OLÉ & OBRIGADO
WINE & SPIRITS WITH HEART & SOUL

A Portela Mencía



Mencía, the hallmark grape of northwestern Spain, wears many hats. Ranging from rustic and powerful to high-toned and elegant, it is a variety that clearly reflects its terroir. In this case, A Portela comes from DO Valdeorras, the “gateway to Galicia.” Beloved in ancient times as the only place the Romans found that could grow olives so far north on their supply line, Valdeorras is warmer than its neighbors to the west, shielded by mountains from the cold wet winds of the Atlantic. It’s also cooler than its neighbor Bierzo to the east, similarly shielded from hot Continental winds by mountains. While this area is best known for white wine production (particularly Godello), Valdeorras was, historically, home to beautiful reds as well. Winemaker Alberto Orte produces A Portela from a single vineyard, planted to high elevation slate and granite soils. This combination of elevation, soil and temperate climate makes for an elegant, mineral-driven Mencía that carries both generosity of fruit and spice and also precise, elegant acidity. Truly a unique plot, it’s no wonder that the A Portela subdistrict is nicknamed the Gateway to Heaven!

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: A Portela showcases the special terroir of Valdeorras in a rare way, as the region is now known primarily for white wine production. Hailing from the A Portela subdistrict where red grapes can ripen on a rounded hiltop, this aromatic Mencía is a perfect introduction to the hallmark red grape of Galicia produced by the hands of a winemaker who wants to keep the past alive.

RATING HISTORY: 2019 92W&S; 2017 94WE; 2015 93JS, 92VM, 92IWR

GRAPE: 100% Mencía. Vines planted from 1976 - 1990. Tended in clay, granite and slate soil from 500 - 700 m (1,640 - 2,625 ft) elevation. This is a vegan wine.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: Herb-roasted chicken, pork loin, sautéed mushrooms, lamp chops or even salmon would be divine.



VINIFICATION AND AGING: The wine undergoes a five-day cold soak in tank. After fermentation, the skins remain in the tank for an additional 10 days before racking. The wine is then aged for 18 months in 225L French oak barrels.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: The vineyards are located in the autonomous region of Galicia, in far northwestern Celtic Spain, within the DO Valdeorras in Ourense province. The vineyards are in the mountain town of Larouco, at 500 meters (1,640 ft) elevation. The soil is composed of slate and granite topsoil with a thin clay subsoil. This soil profile is poor in organic matter and the vines yield 2.5 kg (about 6 pounds) of grapes per vine, compared to the average of 7.5 kg (around 17 pounds) per vine in Valdeorras. The surface of the granite and slate soil is warmed by sunlight during the day and provides heat to the roots, which encourages the grapes to continue ripening during the cool nights. Lower yields result in more concentrated grapes providing more intense aromas and flavors in the wines. The area's climate has an average temperature from April-October of 64.4F, among the lowest average temperatures in Spain, with 32 inches of yearly rainfall. Being one of the lowest levels of precipitation in the region helps prevent overnight frost. The cool temperatures of this Atlantic-influenced climate provide a longer ripening period, which results in bright wines with great aromatic expression.



TASTING NOTES Fragrant crushed-rose and lighter cherry aromas here with a very fluid, even and plush palate. Fine, yet powerful tannins. Dark stones and spices. Plenty of detail. -- James Suckling

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13.5%

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