

Leirana Albariño



Rodrigo Méndez of Forjas del Salnés (known locally as Rodri) is the 5th generation in a family that has grown and crafted quality wine for centuries. Today he is considered one of the greatest Albariño producers in the world, offering more than 15 small-batch bottlings from the micro-terroirs around the Val do Salnés, the most coastal subzone in DO Rías Baixas—an appellation that was established by his grandfather. In another homage to his family's legacy, Rodri is also leading the revitalization of several nearly extinct local red varieties.

Thanks to his rigorous approach and deep regional knowledge, Rodri's wines are pure expressions of the diverse Salnés terroirs. As a winemaker, he embraces historic techniques that highlight the personality of the different vineyard sites and his basic philosophies and commitment to organic and low-intervention production (native yeast fermentation, extended lees contact without batonnage, minimal sulfur) are consistent across all his wines. As a grower, Rodri has deep respect for his region's ancient vineyard sites trained in the traditional Parral (pergola) system; he takes a hands-on approach by insisting on longer hang times and manual harvest, all while practicing organic agriculture.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: This is a wine that is unmistakably maritime. Using almost forgotten minimal-intervention techniques learned through generational viticultural knowledge, Rodri recreates the Albariño of yesteryear. This is a wine of power, elegance and salinity that can truly stand among the best white wines of the world.

RATING HISTORY: 2022 93+WA, 93TA, 92WE; 2021 93TA; 2020 94WA, 93WE; 2019 93WA; 2018 94WA

GRAPE: 100% Albariño. Vines planted from 1952 - 1982. Tended in sandy and granite soil at 5m (16 ft) elevation

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: The salinity of Leirana makes it a natural pair for scallops, oysters and shellfish of all kinds, as well as the classic octopus dish, pulpo gallego.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Naturally occurring fermentation with its own yeast. Aged in 70% neutral foudre, 30% stainless. No malolactic fermentation.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Rías Baixas is tucked into the green rolling hills of the northwest corner of Spain, just above Portugal, hugging the deep blue Atlantic coastline. It is a breathtaking region overall, and the sub-region of Val do Salnés, the birthplace of Albariño, is no exception. Within the five unique subzones that fall under the D.O. Rías Baixas, Val do Salnés' prime location is the coolest and most fertile area of the D.O. on the Atlantic coast of Spain. In fact, there is more Albariño vines planted there than any of the other four sub-regions sharing its Rías Baixas name. The soil here is pure granite with top layers of rocks and alluvial soil, perfect for the fresh, Albariño expression. With average temperatures of approximately 60F (16C) between April and October, Rías Baixas is also one of the rainiest areas in Spain with median annual rain falling 63inches (1600mm). This can often cause difficulties in reaching optimum sugar levels during the last few, very vital, weeks before harvest, often resulting in vintage variation.

TASTING NOTES Pale, green-tinged yellow. Bright and sharply focused on the nose, displaying incisive Meyer lemon, honeysuckle, quinine and mineral scents, along with a hint of ginger in the background. Dry, taut and light on its feet, offering intense, mineral-laced citrus and orchard fruit flavors that show no excess weight. Closes on a spicy note, displaying strong, floral-tinged persistence. -- Josh Reynolds.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13%

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