

Valdespino, Classic Collection,
Medium Dry Amontillado `Contrabandista` NV
Jerez, Andalucia, Spain



PRODUCER

Valdespino is one of the oldest bodegas in Jerez, with a history of Sherry production going back six centuries. Back in 1264, Alfonso Valdespino was one of 24 knights who fought against the invaders for the city of Jerez with King Alfonso X. As a reward for his efforts, he was given the land that formed the basis of the bodega. Today Valdespino belongs to the Estévez family, who purchased the bodega in 1999. They own 750 hectares of vineyards in Jerez, including the renowned 'Macharnudo' Pago. This vineyard ownership allows Valdespino very close control over grape quality. They are one of the few bodegas to make single-vineyard Sherries and are also renowned for their VOS (Very Old Sherry) with over 20 years of ageing and VORS (Very Old Rare Sherry) with over 30 years of ageing.

VINEYARDS

The Palomino grapes were grown in the Pago Macharnudo – one of the top single-vineyard sites on the Jerez DO. At 135 metres above sea level, it is one of the highest altitude sites in the region. It has a south-east aspect with a 10% gradient – perfect exposure for the Palomino to reach optimum levels of ripeness. Soils are white 'albariza' - rich in calcium carbonate, silica and clay. Albariza has excellent water retention properties and acts like a sponge, but it also forms a hard surface layer when it dries out, preventing evaporation. After the harvest, channels are dug between the vines to exploit these properties and trap the winter rains, creating a water reserve to sustain the vines through the heat of the Jerezano summers. The Pedro Ximénez grapes are sourced from the Montilla-Moriles region, which is further inland and hotter and drier than Jerez. After being harvested, the PX grapes are raised on esparto grass mats in the sun before being vinified. The evaporation of water from the grapes concentrates the sugars, acids and flavours.

VINIFICATION

The Palomino is fermented to dryness in 600-litre American oak barrels and then fortified to 15%. The barrels are only partially filled and this allows a thick veil of 'flor' (yeast) to develop on the wine's surface, protecting it from oxygen. The young wine, known as the 'sobretabla', is then fed into the 'Inocente' solera system where it ages biologically under the 'flor' and is fractionally blended through the different criadera levels. It is then further fortified to 18%, the flor layer breaks down and it ages oxidatively in the solera system of the Amontillado 'Tio Diego'. Finally, a proportion of lusciously sweet Pedro Ximénez sherry is blended into the rich Amontillado, producing a medium dry sherry with an average age of over 14 years.

TASTING NOTES

The label was inspired by the painting 'Venta del Gato' (The Cat's Inn), depicting a 'Contrabandista' (smuggler) from the early 19th Century. Smugglers often travelled the road between Gibraltar and Jerez, to trade goods from the British Colony in Jerez. This medium dry Amontillado has a light mahogany colour with a bright amber border. The nose shows intense aromas of roasted hazelnuts, raisins and dates, coupled with notes of butterscotch and toffee. This wine is medium-bodied with a perfectly balanced sweetness and a long, smooth finish.

Grape Varieties	95% Palomino 5% Pedro Ximénez
Winemaker	Eduardo Ojeda
Closure	Natural Cork
ABV	18%
Residual Sugar	35g/L
Acidity	4.04g/L
Bottle Sizes	75cl
Notes	Vegetarian, Vegan

