

Ep 65 Sherry: The wines of Jerez with Interpreting Wine Pod...

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

sherry, wine, flor, jerez, wines, bit, fino, andalusia, vineyard, people, style, de, taste, soils, places, little bit, palo, talking, region, producer



SPEAKERS

Janina Doyle, Lawrence Francis



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 00:30
Hello and welcome back to part two with Interpreting Wine podcast host, Lawrence Francis. So as you already know, from the title of this specific episode, we are talking Sherry. Yes, Sherry from the south of Spain in Andalusia. So by the end of this episode, you're going to know about the region in more detail, the main grape variety and all of the dry styles of Sherry. So as they would say in Spain, Vamos a la conversaci3n con Lawrence, let's go to the conversation now.
- J** Janina Doyle 01:09
We have rocking and rolling and officially rocking and rolling with Sherry. Why Sherry? You picked the subject today. You said you wanted Sherry?
- L** Lawrence Francis 01:21
I did. I did. Well...
- J** Janina Doyle 01:25
Explain yourself. Why are we drinking Sherry today?
- L** Lawrence Francis 01:29
Well, I've got to say this is part two of a two part conversation that we're that we're releasing. And I started my podcast in Spain and I just beyond that I just have an absolute love of all things Spanish, I speak the language, I've been to just about every corner of

Spain. And so you know, have a connection with the food and the and the wine and in pretty much every region. And I chose Sherry because it's somewhere actually, that was, I guess, quite hard for me to really get my head around. More in terms of the wine style.



Janina Doyle 02:10

It is not an easy subject for the average, well, okay, of course, Harvey's Bristol cream.



Lawrence Francis 02:16

Yeah, is that what you've got there?



Janina Doyle 02:18

No, no, I do not, I have the same wines as you. I do not have any. But that, you know, sweet Sherry has confused so many consumers, because they have no idea that so much of the good stuff is completely dry. And that there are so many different dry styles out there. There's so many styles of Sherry full stop.



Lawrence Francis 02:37

Yeah, 100%. And, I mean, the other thing is, as well is that, you know, I was lucky enough to you know, on my on my podcast journey, I was actually lucky enough to be taken over to Jerez back in 2019. And got to interview like several producers over there and actually, you know, released a sort of a mega series on all things Sherry. I just got, like, totally immersed and totally drawn back into the Andalusian way of life. I would say that...



Janina Doyle 03:14

They are just happier - sunshine.



Lawrence Francis 03:18

There's nothing like it. You know, I've said this time and time again, I don't think there's anywhere in the world that I'd rather retire. You know, when I'm ready to hang up my microphone. That's, that's, that's where you'll find me because I just think that the warmth, the warmth of the people, it's just, it's just absolutely beautiful. And and I think, you know, it's got so much beyond, I guess the what you might have seen. The beaches and Malaga and Marbella, you know, these places that I'm sure you know, very cool. But there's, there's like, levels and there's, there's lots of depth, I would say. I think one of the things that

people pretty much uniformly from Andalusia are like rightly proud of I think is the is the Sherry phenomenon really, you know, the Sherry industry, if you like and just this, this wine style that you know, is still so popular, it is still it's still still kind of, you know, consumed so much around the world.



Janina Doyle 04:14

Well, there's definitely many Sherry aficionados, right? You know, once you become a Sherry fan, it's like you're a fan for life right. Now, can we pour the first wine because I feel like you know, we don't want to throw this right at the end. Let's, I'm gonna pour my Manzanilla. Now, and I know you're like waiting for permission and you're like, when is she gonna say Go Go Go right?



Lawrence Francis 04:35

With half a bottle here.



Janina Doyle 04:38

Have you only got half a bottle left? Have you been drinking already?



Lawrence Francis 04:42

I may have done, that's the beauty of a podcast as well.



Janina Doyle 04:45

I already have to. I have to. In fact, okay, so.



Lawrence Francis 04:48

Chin Chin!



Janina Doyle 04:48

Exactly. Cheers. I was drinking this last night. So we have, both of us have the same wines. We have a beautiful Manzanilla and it's from Bodega Hidalgo - La Gitana. So a very famous



Lawrence Francis 05:01

Muy Bien



Janina Doyle 05:01

Obviamente puedo hablar un poquito español, but you know, so we're going to talk a little bit more about this winery in a second. But this Manzanilla is, Manzanilla and Fino, we will try and get a little bit into the styles. Manzanilla and Fino are the two styles that are biologically aged. And that means that they're a little bit saltier, they are, we'll talk about the differences in a second I'm sure, but they're saltier and obviously it's this flor, this yeast that gives you this bready flavour. But they're just amazing tapas and the other thing that they're amazing with is white fish. So last night we, I say we, the partner I didn't, I just sat and watched, and then ate. I ate his fish, there was some white fish, it was just white cod, nice and simple a little bit of herbed potatoes and some just boring broccoli, sorry nothing nothing elaborate. But because of the cod I thought do you know what? Let's crack open this Manzanilla and it really works. And it's something that you know we always talk about, oh a lovely Sauvignon Blanc will be perfect. Oh get a, an Albariño if we are going to talk a Spanish wine. Whatever, there's lots of standard still white wines you could pick but Sherry as a subject I mean it's perfect with white fish right.



