

Ep 49 Wines of Lanzarote with Ollie Horton of Wine Tours Lan...

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SPEAKERS

Janina Doyle, Ollie Horton



Janina Doyle 00:07

Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me just cannot get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving wonderful world of wine. And wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you.



- J** Janina Doyle 00:31
Hello, all you lovely lot, welcome back to another episode. Today, I am talking to ex investment manager Ollie Horton who has done what many of us have dreamed about, he left this wet and cold dreary country to go surfing in Lanzarote. Little did he know that he was going to fall in love with the wines there, start a wine tour business and now is bringing those delicious wines to the UK. So without further ado, I'm going to go into the chat now where you're going to learn about the indigenous grape varieties of this island, the incredible black volcanic soils and how they affect the grapes. And on a daily basis how hard it is to tend to these vines and produce these very delicious wines.
- J** Janina Doyle 01:22
Ollie, thank you so much for joining me today and hopefully painting a beautiful picture of Lanzarote, so we can all just imagine where there. Is that okay?
- O** Ollie Horton 01:32
Absolutely. Yeah. Thanks for inviting me and I hope I can I bring a bit of sunshine to you.
- J** Janina Doyle 01:38
Oh please, please we need it. We need it. So for those that don't know anything about Lanzarote wine, I want you just for a second to tell me, we'll go into your full story. But what is it about the wines of Lanzarote, or Lanzarote the island that has caught you and brought you over there and got you working in wine? What is that story?



Ollie Horton 02:00

Wow, that's such a big question.



Janina Doyle 02:05

Where do you start?



Ollie Horton 02:06

Where to start? Where to start?



Janina Doyle 02:08

Ok you know what - we're gonna wind it all the way back to the beginning. So you woke up one day in the UK, you're from, is it Guernsey?



Ollie Horton 02:17

From Guernsey?



Janina Doyle 02:17

Yeah, you woke up one day in Guernsey and you went, it sucks here. I'm going to go live on an island. That's more fun, that's more mediterranean, that's got more sunshine, right?



Ollie Horton 02:28

So pretty much exactly somewhere warmer and drier. So moving further, further south, but I mean, the island I've been visiting, visiting all of my life, my mum and dad bought a little place down here when I was three years old. So it was like a home away from home and I always used to hate leaving here. Completely captured by the islands. I mean, obviously the climate speaks for itself here. But being a very outdoorsy person and loving water sports, you know, we've got some of the best surf spots in Europe here. Each year just got became harder and harder to leave. And you know, after the family holidays, it was then surf trips with friends. And all that all the time being you know, back on Guernsey, which is even smaller than Lanzarote. And in that routine it just felt like the right time to to break free and come here on a one way ticket and see what happens.



Janina Doyle 03:20

Take the risk and quite clearly something did happen. But did you go to Lanzarote for surfing? Or did you go there for the wine?



Ollie Horton 03:29

Originally for the surfing it has to be said, I mean my first job when I arrived here I just wanted to do something completely different. And I worked as a surf instructor for for for six months. And the wine idea in a way had been in the back of my mind for, core, I would say about seven or eight years before that. Okay, I moved here in 2013 and it was on one of the surf trips here with a friend that I tasted my first Lanzarote wine and it wasn't actually on the island. It was actually on a on a little trip to Fuerteventura.



Janina Doyle 04:06

Oh how funny. You have to swap islands to taste the wine of the island you were living on? Yeah, fine ok, makes sense.



Ollie Horton 04:14

Yeah no exactly. And the waiter talked to us about Lanzarote wine and you know, I just had this sort of vision of it being sort of quite an oldy worldy wine and you know, not particularly my cup of tea basically, I certainly wasn't a wine fan or somebody that knew a huge amount of wine back then. And in the end, we were we were up for it and you know, a bottle of the Lanzarote wine came out and I was absolutely blown away. It was a moment I'll never forget, both the bottle which was you know, super unique and you know, captured my imagination. And then you know, obviously the the wine itself and I returned to Lanzarote a couple of days later. And I guess I wanted to know more about it. And it was hard at the time to, to find out the information that we wanted to find out. So we couldn't actually do it. But it was a lightbulb moment and went from there.



Janina Doyle 05:16

Well, of course, the terroir of Lanzarote is so unique, for anybody who has not Googled this. And I will say it now for me, it's, it's the soils, the blackness of them that the darkest possible colour, it, there's these like bowl shaped depressions, like kind of like a moon like craters, if you see it from, you know, an aerial view, aren't they? And then, from this dark blackness is these green vines that just radiate, you know, in the landscape of is just that of contrast, and it's really dramatic, right?



Ollie Horton 05:51

It is, indeed, I mean, the the vineyards sort of look more like another planet than a typical sort of vineyard. I mean, it really is very, very different. And as you say, the contrasts are incredible. I mean, the landscape and Lanzarote is very unique and diverse. But you know, you get the black of the volcanic ash, you get the green of the vines, the blue skies, and then the white buildings here as well. And it's just a stunning landscape. The vines here, they're all growing in soil, but the soil is lying beneath all of the volcanic ash that sort of fell on the, in the La Geria wine region here between 1730 and 1736. So those eruptions were less than 300 years ago.



