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Oro de Castilla Verdejo

Bodegas Hermanos del Villar - Oro de Castilla is a family-owned winery located in Rueda, with a strong focus on crafting exceptionally high-quality wines. Its origins trace back to 1955 when Pablo del Villar Escudero arrived in Rueda, marking the inception of the del Villar family's engagement in the region. Later, between 1989 and 1990, the first vineyards were planted with the Verdejo, Sauvignon Blanc, and Tempranillo varieties.

Oro de Castilla Verdejo is made in a classic style which showcases the bright, fresh and mineral flavors of this grape. Renowned wine critic Josh Raynolds considers this wine “a textbook Verdejo" while the Spanish Wine Academy presents it as a “best example” Verdejo within the Rueda region section of its Spanish Wine Educator (SWE) certification program.

Its name, translating to "the Gold of Castile," pays homage to its roots. Located at a high elevation, overlooking Rueda, the vineyard is planted in a bed of river stones covering a limestone subsoil. The vines are among the oldest in the region, with deep root systems that penetrate the limestone and mineral subsoils.

Oro de Castilla is best enjoyed when it is young, for it is a wine that is all about the youth and bright, lively flavors of the Verdejo grape.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: Regarded as a benchmark for Verdejo, this wine’s exceptional quality derives from the vineyard’s high altitude and limestone soil, lending a distinct brightness and minerality to the wine.

RATING HISTORY: 2022 93WE "Hidden Gem"; 2021 92WE "Best Buy"; 2020 91W&S, 90D; 2019 94 D

GRAPE: 100% Verdejo. Organically grown vines planted from 1989 to 2009. Tended in limestone soil covered by river stones and sand at 719m (2,359ft) elevation. This is a vegan wine.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: A great pair would be sockeye salmon, Mahi Mahi or flounder simply pan fried in a beurre blanc, or plank roasted. Salads with grilled chicken, asparagus or toasted almonds would also pair well, as well as soft, ripe cheeses.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: The grapes are carefully hand-harvested during the cooler nighttime hours, when temperatures are below 15ºC. Cryo-maceration is employed in an oxygen-free environment to extract the distinct aromas of the grape variety. The grapes undergo gentle pneumatic pressing, and the resulting must naturally settles at a low temperature. Fermentation takes place at a controlled low temperature using indigenous yeast, ensuring the pure expression of Verdejo's aromatic qualities without any external interventions. Following fermentation, the wine matures on its lees for a minimum of 4 months with daily bâtonnage, enhancing the wine's body and character. After fermentation, there is no malolactic fermentation in order to retain the wine's fresh acidity. After aging, the wine is filtered and bottled.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: The vineyards are located in the villages of Rueda and La Seca, within the Rueda DO in northwestern Spain. At 719 meters (2,359 ft.) elevation, the bodega's vineyards have a unique soil profile distinct from other vineyards in the region. A deep layer of river stones and sand provides good drainage and a healthy, dry environment for the grapes to ripen. The subsoil is composed of limestone and clay, which retains moisture for the vines. The soils are excellent at retaining heat, which keeps the vines warm and continues the ripening process through the cool nights. The soil is poor in organic matter and encourages low vigor and low yields, both of which result in grapes with superior aroma and flavor intensity.
Here, the Continental climate is characterized by cold nights, hot days and dry conditions due to moderately low rainfall - 16.4 inches per year. These factors contribute to a prolonged grape ripening period. The resulting wines are fresh and crisp, with greater complexity and aromatic intensity.

TASTING NOTES Light bright yellow. Aromas of Meyer lemon and green apple are accented by suggestions of chalky minerals and sea salt. Dry and racy on the palate, offering lively citrus fruit and fresh fig flavors and a subtle touch of tarragon. Closes on a juicy note, featuring resonating stoniness and very good focus and length.

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-- Josh Raynolds.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 12.5%

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