

SHERRIES

Manzanilla Sherry

Manzanilla is a dry white wine made from Palomino grapes and aged under a layer of yeasts known as veil de flor. It is produced exclusively in the bodegas of Sanlúcar de Barrameda. The special climatic conditions of the town, situated at the mouth of the river Guadalquivir, favour the formation of a special kind of veil of flor which gives the wine its uniquely distinctive characteristics.

Tasting Notes

A very bright, pale straw coloured wine. A sharp, delicate bouquet with predominant floral aromas reminiscent of chamomile, almonds and dough. Dry, fresh and delicate on the palate, light and smooth in spite of a dry finish. Light acidity produces a pleasant sensation of freshness and a lingering, slightly bitter aftertaste.

Making and Ageing Manzanilla

These wines are obtained from Palomino grape must, and are a product of low pressure, non-aggressive pressing and a complete fermentation process (ie, fermented to dryness). The consequent fortification to 15% by volume facilitates biological ageing, a process which must be carried out in its entirety in bodegas located in Sanlúcar de Barrameda.

The unique micro-climatic conditions of the town, sitting as it does at the mouth of the River Guadalquivir, facilitate the growth of a film of yeast (flor) with very special characteristics. As a consequence, biologically aged wines produced in Sanlúcar have special organoleptic characteristics which differentiate them from those of the rest of the Region.

Most notably, the coastal location allows the flor to flourish throughout the year, as the location acts as a moderating influence upon the climate. This is in contrast to Jerez itself, where the flor is at its most active in autumn and spring, and is less active in winter (due to the cold) and summer (heat).

On occasion, Manzanilla wines are submitted to exceptionally prolonged ageing periods during which the film of flor begins to weaken, permitting a slight degree of oxidation and thus producing the "Manzanillas Pasadas".

Climate in Sanlúcar de Barrameda

Three main features make the climate in Sanlúcar so special, in addition to the fact that the town itself is built on two terraces at different levels: one at sea level (the Barrio Bajo or low quarter) and the other a few metres higher (the Barrio Alto or high quarter).

These three features are: the River Guadalquivir which marks a natural boundary to the north of Sanlúcar; the Atlantic Ocean into which the river flows and which borders the town to the west; and the Marisma, the extensive stretch of wetland on the former river delta which is completely flat. These three features generate milder temperatures and higher levels of relative humidity than those prevailing in the rest of the Jerez Region: a humidity which is carried in on the sea-breeze, a westerly wind that is detained when it strikes the natural barrier formed by the Barrio Alto, depositing its moist air upon the urban centre of the town.

Amontillado Sherry

Very unique wine due to its dual ageing process: first under the veil of flor, typical of Fino and Manzanilla, followed by a period in which the flor disappears and the wine is exposed to oxidation. Made from Palomino grapes, this fusion of ageing processes makes the Amontillado wines extraordinarily complex and intriguing.

Tasting Notes

This is an elegant wine which ranges from pale topaz to amber in colour. Its subtle, delicate bouquet has an ethereal base smoothed by aromas of hazelnut and plants; reminiscent of aromatic herbs and dark tobacco.

Light and smooth in the mouth with well-balanced acidity; both complex and evocative, giving way to a dry finish and lingering aftertaste with a hint of nuts and wood.

Oloroso Sherry

Oloroso is a wine made from Palomino grapes. The special structure that it demonstrates at an initial tasting destines it for oxidative ageing. For this reason alcohol is added to 17°, thus preventing the development of the veil of flor and allowing the wine to age while exposed to oxygen. The result is a wine both structured and complex.

Tasting Notes

Ranging from rich amber to deep mahogany in colour, the darker the wine the longer it has been aged. Warm, rounded aromas which are both complex and powerful. Predominantly nutty bouquet (walnuts), with toasted, vegetable and balsamic notes reminiscent of noble wood, golden tobacco and autumn leaves. There are noticeable spicy, animal tones suggestive of truffles and leather.

Full flavoured and structured in the mouth. Powerful, well-rounded and full bodied. Smooth on the palate due to its glycerine content. It lingers in the mouth, with complex retronasal aromas of noble wood creating an elegant dry finish.

Making and Ageing Oloroso

The product of the complete fermentation of palomino grape must, Olorosos are "vocational" wines whose special structures, apparent from the very beginning, indicate to the tasters that their destiny is that of oxidative ageing. An initial fortification to 17% by volume prevents the development of the film of flor, and thus the wine slowly ages in constant contact with oxygen as it descends through the traditional criaderas and solera system. The gradual loss of water through the wooden walls of the cask facilitates a process of concentration which enables the wine to gain in structure, smoothness and complexity.

Palo Cortado

Tasting Notes

A wine of great complexity which combines the delicate bouquet of an Amontillado with the body and palate of an Oloroso.