Janina Doyle 06:33

So let's talk more about the soil because I think that's probably the most unique thing on the island and how it impacts the winds the most, right?



Ollie Horton 06:41

Yeah, I mean, the wine region here back in the day would have been the breadbasket of the island, the cereal crops were growing here and fruit trees and the like. And then you know that when the eruptions happens, that land got decimated with lava flows, and also volcanic ash just sort of falling on the on the soil like snow. So there is fertile soil below that there's not a huge amount of it. So when you see the deep depressions in the vineyards, it's where the farmers had to dig away through all of that volcanic ash, which we call ROFE, and plant the vine into the soil.



Janina Doyle 07:18

That's amazing. And these are really low yielding vines because of this, aren't they?



Ollie Horton 07:24

They are, I mean, we've got two main styles in Lanzarote. We've got a northerly trade wind here. So the further north through the wine region, you head, and further away from the, where the volcanic eruptions where you have a thinner layer of ash. So we've got the vines planted in rows there, but you will find at a maximum about 900 vines per hectare. And as you will know, very low. I mean, what are you looking at normally four to 7000, roughly?



Janina Doyle 07:55

5000 is considered medium, like 2500 is low. So the fact that you're saying 900....



Ollie Horton 08:05

And that's in the most densely planted vineyard, you know, if you had further south and you're, you know, close to the what was now the National Park, you've got about two to 300 vines per hectare there. And the reason why, is that they've had to dig these big holes to reach the soil. So some of these holes may be three or four metres wide, and two to three metres deep. And there'll be one typical one typical vine at the bottom sometimes, you know, there might be two or three, but typically just the one. So you know, the yield is seriously low.



Janina Doyle 08:38

And I think you were saying about them having to they're trying to dig away the sand. And then of course, the sides can collapse in and can you explain to me a little bit more about the difficulties of tending these vines.



Ollie Horton 08:51









Yeah, I'll try I mean, I guess the best way to imagine it is when you were a kid digging a hole on the beach, in the sand in the dry sand, and you know, you put the spade in dug it out, and then the sides would instantly collapse in. It's a little bit like that. And you know, during the course of the year, that when the vine grows, I mean, we get strong trade winds here through the summer months, the vines, they're sort of bush vines, they are crawling, they eat their way into the sides, you've then got the farmer going in to, you know, maintain the vine up to 20 times a year. And, and also the winds. So the sides do collapse in. And every year at least once a farmer has to go in and dig all of the sides out all by, all by hand and, you know, in these vineyards in this particular area, you know, there's no way you're getting any machinery into the vineyard. That's all done by, all done by man. And it's, we've got many old vines on the island, you know, we weren't attacked by phylloxera. So, you know, many vines over 100 years old and you know, long before you know, Caterpillar diggers and JCPs, so this whole landscape has been dug and designed by man.



Janina Doyle 10:05

Well you've already got hardly any vines planted per hectare. They're super low yielding in general because of the soil. The wind, of course, is pretty strong. That's why they have these dry stone walls, haven't they typically around them to kind of offer a little bit more

protection, right? And then you have these old vines because some probably pre phylloxera, or they haven't been affected by phylloxera. So of course, they produce even less yields, as well. So...

-  Ollie Horton 10:30
On that note every year, so different here. I mean, our quality is generally very good or excellent. I mean, we get plenty of sunshine here so ripeness isn't an issue.
-  Janina Doyle 10:41
Stop showing off. Enough, enough.
-  Ollie Horton 10:44
Well, we did actually have some rain this morning. So....
-  Janina Doyle 10:47
Oh okay, good to know, good to know it exists.
-  Ollie Horton 10:49
The sun the sun's back now.
-  Janina Doyle 10:51
Am I right? It rains like the same amount as the Sahara Desert, right? It's like 150 millimetres a year on average.
-  Ollie Horton 10:58
That's right. Yeah. Yeah. So I think that classifies as like as a subtropical desert type landscape. But I mean, the yields every year change. I mean, the year just gone. We add 1.3 million kilos. The year before that we had 2.5. And the year before that was a record year ever on the island at 4 million.
-  Janina Doyle 11:22

Okay, so that would have been 2018, same as an England. A record year for yields.



Ollie Horton 11:30

Okay. I didn't I didn't I didn't know that.



Janina Doyle 11:32

Ahhh you are too busy in Lanzarote and just surfing and drinking beautiful wine. But yeah, we had it. We had a bumper year as well, because the sun was so amazing.



Ollie Horton 11:41

That's right. Yeah, no I remember.



Janina Doyle 11:43

So why so why is it so different year on year, the amount that Lanzarote can make?



Ollie Horton 11:49

Well, it ties into the to the winter weather. I mean, we actually had a worse, in 2016 was less than 700,000. So we've gone from 700,000 up to 4 million in the space of two years, and back down again. And it just depends on the, on the winter weather typically. So this year, luckily we've had plenty of rain by Lanzarote standards and I've never seen the island so green, it's been really really needed. Okay. But the last two years before this, were incredibly dry and warm. And it just means that the vines don't produce in their in their usual quantities. So it is expected on the island. We're very thankful this year's been a wet one.



