

Molly's BOTTLE CLUB - June 2022

Exploring Spain is the name of this month's club. You all know how much I love the unknown, under-represented grapes & Spain has so many!

Bodegas Almaroja 'Pirita' white field blend

grape(s): Doña Blanca, Puesta en Cruz, Albilo, Godello, Moscatel a Grano Menudo, and Palomino Fino

from: Fermoselle, Arribes del Duero

winemaker/ farmer: Charlotte Allen

facts & random info: an English expat who settled here in 2007. She started in the wine business very young but fell in love with winemaking and with biodynamics during her first winemaking job at Domaine Huet in Vouvray (one of my absolute FAVS! and an OG in the natural wine world).

The DO Arribes is a unique environment in Spain: entirely located within a National Park, right where the Portuguese Douro becomes the Spanish Duero.

In the vineyard, Charlotte tends the vines herself, except during the harvest, when she employs pickers. She utilizes biodynamics practices with any necessary treatments being botanical blends (such as sage and nettle) to address a rainy year or other problems that may arise.

Vines are 75+ year old and are co-planted. Her average yield is 10 hectoliters per hectare (about a half ton per acre which is very little).

Co-fermenting these field blends is very traditional all over Europe but has gone out of a favor in the more modern wineries. This field blend is labeled as 100% Malvasia (the local name for the unique clone of Doña Blanca in the area) but is actually a blend of Doña Blanca, Puesta en Cruz, Albilo, Godello, Moscatel a Grano Menudo, and Palomino Fino from 75-150 year old vines.

tasting notes: summer citrus and stone fruit - think white peach and that bit right next to the pit of a white nectarine. Some hints of white flowers like you caught it on the wind walking down the street. Salinity & minerality tingles the mid-palate with soft acidity to keep up with the

structured yet subtle tannins.

pairing ideas: Charlotte recommended white bean soup with the addition of clams & glugs of a good olive oil (Spanish of course) with this wine! Also a burrata & peach salad with some arugula kinda blew my mind - it was truly a perfect pairing for me!

Bodega Corisca

grape(s): Albarino

from: Tea County, Rias Baixas

winemaker/ farmer: Natalia Rodriguez

facts & random info:

Located on the banks of the river Miño between Tuy and Salceda de Selas, the micro-climate here is called a 'thermal valley'. With granite soils and a mild Atlantic climate, the vineyards are about 200m above sea level and are surrounded by mountains.

2nd generation, she is taking over from her dad although they still work together daily. Her dad is 82+ and still works the vineyards.

All vineyard work is manual with no tilling and wild cover crops. Pruning is done as late as possible - utilizing *vimbio* (a typical Galician shrub) style to take advantage of the micro-climate to let the grapes ripen leisurely attaining phenolic ripeness - which is fancy wine words to say the grapes are happy and get to ripen throughout the season!

Grapes are de-stemmed with inter-cellular fermentation beginning (carbonic maceration where the grapes ferment from the inside out instead of being crushed and the juice fermenting) naturally. 3-month lees (spent yeast) contact gives a richer mouthfeel.

They only grow Albarino as they seek to honor the land & the grapes.

tasting notes: from Natalia: "*My corner of Galicia smells of grass, humidity, laurel, and woods. I think my wines have more of this smell...*"

For me, this wine is super fresh with minerality and refreshing herbal notes. Orange & lime citrus tingle across the palate with soft tannic structure and a lovely creamy mouthfeel. The core of stony minerality with some saltiness keeps it from being too zingy. Corisca is a perfect wine to open before dinner, or to pair with sushi, ceviche, grilled octopus,

or fresh green salads

pairing ideas: perfect sipper while cooking dinner that would serve you well as you sit down for the first course of green salad.

Sushi or Ceviche all day!!

Grilled octopus was the high recommendation from a friend - 'with a spritz of lemon'

Talcomraja 'Sang de Saulo Feldspat'

grape: Cabernet Sauvignon

from: Arenys de Munt, Catalunya

winemaker/ farmer: Joan & Emma Munich

facts & random info: vines are planted on an old plutonic granite bedrock. Joan & Emma also rescue old abandoned plots scattered on the Sierra Litoral. This is truly a story of reclaimed vineyards and honoring traditional varietals - honoring the 'old ways'.

The story in the village is that in 1900 there were over 300 hectares of vineyards but when Joan started to be curious about making wine (age 17), there was only 1 hectare. (For reference, a hectare is about 2.47 acres and is abbreviated ha). Most of the vineyards had been abandoned then reclaimed by the forest of oaks & pines. Since 2006, Joan has been vital to the restoration of vineyards without disruption of the oaks & pines as much as possible. He started an association to honor the old varietals and the old ways of making wine - no intervention, only native yeast, etc. (sounds familiar!) "*making known and disseminating the natural, historical and cultural heritage of the region taking as a backbone the vineyard and wine*". Joan & Emma are very into building community and participating in collaborations ~ you know how we love that here at Molly's!

It's also fascinating to note that some of the old vines planted forever ago are actually 'international' varietals such as Cabernet Sauvignon. Who planted them here is up for debate but it's pretty fascinating to me!

tasting notes: distinct aromas and flavors of sour pie cherry acidity with black currants, dark plum and tellicherry black pepper - some herbal

components like bay laurel & oregano. There is an underlying dried fruit note with the bright cherry acidity bolstering it that really made me rethink Cabernet Sauvignon!

pairing ideas: grilled pork chops!

grilled halloumi with grilled plums sorta blew my mind as did spicy vegan pie from Lupo

honestly anything with a little smoke and a little acidity!

Pardas Negre Franc

grape: Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon & Sumoll (Catalonian for Tempranillo)

from: Penedes

winemaker/ farmer: Ramon Parera & Jordi Arnana

facts & random info:

The origin story of Pardas is forged in friendship, when two growers, Ramon Parera & Jordi Arnana, decided to revitalize an old medieval farm - they wanted to preserve the surrounding forest and honor the indigenous varieties in this place. And while vineyards are mostly monoculture, these friends are doing their best to manage 30 hectares of land to include the vines as well as the forest, some grains and cover crops. Keeping biodiversity is very important to the planet and it keeps the grapes happy too - BONUS!

No tilling and very minimal pruning with clay-lime soils on petrocalcic rocks bringing all the salty, minerality to the table.

Ramon's other passion is vinyl, with over 3000 records in his collection. If anyone is up for a visit to Barcelona, let me know - I'm down for a visit to Pardas and they have a few rooms so we can chill with some music and all that yummy wine!

tasting notes: Rich ruby almost garnet with an incredible nose! Black pepper, dark plums and graphite jump out of the glass. The palate follows up with ripe black fruits - plums and blackberries. Cocoa and black pepper minerality dance with silky, velvety tannins and a finish that lasts forever.

pairing ideas: the perfect pairing with grilled meats, this may just

become a staple of your backyard barbecue's this summer
Grilled eggplant stacked with some garden herbs!!