



Traditional pergola-trained Albariño in Rías-Baixas



BURGANS

Somehow cooperatives developed a bad reputation. While it is certainly true that cooperatives can make mediocre wine, it is also true that proper Domaines can be guilty of the same offense. It's not the nature of the operation that determines quality, but what happens in the vineyard and cellar. Burgans is a custom cuvée made for European Cellars by Martin Codax, the largest cooperative in Rías-Baixas. Founded in 1986 by about 50 families with small plots of Albariño around the village of Cambados under the guidance of Luciano Amoedo, it has grown over the last three decades to include almost 600 families and well over 3000 small parcels of Albariño.

By volume, the vast majority of grapes grown in Rías-Baixas are made into wine at any one of a number of cooperatives for the simple reason that much of the land in Rías Baixas is broken up into tens of thousands of small holdings. Almost everyone you meet has a family home in the semi-suburban countryside where they grow a wide variety of crops. Large contiguous estates are fairly rare by comparison so by necessity most growers are members of a local cooperative or they sell their fruit to the few “larger” estates in the area. Most of the Albariño consumed in the world comes from a handful of Cooperatives rather than a multitude of smaller estates.



The driving force behind Martin Codax is Luciano Amoedo, a ninth generation grape grower in Rias Baixas and an early proponent of the Albariño variety. Long before Albariño was synonymous with Rias-Baixas, Luciano was dedicated to the promotion and development of both. Now an official in the local DO, the day to day winemaking responsibilities at the cooperative are in the hands of Katia Alvarez.

With such a vast array of sites and with so many individuals involved, Martin Codax has invested in a team of viticulturist who make regular visits to the vineyards to educate the members on proper farming techniques and sustainable practices including the use of cover crops to fix nitrogen in the sandy, granitic soils. They host a daily radio broadcast in the region as well, to encourage best practices and they pay their members based on the quality of their fruit, not the quantity. All the vineyards are located in the Salnes sub-zone of the appellation – the coolest and most humid of the regions within Rias-Baixas.

In the cellar the wines are fermented and aged in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks to preserve the freshness and bracing acidity that is typical of Albariño grown in the Val do Salnes. Each vintage several experimental fermentations are conducted to understand the minor variations of site, the role of natural yeasts, the length of elevage and the applicability of different fermentation vessels. All of these experiments are used to improve the quality of the wines with each successive vintage.

FACTS at a GLANCE

Founded	1986
Proprietor	Cooperative Martin Codax
Winemaker	Katia Alvarez
Size	450 ha
Elevation	20 – 150 meters above sea level
Soils	Granite, schist, sand
Vine Age	20+
Varieties	Albariño
Farming	Sustainable
Harvest	Manual
Cellar	Fermentation and aging in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks

