

# John H WURDEMAN V

John is an American who has lived in Georgia since the 1990's, he is well known in Georgian wine, not only as a winemaker at Pheasant's Tears, but as its enthusiastic ambassador. He and his wife own a restaurant in Sighnaghi serving some of Georgia's best food. As a painter, John divides his time between his two passions – wine and art – and finds the two go quite well together.

[www.pheasantstears.com](http://www.pheasantstears.com)

**What makes Georgian sparkling wines special and can they make an impact in the UK market?**

From the 19th Century onwards, there has been a tradition of making Champagne method sparkling wines on a large scale. These wines were cherished and celebrated amongst the upper classes, although this was not a real deep Georgian tradition. There were wines made from Georgian varieties like Chinuri and Goruli mtsvane in Kartli and Tsolikauri in Lechkhumi which, due to cold fermentation, would be bottled with a touch of residual sugar, this would lead to a bit of spritz in the bottle, which gave John Okurashvili, Beka Gotsadze and a few others like the Jackeli Brothers and Iago Bitarishvili's ideas of experimenting with Petulant Natural or Method Ancestral.

If the intermingling of Georgian and French aristocrats brought the *chamenoise* method to Georgia in the 19th Century, then the friendship and frequent visits of the natural wine makers from Georgia to France and vice versa inspired us to start

experimenting with using Georgian varieties expressed as a Pet Nat.

**Which for you is the best food to pair with your own sparkling wine label?**

I think that our Pet Nat Mtsvane is particularly good with walnut and herb patés as well as wild herbs in the spring like asparagus, pursulane and stinging nettles that can be blanched served with strained water buffalo yogurt. It also could be delightful with an aged cheese plate.

**Where's the most memorable place you've enjoyed a Glass of Bubbly?**

Pascal Potaire invited myself and a few other growers to taste at his domain Les Capriades, in the Loire. The wines were full of purity and a vast range of beautiful textures. This was the main *aha* moment that made us all think we need to try our hands at the Pet Nat style as well!



Spring time in the Pheasant's Tears Vineyard