

RAFAEL PALACIOS

As Sortes



ORIGIN

Spain

APPELLATION

Valdeorras

SOIL

Sandy granite

AGE OF VINES

40-90+

ELEVATION

680-740 meters

VARIETIES

Godello

FARMING

Certified organic and in conversion to biodynamic (DEMETER)

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, pneumatic pressing, natural yeast fermentation in 500L French oak barrels with temperature control

AGING

7-8 months in 500L French oak barrels (20% new)

As quaffable and enjoyable as Godello can be from Valdeorras, it rarely reaches the level of richness, balance and complexity as it does in the hands of Rafael Palacios. Having left his family's estate in Rioja in 2004, Rafa settled in the Val do Bibei, a rugged, weathered and off the beaten path sub-zone of Valdeorras. Bordering Ribera Sacra, the Val do Bibei is a tortured landscape of granitic, terraced slopes dotted with hard to reach and hard to farm vineyard plots. Whereas most of the rest of the DO is at lower elevation with limestone and schist soils, Rafa works exclusively with Godello planted on granitic soils at much higher elevations – so high that late Spring snow and frost are ever present dangers to his already low yields. Locally these plots are known as sorte, a word in the local dialect that refers to the practice of drawing lots to determine inheritance. Rafa has assembled 24.5 hectares of vines divided among 32 sorte. Some plots he owns outright, others are on long-term lease. The oldest vines, some nearing a century, are head pruned while the younger vines on more gentle slopes are trellised. The farming is minimalist since the sub-zone is blessed with free draining soils and warm, dry summers. All the vineyard work done by hand, including harvesting.

As Sortes takes the selection process one step further by employing grapes from vines between 35 and 92 years old from sortes situated in a natural amphitheater, fermenting them with indigenous yeasts and aging them in 500 liter French oak barrels (20% new). Each barrel is monitored closely and will be gently warmed if the fermentation shows signs of faltering. For many years this was the benchmark wine of Valdeorras, and arguably one of Spain's best white wine, until it was unseated by Rafa's newest cuvées: Sorte Antiga, Sorte Souto and Sorte O Soro.

ACCOLADES

95 – 2018 As Sortes – Wine Advocate

94 – 2017 As Sortes – Wine Advocate

95 – 2016 As Sortes – Wine Advocate

