OLÉ & OBRIGADO
WINE & SPIRITS WITH HEART & SOUL

Verdelho o Original



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 tiny island of Pico in the Azores. It is grown in volcanic basalt at sea level, less than 50m from the Atlantic. This terroir and the varietal imbue this wine with incredible minerality and purity, as well as unmistakable salinity. This varietal of Verdelho dates back to the original plantings in the early 17th century, and is indigenous to the Azores and Madeira.

RATING HISTORY: 2024 92WA; 2023 93WA; 2022 92WA; 2021 94W&S; 2019 92WA; 2018 91WA

GRAPE: 100% Verdelho do Pico. Sustainably grown vines planted from 1984-2004. Tended in volcanic basalt at sea level, less than 50 m (164 ft) from the Atlantic Ocean.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: What better food to eat with a wine from the islands than the bounty of the sea' Shellfish, oysters, grilled or fried fish are all excellent pairing ideas.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Hand harvested to 40kg baskets, heavy triage, then racked to small stainless steel tanks for 6 months with extensive battonage. These tanks were laid down in the fashion of a barrel in order to facilitate battonage during lees aging.



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 Bright straw-yellow. Aromas of passionfruit, pineapple, sea spray and oyster shell on the nose. On the palate, vibrant and fresh with high toned tropical fruit held in balance by impressive mid-palate weight and breadth. Finishes long and clean, with the Azores' tell-tale saline minerality running through the finish.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 12%

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