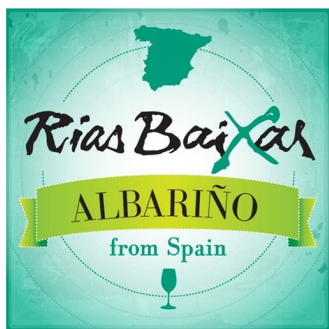




Rias Baixas: Albariño



Denomination of Origin (DO) Rias Baixas is renowned for the **Albariño** grape, an indigenous variety that produces some of the world's foremost white wines. Located in the **Galicia** region of northwestern Spain, the DO was formally established in 1988. You

will find in various other wine regions, notably Portugal (where it is known as Alvarinho) and California, but the Albariño Rias Baixas produce is probably the best in the world today.

9 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT RIAS BAIXAS

1. Galicia bears a strong resemblance to the green fields and rocky coasts of Ireland.

2. Referred to as "Green Spain," with hillsides covered with mist that hide granite castle vineyards.

3. Galicia has a strong Celtic influence dating back to 800-400 BC when they occupied most of modern Central and Western Europe. The Romans drove the Celts to the far western extremes of Europe, including Galicia. This explains the Galicia's desire to follow in the vinicultural Celtic heritage.

4. Due to its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean, it has a cool maritime climate, ample rain, and abundant during the growing season.

5. Soils of the region are uniform, consisting of hard granite and a mineral rich alluvial top soil with limited amounts of organic

material and loads of minerality resulting in world-class white wines.

6. Over 99% of wines produced here are white; however, overall they do permit eight different types of wines.

7. Although 12 different grapes are grown in Rias Baixas, Albariño represents 90% of all plantings.

8. Rias Baixas has five different sub-zones and a host of different wine making techniques resulting in diversity for their wines. These sub-zones include:

- Ribeira do Ulla: newest sub-region, located inland, mostly alluvial soil
- Val do Salnés: located on the Atlantic coast, the birthplace of Albariño, oldest sub-region with the most concentration of vines, coolest and wettest, granite and rocky with alluvial soil.
- Soutomaior: nestled in the hills, smallest sub-region, light and sandy soil over granite bedrock
- Candado do Tea: means "County of Tea," named after the River Tea, warmer and drier with soils containing granite and slate
- Rosal: lies along the Miño River, forms the border with Portugal, granite bedrock and alluvial topsoil, vineyards are terraced along the Miño

9. Legend has it that after God created the earth, he rested his hand in Galicia for a moment, the Rias Baixas five regions are the traces of the fingers of God's hand.



ALBARIÑO RÍAS BAIXAS

Albariño is a green, thick-skinned grape variety. It was presumably brought to Iberia (now Spain) by Cistercian monks in the 12th century. The monks were centered at Cluny, in the Burgundy region of France. But, its name "Alba-Riño" means "the white from the Rhine", which could indicate that it traveled a bit, before settling down in the Rías Baixas region (Galicia) of Spain. Albariño accounts for 90% of all plantings in Rías Baixas.



Albariño is one of Spain's most aromatic white wines. At its heart, it has a lime citrus core with clean minerality and a stimulating acidity that many commonly associate with Riesling. In fact, so considerable are these similarities that in a blind tasting you could mistake it for a Riesling variant if it weren't for the rich and vibrant palate of apricots that also make you think of Viognier.

Wines labelled as "Rías Baixas", "Rías Baixas Albariño" or "Albariño Rías Baixas", are the most typical wines of the region and will be quite similar in style. Those from distinct subregions will be labelled as such, for example "Rías Baixas Condado" wines come from the distinct subregion Condado de Tea, and will tend to have more earthy notes with subtler fruit character.

THE BEST ALBARIÑO RÍAS BAIXAS HAS TO OFFER

One excellent result for the wine lover is that producers here are constantly experimenting and developing new techniques in order to make the very best wines that they can. Another key advantage of the region's youth is that it is still making its name and prices are generally very fair. Even top end Albariño Rías Baixas wines won't cost you a fortune.

Here at Txanton, we have compiled some of the best Albariño Rías Baixas is producing today.



