Rafael Palacios

Louro

As quaffable and enjoyable as Godello can be from Valdeorras, it rarely reaches the level of richness, balance and complexity as it does in the hands of Rafael Palacios. Having left his family’s estate in Rioja in 2004, Rafa settled in the Val do Bibei, a rugged, weathered and off the beaten path sub-zone of Valdeorras. Bordering Ribera Sacra, the Val do Bibei is a tortured landscape of granitic, terraced slopes dotted with hard to reach and hard to farm vineyard plots. Whereas most of the rest of the DO is at lower elevation with limestone and schist soils, Rafa works exclusively with Godello planted on granitic soils at much higher elevations – so high that late Spring snow and frost are ever present dangers to his already low yields. Locally these plots are known as sorte, a word in the local dialect that refers to the practice of drawing lots to determine inheritance. Rafa has assembled 24.5 hectares of vines divided among 32 sorte. Some plots he owns outright, others are on long-term lease. The oldest vines, some nearing a century, are head pruned while the younger vines on more gentle slopes are trellised. The farming is minimalist since the sub-zone is blessed with free draining soils and warm, dry summers. All the vineyard work done by hand, including harvesting.

Louro is a blend of Godello with a small amount of Treixadura from parcels located in the villages of Chandoiro, Lentellais, Outardepregos and Santa Cruz. After decades of conventional farming, the organic practices of Rafa have begun to revitalize the soils of these sites and Louro is becoming more complex with each vintage. Louro is fermented in French oak foudres and aged on its lees for four months. Up to 10% of the blend in Louro will be Treixadura, a variety that can be found co-planted in Rafa’s sortes.

Accolades

93 – 2017 Louro – Jeb Dunnuck
92 – 2017 Louro – Wine Advocate
92 – 2016 Louro – Wine Advocate
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As Sortes takes the selection process one step further by employing grapes from vines between 35 and 92 years old, fermenting them with indigenous yeasts and aging them in 500L French oak barrels. For many years this was the benchmark wine of Valdeorras (and arguably Spain’s premiere white wine) until it was unseated by Rafa’s newest cuvée, Sorte O Soro.

**ACCOLADES**

- **93 – 2014 As Sortes – Vinous Media**
- **93+ – 2012 As Sortes – Wine Advocate**
- **93 – 2011 As Sortes – Wine Advocate**
RAFAEL PALACIOS

Sorte O Soro

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Sorte O Soro is the culmination of Rafa’s pioneering work in the Val do Bibei. Originating from a single .47 hectare plot of 40 year-old vines and farmed biodynamically, Sorte O Soro is the Les Clos or the Clos Ste Hune of Valdeorras. A natural yeast fermentation is followed by aging for 8 months in new 500 L French oak barrels. Luis Gutierrez when tasting the 2011 Sorte O Soro called it, “one of the most exciting whites currently produced in the country.”

ACCOLADES

95 – 2011 Sorte O Soro – Wine Advocate