Janina Doyle 12:34

Is there any irrigation at all that happens through the seasons, or is everything dry farmed?



Ollie Horton 12:40

Everything's dry farmed. watering, the vines isn't permitted by the Denominacion de Origin. So it is I mean, it's very cool that winemaking happens here at all because we're

outside the geographic norm for for winemaking. And it only happens because of the volcanic ash. So that volcanic ash it sort of traps in any moisture, like the rain typically, but then also because we're an island in the Atlantic we get, you know, dews and mists at times, certainly up in the wine region. And all of that gets absorbed and locked into the soil by the by the rofe.



Janina Doyle 13:16

Amazing, right, you know what I've realised we've been talking for a while and neither one of us has taken a sip. And I think if anybody knew how hard it was for us to connect for anyone, almost an hour. I think we need this. So I'm raising my glass to you and thank you so much for connecting and making this possible.



Ollie Horton 13:36

A pleasure. I'm glad we could get some Lanzarote wines to you.



Janina Doyle 13:40

Oh absolutely. So we are both drinking the same, aren't we? We are drinking Malvasia. We're drinking a very special Malvasia aren't we? Malvasia Volcanica which is native to Lanzarote, right?



Ollie Horton 13:53

That's correct. Yeah.



Janina Doyle 13:58

It's so aromatic. It's so pretty. It's so floral and rich and peach. It's absolutely delicious. It definitely reminds me of sunshine. That's for sure. Both of the wines that we're going to drink today are from the same producer, aren't they? This is from Bodegas Los Bermejós. The oldest winery on the island?



Ollie Horton 14:19

No it's not. El Grifo is the oldest winery which is just next door pretty much to Bodegas Bermejós.

J Janina Doyle 14:26
Okay, so do you want to tell me a little bit more about the almost oldest winery - Bodegas Bermejós?

O Ollie Horton 14:32
Absolutely. I mean, it for me, it's a it's a great example of what's happened on the island when it comes to the wine industry, over the last 20 years or so. It has produced wine on the site for well over 100 years ago, but the current two owners bought it in 2001. And invested a lot of money into the site back then, but also, you know, have increased year on year as well and they've taken their annual production from 60,000 kilos in the first year up to pushing 800,000 in a good year nowadays.

J Janina Doyle 15:08
Okay. Okay, more for us.

O Ollie Horton 15:10
Absolutely. Yeah. And it's a good thing because it really is delicious wine. It's they they pride themselves on only using native varieties. They have, I believe 12 different wines. They're pushing the limits of Lanzarote wine producing everything from sparkling wines made in the, in the traditional methods, all the way through to dessert wines to, and organic wines as well. So really at the forefront, along with a handful of other wineries on the island, you know, pushing the pushing the wine industry forward. Typically, it was El Grifo on the island. El Grifo is the oldest winery in the Canary Islands actually, dates back to 1775.

J Janina Doyle 15:53
Oh, wow, ok.

O Ollie Horton 15:54
Which also makes it one of the top 10 oldest wineries in the whole of Spain.

J Janina Doyle 15:58
Go El Grifo, vamos!

-  Ollie Horton 15:59
Yeah. They're a wine mark, everybody would know, that visits Lanzarote. They're the biggest producer as well. They're producing just over a million kilos a year. In a good year. And, you know, typically, they would have been the ones introducing the modern day equipments from the other European countries. But, you know, over the last 20 years there's a whole handful of wineries that are all, you know, doing slightly different things and pushing technology and the industry forward, which is great.
-  Janina Doyle 16:38
Well, I've already tasted both these but now I get to taste again. We were drinking this on Friday, weren't we?
-  Ollie Horton 16:43
We were indeed, yeah.
-  Janina Doyle 16:44
I definitely need to drink more Lanzarote wines so I can make my final opinion. I think that's very important, I should say.
-  Ollie Horton 16:50
It's a good way.
-  Janina Doyle 16:51
Exactly. But the volcanic soils give minerality and there's this lovely acidity and freshness. I mean, that's certainly what I sense from both of these wines and simply this lovely, aromatic white. What makes the Malvasia Volcanica different from other Malvasias that people can get on other islands?
-  Ollie Horton 17:12
Yeah, well, I mean, quite quite simply, Malvasia Volcanica is a variety that you'll only find in Lanzarote. It's a variety in its own right. And for me, what encapsulates is like the crisp freshness that we get balanced with the minerality from the wine, and also I get a lovely saltiness from for many of the Malvasia Volcanica's on Lanzarote.



Janina Doyle 17:39

For sure. And definitely on this one. I think what I love about this specific wine, it's 2019, if anybody cares about the vintage. It's, it's got all these kind of lovely or aromatics that we said and like a mandarin, even ginger spice and a little bit of wet stone, which I just really, really liked but it's it's quite full bodied and luscious, and weighty. So it's got all that freshness and great acidity, but there's some real richness and mouthfeel when you're drinking it. So I just it's divine, I get a lot of mango on the palate, that lovely freshly squeezed lemon juice with some orange juice.



