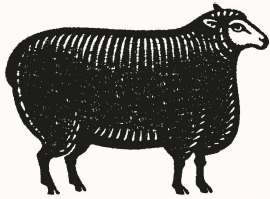


# LE GRAND NOIR



## LEGER



Times are changing for wine. The days when the focus was on 'blockbuster', super-ripe, jammy reds with lots of alcohol and vanilla oak that wowed some American critics, are over. Today, the focus is increasingly on wines that are lighter, fresher and more compatible with a wide range of dishes.

At Le Grand Noir, we've never been in the business of making those big reds; our soils and climate aren't appropriate for them, even if we wanted to. Which we didn't, so few of our wines ever hit alcohol levels above 13 or 13.5%

Even so, because experimentation and blending has always been in our DNA, we wondered about making a light 12% red that would sit between our super-successful Rosé and Pinot Noir.

Some winemakers' approach to producing lighter, lower-alcohol wines simply involves picking the grapes a little earlier. This can work, but wines made in this way often taste 'green' and 'leafy' because the fruit is not physiologically ripe. They can also lack the 'palate richness' and length of flavour that we think of as part of the character of Le Grand Noir.

We knew that our way forward lay in choosing the most ideal grapes and winemaking techniques. The biggest challenge was to avoid simply producing a dark rosé; we wanted some of the structure that makes red wine such a great partner for food, but not too much of it.

After some experimentation, we decided to use Grenache and Cinsault - two grapes that are crucial to our rosés - from specific vineyards that benefit from both sun and a range of cooling winds, and to vinify them in quite different ways.

*The Grenache, from plots close to the village of Pépieux was fermented and left to macerate for 36 hours which allowed more colour to be extracted from the skins than we would get if we were making pink wine, but less than for red.*

*For the Cinsault from Azille, another village to the southwest of Pépieux, we came up with our own version of a winemaking trick the Italians have been using for millennia: we took freshly fermented wine that would otherwise have become rosé, and left it for 12 hours in contact with the skins of black grapes that had been used to make red wine. This gave us the colour we wanted and some of that tannic structure.*

**Was all this effort worthwhile?  
We like to think so.**

**Leger**, the latest member of our flock of black sheep, is *fresh and full of summery flavours that bring together strawberries, raspberries, ground black pepper and violets*. Like all our wines, it is great to drink by itself or with a wide range of dishes - and it's just that bit lighter than any of our other reds.

*Early samples have already been very well received. We look forward to hearing what you think of it.*



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