

CALLEJUELA

Palominos del marco de jerez

Meet: los Hermanos Blancos – Pepe y Paco, producers of incredible Palominos from el Marco de Jerez, some fortified and some not, variously with our without flor.

Their father, Francisco Blanco Martínez, ‘el Blanquito’ founded the business in 1980. Originally, he worked as an *almacenista de mosto* – he farmed his vineyards and made base wine, which was then sold to bottling houses, who fortified it to become *sobretablas* ready to enter their *soleras*.



In 1997, Blanquito’s operation was consolidated in a cellar atop the slope of Pago el Hornillo on the estuary (Trebujena) side of Sanlúcar de Barrameda. Nowadays, Francisco’s sons Pepe and Paco Blanco run the project, with 28 hectares of own vines across four pagos: in Sanlúcar de Barrameda they have holdings in Pagos Callejuela and el Hornillo; while in Jerez they own parts of Pagos Macharnudo and Añina. Ramiro Ibáñez provides advisory assistance. They hold 700 botas in their bodega, about 500 of which are ageing biologically.

Callejuela¹ became a brand in 1998 and entered the Manzanilla market in 2005, but its current face (the labels and styles we are working with) only hit the market in 2015. Callejuela is an incredibly dynamic producer, producing table wines (some with, some without flor), fortified Finos labelled as Manzanilla, and other sherry styles. Some are aged dynamically, others statically. Terroir of origin (Pago location) is as important as is that of the bodega (where the wines are yeasted and aged). The emphasis on the land results in simply better fruit – they pick at 12.5-13% potential alcohol compared to a regional norm of 10.5 (based on the bent assumption that fortification is the fix!).

TERROIR AS LIVED EXPERIENCE

‘Terroir’ in el Marco de Jerez is a cross-reference of two elements: the progression of soil type, loosely from west to east, overlaid by a west-east dynamic in prevailing breezes. With the soils, firstly we progress from sand through clay and arrive (higher up) at chalk, very loosely, from coast to interior, and there is a further textural progression within the *albarizas*, depending on their varying levels of silica, diatomaceous fossil content, and intrusions of iron/clay/sand. Soil structure also plays a role in textural affect.

The prevailing wind in el Marco is an alternation between a gentle, cool and humid westerly coming off the Atlantic, called *el Poniente* (from the setting sun), versus a stronger, hotter and sometimes brutal warm, dry Continental south-easterly, *el Levante* (from the rising sun).

I felt this all too clearly one day in early October, just after the harvest.

“20 degrees in Jerez”, the forecast said.

“Shorts, short-sleeve shirt, and a hat just in case”, said I.

Paco, Pepe, Willy and Ramiro collected us in Sanlúcar at 8am. We spent an hour by Rio Guadalquivir looking at maps, talking about soils, winds, geomorphological history ... and then went to the Callejuela bodega, just out the back of town on the north-eastern side. Two hours later, after time by the estuary, in the bodega, and then visiting pagos near the Atlantic, I was as close to hypothermia as I hope to ever get.

The cold deep chalk, and the fresh nip of *Poniente* breezes affect a massive shift in the feels-like of the ambient temperature. 15 degrees in the AM with all the chill effects felt like 8. Yet, the next day over in a Jerez vineyard, 20 degrees in an afternoon with a moderate *Levante* touch felt more like 26

¹ Meaning little street/alley/passageway

(and these were mild, calm, gentle days). All this is easily felt in the wines, if their handling is sensitive to place, and few are more so than those of Callejuela.

The terroir effects of soil influenced by breeze are phenomenal:

- Near the Atlantic in Pago Callejuela, imagine a swimmer standing up in the shallow end of the pool, shivering, for here the wines are a brisk, vertical chalk wall.
- In the Jerez zone, but keenly feeling the Atlantic, the effect in Pago Añina is reminiscent of free-styling easily in the middle of a pool, and the wine is horizontal, relaxed.
- Further east towards Jerez and open to the *poniente*, in Pago Macharnudo our metaphorical bather is swimming below the surface at the deep end of the pool. The wine is horizontal and marked by depth, pressure and the impression of profundity.

Callejuela is herbal, rice grass, salty on the point of tongue, cloud perfume in back.

Añina is chalk, straight up, cereal deep, mineral threaded, sencha and soy.

Macharnudo is a fist, an earthen ball.

THE PALOMINO BLANCOS OF CALLEJUELA



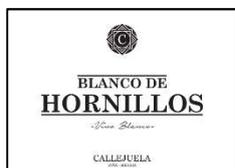
Paco and Pepe make unfortified Palomino whites in a range of expressions of low yield, gently pressed free-run juice:

- their 'house' wine is a blend of four pagos, raised without the effect of flor yeast.
- there is also a series of whites aged under *velo de flor* – these are statically-aged, vintage and pago-specific Finos without fortification.