Lawrence Francis 05:23

Yeah, I mean you I think brought up the one of the things that I think I'd probably missed really what you know in my sort of first pass around Sherry which which is really that essentially it is a food wine and you know I'll share I'll share something a minute which is you know, how how people in Spain often managed to sort of have it without food. But you know, essentially you know, these are I would say at their best when you when you kind of have them and you think you'd at least being a little bit mindful about what might kind of go well with it. So absolutely I mean, I think the lighter styles of of sherry the Fino and the Manzanilla. They are for me and you know what I've what I've sort of come across you know, the kind of work really well with the kind of quite salty foods. So it's often, yeah, the kind of olives and the and the lighter foods as you say the fish, as well even like salted nuts as well. They can they can often bring out some of the some of the complexity that's that's to be found there. And I think it's just it's just fascinating to me that you know, how really how long these these wines have been aged for. My understanding is this is this has been aged for five years. And to find a wine in this like readily available in the supermarket that's been aged for five years and and that kind of has its complexity of the wine that we're having now. It's my experience it's you know, maybe I'm going to the wrong supermarkets. But it's not that easy. It's really not that easy to find something that you know really kind of you know, can hold its hold its own at the dinner table and it's

interesting and as you say, you know, you might you might kind of had your fill of, of Sauvignon Blanc and you want to try something a little bit different or maybe you're having tapas or you're having something a bit more Mediterranean. This is a this is a great, I think quite versatile food wine.



Janina Doyle 08:16

Well you said about how good value it is, just to point out, we're looking around the 10 pound mark. This is literally £10 for a 75cl bottle. So a standard bottle of wine size. £10. That's it. After as you just pointed out five years of ageing. Anyone who wants to get this, apart from the fact this is a really popular wine. It's, you can find it in Waitrose, you can find it even the smaller size I think in Majestic, The Whiskey Exchange. It's not hard to find. In fact, this wine let's talk about Bodega Hidalgo - La Gitana. This Manzanilla is their flagship wine. So this is why it's also so easy to find. I think it accounts for something like 70% of their production. So guys, it's not going to run out. So that's good news. But I mean, these guys are amazing. They've been around and I'm I'm literally reading this now because I put down some notes. I mean, They have been since 1792. The one of the oldest wineries in the Sherry area. In fact, they're the third oldest, but the oldest family owned still. So they're still family owned in their sixth generation. And what I actually heard the winemaker saying on one of those video audios that you sent me, that by the way is on a Davys website, if anyone wants to hear a little bit more about directly from the winemaker, there's some lovely audios of him talking. He said that this winery is the ninth oldest, like not just winery, company, family company in Spain. I mean, that's, that's pretty cool. That takes you back a little bit, right.



Lawrence Francis 09:52

This is it. Yeah, that is I mean, you know, I again, I absolutely love this, this region. And I was, said earlier I was going to sort of share how how people in Spain will will have this without food. And that kind of takes us back to, you know, one of my most favourite trips to Andalusia, it was to Sevilla. They have this massive party two weeks after Easter, called the Feria de Abril, so the April fair, and they essentially construct a temporary city. Kind of on the outskirts of of Seville. And it is like stepping back in time. You've got these quite kind of cobblestone streets, they've got horses kind of you know, horses and carriages going up and down the streets during the daytime, and dancing everywhere. The dance, the costumes, the dance is the Sevillana which is you know, the kind of most traditional thing to dance there, and you know, the women are wearing the they call it the Gypsy dress, basically. And this just goes on for nine days I think now.



Janina Doyle 11:08

Well the Spanish know how to party I think, I think like literally every other week, there is a Feria, a day off.



Lawrence Francis 11:15

And its fueled by, it runs on Rebujiito.



Janina Doyle 11:18

What's Rebujiito?



