

Atlántida (Single Vineyard)



Atlántida is an impressive red wine hailing from Spain's most historic grape growing region of Jerez, most famous for its solera ageing 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 historical 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 a dry red wine made in Cadiz, most famous for the fortified sherry wines of Jerez. Made from the nearly extinct Tintilla grape variety, which is an ancient variety most similar to Tinta Miuda from Portugal, and also likened to the more famous Graciano of Rioja. These Tintilla grapes are grown in a single vineyard of one hectare (2.47 acres) called Pago de Bilbaina. The soil is pure white chalk called albariza.

RATING HISTORY: 2016 93JS; 2015 93JS; 2014 92WS & VN; 91JS; 2013 92 VM; 2012 92IWC; 2011 91IWC

GRAPE: 100% Tintilla. Organically grown vines planted since 1992. Tended in albariza soil at 70 m (230 ft) elevation.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: Grilled meats, aged cheese, hearty stews. Though, a cool night and some fine company will pair splendidly, too. This wine should be decanted.

VINIFICATION AND AGEING: Harvest is done by hand at night to obtain utmost freshness. The grapes are then brought to the winery where they 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 500 liters of 1-2 year-old French oak, where it spends one year. Finally, it is transferred to 3-4 year-old 225 liter barrels for 16 months, where it rests before bottling.

PRODUCTION: 450 cases (6 pack)

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: The single parcel where the Atlántida is grown is called Pago Balbaína. Brushing against the sea, it is one of the Jerez's most coastal vineyards, one with a pure white albariza soil. The grapes of this parcel were historically destined for Manzanilla and Fino due to their fresher maturation, lower alcohol and clean acidity. The unique albariza soil of this vineyard consists predominantly of chalk and clay, one of the richest raw materials within the vast vineyard of Spain, and suited perfectly for the climatic conditions of Cádiz. This dense soil retains an enormous amount of moisture from the heavy rainfalls (600 liters on average) in autumn and winter and later keeps the vines hydrated during the hot, arid summer months. The southern climate of Jerez is heavily influenced by the wind and the sea. There are two dominant winds: the Levante and the Poniente, which are fundamental in the final period of grape maturation during the months of August and September when the fresh breeze off the water keeps the grapes cool and hydrated. This is also called the Rocío, the rotation of the humid, late summer winds coming off the Atlantic that give the grapes necessary moisture to ripen during the maturation process.

TASTING NOTES Lurid ruby. Powerful, mineral-laced dark berry and floral pastille scents pick up hints of five-spice powder and woodsmoke as the wine opens up. Sappy and focused on the palate, offering intense black raspberry, bitter cherry and spiced flavors and an exotic suggestion of blood orange. In a distinctly elegant, energetic style, with silky tannins framing the juicy, mineral-driven finish. -- Josh Reynolds.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13.5%

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ATLÁNTIDA
VINO DE LA TIERRA DE CÁDIZ
100% Tintilla



Alberto Orte