OLÉ & OBRIGADO
WINE & SPIRITS WITH HEART & SOUL

Branco Vulcânico



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 is a micro-production wine from the volcanic Azores islands in the North Atlantic Ocean. It is grown in volcanic basalt at sea level, less than 50m from the Atlantic. This terroir and the blend of varieties imbue this wine with incredible minerality and purity, as well as unmistakable salinity.

RATING HISTORY: 2019 91WA; 2018 90WA

GRAPE: 85% Arinto dos Açores, 15% Verdelho. Vineyards planted from 2004-2015. Tended in volcanic basalt at sea level, less than 50m from the Atlantic Ocean.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: This is a wine that performs beautifully with all sorts of seafood, owing to its salinity and minerality. Shellfish and freshly prepared fish dishes are brilliant pairs.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Sustainably farmed vineyards planted to volcanic basalt. Hand harvested to 40kg baskets, heavy triage, then racked to small stainless steel tanks for fermentation. Spontaneous fermentation with wild yeast, 8 months aging in stainless steel with extended lees contact.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Pico, in the Azores, is about 1000 miles off the coast of Portugal. It is dominated by the volcano Ponta do Pico, Portugal's highest mountain. The soil is entirely black basalt, 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. The average elevation of the vineyards is sea level (0m). Temperature from April to October is 60-70 degrees Fahrenheit (15-21 C), with annual rainfall of 1200mm (47").

TASTING NOTES Light straw with notes of green around the rim. On the nose, tropical but intensely maritime, with pineapple and passion fruit interwoven with seaweed, wet stone and sea spray. Salty and intensely mineral driven on the palate, with a surprising depth of fruit that is balanced by the minerality and focused acidity through the middle.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 12.5%

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