CALLEJUELA Palomino 'Blanco de Hornillo' 2017

This Palomino aged without *flor* is named for Pago de Hornillo, where the Callejuela bodega stands, just away from the Atlantic on the estuary side of Sanlúcar. It is made of fruit from Hornillo itself, and Pagos Callejuela, Añina and Macharnudo. Fermented and aged in stainless, 12.5% abv.

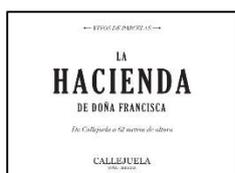
Grassy, with a typical false sweetness from the chalk, and a lovely bitter point to finish.



Golden and floral with a hit of heavy metal mineral, some waxy herbal extract bitterness and a touch of smoke rising, like very delicate lapsang souchang. The soft fruit feels are nicely rounded atop a layer of thick steel minerality. The palate has some locquat richness, without viscosity. It works fluently between rich and tart: it's brined, golden and sandy, edged with chalk grip and salt scratch, finishing lean and dry. Soft, gentle, mineral, and ... clean as a fossil.

CALLEJUELA Palomino de Flor 'la Hacienda de Doña Francisca' 2017, Pago Callejuela

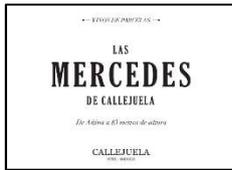
'Hacienda de Doña Francisca' is a specific small vineyard at 62 metres altitude in Pago Callejuela, on the estuary side of Sanlúcar. The Albariza here is *Tosca cerrada*. The fruit is picked at full maturity, which only plays out to 12% abv due to the cool site and *poniente* breezes. The juice is fermented in old Manzanilla *botas*, and the resultant wine is aged on fine lees with 10% ullage for 7 months of ageing under *velo de flor*. The smaller ullage facilitates only a light coverage of flor, which in combination with shorter ageing, emphasises expression of the Albariza over that of the yeast.



A deep plane of chalk layers nose and palate, accompanied by equally deep herb marmalade, and a strong steely thread. It's vertical, and salty, typical of Sanlúcar palomino - bracey, racy, lightly structured, delicate and charming. Anise, whisky brine, sours and bitters, peach skin, dandelion. Palomino in this Albariza is like a swimmer standing up in the shallow end of the pool, shivering.

CALLEJUELA Palomino de Flor 'las Mercedes de Callejuela' 2017, Pago Añina

Grown in *Albariza de anteojuela*, Añina is at the coastal end of the Jerezano pagos, with a notable *poniente* influence. At 83m, 'Las Mercedes' is the Blanco brothers' *parcela* within Añina. The wine is made identically to 'Hacienda de Doña Francisca' and 'la Chozá', and bottled at 12% abv.

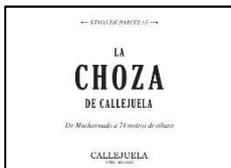


Mineral, open, gently oxidative, redolent of cereal. Deep, dry and soft, it lays out easily in the mouth, with a touch of spice in meal and hay. Apple skins, grasses, shortbread, nettle, white peach and a touch of cider booziness. Volume is leavened by salty minerality. It's savoury and open at the finish with flor bitterness and a tracery of chalk-brine wandering off into space ...

Free-styling easily in the middle of a pool, horizontal, relaxed.

CALLEJUELA Palomino de Flor 'la Choza de Callejuela' 2017, Pago Macharnudo

Macharnudo is one of the jewels of el Marco de Jerez, growing on *Albariza de lentejuelas*. 'La Choza' is the Blanco brothers' own small vineyard at 74m within Macharnudo. Viticulture is by the local traditional method of *vara y pulgar* ('stick and thumb'), whereby each year the vines are pruned to an active arm (the stick), which will carry perhaps eight bunches, while the thumb side has the sprouts which will develop into next year's stick. 'La Choza' is made in the same manner as 'Hacienda de Doña Francisca' and 'las Mercedes', but the warmer inland site and attendant influence of *levante* breezes yields a higher natural degree, and the wine is bottled at 13.5% abv.



Macharnudo brings extra volume with beautifully structured intensity. It's soft, full, golden and earthy, a field of herbs and golden wheat. A typical touch of pan smoke comes in a mid-palate of fruit skin and barley broth. There's a wash of herb tisane in a strong, rich and deep, brassy, savoury, mineral palate. Fenugreek, dried peach, barley water, oat biscuit, honeysuckle, sweet-sour.

