

CLASS A – APERITIF SHERRY

Presented by Colin Nicholson (Victoria Chapter)

2014

SHERRY DECODED: TOP STYLES

Led by a wave of artisanal wines, Sherry is winning a new generation of fans. Here's the 411 by **Michael Schachner (Wine Enthusiast)**

Ready for a vinous oxymoron? Sherry, for ages one of the most tradition-bound, staid and ignored wines in the world, is surging in popularity.

A new generation of wine drinkers is embracing this idiosyncratic, fortified product from Spain's deep south.

If this sounds like a story you've heard before, I hear you.

As long as I have been covering Sherry, the message out of Andalucía has been that Sherry is being rediscovered en masse, Or, that Sherry producers, believing that their wines are about to take off, are mounting yet another global marketing campaign. Or, simply, that Sherry is the most underappreciated; yet perfect wine to pair with food.

But according to tastemakers – i.e. the sommeliers who sell Sherry daily- there's something different this time around, adding traction to the latest movement.

Young wine devotees-millennial-are enthralled with discovering Sherry's myriad styles and flavours, especially if the wines are made in tiny batches by small bodegas.

"There's been renewed interest in Sherry, that's for sure," says Gil Vital, wine director at Tertulia (<http://tertulianyc.com/>), a Spanish restaurant in New York City. Avital says he's been "blowing through" artisan Sherries lately.

" We're seeing an openness to try different Sherries, especially among customers in their 20s and 30s.and that is refreshing", says Avital. Still, the majority of our guests need guidance when selecting a Sherry to go with what they are eating.

"To really know Sherry, one needs to spend a lot of time tasting the many different styles from many sub regions and producers," he says.

But trying they are, at least those who are hip to the nuances of this centuries-old style of wine.

Sherries are aged in a unique system called the solera, where barrels of fortified wines sit for years at ambient temperatures. Portions of the wine are removed from the oldest barrels for bottling, with new stocks added to keep the solera going.

CLASS A APERITIF SHERRY (BCAWA COMPETITION HANDBOOK)

This class is intended for dry and not-so-sweet sherry, Madeira and related wine types. The very sweet wines of these classes belong to the after dinner class.

Alcohol	15.5%-20%
Color	No restrictions
Sugar	0%-10%
SG:	0.980-1007
Acid:	4.0g/l-5.5g/l
Ph:	2.9-3.3

WHAT IS AN “APERITIF SHERRY”?

Aperitifs of any sort are meant to stimulate the appetite and awaken the digestive enzymes, in order to best enjoy a meal. The word aperitif comes from the Latin ‘aperire,’ meaning ‘to open.’ Sherry is a fortified wine. It differs from other wines in how it is treated after fermentation. It comes in different styles, based on sweetness. Aperitif sherry is not the typical sweet after-dinner drink found on a restaurant list; it is dry, delicate and is often characterized by the name ‘Fino’ crisp, dry, yeasty, nutty and tangy, fino is the freshest and most delicate of sherry styles, weighing in at around 15% alcohol. Protected from oxygen during its development by the flor, a layer of film-forming yeasts on top of the developing wine, fino needs to be treated like white wine once it has been opened. It is a versatile food companion

The two other types of sherry, Amontillado and Oloroso, are both meant to be consumed after a meal and at room temperature. Amontillado sherry is an aged fino that has lost its flor and gone on to develop oxidatively, amber-colored, complex and has a nutty flavour, is sweeter, softer and darker in colour than a Fino. Olorosos develops in the barrel without the protective flor layer, often for many years, the result is a complex, rich, nutty style with aromas of old furniture and raisins and darker yet than the than the medium sherry Amontillado. These wines are dry. Because they have seen so much oxidation during development. It is sweetened by the addition of Pedro Ximenez grapes. Cream sherries are sweetened Oloroso sherries.

Madeira also has a number of styles: the two drier types come from the Verdelho and Sercial grapes. Verdelho is medium dry and has a golden colour, while Sercial is very dry and has a lighter colour. The sweeter styles use either Malvasia or Bual grapes. Malvasia creates sweet chestnut brown drink. Bual is more medium sweet, velvety Madeira that is dark gold to brown colour.

TECHNICAL CHARACTERISTICS.

Before the phylloxera infestation in 1894 there were other varieties of grapes used in Spain for the production of sherry: however, now there are only three grown for sherry making. Palomino, Pedro Ximenez (PX) and Moscatel the latter two used mainly for sweetening. Palomino is used by home winemakers but is getting harder and harder to find

The grapes used to make Madeira are Verdelho, Sercial, Bual and Malvasia. Terrantez, Bastardo and Moscatel are also used but more rare since the phylloxera infestation. At

present the workhorse variety is a red grape called Tinta Negra Mole (said to be a variety of Pinot Noir) Bastardo is the only other red grape of the bunch, and the rest are all white. Palomino is also used by the home winemaker to make Madeira style wines. The biggest difference between the two styles is the Madeira style at the end of fermentation is fortified and sweetened if so desired and put into a heated container called an estufa and cooked and oxidized until it reaches the character you are looking for.

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