

# 21 DAYS TO WINE: DAY 20

## WHAT IS FORTIFIED WINE?

WINE: Barbadillo Pedro Ximénez Sherry

SCENTS: Cigar tobacco, Honey

SUPPLIES: A white napkin or piece of white paper (to observe)

# 21 DAYS TO WINE

## REVIEW

In the last episode we discussed ways to make dessert wines, including harvesting grapes late and/ or drying them, both of which impart greater aroma and more sugar.

We also discussed early on the fermentation duration, and the fact that wines become drier and potentially sparkling the longer they are fermenting. When you stop fermentation early, wines, like Moscato D'Asti for example, come out sweeter.

## FORTIFIED WINES

Fortified wines fall outside the standard tasting method because, as their name implies, they are fortified, which means something has been added to make them stronger. Like a fortress, fortified wines are built strong and built to last.

## WHAT IS ADDED?

Distilled alcohol, most often Brandy.

## MORE ALCOHOL = MORE VOLATILITY AND A LONGER LIFE

Alcohol is volatile, which means those aromatic molecules get an extra lift, which makes fortified wines not only stronger, but also intensely aromatic. The added alcohol also gives them a longer shelf life, which means you can really take your time and enjoy them, so buy a nice bottle don't worry about finishing it right away.

## WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF FORTIFIED WINES?

Examples of Fortified Wines include: Port, Sherry, Marsala and Madeira, Banyuls, and Vermouth.

They range in color, sweetness, and strength and are known for their **complex bouquets** with notes of honey, flowers, caramel, dried fruit, spices, sweet tobacco, leather, and burnt sugar. They are also known to have varying degrees of an oxidized quality.

## HOW ARE FORTIFIED WINES MADE?

There is a massive range in the styles of fortified wines, but essentially a **distilled spirit is added during or after fermentation.**

When you add alcohol to the fermenting grape must, it kills the yeast and stops fermentation. This means that the wine will have plenty of residual sugar, and often times a sweeter, fresher flavor left over. Depending on the grape variety, i.e., aromatic, semi-aromatic or neutral, you may or may not have a lot of complex aromas. On the other hand, some aromas need fermentation time to evolve and emerge, as with certain Sherries.

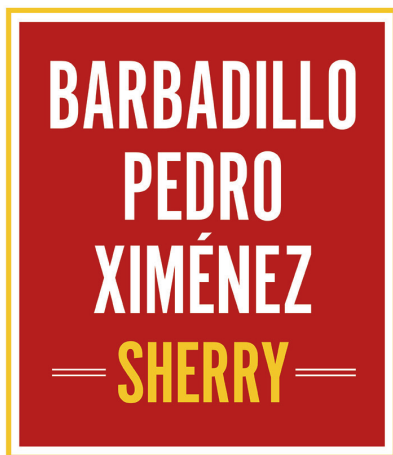
## SHORT HISTORY OF FORTIFIED WINES

*Production of fortified wines can be traced to the late 1600s. Under English Imperial rule, wine traders in Southern Italy, Spain and Portugal devised ways to transport the sweet and aromatic wines grown along the coast.*

*They found that adding brandy, or other distilled liquor stopped the wines from going bad or re-fermenting on their long boat ride home.*

*During the journey the wines also had a chance to oxidize in oak barrels as they made their way across the sea. This combination of oxidation, and the added brandy (which made the whole thing possible), became so popular, that fortified wine production exploded.*

*Over the years, like any normal wine appellation, local laws were put into place to protect the style and traditional grape growing. Marsala, Port, Sherry, and Madeira all come in varying degrees of color, sweetness, and age.*



### HOW DOES THIS TRANSLATE TO AROMA?

Depending on how long the wines are aged in wooden casks, they take on degrees of dried fruit, over-ripe fruit, and a fleshy, nutty quality, leather and spice.

One of the pleasures of fortified wines is that in a way they offer the best of both worlds. The spectrum of aromas is so complex and often quite sweet, but the wine itself can be extremely fresh, depending on when they added distilled liquor and how much sugar is left over.

For example, **Sherry Fino and Manzanilla** have fresher, citrusy notes because they are not aged as long in barrels, and they were fermented to nearly dry white wine status prior to adding distilled liquor, whereas a **Pedro Jimenez**, which is made from super ripe grapes and aged for at least three years in oak barrels has mountains of beautiful ripe and dry fruit notes, but a clean tannic palate.

### HOW DO THEY FEEL ON THE PALATE?

Alcohol and sugar both translate to heat, silkiness, and finish (volatility= more aroma that lasts longer). Alcohol, acidity, and tannins can both aid in cleaning your palate, so depending on the ripeness and grape variety there is plenty of variation in the balance.

### FORTIFIED WINE PAIRING

Much like some dessert wines, fortified wines also have a lot of those aromas that come as a garnish on your cheese plate, like dried fruit and honey. That makes these great for pairing with cheese.

They also work with and traditionally accompany fatty and salty cured meats. The residual sugar is balancing while the tannin and alcohol help clean the palate.

# SHERRY GRAPES: PALOMINO AND PEDRO XIMÉNEZ

PRONUNCIATION: Pa-Lo-Mee-No // Pay-Dro Hee-Men-Ezz

*An Anglicized version of the Spanish Xeres (Jerez), the wine takes its name for the port city of Jerez de la Frontera, in Andalusia in Southern Spain. To carry the Protected Designation of Origin label, the wines must be produced in an area around Jerez de la Frontera, which is referred to the Sherry Triangle.*

### GRAPE VARIETIES AND STYLES

Sherry is made from predominately the white-skinned grape, Palomino. In the case of sweeter versions, Pedro Ximénez or Moscatel.

There are a variety of styles that vary according fermentation techniques and aging and oxidation.

**Manzanilla and Fino** are lighter, drier and more citrusy in style. They are fermented as dry white wines and the brandy is added at the end of the fermentation process.

**Amontillado and Oloroso** age far longer in oak barrels and have nuttier, earthier and spicy flavors.

The **Pedro Ximénez** grape gives its name to the sweet version of Sherry. In this case, the grapes are dried, most often in the sun so that sugar and aromas accumulate, like in late harvest or straw wines. The wines are then fermented slightly and alcohol is added later. The wines then age in oak casks. These are richly aromatic with notes of dried fruit, spices, molasses, honey, and tobacco.

### SOLERA AGING SYSTEM

Sherry rarely carries a vintage on the bottle as wines from different years are blended together to create depth and complexity of flavor and aroma, as well as consistency of character and style. The Solera method involves taking the wine from the bottom barrels and adding to some from the top, that being the newest wine.

*my notes*

# TASTING NOTES

**LOOK:** Deep brick, mahogany color

**SMELL:** Intense and complex notes of dried fruit: raisin, cherries, plums, cinnamon, and chocolate

**TASTE:** Silky luscious on the palate with long lingering notes that recall the nose. Sweet yet balanced with alcohol and acidity.

## DISCUSS

This is dessert in a glass. Try it with chocolate or as the winery suggests, foie gras!

*Cheers!*  
**ANNIE**

## WINE NOTES

### WINERY

Founded in 1821, Barbadillo has grown into one of the largest producers in the region of Cadiz, in Andalusia and is recognizable throughout Spain and much of the world. While they focus their production on fortified wines like Sherry and Pedro Ximénez, they also produce dry red and white wines made in the traditional method.

### WINEMAKING

Grapes are hand harvested, and sun-dried slightly. The wine is fermented slightly and then fortified and aged and blended.

