

Delgado Zuleta

DO Manzanilla - Sanlúcar de Barrameda

Established in 1744, Delgado Zuleta is the oldest family-owned house in the sherry triangle, and has its cellars and vineyards situated around the town of Sanlúcar de Barrameda. Delgado Zuleta specialise in producing Manzanilla, but also make a full range of Jerez styles from Amontillado to PX.

Their market-leading wine is a Manzanilla labelled as 'La Goya', (real name, Aurora Mañanos Jauffré), a famed flamenco dancer from the region. This brand first appeared in 1918. DZ have several other brands which are sold locally, but not commercialised for broader domestic or international consumption (in order of importance, these are 'Zuleta', 'Barbiana', 'Galvana' and 'Lola'.



There are two further, occasional bottlings of La Goya. La Goya 'en rama' Magnums are barrel-condition Manzanilla, bottled raw from the Solera criadera of La Goya. In the back of the bodega hides a small solera labelled 'Bota No!': not for bottling. This is a reserve of Manzanilla older than the normal La Goya Solera, and is used for back-blending and typification when the solera is stressed by demand. This reserve is very occasionally bottled as La Goya XL Manzanilla en rama in 500ml bottles.

Sanlúcar de Barrameda is a town on the south bank of Rio Guadalquivir, just before its culmination at the Atlantic, north along the coast from the Bay of Cadiz. Sanlúcar's significance as a port dates back to the turn of the 13th century and has been trading wine since the 17th ... it was here around the turn of the 19th century that 'la Flor' first appeared, and where the Solera System was originated to flush nutrient through to the older wines under biological protection.

The climate is cool and moderate compared to the blazing alternations of heat and cold at inland Jerez, and the air is alive with maritime brine. Originally subsumed within the broad DO Jerez-Xerés-Sherry, the Finos of Sanlúcar are more delicate than those of Jerez and have acquired their own designation as a separate DO. DO Jerez was formed in 1933, and DO Manzanilla dates from 1964. These are collaborative appellations, though, working out of the same office and same basic organisation in downtown Jerez. It is important to note with sherry that the fruit origin (vineyard location) is not as important as the location in which maturation takes place. Thus, Finos, Manzanillas and Finos del Puerto all take fruit from pagos within the Sherry Triangle, but the vineyards do not have to be within the municipality indicated on bottling. For wine to be designated Manzanilla- Sanlúcar de Barrameda, it must be matured in Sanlúcar, but the fruit can come from anywhere in the Sherry lands. In Sherry, the bodega is the key to the identity or signature of the wine. Only 10% of the total area for production of Sherry is the town boundary, but all of it is eligible to be Manzanilla. The key pagos which *are* in Sanlúcar are Miraflores and Torrbreva (among 27 vineyards in total).

Manzanillas are identical to Finos in terms of production – the stylistic difference is the qualitative effect of the mild, briny air. A key to the delicacy of Manzanilla is that the flor yeast grows more thickly and consistently year-round in Sanlúcar. As a result, Manzanillas are more lightly fortified, bottled at 15%, rather than 16% for the Finos of Jerez, where the flor requires a little extra assistance to realise the miracle of biologically-aged Fino: oxidatively-aged wines with no apparent oxidation.

A diversion on naming: how Manzanilla came to be so-named is a contested matter. Manzanilla is the name for chamomile, and the delicate yeast aroma of Manzanilla is rather chamomile-like. Manzana is a green apple, so a Manzanilla would be a little green apple, and Manzanilla has a touch of apple flower and crabapple bitterness in the mix. Others argue a village west of Seville gave its name to the wine of the region.

Camomile, little green apples, the absence of nuttiness (compared to the Finos, that of Jerez particularly) and the tang of the Sanlúqueno briny sea air are the collective defining characters of Manzanilla.

The town of Sanlúcar has 3 separate tiers.

One enters the town by road from a plateau above the Atlantic coast. There is an increasingly steep descent as the road spirals down through the heart of the old town (pocked with tiny cellars nurturing Manzanilla soleras). Finally, there is a gentle second slope below town, running a kilometre or so down to the estuary of the Guadalquivir, a few kilometres from its exit to the Atlantic. Across the estuary from Sanlúcar, Las Marismas (the marshlands) contain 'Parque Nacional Doñana', a wildlife reserve and breeding ground for a major portion of Europe's winged species (with plentiful boar, deer and more besides).