Chestnut to mahogany in colour with a complex bouquet which harmonises the characteristic notes of Amontillados and Olorosos, citric notes reminiscent of bitter orange and lactic notes suggestive of fermented butter. It has a deep, rounded, ample palate with smooth, delicate aromatic notes appearing in the aftertaste, leading to delicious lingering finish.

Making and Ageing Palo Cortado

These are wines produced from very fine must, initially fortified to 15% by volume and their casks are marked with a "palo," or slash.

Once the sobretabla stage is completed, if the tasters note the existence of certain very specific characteristics in some of the casks in which the flor has been maintained, they will mark it as a potential Palo Cortado by drawing a horizontal line across the original slash mark. The wine is then again fortified to above 17% by volume, thus redirecting the process of oxidative ageing.

Pale Cream Sherry

Although the evolution of wine under flor produces a crisp light and delicate style, it also accentuates the sensation of dryness. Pale Cream is a sherry for those who appreciate flor wines, but prefer them to have some sweetness and smoothness.

Tasting Notes

Ranging from yellow straw to pale gold in colour. In the nose it shares the sharp bouquet of biologically aged wine, with hints of hazelnut and dough received from the flor.

Light and fresh in the mouth but with a delicate sweetness which is pleasant on the palate and reduces the bitter aftertaste of biologically aged wines, which are naturally very dry.

Making and Ageing

Pale Cream is a vino generoso de licor produced from biologically aged wine (Fino or Manzanilla) to which concentrated rectified must is added in order to create a touch of sweetness to mitigate the original dry sensation of the wine.

The use of concentrated rectified must as a sweetener, a product made from grapes and which consists exclusively of the sugars and juices extracted from the same, is generally preferred to the use of naturally sweet wines, as this allows the conservation of the characteristic original pale yellow colour in the final blending.

Medium Sherry

Amongst the range of Sherry styles there is a wide panorama of blended styles. According to the rules of the Denominación de Origen, any sherry with a sugar content of over 5 grams per litre and up to 115 grams per litre is called “Medium”.

Tasting Notes

Ranging from amber to dark chestnut in colour, medium sherry has a liquorous amontillado-like bouquet with the smoothly sweet notes of pastries, quince jelly or baked apple.

It starts slightly dry in the mouth, gradually becoming sweeter to finish with a smooth vaporous aftertaste.

When the blend has a sugar content of between 5 and 45 grams per litre it is known as “Medium Dry”, while a blend of between 45 and 115 grams per litre is known as “Medium Sweet”. This is a large range of Medium wines which caters for all tastes: drier or sweeter.

Making and Ageing

Medium Sherry is a vino generoso de licor obtained by blending vino generoso wine and naturally sweet wine or concentrated rectified must. The base wines used in the blending process are usually either amontillados or wines which, though primarily aged by means of oxidative process, have also undergone a period of biological ageing.

In any case, what fundamentally defines the character of Medium sherry is its degree of sweetness, which can be of between 5 to 115 grams of reductive material per litre. When the content does not exceed 45 grams per litre, we speak of "Medium Dry", while if the sugar content is more than 45 grams per litre, it can be labeled as "Medium Sweet".

Cream Sherry

Cream is a semi sweet wine which is obtained exclusively from oxidative ageing and involves blending the Oloroso (in what is known as cabeceo) with an amount of Pedro Ximénez, hence it being commonly known as Sweet Oloroso.

Tasting Notes

Ranging from chestnut brown to dark mahogany in colour this wine has a dense, syrupy appearance. A strong oloroso bouquet in the nose combines with a hint of sweetness reminiscent of roasted nuts, such as in nougat or caramel. Full bodied and velvety in the mouth with a well-balanced sweetness, seductively elegant with a lingering aftertaste combining hints of sweetness with the characteristics traits of an oloroso.

The intensity of this wine and its concentration of sweetness allow it to be served “on the rocks” while it continues to show its aromatic power and length on the palate. Served in a tumbler, Cream with ice and a slice of orange is a fantastic aperitif which combines the complexity of Sherry with delicious citrus notes.

Production & Ageing

A Cream is a generoso wine produced by blending different wines from the oxidative ageing process (mainly Oloroso) with a proportion of naturally sweet wine or of concentrated rectified must. The whole ageing process is therefore oxidative in nature and once blended the wine should present a reductive material content of over 115 grams per litre.

Bristol Cream is blended from 30 different solera systems, from Oloroso, PX, Finos and Amontillados. Bristol Cream was very popular in 19th century used to be called as Bristol Milk, which was very sweet. Mothers gave a teaspoonful of Bristol Milk to weak babies to help them revive and it is consequently improved their health.

Moscatel (VDN)

The Moscatel is one of the sherry grapes with pronounced fruity notes typical of this kind of grape which has greater aromatic personality. The Moscatel vineyards are close to the beach in sandy soils with considerable maritime influence.

