom of Sussex was established in Saxon times around 477AD and is one of England’s oldest counties. In 1832 it was divided into two districts, West and East, under the Archdeaconries of Chichester and Lewes. As a Kingdom it was, at one time, quite isolated from the rest of England by its geography. Before drainage was introduced it was separated from most of Hampshire to the west by the swamps around Havant and Hayling Island, and from Kent, in the east, by the Romney Marsh, and from the north by the thick forest of the Weald.

The current administrative boundary of West Sussex rises up from a point east of the town of Emsworth, just north of Hayling Island, and passes to the east of Petersfield and south of Haslemere. It then extends east to encompass Crawley and East Grinstead. East Sussex then extends to the south of Royal Tunbridge Wells but includes Rye and borders

the Romney marsh to the north of Dungeness. This boundary is shown in the map below and includes the vast majority of the South Downs National Park.

The boundaries of East and West Sussex



Under EU PDO regulations all grapes used for Sussex wine must come from vineyards located inside the current boundaries for East and West Sussex* and all winemaking, vinification, on-lees storage and finishing processes must be carried out within the same demarcated boundaries as shown above.

Note: * As these are administrative demarcations the applicant will reconsider the boundaries of the PDO area in the light of any legislative changes.

9. Link

9.1 Details of the geographical area (natural and human factors)

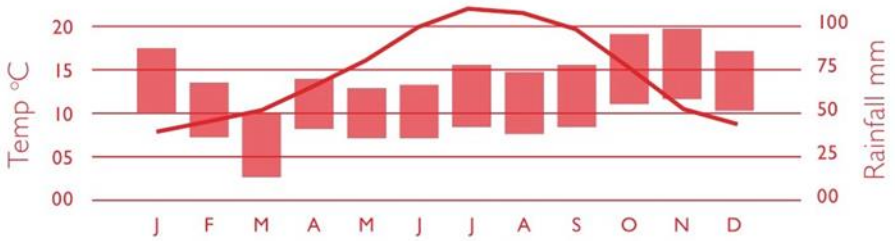
Soils

The majority of Sussex vineyards are based either on the chalk of the South Downs or on the mineral rich greensands to the north. This major geological feature that runs through East and West Sussex has a significant calcareous influence.

The South Downs are now the England's largest National Park. They rise out of the sea at Beachy Head in East Sussex, run through West Sussex and on into Hampshire, dominating the landscape of the region's southern boundary with the English Channel. This cretaceous geological phenomenon is the result of aeons of years of the chalky deposits left by marine organisms over 100 million years ago. They were heaved upwards tectonically at the same time as the Alps to form this ridge of hills, the South Downs, that are in fact part of the same band of chalk, an extension of the Paris Basin, which runs through northern France, into southern England.

Climate

Sussex benefits from a high altitude and is also recognised as one of the driest and warmest areas in England albeit with cool evening breezes. It is classified as having a ‘semi-continental climate’, with average rainfall typically between 600-850mm per annum. Areas of Sussex still hold records for the longest sunshine hours in the UK, with Growing Degree Days (GDDs) (as defined by Coombe and Dry 2004), during the growing season of April to October, of around 970-1050.



Human factors

Winemaking skills in Sussex have developed rapidly over recent years, bolstered by the expansion of Plumpton College, who’s degree and masters level courses in Viticulture and Oenology are validated by the Royal Agricultural University (Cirencester). Many of the winemakers and vineyard managers working in Sussex have attended courses at Plumpton College which is a centre of excellence for wine education in the UK and located just north of Brighton in Sussex. It is the only wine school based in a cool climate wine region with a research department offering a bachelor’s and master’s degree programmes in Oenology. The winemakers of Sussex have developed higher analytical standards for the wine produced and longer bottle ageing for Sussex sparkling wine, an independent qualitative assessment for both still and sparkling wine. They have limited the number of grape varieties and introduced higher natural alcohol levels in the grapes used to produce Sussex wines. The grapes used for sparkling wine are harvested by hand and pressed in whole bunches.

9.2 Details of the quality or characteristics of the wine which are essentially or exclusively due to the geographical environment.

Still wines have notes such as lemon, lime, elderflower and other floral notes, apple, pear and gooseberry strongly apparent in the white wines. Rosé wines can be delicate and floral with hints of white flowers, rose petals, melon and strawberry. Reds will generally be lighter in style with soft hints of red and black fruits, leather, juicy plums and wild berry on the palate.

Sparkling wines have crisp lemon citrus and green apple acidity from the chardonnays, while the pinots can have a more earthy mix of red berry and baked apple flavours, The longer on-lees bottle aging produces wines with developed autolytic notes of brioche, fresh toast, melon, baked brioche and honey aromas on the nose and palate. Sparkling reds have hints of red and black fruits, leather, juicy plums and wild berry on the palate.