Ollie Horton 18:13

There's plenty going on. It just lingers on the palate as well, which is just brilliant.



Janina Doyle 18:18

It's just got a gorgeous perfume. So I think they've done a really, really good job. I don't have any basis to compare it to, yet. But this is going down a treat, making me feel much calmer and much happier right now. By the way, we should point out, we are jumping ahead a little bit, but you do have a wine shop that is available for people in the UK and in Ireland. So they can purchase both these wines were tasting and many others. So how much is this white wine if somebody wants to get into the know about delicious Malvasia Volcanica?



Ollie Horton 18:54

Yeah, we do indeed. We have this wine priced at £18.99 on our website. You know, we have a base in, in in Northern Ireland. And everything is distributed from there. The tax is paid and things. So this was a little project that has stemmed on the back of our wine tours business during the COVID lockdown.



Janina Doyle 19:18

So can we go to the wine tours business now then for a second because that's what you were doing before? Pre-lockdowns. What would we get if we had jumped on a plane and travelled to Lanzarote and come to meet you? What would we get if we came on one of your wine tours?



Ollie Horton 19:32

Okay, well, one of our typical wine tours, we run two. We do we do one with tapas and one without tapas.



Janina Doyle 19:41

Oh, I'm gonna imagine the one with tapas. Tapas for me thankyou.



Ollie Horton 19:45

That tends to be the popular option and for good reason.



Janina Doyle 19:48

Yeah, I understand why.



Ollie Horton 19:51

Well, we launched in 2017. And we specialise with with with small groups of no more than eight and we pick people up from their accommodation, and then we take them up to the La Geria wine region. And we visit three different wineries on the island, we always go to one of the bigger commercial wineries, although we try and stay off the tourist route. So somewhere like Bermejós we visit for instance, and then we go to one or two little artisans stops as well, which gives a real insight into, you know, Lanzarote tradition and culture when it comes to wine, which is, you know, where it's all come from, really. And we have a little walk at each of the venues, just a little stroll, have a look at what's going on, explain about the Lanzarote wine miracle. And then we taste two wines, each of the stops, we explain a little bit about how to taste wine, how the wines are made, and try some Lanzarote goat's cheese. With the tapas tour we do all of that, and then finish with some traditional Lanzarote tapas at one of the countryside restaurants.



Janina Doyle 21:03

Sign me up, I'm coming.



Ollie Horton 21:06

You're invited.



Janina Doyle 21:07

Thank you. When do you think is this a really ambiguous question? When do you think that you'll be able to start doing the tours again?



Ollie Horton 21:15

Well, it's a good question, because we're actually running the tours at the moment, but just for private groups. So we're doing, you know, for a couple for instance, or a group of three or four. And we're just doing those on an ad hoc basis, it has to be said, There's not too many of those. But we are quite nimble. So as soon as the numbers pick up, then we will try and run them as soon as possible really.



Janina Doyle 21:40

Ah fab. But in the meantime, we can buy the wines can't we, If you're in the UK, for those listening. We can buy the wines from the wine shop. What is the website that people need to go to?



Ollie Horton 21:51

Yeah, it's <https://wineshoplanzarote.com/>



Janina Doyle 21:53

Very complicated.



Ollie Horton 21:55

Yeah, it does what it says on the tin.



Janina Doyle 21:57

Absolutely. And then we can drink we can have a little sip. And we can just close our eyes and just imagine we're in another planet filled with lava fields and and feel like we're there, hopefully with a bit of sunshine this summer.



Ollie Horton 22:10

Exactly. And you'd be amazed at how many people have been buying the wines just for

that very reason. I mean, it's it's always been something I wanted to do, because you see the people on our tours, enjoy the wine so much from from the island, and we see what they buy and what they enjoy and the feedback. And we put that feedback together with you know, our skills and knowledge of the local wines. And that's how we basically decided on what to send back to, to the to the UK. And yeah, we've been able to tag on a virtual tour as well. On to the website offering as well. So people want a tour from the comfort of their own home. We can we can take them there. And many people have been buying because they haven't been able to visit the island this year, as well. So yeah, bit a sunshine in a bottle. I guess.



Janina Doyle 22:58

I love that. There you go everyone virtual tours whilst we can't get out there. So I'm almost Oh gosh, I'm almost I'm almost finished with this glass. But this delicious white is one of five indigenous varieties growing on the island. So, majority white, isn't it?



Ollie Horton 23:14

That's right.



Janina Doyle 23:15

We have the red so we'll leave that one when we taste it. What are the other whites that grow on the island?



Ollie Horton 23:20

Okay well, just going back to the Malvasia volcanica I mean, that's our sort of star variety, if you like that accounts for 70% of production on the island, so it's the biggest by far. And then we have another grape variety, which is called Diego.



Janina Doyle 23:38

I love it. Diego sounds very cool. very laid back.



