



CASA CASTILLO

Pie Franco

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.

Depending on whom you consult, the Pie Franco from Casa Castillo is considered: the benchmark wine from Jumilla, the best example of Monastrell in Spain or one of Spain's greatest wines. The Pie Franco comes from the oldest vineyard (about 75 years old) on the property, La Solana. Solana is noted for its sandy soils that are phylloxera resistant but not completely immune and each year a few vines succumb to the disease which combined with the low yields means that there is very little Pie Franco to go around. For many years this cuvée was only available in Europe but recently a small amount has been made available to us. A pre-fermentation maceration proceeds fermentation in stone lagars after which the wine is racked into neutral 500 liter French oak demi-muids where it ages for 16 to 18 months.

ORIGIN

Spain

APPELLATION

Jumilla

SOIL

Sandy clay limestone

AGE OF VINES

75

ELEVATION

750 meters

VARIETIES

Monastrell

FARMING

Certified organic (CAERM)

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, 30-50% whole cluster fermentation in stone lagars, frequent manual pigeage

AGING

16-18 months in neutral 500L French oak demi-muids

ACCOLADES

100 – 2020 Pie Franco – Wine Advocate

97 – 2019 Pie Franco – Wine Advocate

98 – 2018 Pie Franco – Wine Advocate