Tasting Notes

Ranging from chestnut to an intense mahogany in colour, with a pronounced density and tearing. The characteristic varietal notes of muscatel grapes stand out in the nose with the presence of the floral aromas of jasmine, orange blossom and honey suckle in addition to citric notes of lime and grapefruit and other hints of sweetness. It has a restrainedly sweet palate with predominant varietal and floral notes leading to a slightly dry, bitter finish.

When Moscatel is raisined by “asoleo” a great concentration of sugars and aromas of raisins is produced. The resulting wine is known as “Moscatel de Pasas”.

Production and Ageing

Moscatel wine is produced from the grape of the same name in either fresh form or sun-dried form until it develops an intense raisining of the fruit. In the latter case pressing produces an extraordinary concentration of sugars and a certain level of coloration. Now with musts made from fresh or sunned grapes, the fermentation is stopped with the addition of wine alcohol.

Ageing is carried out exclusively with air contact and causes progressive aromatic concentration and increasing complexity without losing the freshness and the typical fruity character of the grape. This wine is ideal for drinking on its own, and its structure allows opened bottles to be kept for months.

Pedro Ximenez (VDN)

Pedro Ximénez is obtained from the overly ripe grapes of the same name which are dried in the sun to obtain a must with an exceptionally high concentration of sugar. Its ageing process, which is exclusively oxidative, gives the wine a progressive aromatic concentration and greater complexity, whilst fully preserving the characteristic freshness of the variety.

Tasting Notes

A dark, ebony coloured wine with pronounced tearing and a thickness to the eye.

In the nose its bouquet is extremely rich with predominantly sweet notes of dried fruits such as raisins, figs and dates, accompanied by the aromas of honey, grape syrup, jam and candied fruit, at the same time reminiscent of toasted coffee, dark chocolate, cocoa and liquorice.

Velvety and syrupy in the mouth and yet with enough acidity to mitigate the extreme sweetness and warmth of the alcohol leading to a lingering, tasty finish. Pedro Ximénez is probably the sweetest wine in the world? Yet despite this, its complexity of aroma and flavour make it fresh and harmonious on the palate as a result of the natural process of raisining by “asoleo”, or drying the grapes in the sun. This concentrates the sugars but also the natural acidity of the grapes.

Production and Ageing

Pedro Ximénez wine is obtained from grapes of the same name which then undergo a traditional process known as "sunning", whereby the fruit turns to raisins. Musts are obtained after pressing which have an extraordinarily high concentration of sugars and a certain degree of colouring, whose fermentation is stopped by adding wine alcohol.

Ageing is exclusively oxidative in nature, facilitating a progressive aromatic concentration and increasing complexity, though always ensuring not to lose the fresh, fruity characteristics of the grape variety.

Some other very important Sherries over the years.

Amoroso, Brown, Old East India and Pajarete or Paxarete

The Amoroso Sherries are, in essence, sweetened Olorosos, and are smooth and velvety. The Brown Sherries, as the name suggest, are very dark in colour mainly composed of Oloroso, sweetened with Pedro Ximenez and a larger dose of colour. That gives a lot of body and the nose with a hint of raisin and toasted and caramel nuances. The Old East India was also a type of sweet, old Oloroso. Its name derives from the fact that the Sherry was placed in oak butts which were then placed on ships as ballast. These ships undertook long voyages, crossing the equator a few times and, of course, the Sherry was continually in movement because of the waves. It was also subject to changes in humidity levels and in temperature. All these aspects caused great changes in its organoleptic characteristics.

The Sehrry Pajarete or Paxarete originally came from the Pajarete district, where the historic Pajarete tower is located. It is a sweet sherry and was made with a blend of Oloroso and PX and colour wine. It was sold in bulk production to the American markets, both for adding to their whiskies and their rum to give them a certain character which was very popular. This was called Blending Sherry.

Colour Wine (vino de color)

Colour Wine Sherry is a very traditional product of the region and is used as a blend of certain Sherries, both of its colouring effect and its aromatic characteristics which are very distinct. The colour Wine is a mix of two thirds of arrope or sanocho (concentrated must heated in cauldrons over direct heat) with a third of non-fermented must. This blend ferments slowly and is aged both as vintage and through the Solera System.

Colour sherry has toasted, burnt caramel aromas and it has tannins with certain vinosity due to the fermentation process. These features become more complex as it ages in oak butts in a Solera System and the vinosity, old oak, vanilla and caramel aromas become more pronounced.

It is said that both the must concentration process and those of wine distillation in Jerez region were introduced by the Moors, in Jerez, from 711 to 1265 AD. They used a copper pot still to produce alcohol, however Arabic people are not allowed to imbibe alcohol, so they used the alcoholic product to make some perfume.