Ollie Horton 23:43

And it's a it's growing in popularity. Again, there's not a lot of it on the islands, but it's really sought after now. And so the new wineries that are opening up and doing different things, which is which is great. So it's Yeah, one of those, I guess lesser known varieties, but

it's becoming increasingly popular. And for good reason.

- J** Janina Doyle 24:03
I'd love dinner with Diego. Yeah, if it's not that popular yet. It's not that much planted. Have you tasted enough of it to get an idea of what Diego actually tastes like?
- O** Ollie Horton 24:13
Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. No, it's it's delicious. I mean, it's not quite as fruity as the Malvasia Volcanica. There's a bit more acidity in there too. But certainly a very fresh and you know, delicious wine.
- J** Janina Doyle 24:30
Okay, so maybe a little bit leaner a little bit more restraint, whereas because I felt like the Malvasia Volcanica was really quite, not in your face, but just really perfumed and really aromatic and really inviting. So perhaps Diego maybe is a little bit more...
- O** Ollie Horton 24:44
a little bit more toned down. Absolutely not not hasn't got that same aroma. And not quite, not quite not quite as fruity either.
- J** Janina Doyle 24:51
Okay, okay, good. There we go.
- O** Ollie Horton 24:53
So there's Diego, and then we've got Moscatel de Alejandria, which is typical for the, you know, sweet wines of the islands. And then we've got another called Listan Blanco. It's sort of related to the Palomino grape that was once planted across the island, but not so much anymore. Often find it blended with the Malvasia and nowadays not so often on its own.
- J** Janina Doyle 25:23
Okay, Have you tasted it on its own?



Ollie Horton 25:25

I have. Yeah, it tends to be on its own, it isn't my cup of tea, shall we say? It tends to be the ones that have tasted a more sort of artisan, a bit of a oldy worldy. Type sort of flavour. rustic, a little more rustic, a little heavier, and intense. But yeah, there's so few commercial wineries on the island doing I'm trying to think off the top of my head here, whether anybody's actually doing 100% Listan, and I don't believe there is. Certainly not one I can think of.



Janina Doyle 25:57

So it's more of a blending partner really.



Ollie Horton 25:58

It's more of a blending partner. Exactly. And when it's blended is absolutely delicious. Because some of those intense flavours get brought out in the wine, maybe adds a touch more body and intensity. It's, it's worth trying for sure.



Janina Doyle 26:10

Fab. Well, I run out of my white. Well, I haven't there's still more in the bottle. But I've already pre poured out the red. So I feel like we should then finish off with the last indigenous grape variety... ohhh I love that. Was that the lid coming off of something? Boom.



Ollie Horton 26:31

I'm preparing myself here.



Janina Doyle 26:32

Good. Be prepared, I'm already prepared. And I will announce to the world that this is Listan Negro. So can you tell us a little about Listan Negro?



Ollie Horton 26:43

I can. It's our only native red variety. And as I'm sure you're picking up already is very unique, very expressive, and different. The red wines from Lanzarote traditionally haven't been sort of highly sought after. But in the past, again, 20 years, there's been a lot more

sort of technology and thought and skill set gone into producing these wines and the wines now are absolutely delicious. And you know, for me, it's not I know some people think the rosés may be more expressive of the island, others the white, but the reds are just so expressive of Lanzarote, you can almost drink them and imagine, you know, the volcanoes are just next door.

J

Janina Doyle 27:26

Do you know what you're completely right. So just to let everyone know, same producer here, but this is the 2018 Listan negro. It's got the really lovely fruitiness and freshness kind of in keeping with the white, but it's got this real ash like note to it's a lovely kind of red cherries and black plums, but that that kind of hint of smoke or kind of crushed leaves. And because of that, like ash like setting this whole, you know, imagining you're right by a volcano, I I fully fully understand. I went to Mount Etna when I was in Sicily several years ago, and I was climbing up Mount Etna. And as we got close to the top, the you know, there's loads of wind, and of course, the wind is blowing ash and, and soil and whatever into your mouth, you just get that little bit on your lips, you know, if you lick it, it's that amazing moment when you can actually taste literally, the soil. And this has that ash like quality that I tasted when I was climbing Mount Etna, and it has it in this wine, which is of course no surprise, right?

O

Ollie Horton 28:30

All to do with the volcanic soils, I I guess and wines being produced from vineyards at the foothills of the volcanoes. And, you know, a lot of people associate, I think, with that sort of smokiness, or maybe woodiness with oak ageing, but the wines, the red wines from the island that haven't even been aged in oak, possess those characteristics. So it really is what the soil and the grape is, is giving to the wine. I mean, the reds from the island tend to be sort of lower tannin, lighter body than, you know, many reds that people typically buy in Northern Europe,


J


Janina Doyle 29:07


I was gonna say this specific wine. It's not quite medium body, medium minus, beautiful, highest acidity, and then the tannins, that dusty, they're soft, they're medium minus, again tannins, but they're dusty, but again, in a really nice way. And again, it's that for me, I describe it as this kind of minerality that I'm tasting. So again, I'm imagining climbing up a volcanic mountain kind of thing. This is what I get when I taste it. But yeah, it's it's lovely. There's still gorgeous freshness, even though the complexity of that smokiness, which as you said gives you that appears that there is smoke. So does it does it say a little bit about


though?


