



CASA CASTILLO

El Molar

José Maria is a third generation owner and operator of Casa Castillo a farm that began as a rosemary plantation but one that has evolved into the preeminent estate in the DO of Jumilla. While the smell of rosemary still lingers in the air, the pale, rocky soils surrounding his house and cellar are now planted with vines, olive and almond orchards separated by indigenous and highly aromatic herbs. When José Maria's grandfather purchased Casa Castillo in 1941 there was already a winery, cellar and some scattered vineyards on the property dating to the 1870s, established by French refugees fleeing the plight of phylloxera in their native land. In 1985 José and his father began to replant the vineyards and expand them with the goal of making wine on the property. In 1991 they bottled their first commercial vintage.

José Maria has converted his estate to certified organic farming and his entire harvest is manual and brought promptly to the cellar for sorting and fermentation. Fermentations are in stainless steel tanks or underground concrete vats. Pigeage is done by foot and whole clusters are increasingly used – up to 50% in the Pie Franco. Aging follows in concrete, foudre and 500L French oak demi-muids. All this effort is made to restrain the natural exuberance of his principal variety, Monastrell, to showcase its potential even in the warmest climate to make wines that are both dense and nuanced.

While Garnacha has been grown in Jumilla for centuries it has never been taken quite as seriously as Monastrell and most of it has been blended with other varieties. This seems all the more remarkable considering how closely the terroir of Jumilla resembles that of the Southern Rhone – hot, dry summers, and a limestone subsoil topped with gravel. A few years back Jose Maria planted Garnacha in some of his most gravelly soils as an experiment. Named for the mountain with overshadows his property, El Molar is fermented 50% whole cluster with indigenous yeasts and spends 14 months in foudres and neutral 500L French oak demi-muids, resulting in a wine that is pale, fresh, and aromatic – a promising new directing for the property and the DO.

ORIGIN

Spain

APPELLATION

Jumilla

SOIL

Sandy clay, gravel

AGE OF VINES

10-15

ELEVATION

750 meters

VARIETIES

Garnacha

FARMING

Certified organic (CAERM)

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, 50% whole cluster, natural yeast fermentation in concrete, manual pigeage

AGING

14 months in foudres, and 500L neutral French oak demi-muids

ACCOLADES

94 – 2021 El Molar – Wine Advocate

95 – 2020 El Molar – Wine Advocate

94 – 2019 El Molar – Wine Advocate