Lawrence Francis 11:20

So Rebujiito is the simplest, Sherry cocktail, there is. Still, you know, still still good, because as you say, you're making it with a wine that's been aged. But essentially just three ingredients. And they just mix it together in these jugs. They'll take probably probably like a half bottle or a half litre bottle, stick it stick it into the jug also put in like half a litre of sprite or you know, some some kind of something like that. Yeah, exactly. And then, and then kind of top up with ice. And then and then that's it. And then that that is basically you know, because because these these these Sherry's even the Finos you know, they do sort of end up at around 15%. You know, that's, that's quite strong to be drinking all day, if you're, you know, going to be fair and spending all day they're dancing and maybe, you know, maybe not eating so much. So that probably brings it down to a you know, a bit a little bit more of a manageable level with the ice and the sprite. But you still get that sort of, you know, you get that sort of little boost and that little bit of sugar and a little bit of sherry in you. And it's basically what what the people run on for for a weekend. Because it goes on until you know 5am and then people people go back home, have a shower and have to go to work, unfortunately, some of them as well. So I go in there, but everyone's in the same boat. So, everyone sort of, yeah, survives it somehow.



Janina Doyle 12:46

They're well practised.



Lawrence Francis 12:48

It's just unbelievable.



Janina Doyle 12:49

Well I didn't have it with lemonade, but interesting. After I had a little try of the Manzanilla yesterday, I also put some tonic, tonic water in there. After literally speaking with top Sommelier Bert Blaze on a podcast a few weeks ago, he was saying when he was down in Jerez, they were drinking it like that. And it was just amazing. And I thought and, he was like, it's so much better than a gin and tonic. It's, I wouldn't say it's better than a gin and tonic from my perspective because it depends on your your palate. Definitely. I do think Sherry's are a slightly more acquired taste. But I thought it was really interesting. It was super super fresh and instead of the botanicals, botanicals that was rather posh, instead of the bo-tanicals



Lawrence Francis 13:32

The botanicals. How are you spelling that dear?



Janina Doyle 13:35

Instead of the botanicals, there's that really, this sour, tangy lemon peely, it's just it's really interesting, it's got a different vibe, but still got some, you know, lovely, lovely freshness to it with that, with that tonic, so I gave that a go as well. So I've had a fair bit of fun with this wine, but what do you think about?



Lawrence Francis 13:54

Yeah, I mean, again, it's super bone dry. I think that's one thing I would say. I would say first off because I think I think still Sherry's maybe been a victim of it's own success when it brought out and kind of really expanded production into sweeter styles. And it's absolutely you know, almost crystal clear, that's I think one of those interesting things about it because that's that's what essentially the flor, that biological ageing that you're that you're talking about there. It basically feeds on the alcohol and that's what kind of means that it that it kind of comes across. I would also say that you know, it doesn't for me, you know that there's really not much, nothing like to kind of fruity here coming through. I think that's probably the, a couple of things. I mean, I think one the Palomino fino grape which these, this wine comes from, I think is broadly accepted to be you know, relatively neutral grape style, in those conditions down there. And then also, the brandy that added to this wine is also quite neutral as well. So, I always think that this, this takes on the characteristics from that flor, so more like that yeasty characteristic and I'm I guess one of those old romantics that, you know, if this wine is being produced close to the sea and in this sort of such a, you know, humid and an almost kind of sub tropical place as Andalusia

is, and it will it will kind of, you know, soak in somehow some of that salinity and some of that kind of sea breeze almost. And, you know, I, to me, it just, it just takes me back there because I had I had such a wonderful experience visiting all of those different Bodegas and it just it just for me, it's it's just a real time capsule of that experience and of that time there. So it just it just transports me back there to Andalusia.

J

Janina Doyle 16:00

Well, I think if anybody wants a really good example of a Manzanilla, I mean, this one is it. I get, you know, kind of like that really sharp green apple, like a baking apple and a bit of lime. But what's playing centerstage is a bit of that saltiness that breadiness, like maybe some salted almonds, but there's something really interesting that I was trying to get my head around, and it's kind of herbaceous, but I was like, what kind of herb is it because I've been trying to think and describe it. It almost takes me to the Agave plant that's in tequila. I don't know whether you can get that but it's this herbaceous nose. And that might be very unique to me, but I really love the freshness, and that herby saltiness that I'm getting from it, and then on the palate, I mean, it's just tangy and salty, and some lemon skins. A little bit of almond flakes.

L

Lawrence Francis 16:52

This is it. I mean, I think it is, you know, I was listening back actually, to the, to the first podcast of the of the series, I recorded down there with the, with the then head of the consejo, you know, the, the people who look after Sherry, and, you know, kind of authorise everything that carries the sherry label and, you know, I was very, very impressed, because, obviously, there's so much talk of the, of the history, you know, I would say that, that's one thing that you can kind of, you know, be guaranteed really, you know, get speaking to anybody that's, that's passionate about Sherry, or that produces Sherry. And I think very quickly, they will tell you about how it's made and where, the conditions that it's made in and where it's made and the cities it's made, you know, that they just love talking about it. But I think that the thing that kind of really impressed me, when I when I was speaking to Señor Beltrán Domecq was, he was also very keen to talk about it out there in the in the world as well and bring in things like, you know, the kind of mixologist interpretation. So, almost like the next level up from you know, your Rebutito and your Sherry and tonic, but really going to the next level then and it's like, you know, this has an ingredient in in a sort of a 7 8 9 10 ingredient, you know, signature cocktail. It's just, it's just bringing something it's like that extra tool in the box for those mixologists and I know that Sherry has as a region and you know, as a, as a sort of a wine. They've had a lot of success with that, as as a selling point really that this this will bring something that really no other wine, I guess kind of no other spirit really kind of can bring to a cocktail.



