OLÉ & OBRIGADO
WINE & SPIRITS WITH HEART & SOUL

Vinha Centenária Branco







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?: After phylloxera and oidium's devastating outbreak in the 19th century, the locals maintained a small pocket of vineyards. This "Vinha Centenária" wine comes from one of those 100+ year-old vineyards that are considered the guardians of the island's native grapes and traditional vineyard composition.

RATING HISTORY: 2023 96WA; 2022 93+WA; 2021 95WA; 2020 95WA, 93W&S; 2018 95 WA

GRAPE: 85% Arinto dos Açores with Verdelho, Boal and Alicante Branco from vines that are 100+ years old planted in volcanic basalt soils at less than 150 feet above sea level.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: A wine born in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean performs beautifully with all sorts of seafood, owing to its salinity and minerality. It is also a great match to suckling pig and pork belly.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Grapes are hand-picked and head to the sorting table, then direct press, decanted for 12 hours in cold. First press (70%) is fermented and aged in stainless steel in horizontal tanks, and the second press (30%) is fermented and aged in 3-year French oak barrels without batonnage for 9 months.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Pico, in the Azores Islands, is about 1,000 miles off the coast of Portugal—nearly halfway to New York City! It is dominated by the volcano of the same name, which is Portugal's highest peak. The vines are planted in the black basalt rock cracks at the foothills of the volcanic mountain 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. Temperature averages 60-70 degrees Fahrenheit, with rainfall averaging 47 inches a year.

TASTING NOTES Yellow citrus-straw color. In the palate, the wine has beautiful concentration with bright acidity, intensity, and saline notes.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 12.5%

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