

Atlántida Tintilla



Atlántida is an impressive red wine hailing from Spain's most historic grape growing region of Jerez, most famous for its solera aging system of sherry. However, what is seldom spoken of are the astounding vineyard sites blanketing the region, where nearly forgotten grape varieties are grown. These noteworthy vineyards are producing some of the finest wines of Spain today.

While historically, Jerez had more than 80 different red and white grape varieties planted when phylloxera devastated the area, the trend shifted quickly to focus attention in the vineyard on the replanting and cultivation of one very productive strain of Palomino, the workhorse of Jerez and the base grape for dry sherry. However, one of the most interesting varieties of the pre-phylloxera era is Tintilla, a long-cycling, small grape. Through careful analysis, we have discovered that Tintilla is the ideal grape variety to transport the mineral-laden, salty, chalky characteristics of the albariza soil in which it is grown in the coastal terrain of Jerez. Tintilla vines require meticulous cultivation, and production is very limited.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: Atlántida is the rare dry red wine made in the Sherry zone from the nearly extinct Tintilla grape variety. The soil is pure white chalk called albariza. Starting with the 2022 vintage, Alberto realized that the Tintilla grapes coming from his own El Aljibe estate now surpass the quality of those from the single vineyard in Pago de Balbaina. With the goal to craft a wine with the best expression of this grape variety, Alberto decided to use the fruit from his estate which comes from 3 vineyards called San Cristóbal, San José, and El Aljibe.

RATING HISTORY: 2019 94JS; 2017 94JS, 91WS; 2016 93JS, 93VM

GRAPE: 100% Tintilla which is an ancient variety most similar to Tinta Miuda from Portugal, and also likened to the more famous Graciano of Rioja. Organically grown vines planted since 1992. Tended in albariza soil at 70m (230 ft) elevation.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: This wine is incredibly versatile, and pairs with hard cheeses like pecorino, pork tenderloin with rosemary, beef or tuna tartare.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Harvest is done by hand at night to obtain utmost freshness. The grapes are fermented in oak vats with 90% whole cluster fermentation and 10% de-stemmed. They endure two daily rackings and two pump-overs during the course of a 28-day maceration. Next, the grapes are pressed, and the juice is passed to 1–2-year-old 500-liter French oak, where it spends one year. Finally, it is transferred to 3–4-year-old 225-liter barrels for 6 months, where it rests before bottling for a total aging time of 18 months.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: The unique albariza soil of these vineyards consists predominantly of chalk and clay, one of the richest raw materials in Spain and suited perfectly for the climatic conditions of Cádiz. It retains an enormous amount of moisture from the heavy rainfalls (600L on average) in autumn and winter, keeping the vines hydrated during the hot summer months. The southern climate of Jerez is heavily influenced by the sea and two dominant winds: the Levante and the Poniente, which are fundamental in the final period of grape ripening during the months of August and September when the fresh breeze off the water keeps the grapes cool and hydrated.

TASTING NOTES Dusty albariza chalk lies beneath aromas of Italian plum and dried black cherry, accented by dried green herbs like rosemary and sage. The nose shows hints of sea breeze and a distinct, almost bloody minerality like that found in bluefin tuna. After opening up, wild fruits (frutas del bosque) emerge. The nose is intense and powerful, yet the palate is light, lifted, and incredibly pretty. The acidity is mouthwatering and the wine is truly persistent and lingering. The tannins are completely integrated without being overly soft. The wine shows restrained red and black fruit flavors, candied violet, and rooibos, with hints of oregano and Darjeeling tea on the finish.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 14.5%

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VINO DE LA TIERRA DE CÁDIZ

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