

SPAIN

- The third largest wine-producing country in the world.
- Bulk are ordinary, some fine ones, and of course . . . Sherry
- New laws in 1970 – modern methods helped raise standards.
- Production and labeling governed by INDO (Instituto Nacional de Denominacione de Origen)
- Wines labeled DO are of guaranteed standard – but not as stringent as AOC.
- There are 28 wine regions.

RIOJA

- Northern Spain, bordering Ebro river.
- Very popular (still made by traditional methods).
- Best are reds but whites also are good.
- Reds often aged for more than 10 years. Whites are had young.
- Grapes/wines are sold to shippers who produce blended brands.
- Some notable brands: Imperial, Ygay, Marques de Riscal

LA MANCHA

- Central Spain, south-east of Madrid.
- Huge concentration of wines.
- The town of Valdepeñas gives its name to many wines.
- Chiefly strong reds.

CATALONIA

- North-east, near Barcelona.
- Red, white and rosé.

Penedés

- North-east coastline, between Barcelona and Tarragona.
- Best known for sparkling wines but stills also produced.

Andalucia

- South-west coast – most famous wine-region of Spain.
- Other than the delimited Sherry district, two famous districts are Montilla and Malaga.
- **Other regions**
- Valencia, Las Campañas, Basque, Extremaduro, Aragon, La Nava, Ceberos, Etc.

SHERRY

- Sherry is a complex blend of wines, fortified by the addition of spirits.
- Appeared in England in the early 16th century – immediately popular.
- Fortification for easy travelling.
- The English called it sack - from Spanish sacar (to export).
- Main town: Jerez de la Frontera
- Jerez → Sherris → Sherry
- Andalucia – from Portuguese frontier in the west to Mediterranean in the east.

- Sherry district between Guadalquivir and Guadalete rivers.
- Jerez de la Frontera is the Sherry capital.
- Other towns are: Sanlucar de Barrameda, Cadiz and Puerto da Santa Maria.

Soil

- Albariza (lime, chalk, magnesium & clay)
- Barros (clay)
- Arenas (sandy)

Grapes Used

- Palominos (white) – classic and finest for Sherry – 90% are Palomino vines.
- Others: Mantuo Castellano, Mantuo de Pilla, Cañocazo
- Pedro Ximenez – very sweet, used mainly for blending.

MANUFACTURING OF SHERRY

Unusual and unique process.

Fully ripened grapes brought to pressing house



Placed on round, woven esparto grass mats (for 12 to 14 hours)



Juice concentrated = high sugar content



Brought to pressing hall with **lagars**



Men tread with hobnailed shoes.



Gypsum is sprinkled → cream of tartar in grapes breaks down to tartaric acid = higher acidity.



Actual pressing with a screwpost (grape pulp piled evenly, covered with broad esparto ribbon and the post is turned)



Juice gushes forth filtered through the grass ribbon



Received in the waiting **butt**



Butts of **mosto** sent by trucks to **bodegas** in the Sherry towns.



Fermentation is violent in the first week.



Slows down and takes up to 3 months = a completely dry wine.



Racked into new casks

(even at this stage the vintner does not know what type of wine is going to develop)



A white and soft **flor** appears on the wine in some of the casks
(gives distinctive character to dry Sherries).



Two basic categories:

- **Fino** (fine) – thick and heavy flor
- **Oloroso** (rich fragrant) – little or no flor

The wine is incorporated into a **solera** system for maturing and blending with old wines → the new wine acquires the characteristics of the older wines.



Never drawn out more than 1/3rd from the solera → continually blending wines
→ continuity of style for centuries.



Sometimes wines from more than one soleras are blended to create a brand.



Put into fresh casks and fortified with brandy:

- Fino – 15%
- Oloroso – 18%



Further blending, if desired:

- Darker: **vino de color**
- Sweeter: **vino dulce, dulce apagado**



Clarified with egg white/white Spanish earth.



Bottling

TYPES OF SHERRY

The Fino Group

- **Manzanilla:** a very dry, very pale, light-bodied fino that has been developed in the bodegas of Sanlucar de Barrameda, where the salty air of the Atlantic ocean contributes to the fragrance of the wine.
- **Fino:** a very dry, very pale, medium-bodied fino from Jerez.
- **Amontillado:** dry, pale to light gold, fuller-bodied.

The Oloroso Group

- **Oloroso:** usually sweet, deep golden, full-bodied and nutty.
- **Cream:** sweet, deep golden, full-bodied and nutty.
- **Brown:** very sweet, dark brown, full-bodied and nutty.

SOME FAMOUS SHIPPERS

Gonzalez Byass, La Riva, Williams & Humbert, Pedro Domecq, Harvey's

USES OF SHERRY

- A fine drink on its own (before/after dinner).
- Accompaniment with some foods.
- Popular cooking alcohol.

SPANISH SPARKLING WINES

Vino Espumoso

- Lately quite popular.
- Some are good, especially from Penedes.
- Most are sweet.

SOME SPANISH LABEL TERMS

- **Tinto:** Red
- **Blanco:** White
- **Rosado:** Rosé
- **Cepa:** grape variety
- **Reserva:** matured quality
- **Vino de mesa/pasto:** table wine
- **4° Ano / 4 Anos:** bottled at 4 years old.
- **Consejo Regulador:** organising and controlling co-operative body