

Orangewood Wines

Small Wineries, Great Wines

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Introduction

This month we revert to our usual format of something interesting from Leslie, covering a wonderful wine from Portugal, and a Ramble that may shed darkness on your wine collection. I have moved to a new volume, this is issue 1 of volume 8, in recognition of our ownership change.

Vinho Verde

Portfolio Notes from Leslie Zellmer

Tucked under Spain in northern Portugal is the Vinho Verde region, the country's largest appellation. Vinho Verde, pronounced veenyovaird, is not a green wine, as the name might imply, it can be red, white or rosé. The region, on the other hand, much like its northern neighbor of Galicia (where Spanish Albariño hails from) is a wet and green region on the Atlantic coast.

Most of the examples of Vinho Verde wines available in the U.S. are white. Typically, it has a freshness on the palate, a generous mineral quality, due to the granitic soils, and a bit of fizz in the glass. This fizz was once accomplished by bottling quickly before fermentation was complete. Today it is done artificially and sometimes not at all.

There are several grape varieties that can be used to make up white Vinho Verde. These include Avesso, Arinto, Azal, Loureiro, Trajadura and Alvarinho (yes, the same as Albariño!). The flavors you can expect are bright: lime, lemon, grapefruit, melon and peach, making this wine pair beautifully with fresh and light foods. Sushi, salad, fish tacos, ceviche and swimming pools, please!

We have a terrific example in our portfolio called Tormes. This is a 100% organically farmed blend of Avesso and Arinto, made in conjunction with Lima-Smith and the Eça de Queiroz foundation. The foundation has a museum dedicated to the most famous 19th century author of Portugal: Eça de Queiroz. It is around the foundation's property (pictured here) that the grapes are grown for this beautiful wine.



The Rambler

The Economist magazine is not usually the place that I look for oenological advice, however a recent headline caught my eye. With the subject of "Wine bottles" and the headline "A pour decision", I was reminded that I really should have been a headline writer and was also motivated to read the article. Briefly, it said that light has negative effect on wine. White wines are particularly susceptible. The use of colored glass protects the wine quite a lot. The study published in the Proceeding of the National Academy by a group from Northern Italy, said that a white wine in a clear glass bottle kept in light similar to that of a wine store for five weeks will lose some of the nice smelling chemicals (aromas of fruit and flowers) and gain some of the less nice ones (wet dog, Marmite!). They did control studies where the wine was kept inside a cardboard case and in the dark. They used gas chromatography to measure changes. Bottom line, keep your wine in the dark and don't pick white wines in clear glass bottles that have sat on a brightly lit shelf for extended periods. That took a lot longer to explain than I intended.

I do want to commend those who spotted the two Pink Floyd quotes in last month's Rambling. Partial credit for those who noticed only one!

The Rambler rambles on...

Cheers,

Richard and Laurie
Orangewood Wines