Delgado Zuleta recently added to their collection of small bodegas built into the walls in the middle of town, by building a new bodega on the breezy plateau atop Sanlúcar. They took 20 years to ensure the humid, clay-soiled bodega had exactly the right conditions for the flor before finally moving in the La Goya solera. Ideal maturation conditions for Manzanilla include high levels of aeration to help the flor transpire, high humidity, low levels of light, noise and vibration, with temperatures both mild and as constant as possible.

Delgado Zuleta 'La Goya' Manzanilla



The first criadera for La Goya was laid down more than 100 years ago. Butts in the solera average over 100 years' age, and are repaired every 30-odd years. 'La Goya' is technically a Manzanilla Pasada, meaning it has been aged for a relatively long time (8 years, compared to the standard 3-5 years). However, La Goya is bottled before any die-back of the flor yeast, and is devoid of Amontillado characters ... it is a marvel of cellar craft: 8 years' ageing simply yields a deeper and somehow even purer Manzanilla. The oyster shell suggestion in Manzanilla becomes a richer scent of abalone, and the wine has a fabulous builders' lime streak reflecting the flavour of the chalky 'albariza' soils.

Fino/Manzanilla Sherries are best consumed fresh (within a year of bottling, and within a day or two of the bottle being opened). La Goya' destined for Australia is bottled the week prior to shipping, and is shipped regularly in small volumes, with an importer's label which specifies the bottling date of each batch. This is easily translated: L190617 is a Lot bottled on the 19th day of June in 2017. Occasional bottlings of the La Goya solera, unfiltered or 'en rama' in Magnums are also available. The main 'La Goya' Solera system is 1500 butts of 500 litres. The tiny *Solera Reservada* 'XL' is just 34 butts of Manzanilla more than 10 years old with no oxidative variance from pure Manzanilla style.

Delgado Zuleta 'La Goya XL' Manzanilla En Rama

Goya XL is an extraordinary wine. Having spent more than 10 years under protection of the flor yeast (unimaginable in any bodega other than DZ), the wine comes from a small reserve solera of extra-aged wine which serves to insure the depth and integrity of the La Goya Solera. If the Solera is taxed (especially likely during the huge demands associated with Sevilla's annual 'Feria') and there's any chance of the wine becoming weak, the special 'Bota No!' reserve of older La Goya is used to blend the wine up to spec. 'XL' stands for 'extra large' flavours!



When Scott visited Delgado Zuleta in 2012 and tasted the 'Bota No!' solera for the first time, he asked them to bottle it as a version of 'en rama' or raw sherry. The first saca (withdrawal from the solera) was made on September 27, 2012 and became the first release of 'Goya XL' Manzanilla en Rama. Since 2012, there have been 3 further sacas and subsequent XL releases. It's worth noting that en rama bottlings of Manzanilla and Fino tend to age very well over a couple years, compared to their day-to-day filtered kin.

Straight from the barrel, it is an extraordinary experience to taste – rich, golden and glorious, reminiscent of Mersault in a way, and best drunk from a large wine glass. The acidity of XL is an incredible, layered, textured experience: a line of secondary, developed ‘sherryish’ acid melds with the rich tang of Albariza chalk and releases into fresh, delicate primary acid tingling with a sweet rainwater liveliness akin to great Madeiras. Rich, bright yellow, with gold hue. There’s a really rich nose of honeyed lemon and beeswax-candle with heady vanilla-bean and bourbon wood notes playing a supporting role. The wine is bone dry with snappy acidity giving balance to the fleshy beeswax, chalky Albariza soil-textured palate. Lemon-drop citrus combine with briney sea aromas and almond meal to give an incredibly well-balanced, very long, complex and textured mouthfeel.

TASTING NOTE by John Radford (from his blog ... for once, we’ll relax our ‘no third party review’ rule!)

Goya XL Manzanilla en Rama Reposada - 15% abv - 10 years old - (drink within six months) Full straw; lovely, nutty, savoury aromas; wow! Roasted almonds and walnuts on the mid palate, tremendous complexity, layered and structured, long, long finish and bone, bone dry. A masterpiece. 19/20