



Spain: Galicia Calidade

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Galicia Calidade is a slogan (in Gallego language) used to promote quality Galician products and nowadays an idiom that has transcended to casual language when talking about the region. I think it expresses very well what I found tasting the wines from the finest producers in such a large region in the northwest of Spain where we have a good example of the diversity found in the country. There are five appellations of origin and a handful of IGPs for regional wines and a good array of grape varieties and wine styles.

I should have published this report a few weeks ago, but some personal circumstances and a new wave of the Omicron variant of COVID delayed me just when things were looking almost normal again. As a result, I ended up with two vintages to taste for many wines/wineries.

My previous round was during the hard COVID lockdown, when I set the objective to publish an appellation each week; that was possible because everyone was home and had enough time and focus to send me the bottles exactly when I needed them, something that is very difficult to achieve under more normal circumstances, as we had this year. I did a deep dive into Rías Baixas, Ribeiro, Ribeira Sacra, Valdeorras and Monterrei and the IGPs; those article contain lots of background information you might want to check. I don't think I've worked longer hours in my life than during those weeks of lockdown in 2020. This time, I've gone back to publishing the whole of Galicia in a single article you are now reading.

Virgen del Galir is a property purchased by CVNE in Valdeorras. Other than working with the grapes from the estate vineyards in a warmer place in the Galir Valley to produce whites from slate soils, they are also recovering old vineyards in the zone of As Ermidas in the Bibei Valley to produce reds from granite soils. The winery produces around 100,000 bottles.

2021 • Maruxa Godello

Rating

90

Reviewed by
Luis Gutiérrez

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The village white from Éntoma is the 2021 Maruxa Godello from different vineyards, soils and orientations but mostly from the south and on slate, from a cooler vintage with moderate alcohol (13%) and generous natural acidity (six grams). The full clusters were pressed, and the juice fermented with indigenous yeasts. It was kept with lees for three months.

It's very balsamic and has notes of bay leaf and feels a little reductive. It's varietal and flattering, gentle and caressing and has a fresh and elegant finish.

40,000 bottles produced. It was bottled in January 2022.

2021 • Maruxa Mencía

Rating

89

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The red village 2021 Maruxa Mencía comes from different plots on the banks of the Galir and Sil Rivers on slate and clay soils. It fermented in stainless steel and was bottled unoaked, looking for pure Mencía. Despite the lack of oak, there is a certain creaminess intermixed with herbal and wild notes of the variety. It's a village wine from Éntoma, a warm place where the challenge is to keep the freshness. They describe this as a distant cousin of a mineral Gamay from Beaujolais. Varietal, refreshing and easy to drink. 26,000 bottles produced. It was bottled in January 2022.

2020 • Pagos del Galir Godello

Rating

91+

Reviewed by
Luis Gutiérrez

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The white 2020 Pagos del Galir A Malosa Godello was produced with grapes from a large vineyard (21 hectares!) planted over four years after purchasing over 100 small plots from local growers. So, it has different soils, expositions and altitudes. In 2020 they used the grapes from the lower and middle parts, the oldest plantings on slate soils fermented in stainless steel, barrels (500 and 600 liters) and oak foudres and then matured in foudres and barrels for seven months. 2020 saw a very early harvest with higher yields than 2019, resulting in a wine with 13.5% alcohol and 6.5 grams of acidity. They have seen that small barrels don't work in the region and have moved to larger sizes, all from French oak. The nose has a Burgundian feeling to it, spicy and with a toasty twist. The oak is still there, so it might need more time to get that creaminess integrated, but it's very clean and of high quality. There is great purity, definition and precision here. The wine is elegant and subtle, with a long, dry and tasty finish. It has good acidity, one of the challenges with Godello. 19,000 bottles and 300 magnums were produced. It was bottled in May 2021.