Janina Doyle 18:41

I mean, it's certainly gaining in popularity, isn't it? I'm certainly in London I can't I imagine in cities around the world there's there's always these Sherry bars now that people can go and experience though. In fact, I should probably have looked up. I'm really bad. I'm not prepared. I should have looked up some Sherry bars to name but I'm sure everyone has the internet.



Lawrence Francis 19:00

Yeah, that's it google!



Janina Doyle 19:03

Use google. Guys, don't just depend on me go figure it out. I can't do everything here. Oh dearie me. But have you been to Sanlúcar de Barrameda? So we should probably point out there is the Sherry triangle. Do they call it the Sherry triangle? The Sherry triangle for everybody is Sanlúcar de Barrameda, which is where Manzanilla comes from. So this is they they have their own DO, that is where Manzanilla has to age so it could come from other areas, but it must age in Sanlúcar de Barrameda. It's really exciting because it's actually very different. The microclimate so maybe we'll touch on that in a second. Then you have the famous Jerez de la Frontera and that's actually where Jerez, Sherry that's the kind of the translation, that's where the that's where it was started from. And then you have El Puerto de Santa María. So these are if you actually look at them on the map, they they form a triangle. So all the vineyards, and everything happens around these three places. Now, you mentioned to me that you went to Jerez, because obviously, nobody's going to go down to Sherry land and not go down to Jerez. Did you go across to Sanlúcar de Barrameda?



Lawrence Francis 20:14

Yeah, we did my, as you can probably imagine, it was it was a very intense four nights there. So, you know, some of the details are maybe a little bit fuzzy.



Janina Doyle 20:26

It is because some of the shows and the others are a little bit 17, 18%?



Lawrence Francis 20:32

It was just, you know, I wanted to make the most of my time there. And, you know, I suffer for my art.



Janina Doyle 20:38

Someone has to.



Lawrence Francis 20:39

This is it. I was travelling, I had, I produced nine interviews when I was there.



Janina Doyle 20:44

Oh in four days. That's, that is hard core.



Lawrence Francis 20:46

It was pretty, it was pretty full on. And, and I believe that the very first night, actually, so the so the first evening, we actually went to Sanlúcar de Barrameda, and to the Bodega of Osborne. And so in the series itself, that's actually the second episode. So yeah, actually, you know, recorded the tour that they, that they gave us. And so yeah, obviously able to, to, to share that. So we saw that by night, and we pretty much saw that from within the kind of walls of the of the bodega. But, you know, as you can sure, as you can imagine, you know, magical welcome and that, you know, really warm climate, I'd actually actually flown directly to Jerez from Austria. I had been over in Austria for I think four nights as well. And, you know, it was not exactly culture shock, but obviously, still within Europe. But yeah, you're going from like, you know, going down the Danube and, you know, going going to do what, you know, what, what are quite sort of cool regions and quite foresty regions, to then Jerez where it was, you know, the sunshine hits you, and that was that was May, you know, I've never been there in in June and July. But interestingly, you know, to kind of give the, I guess, the key thing about Manzanilla is that layer of flor FLOR, which obviously, you know, look up on YouTube or on Google to see how that looks, that that is the region there for that microclimate that you've just mentioned. That's a region where that that flor doesn't kind of recede, doesn't get too thin. No, because even in the winters there, it's warm enough to sustain the flor. The flor is like me. It likes a warm environment and lots of alcohol.



Janina Doyle 20:47

You and flor should be best friends. Sanlúcar de Barrameda is amazing, isn't it because it's

got the river running by it. What it is called the...

L Lawrence Francis 22:57
Guadalquivir.

J Janina Doyle 22:59
Oh no I am not even pronouncing it correctly. Do you want to try it one more time for me.

L Lawrence Francis 23:02
The Guadalquivir

J Janina Doyle 23:04
That will do. So it's got that river, and then it's got the marshland all around it, you know, and so this flor, that obviously gives all this bready, salty yeastiness, it never disappears, and it's the thickest layer. So whereas it's made in the same way, as Fino, they're made in the same way. It's the same grape variety, obviously, the best examples are all grown on their Albariza soils, which are these just beautiful, white chalky soils that retain all the water, the deeply, so the vines, even in the middle of summer, they can still get some water, they're amazing soils, aren't they? So it's all the same, but it's simply just the fact that this flor can maintain itself the whole way through summer and winter, that it just is saltier and actually a bit finer. It's just that little bit seems that saltier and a bit more elegant.

