

Vara y Pulgar



Alberto Orte

Vara y Pulgar is made from one of the most rare grape varieties of southwestern Spain. The Tintilla grape was cultivated in Jerez for many centuries; however, it, along with many other varieties disappeared after the phylloxera epidemic in the early 20th century. Today, Alberto Orte has recovered a few cuttings from abandoned vineyards that managed to survive phylloxera, and after many years of work has managed to produce the first bottles of 100% Tintilla still (dry) wine in over a century. Jerez is famous for its Albariza soil, a type of chalk that is very light and porous. This same type of soil can also be found in some parts of the region of Champagne in France. Vines that are tended in this type of soil make superior and distinctive wines. Planted in Albariza, Tintilla is able to ripen perfectly without showing extra alcohol or overripe flavors. It has a rare confluence of delicate complexity and medium to full bodied weight on the palate, with lovely minerality similar to other wines of the region. Recent genetic studies show that Tintilla is the same grape as Graciano. It is possible that the first documents published on Tintilla were by Roxas Clemente in 1807. Abela wrote about Graciano in 1885. Tintilla has also the name of Xeres in Australia. As such, it is a reasonable hypothesis to establish that the origin of this grape is in Jerez and that Tintilla is the original name.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: A rare wine produced from a rare grape in the Jerez region. The vines are tended in Albariza soil. The wine is aged in large cement and oak vats in addition to small barrels of 225 liters.

RATING HISTORY: 2016 92JS; 2015 92JS, 92IWR, 90VM; 2014 93JS; 2013 92VN; 2012 90RP & IWC

GRAPE: 100% Tintilla. Vines planted since 1993. Tended in Albariza soil at 60 m (197 ft) elevation.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: With roast lamb, spicy sausage or charcuterie in a supporting role, this wine would fare well on the table.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Vara y Pulgar is aged for a total of 19 months. The first 12 months in 40% oak vat and 60% concrete tank of 6,000 Lit followed by additional 8 months in French oak barrels of 225 liters.

PRODUCTION: 1,135 cases

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Located in the Jerez region near the town of Cadiz, southwest Spain by the Atlantic ocean. the soils of these vineyards are composed of the finest white chalk of Jerez by the name of Albariza. Average temperature during the April through October growing season is 21C (69.8 F) and annual rainfall is 600mm (23.6 in).

TASTING NOTES Opaque ruby. Smoke- and mineral-accented black and blue fruits, candied flowers and succulent herbs on the highly perfumed nose. Juicy and focused in the mouth, offering concentrated boysenberry, bitter cherry and violet pastille flavors that become sweeter as the wine opens up. The dark berry and floral notes linger on the spicy, very long finish, which is given shape by smooth tannins. -- Josh Reynolds.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13.5%

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