2019 • Pagos del Galir Mencía

Rating

91

Reviewed by
Luis Gutiérrez

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The red 2019 Pagos del Galir Mencía was produced with grapes from two plots in the village of Éntoma planted with a small percentage of other grapes, Brancellao, Sousón and Garnacha Tintorera. The terraced vines were planted in 1998 on slate soils, and the grapes were picked late, the last to be picked in the village. It fermented with indigenous yeasts in stainless steel and open-top barrels and matured in used 500-liter oak barrels for 10 months. It's quite ripe at 14% alcohol and has mellow acidity. It's more serious, with dark berry fruit, more in the style of a northern Rhône, juicy and meaty. It has a medium body and very fine tannins, integrated oak (they stopped using small barrels and went for larger ones) and a long, dry finish. Ripe but fresh. 13,000 bottles produced. It was bottled in May 2021.

**2020 •
Regueirón**

Rating

93

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The white 2020 Regueirón was produced with Godello grapes from a vineyard in the village of Éntoma that gives the wine its name and is mentioned on the label, a 0.42-hectare plot that was planted 25 years ago and contains a small percentage of Treixadura and Albariño on slate soil. It fermented in four 500-liter oak barrels and matured in those barrels for one year, followed by two months in foudre. It's perfumed and floral, nuanced and elegant, with subtle notes of spice and flint. It's medium-bodied, dry and fresh, balanced and serious. It's very expressive and feels very balanced and with the stuffing to develop and improve in bottle. 2,500 bottles and 60 magnums produced. It was bottled in December 2021.

2019 • Sede e Fame

Rating

93

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The 2019 Sede e Fame is a white produced from the oldest Palomino vines, from the beginning of the 20th century, in the zone of As Ermitas in the Val do Bibei. These grapes are the last to be picked in the valley, but the wine is only 11.8% alcohol and has good freshness (pH 3.2). It fermented in tinaja and a very old sherry cask, where it matured for 24 months. This is reductive, austere and serious, with acidity and freshness. It has spiciness from the butt, but it didn't develop any flor. It has the subtle salinity of the wines from the south. The palate is light to medium-bodied, sharp and dry, with a chalky feeling to it. The long aging has stabilized the wine that feels young and with a beautiful sapidity, the salty tastiness of granite. Austere and vertical in a style I love. 1,567 bottles were filled in December 2021.

**2020 •
A Villeira**

Rating

93+

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The red 2020 A Villeira was produced with a blend of Mencía and some Garnacha Tintorera, Brancellao, Sousón and Merenzao from a plot on granite soils in the zone of As Ermitas in the westernmost part of Valdeorras where the soils are granite, sand, slate and quartz on 0.4 hectares planted in 1958 on 12 small terraces at 700 meters in altitude. There is an old, small winery in the process of being restored, and they plan to ferment the wines from As Ermitas there. 2020 was an early harvest, but the wine is still 13.5% alcohol and has a pH of 3.35. It fermented in 500-liter oak barrels, where it matured for 12 months. This is meaty and juicy, floral, rustic and elegant, a little in the style of a northern Rhône, subtle and harmonious, elegant and powerful. It's dry and fresh, with fine-grained tannins and good precision. It has energy and depth with the electric minerality from the granite. It has a really captivating nose. 1,900 bottles and 50 magnums were filled in December 2021.

**2019 •
Los Carismáticos**

Rating

94

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Los Carismáticos is a Merenzao/Trousseau wine produced in a more delicate way. The 2019 Los Carismáticos comes from the Val do Bibei (As Ermitas), 0.3 hectares of 50+-year-old vines on decomposed granite soils. It has 13.5% alcohol, good freshness and moderate acidity. It fermented in 500-liter oak barrels with full clusters and matured in those barrels for 12 months, followed by three months in concrete. They believe this is the Bastardo strain of the grape, which has a paler color. They have planted a little more of this variety, which interests them very much, and are working hard to understand it. This is subtle and elegant, very floral, with a bright ruby color, a light palate and ethereal tannins, very long and tasty. This is simply delicious and very easy to drink. The good ripeness of the year helped here, and the wine managed to keep the freshness and poise. 1,200 bottles and 50 magnums were filled in May 2021.