

Pepe Mendoza, El Veneno, DO Vinos Alicante, Spain, 2020

Producer Profile

Pepe Mendoza is one of the most respected winemakers in southeast Spain, focusing on local and Mediterranean varieties, sourced from their own vineyards in the Alto Vinalopó region near Villena, and the coastal-influenced Marina Alta.

His latest project, Casa Agrícola is a personal project, created with his wife Pepa Agulló, to make high-quality wines from Monastrell, Syrah, Macabeo, Moscatel and Giró. With plantings dating back to 1923, vineyards are organically cultivated, dry-farmed on ancient terraces, and in tune with the climate of Alicante. Pepe refers to his entry level wines as 'landscape wines', the white a delicious blend of Macabeo and Airen from Vinalopó, and Moscatel from Marina Alta, whilst the red is equal parts Monastrell, Giró and Garnacha Tintorera (aka Alicante Bouschet) from Alto Vinalopó. Pureza is skin contact Moscatel fermented in amphorae. With the pinnacle of the range, two single vineyard wines, El Veneno, a stunningly fresh expression of Monastrell sourced from the highest plots in Alto Vinalopó, and Abarques, which reflects the character of Giró and the Marina Alta location.

Viticulture

This comes from a beautiful mountain plot named after an ill-tempered past owner Uncle Veneno because he was quite serious, mean spirited and hard on his neighbours! Despite this he left in his memory a magnificent and exceptional vineyard; El Veneno situated at Alto Vinalopó at around 650 meters above sea level, this 5 ha vineyard is on average 57 years old, on sandy loam soils, with a lot of calcareous caliche stone.

Winemaking

Despite being serious, this expression of Monastrell is created with simplicity, and emphasising the high potential grapes and hands on approach. Maceration is soft, manual and delicate with skins and only 30% of stems (no pumping). Native yeasts start fermentation, in 1000l vats for 8-10 days. Whole cluster pressed. Lees contact without batonnage. Malolactic in oak casks.

Tasting Note

A serious expression of Monastrell with notes of lavender, rockrose, scrub, holm oak and Mediterranean pines. The fruit and mountainous notes come first, then subtle oak accompanies and gives complexity for a magnificent mouthfeel which is long and balanced. A wine to be aged.

Food Matching

Matches the bold flavours of Iberian sausage, sheep's cheeses, grilled lamb or aged chuletón steak.

Awards

Robert Parkers The Wine Advocate 95+ Points

Technical Details

Varieties:

Monastrell 100%



ABV: 14%

Closure: Natural cork

Colour: Red

Style: Still wine

Case Size: 6 x 75cl

Oak Ageing

Time: 1 Year

Type: French Oak 500L

% wine oaked: 100

% new oak: 100

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