

Lea Winery's Opale – Spumante Blanc de Blancs no alcol

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Let's say it right away: Lea Winery is, today, the most advanced and credible experience Italy can put forward in the field of dealcoholized wines. This is not a judgment made lightly. The Friulian winery of the Spadotto family, in San Vito al Tagliamento at the heart of the Friuli Grave DOC, has not built an industrial operation. It has built an integrated viticultural project: its own grapes, in-house vinification, research done in-house, control of the entire chain from vineyard to bottle. In a segment where the shortcut of outsourced production is the rule, controlling the entire chain is a rarity. And it shows.

Opale Blanc de Blancs is the confirmation of all this, and it lands straight in the glass.

Because Opale doesn't try to mimic a "normal" sparkling wine, the trap that almost all dealcoholized wines fall into, and which always ends badly: pale, cloying imitations with no character. Here the conversation is different. This is 100% Chardonnay, harvested at just the right point of ripeness to hold acidity and aromatic profile together, then left on the fine lees for about six months with frequent bâtonnage before the alcohol is removed. There is real cellar work here, and it shows. Dealcoholization takes place through selective membranes, with the aim of preserving as much as possible of the aromas and balance of the starting wine.

In the glass it is bright, straw-yellow, with a fine, continuous perlage. On the nose it is clean and fresh: green apple, citrus, delicate white flowers. But it's the palate that changes the game. Freshness leads, acidity gives tension, the bubble sets the rhythm. It lacks the volume and warmth that alcohol provides, obviously, but Opale doesn't chase them. It goes its own way, with consistency, avoiding the flaw that betrays so many dealcoholized wines: that residual sweetness that tires the palate after two sips. Here, on the contrary, the sip stays dry, straight, credible.

This is a wine that makes serious sense the moment you taste it, and one that deserves to be tried at the table.

We did so in the simplest and most Italian way possible: a platter of excellent cured meats, from Prosciutto di San Daniele to Sopressa Vicentina, and it was a winning match. The fattiness and savoriness of the cured meats find in Opale's tangy freshness and bubble the perfect counterpoint: the effervescence cleanses the palate, the acidity cuts through the fat, and the drinking experience stays light and inviting sip after sip. And without alcohol to stiffen the pairing, everything flows better. Concrete proof that a dealcoholized wine, when made this way, is not a compromise: it is a choice at the table with its own precise gastronomic dignity.

Opale Blanc de Blancs doesn't apologize for what it isn't. In a category that is still young and full of shortcuts, that is already a great deal.

Company profile

LEA Winery was founded in 2018 by the Spadotto family, drawing on a background of international industrial experience. The name is an acronym of Lucio, Lorena, Eleonora and Alessandro, the four family members leading the project. The estate covers 132 hectares located in the DOC Friuli Grave area. The project includes vineyard planting, production infrastructure, the renovation of an historic country villa, and two product lines: Blancjat and Franc Lizêr. Production follows a vertical approach, from vineyard to glass, with careful research and responsible production practices.

LEA WINERY

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