

Pazo de Galegos



Pazo de Galegos is made in the Rías Baixas region of Galicia, on the Spanish shore of the Atlantic Ocean. This small production Albariño offers both complexity and a nod to history: the word "pazo" means more than just "estate," as it is linked to the ancient pilgrimage of El Camino de Santiago. El Camino, or "The Way," began during the Moorish occupation of Spain, when only the northernmost provinces of the peninsula managed to resist conquest thanks to their mountainous terrain. It was then that pious Catholics began a route across these northern provinces to the final resting place of the apostle St James, in Galicia. To qualify as a "pazo," an estate must have a shrine, an inn where pilgrims can stay, and a small vineyard. "Pazos" are still found today in Galicia, offering hospitality and nourishing the spirit along the Camino. The people from this part of Spain are known as galegos, and this is a wine that reflects the essential qualities of the people and history of this magical part of Spain.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: Pazo de Galegos is located in Valle del Ulla, one of the most sought-after of the 5 subzones in Rías Baixas. This area has a drier, warmer climate, which allows its flagship grape, Albariño, to ripen perfectly year after year. Pazo de Galegos is a small family property that produces less than 2,000 cases of wine per year, and which has lovingly maintained the original stone house and small shrine that welcomes pilgrims on the route to Santiago de Compostela, which is a short distance away. This wine is a textbook example of Albariño produced from old vines. The wine is made using only natural yeast to respect the flavors of its terroir.

RATING HISTORY: 2015 91VM; 2014 91VM; 2013 91IWC

GRAPE: 100% Albariño. Vines planted in 1945. Tended in sandy soil at 225 m (738 ft) elevation

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: Albariño has a fresh, tangy character that makes it pair wonderfully with all kinds of shellfish and seafood. In Galicia, cockles, razor clams, oysters, clams, octopus and squid are typical local dishes, always consumed with copious Albariño! This wine also has the clean acidity and ripe fruit necessary to pair well with some Thai, Vietnamese and Chinese dishes.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: After the best bunches are manually selected, the clusters of grapes are de-stemmed and slightly crushed. The must macerates on the skins for 6-8 hours at a cool temperature. Fermentation takes place at low temperature (16C or 61F) with the grapes' own indigenous yeast. When fermentation is complete, the wine undergoes partial malolactic fermentation. The wine is aged in stainless steel tanks on the lees for 3-5 months before bottling.

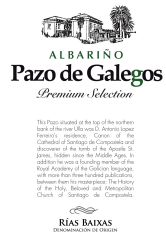
PRODUCTION: 2,000 cases

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: The vineyards are located in Galicia in northwest Spain, near the town of San Pedro de Vilanova in the Valle del Ulla subzone at 225 meters (738 ft.) elevation. Valle del Ulla is the northernmost and driest of the five subzones in Rias Baixas. The vineyard's soil is sandy, which provides good water drainage and heat retention. In general, sand offsets undesired humidity, which can result in maladies for the vine. The low nutrients and low vigor of the soil limits vegetative growth and keeps yields naturally low, resulting in concentrated aromas and flavors. The area's climate has an average temperature from April-October of 58F, among the lowest average temperatures in Spain, with 42 inches of annual rainfall. Valle del Ulla has one of the lowest recorded levels of precipitation in the Rias Baixas region.

TASTING NOTES Pale gold. Fresh peach, tangerine, melon and a hint of dusty minerals on the highly fragrant nose; a subtle hint of honey emerges slowly. Juicy and focused on the palate, offering ripe orchard and pit fruit flavors accented by a bitter citrus pith nuance. Dry and minerally on the finish, which shows very good lift, spicy cut, and strong persistence. Here's a distinctly nifty rendition of the 2015 vintage, which generally produced large-scale, hefty white wines. -- Josh Reynolds.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13%

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