The winery 'Pazo San Mauro' is steeped in history, culture and above all, great wine. The winery was named after the country palace (or 'Pazo') that was built in 1591 in honor of **Saint Mauro** (a.k.a. **San Amaro**). Vine cultivation has always been intimately linked to the history of the Pazo and remains of an old winepress can be found in the ancient Pazo which dates back to the 16th century. The current owners of Pazo San Mauro also have award-winning wineries in Rioja (Marquez de Vargas) and Ribera del Duero (Conde de San Cristobal) and have invested heavily in both the restoration of Pazo San Mauro's magnificent old buildings and in the construction of a new wine cellar, which uses the most advanced technologies to produce the finest wine possible.





Like most wineries in the D.O. Rias Baixas, Pazo San Mauro is dedicated to producing high-quality white wines made predominantly from the Albariño grape varietal. All of the hand-harvest grapes that go into making their wines are 100% estate-owned, and their vineyards are located in an optimal location for quality wine production, which has an exceptional microclimate, midday sun exposure and protection from the northern winds.



Currently the winery makes two wines which we also have at Txanton. **'Sanamaro'** is a wine with great personality that brings together the aroma and taste of two magnificent grape varieties, Albariño and Loureiro, which are planted on the highest point of the winery's 30-hectare estate. **'Albariño Pazo San Mauro'** is a monovarietal wine that is the result of a meticulous selection of the best grapes that grow on the rolling banks of the river Miño, which separates Spain from Portugal.



This amazing producer is located in the Salnés Valley in Rias Baixas and dates back to the 16th century. Although grapes have been grown at the estate for a long time it only began its wine making career in 1989 when it was bought by husband and wife team Marisol Bueno and Javier Mareque. Marisol is an impressive and dynamic woman who has had an important impact on the region. She was the driving force behind the creation of the DO Rias Baixas in 1988, it was even her husband that came up with the odd name Rias Baixas. After the creation of the DO she remained as its president for 20 years. This commitment to the region and the quality of its wine were clearly communicated through her wines.



From the beginning, the Bueno/Marque family's primary objective was to make a high quality wine. All the vineyards are trained to the traditional Pergola (Parra) system. Their high standards of work in the vineyard and cellar took precedence over the volume of bottles produced, which resulted in a traditional wine-growing approach that paid the greatest respect to the final product. As a result, the wines of Pazo de Señorans have gained recognition and countless awards both in Spain and abroad.



BODEGAVIÑANORA

Viña Nora is located in the heart of Condado do Tea, bordering Portugal. Condado do Tea is the only inland sub-region out of the five Rías Baixas sub-regions. This unique location is noted for its granite and stone soils and less rainfall than the region's average. These features favor an early maturation of the grapes, resulting in wines with characteristic expression of Albariño and the terroir.

The winery owns 39.5 acres of vines that grow in a mix of washed and decomposed granite and stone soils, which regulates the day's heat. The vines can avoid excessive humidity during the night and favor a better maturation.



The vines are grown on trellises, a common growing technique of the Rías Baixas region, reaching 6.5 feet high. The height helps protect the grapes from the soil's humidity and fungal diseases, and favors a complete maturity of the grapes with the great exposure to the sun.

Viña Nora's goal is to make authentic Albariño wines from Rías Baixas. With this objective the winery relies on the best technology, including small containers where microvinification is carried out to individually manage the characteristics of unique plots of land.

ZARATE



ALBARIÑO

ZARATE is a family-owned estate located in Meaño, the heart of the Salnés Valley in the Rías Baixas appellation. The vineyard is contained within the grounds of a Pazo built in the 16th century and totally restored during the 18th. Zarate has been a family wine making business for 7 generations. Under the auspices of the family, current wine maker and viticulturist Eugenio Pomares has continued to adopt more environmentally sympathetic policies with the development of sustainable agricultural practices avoiding the use of herbicides and pesticides.



The estate's wine philosophy, which adheres to natural viticultural methods for its century-old vines, is that each plot, with the help of carefully controlled yields, should express the true character of its terroir and grape variety.

Credits: Christine Faith L. Lopez | © 2016 Txanton Torre Wine & Olive Oil Co., Inc.

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