L Lawrence Francis 23:52
Yeah, you're you're in, you're in, you're in good company. I think either way. And I think that's that. That's the other thing. I mean, you know, it's, it's, it's also, I think it's very interesting that even that, you know, the producers, because there is there are those different, different influences across those different cities, you know, as you get in any region, you know, I think just sort of, you know, be careful if you kind of lump Finos and Manzanillas together because I think people will, especially ones who who are producing it, you know, there'll be there'll be very quick to point out what the, what the differences are, even if you know, I'll be honest, you know, sometimes for me, I can't always tell the difference, but it maybe does need a little bit of context and you know, it's all it's a kind of, you know, well of history, I guess and information that the Sherry has, you know, there's there's kind of so much to discover and so much nuance really about the wine style.



Janina Doyle 24:48

And it's just something that people don't don't realise about really. Actually, you know, I mentioned the Albariza soils? I have not been down to Jerez or Sanlúcar de Barrameda. I've heard that the soils because they're white, but they're they're not just white that they vibrant they're, they shine. Do you remember that when you're walking through the vineyards. Were these white soils really that intense?



Lawrence Francis 25:14

I mean, it was it was it, yeah, it was really interesting the, so I didn't actually explain the bigger context of the visit there. I was, in a sense, I was I was kind of piggybacking really on the back of this massive event that they host in Jerez every two years, which is called the Copa Jerez. And the idea there is I think, really to kind of reinforce this idea of sharing as a food wine. They run competitions, in essentially, big Sherry consuming markets and important Sherry markets around the world, at top restaurants, and they're basically looking for, it's almost like the kind of the Olympics of, of Sherry food pairings. So they kind of whittle everyone down, you have like the UK heats, and the US heats and the Spain heats, and the Denmark heats and the Germany heats, around eight, I think countries in all. And then they'll kind of battle it, battle each other down in the country. And then they'll get their representative team from each country, which each team consists of a Sommelier and a chef. So And the idea here is that they've, as a team, that they've got to put together a three course, essentially pairing menu, like a kind of mini pairing menu. So they've got a starter, they've got a main, they've got a desert, and in conjunction between essentially that, you know, as a triangle, again, between the Sommelier, between the chef and between the producers, then they kind of bring and put forward what are the what are the best pairings that they possibly can. And the idea is then that they then present that kind of the the dishes and the wines that won them, the regional heats. They then all fly into Jerez together, that same kind of two, three night period. And then they actually produce those dishes and the Sommelier presents those dishes, kind of in, in under timed conditions. The clock is ticking, and they have to present to, you know, a very esteemed panel.



Janina Doyle 27:24

Can people watch this live, or can they find information online and see what dishes were produced? Give them some inspiration?



Lawrence Francis 27:35


I think the Sherry, you know, the kind of official Sherry wine website is very comprehensive. So, I think any kind of search for Sherry, Copa, COPA, Jerez, JEREZ. I was there in 2019. So so that that's, that's really the, you know, the, the experience that I had, and, and what I saw there. It's kind of all there, you have, you know, all of these sort of Michelin star restaurants that are, you know, putting forward the Sommelier and chef team, and it's really competitive. You know, I must admit I may be underestimated before I went there, how competitive it really was, you know, people were really, yeah, giving their all, I think just, you know, just really wanted to win. So it was a pretty incredible experience.



Janina Doyle 28:26


Awesome. Okay, that's amazing. Now, now we know why you were really there. Right? I've run out of that glass, so I'm going to pull myself the other one. It's Palo Cortado time. Palo Cortado. A wine style that is just confusing to perhaps even the people in Jerez. For people who do not know what Palo Cortado is, don't worry, we don't either. No, the, it's because nobody knows. It is a very rare style. I mean, we're talking like 100,000 bottles a year get made apparently, like 1% of production. And the definition is it's just really vague, isn't it? It's like, it should have the nose of an Amontillado but the body of an Oloroso. So I guess actually we should probably touch on what they are. So we said that Fino and Manzanilla are biologically aged, which means that they age with the flor. So that's why they taste bready and they typically taste salty. Then you have Oloroso which is oxidatively aged meaning there is no flor. So all of these wines are fortified. So after the juice has been fermented and identified is it going to be is it quite light and elegant, right, that's going to be a Fino, that gets fortified up to 15%. Same for Manzanilla or it's like oh, this is quite rich, or this is heavier, they like right, that's gonna be an Oloroso. So they fortify it up to 17 or 18%. And then of course, with it being higher in alcohol, the flor can't survive. It can survive at 15 but it can't survive at 17 or 18. So for that reason, whilst is ageing just like the Fino and Manzanilla will do, it will do the same thing in solera systems which we can, we can touch on, but it will obviously have oxygen affecting the wine and so it gets much bigger and nuttier and more toffee and leather and caramel, it depends on obviously, how long it ages for. And so then you have Amontillado in the middle. And that starts its life, like a Fino. And then it then transfers over to, then loses its flor, because it's refortified and then has some oxidative ageing. So therefore, you have the both styles, you have a bit of saltiness, a bit of breadiness, and you have a bit a toffee, a bit of caramel. So it's a perfect balance, if you're not sure which one, which style you prefer. Then you have Palo Cortado. Which is, well, they say a lot of the winemakers will say it's by accident. And ultimately it's more about the style. So it can be made in many different ways. Typically, it would have started its life with a bit of flor. But speaking to several winemakers, now a lot of them don't, they say that actually, there's just the free run juice