9.3 Link between the characteristics of the geographical area and the quality of the wine.

The high latitude of the Sussex vineyards gives the opportunity to have a longer growing season, enabling grapes to mature to full phenolic ripeness, and the wide diurnal temperature range providing ideal growing conditions for Traditional Method quality sparkling and still wine production.

The warm days and cooler evenings and a long growing season give rise to sparkling wines with refreshing natural acidity that are clean and fresh, yet have depth and are complex, with a richness in character. Red sparkling wines are generally light in style. Still wines have prominent floral and fruit driven flavours.

The effect of chalk in the soils on Sussex still and sparkling wine should not be underestimated and imparts a distinctive character into the wine. Chalk consists of calcite formed from the shells of these marine organisms, which are highly porous and act as a reservoir (storing an estimated 300-400 litres of water per m3) that provides the vines with a steady supply of water, even in the driest summers. Chalk draws in water through capillary action. The effort required by the vines to tap into this water supply puts the vines under just enough water stress in the growing season to achieve that delicate balance of ripeness, acidity and berry aroma potential.

The greensand soils to the north of the South Downs also provide free draining soils ideal for viticulture.

The particular terroir of Sussex produces a wide selection of mainly light (low alcohol) still wines from crisp dry whites to fruity red wines and elegant rosé wines. The warm, dry maritime climate, free draining soils of Sussex and the addition of cool evening breezes mean the grapes develop high levels of natural acidity crucial for sparkling wine.

These inherent natural and human factors, particularly the calcareous soils, an exceptional sunshine record and the moderate annual rainfall of 600-850mm, make Sussex an ideal region to produce grapes of outstanding quality for still and sparkling wines.

10. Proof of origin

During the process of harvest and winemaking, the producer must ensure that records are kept that track all the processes and racking, the origination and varieties of must and wine, to ensure that the corresponding cuvée (blended wine) fulfils the PDO requirements and that the control body (Wine Standards) can identify at any time the different pressings and base wine in accordance with UK PDO regulations as amended.

If during an inspection by Wine Standards, the records fail to establish that the criteria necessary for Sussex PDO have been met, approval for the wine in question will be withdrawn and it cannot be marketed under the classification scheme.

11. Labelling and packaging

'Sussex' sparkling wine:

After a wine has qualified as ‘Sussex' sparkling wine the name can be complemented by the addition of ‘Sparkling’ ‘Classic’ or ‘Origin’ on the label. The terms “bottle-fermented”, “traditional method”, “bottle fermented in the traditional method” or “traditional” can also be added the label.

Vintage Years – the 85% rule (above) applies.

Defined geographical area – The words “Product of England” or “Made in England” must be included on the label.

The term *‘protected designation of origin’* must appear on the label.

The Sussex emblem may be displayed on the label.



All labelling showing sugar content and alcohol content must follow UK regulations.

'Sussex' still wine labelling:

After a wine has qualified as ‘Sussex’ the name can be complemented by the addition of ‘Still’ or ‘Origin’ on the label.

Vintage Years – the 85% rule (above) applies.

Defined geographical area – The words “Product of England” or “Made in England” must be included on the label.

The term *‘protected designation of origin’* must appear on the label

The Sussex emblem may be displayed on the label.



All labelling showing sugar content and alcohol content must follow UK regulations.

12. Applicant Organisation:

The Sussex PDO is open to all producers of Quality Wine in the Sussex area as defined in 8 above.

The ‘Sussex Wine Producers’ (SWP) is an organisation set up to oversee the smooth running of the 'Sussex' PDO scheme and is open to all winemakers who produce a qualifying 'Sussex' wine.

The articles of the established association set out the voting rights and rights of members to elect officials to the regulatory committee which will oversee the PDO in conjunction with Food Standards Agency (Wine Standards).

The members will elect a small committee to manage the PDO scheme and the election rules are set out in the articles.

The costs of administering the PDO scheme including expenses of the committee and annual certification of PDO scheme membership will be met by a per bottle charge to be determined by the SWP.

The producer will be responsible for covering the cost of the post disgorgement organoleptic test by the Scheme Manager.

Note: SWP have appointed Campden BRI as the wine Scheme Manager.

13. Inspection and certification

A. Sussex Wine Producers (SWP)

c/o Rathfinny Wine Estate

Alfriston

East Sussex

BN26 5TU

Tel: 01323 871031

Email: info@rathfinnyestate.com

B. Sussex PDO Scheme Manager

Campden BRI (Corkwise)

Coopers Hill Road

Nutfield

Surrey

RH1 4HY

Tel: 01737 824244

Email: winesandspirits@campdenbri.co.uk

C. Regulator

Food Standards Agency (Wine Standards)

Floors 6&7 Clive House

70 Petty France

London

SW1H 9EX

Email : Winestandards@food.gov.uk

D. Accredited Laboratory

Shall mean any laboratory accredited to assess wine within UK, meeting the minimum standards set out in Regulations which are specified as ISO 17025 (or equivalent).

ENDS

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