Swimming along the bottom of deep end, horizontal with the depth pressure of profundity.

THE MANZANILLAS OF CALLEJUELA



Callejuela make a wonderful array of Manzanillas aged under flor in Sanlúcar:

- there's a fine 'regular' version of solera-aged Manzanilla, simply called Callejuela.
- and a pago-specific *Pasada* from Hornillo, called 'Blanquito' in homage to their dad.
- an incredible serial-bottling project of a vintage-specific, statically-aged Manzanilla.
- and a trio of pago-specific, statically-aged vintage wines expressing village-vineyard difference as clearly, thrillingly as anywhere in the wine world.

CALLEJUELA 'Blanquito' Manzanilla Pasada

This is a full and soft, long-matured Fino, with 12 years' of dynamic aging, and will develop further in bottle. Blanquito, named for Francisco Blanco, is bottled at 15.5%, and features fruit from Hornillo.

A deep and obviously aged wine but still very clearly Manzanilla, albeit with less acetaldehyde and less direct flor yeast character. It has an incredible sucking pebble, dry chalk, soft tannin finish with traces of nuts and old dry flowers. Apples, iodine, hay, spice, minerals. Salty, salivatory ...

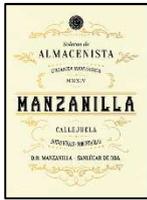


CALLEJUELA Manzanilla de Añada 2012 series/11

Statically aged, this is a vintage Manzanilla from Pago Callejuela on the Atlantic coastal side of Sanlúcar de Barrameda. 11 botas were made, which will be bottled over a 10 year period. The first saca, #1/11 emptied the number 8 bota into bottle. Saca #1/11 took place in 2015, and Saca 11/11 will be bottle the final bota in 2025. Un-refreshed, or statically aged, vintage wines like these evolve more quickly than continuously blended and refreshed styles. Over the course of the series, the wine will naturally evolve from vital young Fino to rich, fragrant Amontillado. Saca 1/11 is both saline and rounded, with mineral, camomile, lemon and apple.

CALLEJUELA Manzanilla de Pago Callejuela

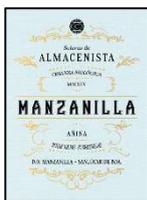
As with its unfortified sister, this is from the little vineyard ‘Hacienda de Doña Francisca’, within Pago Callejuela. Statically aged – unmoved, unmixed for 4 years under flor which received no further nutrient. It went into old botas at 15% and is bottled as *una palma* at 16% abv.



Deep gold, a gentle tisane of old pressed flowers, honeysuckle toffee in branch water with flaxseed and a glint of steely mineral. Meyer lemon, pistachio, salted dough, apple pip, yellow petals. Restrained and elegant, super dry, with great chalky grip, like the scrape of a boat on seabed as it brushes ashore. The wall of fresh chalk depth persists from entry all the way through to after perfume. Humid, electric-edgy, delicate, haunting, like the sun under water.

CALLEJUELA Fino del Marco de Jerez de Pago Añina

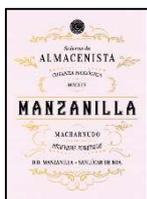
This is from the fruit of ‘Las Mercedes’ vineyard inside Pago Añina. A natural Palo Cortado (classified as *un cortado*) bottled at 16%. Intensely mineral, after 4 years unmixed, unmoved under flor.



A deep, slightly oxidative bronze. Smells like a tisane of fermented straw: old flowers and standing grasses long gone to seed give heady, deep, faded florals. Linseed, toasted cereal, powdered ginger, almond meal, mace spice, a tangerine fade. The palate gathers to a caramel chew moment then releases into an endless shimmering non-finish of glazed kelp, salt rime and a last perfume memory of barley liquor. It's rounded, soft, mineral and easy in style.

CALLEJUELA Fino del Marco de Jerez de Pago Macharnudo

The fruit is from ‘la Chozas’ vineyard inside Pago Macharnudo, and classified as *una palma*.



Deep gold with a fringe of bronze. There's great depth and seductive perfume on a nose brilliant with spicy dried Seville orange rind, salted caramel, kelp and smoked steel. Deep and earthy, pecans, rye toast, barley and lots of cake-bake spice. Sweet and sour, dynamic in the mouth, the palate is lush, mineral, maritime. The feel is a long slow groove, coating the base of the mouth, running under the tongue, barley water edged by chalk-starch, becoming grain mash and praline. The whole thing is open, vibrant and welcoming, complex acidity and abstracts take over for the ride to end.