that would have gone into a Fino, but actually straight away, they just allow it to have an oxidative effect. And it's just the fact that it's just a very fine light style. So anyway, that yeah, that probably confuses people even more, but it's rare. It's delicious. It's very fine. And it's somewhere in between an Amontillado and an Oloroso. Okay.

 Lawrence Francis 31:39
Very well done.


 Janina Doyle 31:40
Is that alright. I feel like I'm sweating trying to describe that.

 Lawrence Francis 31:45
Have a drink, you should have saved some of the Manzanilla.

 Janina Doyle 31:48
I am I'm gonna have a nice sip now. Sorry, everybody, we are tasting a very delicious Palo Cortado, which is 20 years old. So it's a VOS. So what's that in the Latin word, obviously it's Very Old Sherry, but ahh, it's on the back. It's on the back. Vinum Optimum Signatum. There you go.

 Lawrence Francis 32:08
Okay, I didn't know that I'm learning. I just I just accepted it as Very Old Sherry. That was like easy enough for me.

 Janina Doyle 32:13
No. Officially, it's Vinum Optimum Signatum. Gosh, Lawrence, come on. Everyone knows that Vinum Optimum Signatum.

 Lawrence Francis 32:19
They do now.



Janina Doyle 32:20

So this is the Wellington. And obviously, with 20 years, it is, a little bit older. So what are you smelling? What are you tasting?



Lawrence Francis 32:29

This, you'll notice that the way that I talk about wines is always it's always through experience. And what this actually takes me back is to a trip that I had to Seville 3, 4, 5 years ago. And I remember yeah, I was sort of, you know, earlier on on my wine journey. And I was like, yeah, let's be really, you know, swanky let's order a Sherry. And I can't remember, it may have been in Amontillado, or it may have been a Palo Cortado. But it was basically, what this is giving me is kind of remembering the confusion I had, which is that I almost smell this. And I remember smelling this sort of, you know, back in the day, and because it almost has that sort of caramel, the sort of yeah, very, like woody, you know, quite quite aromatic characteristics. But I got I got fooled by that by that caramel and that influence of the wood, into thinking it was going to be sweet. So I was then, not to say disappointed. But I was really confused. I was like, how can how can something that smells like it's so round and it's actually you know, maybe got a sort of a, you know, a touch of, sort of, you know, dry fruit and something that is smells like it's so intensely sweet and not even just, it's like a fresh fruit. It's almost it's that kind of dried, concentrated fruit. And then you actually taste it and it's, it's, you know, almost completely dry. I mean, this isn't this has got I can see, you know, a touch of residual sugar, but it's still it's still very dry. I would say. And so yeah, it's again one of these things you sometimes can get, I think a little bit caught out with with with some of these Sherry's that are you know, in a sense sort of in the in the middle ground between what maybe is a little bit more familiar in terms of that Fino/Manzanilla, and you kind of get, you get what you're, you get what you're kind of expecting and maybe these are a little bit more complex and maybe even as I say a little bit contradictory sometimes in terms of how they smell and how they actually taste.



Janina Doyle 34:39

For me, it's, you said woody and it is. It's this woody even like mushroomy walnuts style but lovely dried apricot and then there's like this kind of hint of gingerbread, it there's a lot going on, the aromatics on this are beautiful and actually I should point out that Amontillado which is obviously in between a Fino and an Oloroso and so often has a lot more of that dried fruit, dried apricots often come with Amontillado. And of course that's sticking with the style right? This should have a nose of Amontillado but more of a body and more full bodied, like an Oloroso. So on the palate. Really umami, isn't it? So yeah, the fact that you say you're expecting something, oh god, devastating. Very umami but with

all this toffee and caramel still, even though it's completely dry. And then with this kind of it's a really tangy finished like, like a salty, zesty lemon or some almond skins.



Lawrence Francis 35:42

Interesting. Listen to you describe that there. I think it's almost then like you don't really carry through for me, you don't carry it through the fruit that you can smell, but that doesn't then really show up on the on the palate. It's almost then, that's maybe why I got confused. You know, as I say, I smelt that fruit. I smelt how intense it was, I expected it to taste like that.