 Ollie Horton 29:42
This one's been aged for four months in oak.


 Janina Doyle 29:45
Okay, yeah.

 Ollie Horton 29:46
So because it's those sorts of characteristics that you were just mentioning before. You know, if you were to age this for six months or twelve months in oak, those characteristics would just overpower the wine. So they tend to be between you know, three and four months aged and or not aged at all, just to keep them nicely balanced.

 Janina Doyle 30:06
Yeah, now, we talked about this being the only red, but I believe a little bit of other red grows on the island. What other grapes are growing?

 Ollie Horton 30:14
Yeah, that's that's right. So probably the biggest non native red varitey on the island would be Syrah. And then you will find Tempranillo here in very small quantities. It hasn't travel too far. And then bits and pieces of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, but to a much lesser degree.

 Janina Doyle 30:37
Any other whites?

 Ollie Horton 30:39
No, not that you will see. There will be the odd one here and there. But yeah, not not available to purchase as a as a wine.



Janina Doyle 30:49

Okay, that's really interesting. They brought over International Red varieties, but not whites, I suppose because you have more indigenous white.



Ollie Horton 30:56

Yeah. And also, I think, you know, historically, the white wines have just been so highly thought after that, there hasn't really been a need to dilute what we've got growing here already. The red is I just touched on before, you know, it hasn't been everybody's flavour over the years, it hasn't had as much attention paid to as the white varieties, although that's, you know, caught up now. And because of those characteristics that you just touched on before, you know, the lighter bodied versus maybe some of the wines that have been drunk in Northern Europe, which, of course, many of the tourists arrive on the island, they're the wines that they're more familiar with those sort of fuller bodied styles. It's been putting the two together. So you know, you'll find blends of the Listan Negro with Syrah, which of course, is a more full bodied and heavier grape, you know, more tannin and those sorts of characteristics. And I guess, sort of adapting the wines to a degree, but, you know, still retaining the Lanzarote authenticity.



Janina Doyle 31:57

Well, at the end of the day, you said it wasn't people's cup of tea, originally. But this wine, people are looking for higher acidity, fresher wines. This is 13.5% in alcohol, you know, so it's not a heavy, chunky wine. And I think people are starting to prefer that. There's always a time and a place for fresher wines. And this also could be chilled down just a little bit in some lovely hot weather.



Ollie Horton 32:21

Absolutley. Yeah. And I'm typically on the island it is served chilled, you know, 14 to 16 degrees is the ideal temperature for these for these wines. And for sure. I mean, as I say, I mean, we're lucky that we have the tours business because we see what people enjoy. And we know for a fact that people love the Reds from the island because we see how many people take home with them from the tours. So they're brilliant wines, which is why we've, you know, been sending them back to the UK as well, we talked so highly about them. But it's it I think it's just on the island as a whole, you know, these sort of perceptions take a while to to to get diluted through, you know, from generation to generation.

J Janina Doyle 33:03
Absolutely. Now, if somebody wanted to try the red wine, the Listan Negro, how much is that going to cost on the wineshoplanzarote.com ?

O Ollie Horton 33:11
It's £19.99.

J Janina Doyle 33:13
Okay, perfect. So in keeping with the white, fab, and people need to check out these bottles, because their wine bottle is so unusual. I've not seen a bottle like it.

O Ollie Horton 33:23
It is. We've got lots of different bottles on the island. Actually, these guys were the first to introduce them. And I mean, as we touched on before, you know, there's not a lot of Lanzarote wine produced and only about 10% gets exported. So we do need to make sure it stands out on the shelves. And I guess it's you know, it's great marketing at the end of the day. You know, it certainly did for me because this bottle, The first time I tried it, it just stuck in my mind and back then, you know, you couldn't find it in the in the supermarkets. And you still can't now actually the flagship wines from the island.

J Janina Doyle 33:59
Thats crazy.

O Ollie Horton 34:00
But many years later, I did find it purely because I remember what the bottle looked like. We got wines here from Vega de Yuco which are sold in a in a delightful elongated triangular blue bottle that everybody knows and remembers, you know, the Bodega Vulcano that we work with, they've got sort of contours of the volcano shaped into the bottle, and El Grifo have a little volcano at the bottom of their bottle. So it all sort of, you know, captures the imagination. And you know it stands out on the shelves.

J Janina Doyle 34:32
Yeah, and for anyone who wants to know about Bodegas Bermejos which is what we're

drinking, these ones, they've got a really big fat lip on the top and then almost the lip extends in one part which acts as like a bit of a pourer which is rather useful.



Ollie Horton 34:45

It does indeed. It is and actually my olive oil is all stored in Bermejos bottles in the kitchen.



