

Wines of Spain

Introduction

Spain is the third largest wine producer in the world and has the largest land area dedicated to vineyards than any other country. Earlier, it was known for ‘sherry’ and red wines from Rioja, outside Spain. However, today, almost all its wines are well – recognized because of dedicated and continuous efforts on improving the quality. Some new wine makers are employing modern technology and introduce classic grape varieties along with native grapes, to wide range of wines.

Spain has a diverse climate which gives a variety of wine styles – full – bodied wines, light wines, and sparkling wines. Sparkling wines are made in Spain using methode champenoise named Cava.

Spanish Wine Classification

Spanish wine classification is based on French appellation system, which not only identifies the specific area of production and the grapes used but also the minimum ageing period which is applied to all Spanish wines.

Spanish Wine Areas

Rioja

This region makes the best known Spanish table wines, including red and white of different styles and rose. The key feature of Rioja is that it is aged for a longer period in 225 litre barricas (barrels); for instance, reds are aged as long as 15-20 years obtaining an oak flavour from the wood. The reds are mainly from *tempranillo*. The whites of Rioja are made chiefly *viura*. The three Rioja red wine classifications, as found on the front or back of Spanish wine bottle labels are as follows –

- **Crianza** – This is fresh, fruit – flavored, youthful, red wine that is aged in oak for a minimum of one year and then kept another year for ageing in the bottle.
- **Reserva** – The ageing requirements for a Reserva are a minimum of one year in a barrel and another two years in either a barrel or a bottle.
- **Gran Reserva** – These wines require barrel ageing for two years and must have another three years (minimum) of bottle ageing before they are released. The Gran Reserva is not made every year. It has a high status because it is only made in extraordinary vintages.



Penedes

The Penedes area produces excellent white, red and sparkling wines. It is an official place for *Cava* (sparkling wine). *Cava* is the name given to the sparkling wines of Spain, made by the traditional method (method champenoise). Examples of Cava – Rimat, Cavas Hill.



Other Regions

Jerez – This region produces fortified wine Sherry.

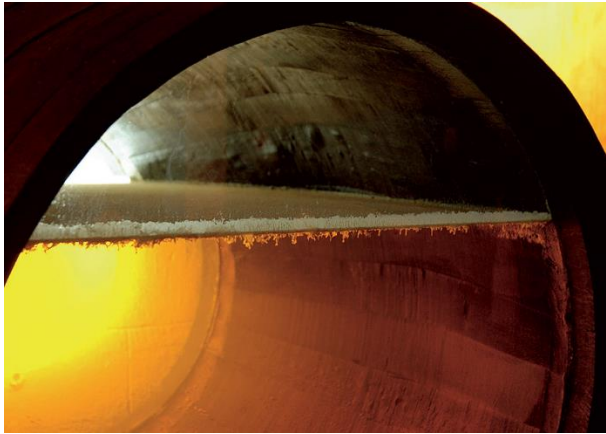
Malaga – This region produces a sweet fortified wine called Malaga.

MAKING OF SHERRY

Pedro ximenez (sweeting), Palomino & Muscato. Grapes are spread on esparto grass once dried it is pressed using **zapotas**. Pressed three times, first 2 pressing are used for sherry and last for vinegar. After grapes are pressed gypsum, calcium sulphate is added to increase acidity. This is called **plastering**. The must is then sent to **bodegas**.



First fermentation last for a week. Now it develops a thick screen of yeast called **flor**. This is what makes the sherry dry. If no flor sherry becomes sweet. Flor imparts dryness and prevents entry of oxygen. A sherry cask has two bung holes, to see development of flor and to add brandy. Now wine is racked, it is tasted and sent to **criaderas** (casks are stored).



SOLERA SYSTEM

The **solera system** is topping of older wines with more recently made sherry. Solera system consist of number of tiers of sherry casks from oldest to the most recent. (**Oldest is kept down**). Usually 1/3rd of the oldest wine is drawn off, then replaced by the wine from the next oldest, so on up through the solera system. This process makes young wine give their nutrient to older wines. Sherry is matured for about 9 yrs. Tasted, filtered and sometimes colored with caramel. Sherry is not vintage wine, as it is Blended .This wine comes from dozens of years wine.



STYLES OF SHERRY

Fino ('fine' in Spanish) is the driest and palest of the traditional varieties of sherry. Full flor development. Best served as Aperitif.

Manzanilla is a variety of fino sherry made around the port of Sanlúcar de Barrameda.

Amontillado is a variety of sherry that has been aged first partial flor development, darker than fino but lighter than oloroso.

Amoroso deep colour partial flor.

Oloroso ('scented' in Spanish) is a variety of sherry aged for a longer time than a fino or amontillado, producing a darker and richer wine.

Palo Cortado is a rare variety of sherry that is initially aged under flor like an amontillado, but develops a character similar to oloroso, with some of the richness of oloroso and some of the crispness of amontillado.

Cream Sherry is a common variety of sweet sherry made from oloroso, with other varieties including **pale cream sherry** (made from fino) and **medium sherry** (made from amontillado) served as dessert wine.

Sherry SHIPPERS

Shippers are exporters or importers. The best sherry shippers are as follows:

- Croft
- Terry
- Williams & Humbert
- Sandeman
- John Harvey & Sons
- Duff Gordon
- Pedro Domecq

Brands of SHERRY

- Gonzalez Byass
- Hidalgo
- Domecq
- Osborne
- Harveys
- Lustau
- Taylor



WHAT IS MALAGA?

It is a sweet fortified wine that comes from Malaga on the Mediterranean coast of Spain. The main grape used is Pedro Ximenez. It is matured in the Solera System.

TYPES OF MALAGA

Malaga is classified according to age, colour, and sugar content.

According to the age, there are known by the following names

- Malaga – It is aged for 6-24 months.
- Malaga noble – Aged for 2-3 years.
- Malaga anejo – Aged for 3-5 years.
- Malaga transanejo – Aged for more than 5 years.

According to their colour, the classification is as follows

- **Dorado or golden** – It is produced with no added grape syrup.
- **Rojo Dorado or rot golden** – It is produced with the addition of up to 5 per cent grape syrup.
- **Oscuro or brown** – It is produced with the addition of grape syrup between 5 and 10 per cent.
- **Colour (coloured)** – It is produced with the addition of grape syrup between 10 and 15 per cent.
- **Negro or Dunkel (Dark)** – It is an aged wine produced with the addition of over 15 per cent of added grape syrup.

According to sugar content, they are classified as follows

- **Dulce crema or cream** - Contains sugar between 100 g/l and 140 g/l (gram per litre). Its colour ranges from amber to dark amber.
- **Dry pale or pale dry** – Has sugar content not more than 45 g/l.
- **Pale cream** – Has sugar content higher than 45 g/l/
- **Sweet** – Has sugar content more than 140 g/l. Its colour ranges from amber to black.

Producers of Malaga

- Scholtz Hermanos
- Larios
- Manischewitz
- Jorge Ordonez