

VIEW FROM THE CELLAR

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Divina Clementia (Sober)

Divina Clementia is the very, very new project of Raul Suarez, whose family have been winegrowers in Ribeira Sacra for generations, but Señor Suarez has just taken the plunge to begin producing wines commercially on a small scale, utilizing their oldest vines and finest terroir in Amandi for their own bottling. And this was indeed started on a small scale, as the first vintage of 2012 has only produced a single barrel of their Mencía, or three hundred bottles.

Happy with the first year's results, Señor Suarez and his team, headed by winemaker Pedro Pérez, (who also makes the wines at Adegas Guimaro), have expanded production up to three barrels in the 2013 vintage. Raul Suarez very kindly dropped off a bottle of the 2012 at the restaurant, O Grelo in Monforte de Lemos, so that I could try the wine during my visit to the region, as my itinerary was already too full to add a visit to the bodega.

2012 Divina Clementia Mencía (Ribeira Sacra)

The inaugural vintage of Divina Clementia is comprised of a blend of eighty-five percent Mencía and fifteen percent Tintorera (Garnacha) and was raised in a new French barrel for six months, as this was the first year for the wine. The grapes hail from two small vineyards, with the average age of the vines between sixty and eighty years-old. The 2012 is an outstanding first vintage, but I found the wine just a touch oaky in personality and look forward to tasting the 2013 and future vintages, when the percentage of new wood will be a bit less. The bouquet is a blend of pomegranate, tree bark, cigar ash, a touch of menthol, lead pencil and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and a bit youthfully tarry in personality, with a good core of sappy fruit, fine complexity, moderate tannins and a long, well-balanced and chewy finish.

The wine seems to lack just a touch of brightness from its six month stay in a new barrel, but the constituent components here are very good indeed and the future looks quite bright for Divina Clementia. 2017-2027+