OLÉ & OBRIGADO
WINE & SPIRITS WITH HEART & SOUL

Arinto dos Açores



Just one short decade after launching Fitapreta Vinhos in sunny Alentejo, António and two other partners founded the Azores Wine Company on the island of Pico (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) after becoming inspired by their shared work recovering the indigenous Terrantez do Pico varietal—not to mention António's many childhood trips to his father's Azorean homeland. The initial bottling of Terrantez do Pico made a splash in the wine world, receiving a top score from Wine Spectator, and a mention in their article "Breaking the Mold" in 2016. António and his partners own 100 hectares of extremely low-yield, walled vineyards (primarily on Pico) and purchase fruit from an additional 30 hectares across the archipelago, from regions such as DOP Graciosa, São Miguel, and others. These sites range from sea level to 500 meters in altitude, with the oldest vines averaging up to 80 years. It is from this stony volcanic terroir that according to Antonio, "these singular, saline wines are born, or should we say, erupt." On cold and wet Pico Island, vines struggle to escape the volcano's rain shadow grasping for sunlight along the island's edge, where 500-year-old volcanic stone walls (known as currais) are all that stand between the plants and dangerously salty Atlantic winds. Making wine on Pico, according to António, is a constant "battle between the sea and the mountain" and he is one of very few who have succeeded in achieving ripeness in red grapes here.





WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: This micro-production wine comes exclusively from Arinto dos Açores grapes grown on the island of Pico. Here, there is no soil, just volcanic basalt, and the vines are planted in vineyards just 100 feet from the Atlantic Ocean; Pico's enormous rain shadow extends nearly to the edges of the island, and sunlight can be hard to come by. To protect the vines from the relentless salty winds, they are planted 4 at a time in plots surrounded by hand-built stone walls known as "currais."

RATING HISTORY: 2024, 93WA; 2023 93WA; 2022 93D, 93+WA; 2021 92WA; 2020 92+WA; 2019 92+WA, 92WE; 2018 92WA; 2016 92WA

GRAPE: 100% Arinto dos Açores. This version of Arinto has no relation to those on the mainland; it is a unique varietal which evolved over time to adapt to the extreme growing conditions here. Sustainably grown vines planted from 1984-2004. Tended in volcanic basalt at sea level, less than 100 ft from the Atlantic Ocean.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: This is a wine that performs beautifully with all sorts of seafood, owing to its salinity and minerality. Grilled whole fish, oysters, mussels and shrimp are perfect pairings.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Grapes are hand harvested in small baskets and go through heavy triage before being whole bunch pressed. The juice decants for 24 hours and ferments in temperature controlled vertical and horizontal 600-1,000L stainless steel tanks. 10 months on the lees in a horizontal tank; the use of horizontal tanks for this aging increases the surface area for lees contact. The wine goes through full malolactic.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Pico, in the Azores Islands, is about 1,000 miles off the coast of Portugal. It is dominated by the volcano Ponta do Pico, Portugal's highest mountain. With its unique and unusual terroir, the vines are planted in the black basalt rock cracks at the foothills of the volcanic mountain which puts enormous stress on the vines, lowering yields. Vines are the only crop to speak of on Pico, as other plant life has a difficult time surviving. Temperature averages 60-70 degrees Fahrenheit, with rainfall averaging 1200mm a year.

TASTING NOTES Pico's terroir contributes incredible minerality and purity on the nose, as well as unmistakable salinity. The palate offers the tension and brightness of grapefruit and under ripe stone fruits.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13.0%

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