

Heredad de Candela



The Candela family know their way around the Yecla DO and its native grapes, having founded Senorio de Barahonda in 1925 and handing down their artisan spirit through four generations. They live with the conviction that good wine is made in the vineyard, and their estate is farmed accordingly. Their 340 hectares (840 acres) are planted on sandy limestone soils and farmed organically, using no additional irrigation despite the extremely dry climate. Here, gnarly-looking Monastrell vines stand their ground against the scorching summer days and freezing winter nights, occasionally soothed by a westerly Mediterranean breeze. Heredad de Candela is a pure expression of Monastrell from the lowest-yielding vines in the family's estate. Made solely from their oldest vines planted around 1925, this is a serious wine with all the earthy and gamey qualities that Monastrell lovers dream of. Alfredo Candela, fourth generation bodeguero, or proprietor, has resurrected in this wine some of the traditional winemaking techniques of Yecla, utilizing open top fermenters and stem maceration. Heredad de Candela is also a very personal wine, a tribute to the family's heritage and winemaking in one of the most extreme viticultural regions of Europe, from the oldest winery in Yecla.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: Made from 100% Monastrell from head pruned, dry-farmed, organically grown vines planted between 1925 - 1935. Yields are miniscule (800 grams per vine, or 8.5 hectoliters/hectare). Little oak aging is used (only 12 months) to maximize the pure flavors of the Monastrell grape. This wine offers the rare opportunity to try a true monovarietal Monastrell (also known as Mourvedre) unmatched even in its more famous Mediterranean homes, such as Bandol.

RATING HISTORY: 2016 92VM, 90JS; 2015 89JS; 2014 92VM

GRAPE: 100% Monastrell. Organically grown vines planted from 1925 - 1935. Tended in limestone, clay and sandy soil at 713 m (2,339 ft) elevation

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: This grape and wine are more versatile than you think. From pulled pork sandwiches to braised beef shoulder in wild mushroom reduction, this wine can dress up or down as required by the cuisine. The essential character here is a cool climate, spicy, herbal and mineral-inflected red wine with woody and savory accents.

VINIFICATION AND AGEING: After the meager yields from the ancient Monastrell vines are harvested by hand, the perfect bunches are put into a refrigerated container at 50F degrees overnight to retain optimally fresh aromatics and dark pigmentation. Eighty percent of the bunches are de-stemmed and crushed, and the rest is macerated and fermented with the own stems. Fermentation takes place in open top small stainless steel tanks with daily pumping over to extract the flavor in the skins. Malolactic fermentation takes place in 500-liter French oak barrels. Stirring the lees in the barrels (batonnage) is a regular practice after malolactic fermentation. The wine is aged for twelve months in 500-liter French oak barrels.

PRODUCTION: 1,500 cases

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: The vineyards are located within the Yecla DO within Murcia in southeastern Spain. The vineyards are in the Campo Arriba district of Yecla, at 713 meters (2,339 ft.) elevation. Monastrell is more famously known as Mourvèdre in France, but originally hails from this part of Spain. Yecla's high altitude actually makes it significantly cooler than neighboring Jumilla, and the resulting wines are more aromatic, with a fresh, easy-to-drink character. The area's soils are composed of limestone and chalk with clay and gravel subsoils. Poor in organic matter, the soils are deep and have good drainage. Due to the low content of nutrients in the soil, the vines have low vigor and yields are only 2 kilograms (4.4 lbs.) of fruit per vine, which produces smaller berries with a higher skin-to-juice ratio. These grapes produce wines with greater concentration and complexity in aromas and palate flavors. The climate is Mediterranean with a light Continental influence due to the region's higher altitude. The vine virtually shuts down or slows considerably during the cool nights, which helps prolong the ripening period. This allows the Monastrell grapes to ripen slowly and prevents over-ripe grapes. Proximity to the Mediterranean Sea helps moderate the arid and sunny climate. The area receives a high amount of sunshine per year (3,893 hours).

TASTING NOTES Inky ruby. Intense, smoke-accented aromas of blackberry, cherry liqueur, spicecake and vanilla, along with a powerful floral overtone. Plush and expansive in the mouth, offering surprisingly energetic dark fruit, violet pastille and cola flavors that pick up a smoky element with air. Closes on a sweet cherry note, showing impressive thrust, lingering florality and supple tannins that fold effortlessly into the energetic fruit. This is a really impressive wine for the region.-- Josh Reynolds.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 14.5%

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Agustin Carrion and Araceli Gonzalez Martinez