Janina Doyle 36:06

It doesn't come through, no no.



Janina Doyle 36:07

But it's very, it's got that that smoothness though, roundness and body on the palate, I mean, it's it is a very beautiful wine. I personally, my personal preference is for Palo Cortados and Olorosos, I think, I really like the the nuttiness and the depth that you get with these heavier Sherry's and then of course, something like Jamón ibérico. It's literally an ideal pairing, like you can't, well I was gonna say you can't get better than that. You probably could. But I mean, it's, it's one of the best pairings you can get. I mean is, is great, you can pair it with game and, and red meats and obviously mushroom dishes, mushroom paté, these kind of things, they would be fantastic, wouldn't they. But this is a lot more expensive, for obvious reasons, this is a 20 year aged wine. You can get it from, I'm looking at the list now, generally around £26 £27 from Davys, from Christopher Piper wines, from Fareham wine cellar. So again, because these guys are quite legendary in Sherry, they are in enough places people want to stock their wine. So I'm sure all my other listeners that are out of the UK, you will definitely be able to find wines from Bodega Hidalgo - La Gitana so.



Lawrence Francis 36:07

It absolutley didn't.



Lawrence Francis 37:29

I would also just add that I have put together a special link to, directly to the producer tasting note for this wine. So if anybody is listening, and wants to hear, sort of a two three

minute clip from the producer themselves, just go to interpretingwine.com/napoleon. And that will take you directly to a description which I was, I was very happy that I had sort of up my sleeve. I was able to play this back today and listening to them speaking, they were actually talking about, you know, when you would enjoy this wine and all of the things that you just said there in terms of food pairing came out. But then even interestingly, for me beyond that was actually talking about, you know, this is one that maybe you could even just enjoy by itself, kind of potentially taking the place of where you know, cognac or a whiskey might sit.



Janina Doyle 38:29

Yeah but it's a bit smoother, isn't it? So.



Lawrence Francis 38:33

And even though, you know, I'm just holding this up now and it's got this lovely, you know, deep rich colour, it's almost like quite viscous, it's, you know, you put this in a, in a Sherry glass, in whiskey glass sorry, you could, you could mistake it for a whiskey, you know, it really does have that look of a sort of a spirit, slightly higher alcohol because it's, because of the production style and the kind of additional fortification, so it comes out at 70 and a half percent, but I think it kind of would do, as, you know, as the producer kind of recommends, you know, we were to do a lot of that kind of that job, I kind of digest it and have the end of the meal job really that you know, cognac and great whiskies also do so well.



Janina Doyle 39:19

I see that I fully do. I mean these guys anyway, I realise we, they're very traditional in the way they make wines. They make everything, they've organically farmed, as well for anybody but I'm not that it's that complicated down in the beautiful sunny area of Andalusia, but it is organically farmed, and they have these pagos. Like pagos are these vineyard sites were produced amazing wines and they have these two top pagos one in Sanlúcar, in Sanlúcar de Barrameda called Miraflores and then one that's kind of near Jerez, but a bit closer to the sea called Balbaina. And that's where their fruit is coming from. So of course if anyone wants to go and look up these pagos, they have them in their portfolio, which I think again, helps with the quality. But they certainly, they've got botas that are like nearly 200 years old or around that as well. About 10,000 of them, you know, but that's what they have, because they have so much history. You know, I certainly know the first wine we were drinking, they've got a family solera that dates back to the early 19th century, which apparently is kind of when Manzanilla kind of started, you know, that

style. So, you know, they go all the way back. So you drink a little bit of history, as well as just delicious Sherry, all at the same time, you know?