Janina Doyle 34:51

Oh, there you go. And then they're doing themselves some good marketing and funny enough as well, which people will see if they go to the website, or if they go to my Instagram account @eatsleep_winerepeat you're going to see the photo of this wine so you can see it. It doesn't have a label on the bottle as such, their label is simply just at the top, just on the neck of the bottle. So in a way, it's actually very classy. It's very minimalistic, very simple. I like it a lot.



Ollie Horton 35:19

Yeah, no, it's certainly very classy isn't it. It does catch the eye.



Janina Doyle 35:23

In fact, and then the only thing I got quite confused at the beginning, the only thing actually on the bottle is a sticker of Lanzarote, but that's the Lanzarote DO symbol, isn't it?



Ollie Horton 35:32

It is. That's right. Yeah. So you know, when you're drinking a DO wine when you see that, that label and it's lovely. It is it's a César Manrique design. He was a famous artist that that once lived on the island. And he really, I guess, you know, shaped a lot of the laws on the island and the island is today why it is thanks to thanks to him.



Janina Doyle 35:58

Well, for me, am I right? In thinking this? It's a little yellow circle, which is the sun, then a black blob, which is the soil and then loads of red stuff coming out? Which is the volcano lava?



Ollie Horton 36:10

Absolutely, like, abstract piece of art.



Janina Doyle 36:13

Love it. Well not so abstract, because I figured it out. One point to me, I love it. So, so we talked about the DO. This is a tiny island still, and not many people have had the pleasure to taste wines of Lanzarote. How many wineries are involved in the DO?



Ollie Horton 36:30

Yeah, so I mean, on the island, we've got 21 wineries now that are part of the DO. In, when we started the tours in 2017. There were just 14. So in the last four years, it's sort of the the numbers grown by by 50%. Yeah, it's really cool. I mean, there's a really nice sort of tailwind behind in behind the industry. There's sort of more and more young guys getting involved again, and interesting setups, doing different things with the wines as well.



Janina Doyle 37:05

Well, you said young guys, but the winemaker for this winery that we're tasting, Bermejós, is actually 26 years old, isn't he?



Ollie Horton 37:13

Yeah, he is. Yeah. Yeah. He's, he's a local lad. Again, it sort of ties in with the DO story, I guess. Because, you know, there's 2000 registered viticulturalist on the islands that are registered with the DO. I mean, we've got a population of 150,000 here to give you an idea. So it really is in the in the lifeblood of the island and winemaking and the and the tradition. And you know, many of these guys, it's been passed down from generation to generation and you know, they're not in it for the money. They're, they're in it for the love and the passion of making wine and then, you know, in in Danny's case, the winemaker at Bermejós, you know, he's then gone on to study. He's worked on the on the Spanish peninsula before returning back to the island, you know, picking up the winemaking job for good reason at Bodegas Bermejós, and he wouldn't be the only local young guy working at the wineries. El Grifo has got a young winemaker, as has Vega de Yuko probably the third largest producer too. So, you know, it's really nice to see.



Janina Doyle 38:20

So we should watch this space is basically what you're telling us because Lanzarote is growing in the wine world.



Ollie Horton 38:28

I would like to think so. Yeah. Yeah.



Janina Doyle 38:30

You'll have more business too.



Ollie Horton 38:32

Certainly, certainly more interest. You know, I mean, we've got so many unique and different things to talk about. And, you know, luckily, that goes hand in hand with having, you know, great wines too. I mean, our production is never going to skyrocket here, just because we've got very limited land where is physically possible to produce vines and to grow vines. So it's never going to be a big market in terms of volumes being sold and exported. But certainly maybe the things that are happening here we're going to be super interesting is my is my guess.



Janina Doyle 39:08

Now, you touched on this at the beginning, the wine region within Lanzarote, Le Geria. And for people to know how to search it's spelt with a G. G E R I A, Le Geria. This is the main winegrowing region right?



Ollie Horton 39:26

Yes it is yeah by far.



Janina Doyle 39:28

Are there others? How many others are there?



Ollie Horton 39:30

We just have a another small region in the north of the island but it's way smaller than Le Geria.

- J** Janina Doyle 39:37
Okay and this is Ye-Lajares no?
- O** Ollie Horton 39:39
That's right. Yeah.
- J** Janina Doyle 39:40
Okay. So Ye-Lajares exists up in the north and that's obviously where it's even windier and a little bit colder?
- O** Ollie Horton 39:47
Yeah, it's typically colder, the the ripening cycles a little longer than Le Geria.
- J** Janina Doyle 39:55
But the majority of the wineries or should I say the vineyards are going to be found in Le Geria. So why why? Why is Le Geria the main stop?
- O** Ollie Horton 40:05
It just goes back to the to the landscape of, of having the ash. And this is the parts of the island where all of the volcanic ash accumulated through the eruptions. So without that, you know, you don't have the water retention in the soil. So, you know, growing vines is impossible. They do have ash in the north of the island from, you know, previous and different eruptions. But on a very, very small scale.
- J** Janina Doyle 40:31
Okay, well, I'm glad I'm glad to hear they still got a little bit I don't want them feeling left out. So that's good. I guess like 30% of the island is basically covered in volcanic ash, right?
- O** Ollie Horton 40:43
Yeah, yeah. It would be it would have been about that. Yeah. Through volcanic ash and lava flows. And yeah, and even the lava flows, you'll find vines growing, too.