Lawrence Francis 40:33

Yeah. 100% 100% and I just realised that I did, I didn't actually answer your question earlier, you were asking about the soil and kind of how that looks. And actually on the trip to Sherry, one of the places we visited, I am sure it would have been one of those, Bibaina or Milaflores but actually, by invitation of Williams & Humbert. They have a sort of a, I guess it's like a small entertaining space really, kind of out in the middle of the vineyard. So we're actually, you know, taking a break from all the, all that kind of activity at the main Copa Jerez site. We were driven out there for this incredible lunch and it was, you know, May going into June. So, you know, temperatures were pretty high. And then you just absolutely you know, we were inside having lunch and having Sherry, you know, this kind of, you know, shaded building, you know, shaded space and you know, cool space to break from the from the 2pm sun. But as soon as you stepped outside, you then just blinded by the reflections, it's yeah, it's just absolutely brilliant. It's just, you know, they're actually remember, they were handing out this sort of, you know, straw boaters as we got off the coach, basically, because it's like, if you didn't have sunglasses, which has, you know, I don't think a lot of people did, you were going to be blinded. So it was like, you need you needed something to shade your eyes with because it was just that intense. But it but it's it's incredible. And I would I would actually let you know, just like to make a bit of a link back to, to the kind of, to the last episode. And just, I think, you know, where I think Sherry, I think it does so many things so well, you know, that we've we've sort of already touched on, but I think I think there's still, you know, there's still an opportunity really to tell that part of the story. I remember back to when I was, you know, first sort of curious and reading about Sherry, it was almost like the, the weight of all of the communication and, you know, everything that was kind of described, it was all around, you know, the great things that we've been speaking about. You know, is about how the flor comes in. And it was about how wines are fortified and how they go into barrels and how their age and how they move around. Which is absolutely amazing. But I think the part almost before that grape gets harvested, before it gets snipped. I personally feel that that is under represented in the Sherry's story. And in this, in the sort of spirit of people wanting to know more about where their food is coming from, what conditions it's coming from, and almost yeah, wanting something that's that's a bit special, that's unique, that's maybe limited edition, I think that there is a an additional story and I would say an opportunity, really, for Sherry to tell more of that story, more of, you know, what happens in the vineyard, what are their sort of growing conditions. And I think there's I think there's potentially some interesting moves in that direction that have been sort of bubbling under as I see them for many years, and maybe that these are going to come more to the

fore.



Janina Doyle 44:00

I totally agree. And I mean, just simply you said about you know, what happens in the vineyard and that you remember, of course, your three out of your six: the culture, the geographical, the geological. But in terms of geological this Albariza soils, like I mean, they're so unique, they should be something. The way, the fact that you can't actually, you're not allowed to irrigate. The rules for the DO is you're not allowed to irrigate. So you have to rely on the water that falls in, primarily in the winter. And we're talking I think it's about 500 to 700 millimetres a year, it's not a lot at all. And they create these stairs into the soils, so that they can kind of catch the water so that it will, so they don't lose anything, nothing runs off and then it will go down in, they're very obviously calcium rich soils. So of course they're free draining and then they retain the water but just the way that that soil is so different. And they treat it so differently because of the water restrictions. It's phenomenal. And people don't know about it. So yeah, people can talk passionately about what they're doing in that vineyard, and how that affects this, as you said, quite neutral grape actually, there's there's definitely stories to be told.



Lawrence Francis 44:07

100%



Janina Doyle 44:19

For now I'll just have to wine. I haven't got any stories to contribute sorry. Lawrence, thank you ever so much.



Lawrence Francis 45:18

Yeah, no, it's been amazing. I think the other big opportunity, obviously the Sherry Week is a huge event that kind of, you know, takes place every year in November and, you know, kind of gets a lot of those stories out there. But I you know, I think I think Sherry is, you know, genuinely uh, you know, it's for life, not just for Christmas.



Janina Doyle 45:41

There you go. You hear it here first. But guys, you're listening to this podcast, if you're listening to it, when it's just been released, you have one month to prepare for Sherry Wine Week and then you can get all crazy and indulge. And really, I'm sure there'll be lots of

stories as Lawrence has said, coming out and about. Thank you, Lawrence, you've been amazing.



Lawrence Francis 45:59

Amazing. Thank you so much. Yeah, it's been brilliant.



Janina Doyle 46:03

Bless you. I'll speak to you soon.



Lawrence Francis 46:04

Virtual chin chin.



Janina Doyle 46:06

Oh wait, I've got two glasses. Salud!



Lawrence Francis 46:09

Salud!



Janina Doyle 46:15

So anyone who wants to continue their Sherry journey, you can go across the interpretingwine.com/sherry. And this is the start of Lawrence's nine part series. So it'll start with Episode 325. And we didn't get around to talking about the solera system itself. However, if you go back to one of my old episodes, that's Episode 33, fortified wines with Master of Wine, Tim Jackson, about five minutes in. I'm talking all about what the solera system is. And in fact, you'll also hear from him what he thinks is a Palo Cortado. Now I have a great wine quote for you to finish off today's episode, it's by Spanish novelist Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, and he says:



Janina Doyle 47:01

"On Sherry, the destiny of 1000 generations is concentrated in each drop. If the cares of the world overwhelm you, only taste it, pilgrim and you will swear that heaven is on earth."



Janina Doyle 47:17

Yes, well, quite clearly, Pedro Antonio was a Sherry aficionado. Alright, that's all for today. Thanks so much for listening. You know what to do. Subscribe if you haven't, share with your wine loving friends and like and leave your comments. To prepare you for next week, if you thought Sherry was a step out of your comfort zone. Next week, I'm chatting with Sonal Holland who is the only Master of Wine in India. Of course, the subject is Wines of India. So I look forward to seeing you again next week. Until then, cheers to you.