Janina Doyle 40:53

I love it. Now. It just I asked you this question on Friday, because I find it fascinating. And I just want to make it super clear to people who have no idea about the vines. First of all, we've already said they're bush vines. They're un-irrigated. So bush vines means they're not grown on any trellising. They're not like anything that you would normally see. In typical vineyards. The majority of the vines are just planted aren't they, directly into the ground. But you did say, you showed a picture when I spoke to you last from the El Grifo winery, and they were growing the vines in a way that they call them Chabuco. Right. And I found that fascinating. Now with without a photo, do you feel brave enough to somehow try and describe what Chabuco is, because I just think it's amazing, and really different than vines growing in this way. And people should be aware that Lanzarote, are doing these kind of strange, cool, amazing things. So yeah, good luck.



Ollie Horton 41:54

I'll try, I'll try my hardest. So I mean, among the the vineyards where, where you have all of the volcanic ash, there's also lava flows, which is just sort of solid rock effectively, where the lava was once flowing, but within there, you do get these gullies and cracks and holes, which lead down to soil below the lava flow. And as we were chatting about before, there's no more very little rainfall on the island. But what happens when it rains on to the hard lava rock, is that it will typically collect in the bottom of these holes. So over the years, the farmers have realised this and planted whatever will grow at the bottom of those, those holes, which are called Chabucos. And the vine will grow and be trained to grow out of the sort of fissure in the in the lava. And some of these can be anything from one or two metres deep up to, you know, four or five metres high.



Janina Doyle 42:54

It's amazing. And then they kind of build this little kind of a square around it don't they with wood, probably to support the vine.



Ollie Horton 43:00

To support, exactly, yeah, and just to train it to train it upwards. And typically they grow the Moscatel in the Chabucos because they enjoy a little bit more water than the Malvasia. So it's basically the farmer using the landscape to their advantage, you know.



Janina Doyle 43:17

Yeah, because Malvasia is just actually, it's really drought resistant isn't it. Loves a bit of heat, like all of that.



Ollie Horton 43:26

Absolutely. I mean, all these vines have had to adapt to those conditions. You know, the lack of water, the heat, and the and the wind.



Janina Doyle 43:35

Wow. Ollie, thank you so much. I think hopefully people have got an idea. Lanzarote is I think you touched on it, did you say something magical? You called it magical, didn't you?



Ollie Horton 43:45

Yes



Janina Doyle 43:46

From seeing the photo, I've been to Lanzarote. But sadly, so many years ago when I wasn't involved in wine, and so I missed out that part. I went to the National Park. I saw the geysers. I picked up the soil, but I did not get to the vineyards, which is very disappointing. So you are now very high up on my list.



Ollie Horton 44:06

Perfect. Well, it's never too late. We'll be here.



Janina Doyle 44:10

Oh, well, I trust me. And but thank you so much. And of course everybody, drink some wines from Lanzarote, because I imagine not many of you have or if you did, it was a quick bottle when you were there on the island. So try some at home now and feel the magic again, right?



Ollie Horton 44:29

Absolutely. And if anybody's interested there's plenty of information on the website just about the cultivation here. The different grape varieties as well. So there's there's plenty of

educational pieces on there, too.



Janina Doyle 44:40

Oh, perfect. Yeah, exactly. It's not just about the drinking everyone, right. Learn about the island first, then reward yourself with a delicious bottle. There are your rules. I thank you so much, Ollie. It's been brilliant.



Ollie Horton 44:52

Thanks all for having me. It's been great to chat.



Janina Doyle 44:54

And we will see each other in real life in Lanzarote very soon. Sounds good.



Ollie Horton 44:58

Okay. Bye. Take care.



Janina Doyle 45:05

So for many of you probably the only time you've drunk a wine from Lanzarote is when you visited that island. So hopefully now for those of you in the UK, you know exactly where to get it, the website will be in my show notes. For those of you in America in Canada, in fact, big shout out to my listeners in Singapore, you are my third biggest downloads last month, who are you? Contact me and say, hello, give me a wave. So a big cheers to you. So for those of you around the world, hopefully, an importer is bringing in small, delicious amounts of these wines of Lanzarote. Now to finish off with, as always, our wine quote, which is quite a rather solid piece of advice, and it is:



Janina Doyle 45:50

"Not all heroes wear capes, some deliver wines."



Janina Doyle 45:54

And Ollie - We salute you. Thank you for bringing us these distinctive, mineral rich and vibrant wines. Right, that is it. Thank you so much for listening, guys. For those of you that have not been in touch with me, send me an email at janina@eatsleepwinerepeat.co.uk or

DM me on Instagram @eatsleep_winerepeat let me know which one of these episodes are your favourite and what you want to know more about. As always, if you haven't liked, shared, subscribed, please do all of that as it helps make the podcast more discoverable. Until the next episode, I raise my glass and cheers to you!