

## BODEGA de FORLONG

### Marco de Jerez region, vinos de la Tierra de Cádiz

Alejandro (Alex) Narváez and Rocío Áspera are native *Jerezanos* and first-wave Marco de Jerez revolutionaries, reviving terroir and a variety of historical wine styles. It's a young project, conceived of in 2009 and producing its first bottles from the 2012 (first Tinto) and 2013 (first Blanco) harvests. It has a long gestation though: they have been a couple since they were in high school! In 2011, Rocío graduated as a Master of Warm Climate Winemaking from Cádiz University. Alejandro is half-French, and previously worked as a winemaker at Smith-Haut-Lafitte.



Forlong's fruit is grown in coastal Marco de Jerez, equally influenced by *albariza* and by briny Atlantic sea air (the wines carry 150mg of salt/litre from the air). In total, they work 18 hectares.

### FORLONG and the Pagos of Marco de Jerez

Forlong work vineyards in the *pueblos* of Puerto de Santa Maria and Jerez

- Their bodega sits on a 10 hectare property 5km north of Puerto towards Rota. This is in Pago Balbaina Baja, thus has *pueblo* designation as a wine of el Puerto de Santa Maria. 'Finca Forlong' is planted to a 7 hectare mix of Palomino, PX, Merlot, Syrah and Tintilla de Rota.
- They have 7 hectares of Palomino in 'Finca los Corrales' (Pago Balbaina Alta, Jerez) on the western slope facing *a poniente* towards Rota (they share this vineyard with Peter Sisseck, whose share of 'Corrales' crowns the Pago). Through 2018, they used a rental parcel in Balbaina Alta, 'Plantanila', but by 2019 had moved into their own *parcela*.
- Also in Jerez, they have 4 hectares in the 'Finca Greduela' *parcela* in Pago Lomo Pardo: one of Tintilla de Rota, the rest a mix of French cultivars.

All viticulture is organic, and selected use is made of biodynamic preparations (without swallowing that entire bible). Their vineyards are protected with ground cover and organic, herbal sprays, needing no chemicals. Harvesting by hand takes place at night, to avoid the daytime heat and the fruit is given a chill for a day or two before spontaneous fermentation. Little or no sulphur is added.



Their bodega name, Forlong, takes a lead from its former owner. It was called 'Forlon's Olive Grove' when they came across it in 2007, having been established as a farm in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by English merchant, Peter Forlon. They liked the idea of continuity in the name of the place, and tweaked 'Forlong' as their ID neologism.

### FORLONG Palomino/PX Vino Blanco Ecológico

Predominantly Palomino (85-90%), night-picked grapes are chilled to 6° for a day or two, then rigorously sorted, de-stemmed and pressed into stainless steel vats to ferment. The Blanco is spontaneously fermented long and cool at 15 degrees over 3 weeks. As the PX needs to be picked very early (perhaps mid-August), the wines are fermented separately, then blended and aged for 6 months on lees in stainless steel. The wine is glyceric, honey-floral, with a nice mineral lick to close. The Palomino gives a characteristic 'grass liquor' feel, while the PX adds a deep honey-pollen aroma.

### FORLONG Palomino-PX Blanco



*A lovely pale yellow with a flash of green, it's really brilliant in the glass. Peach, mandarin, wild hay, barley water, Pink lady appleskin and sea spray. It's classical Palomino-in-Albariza with a little musky pollen and under tongue weight and texture from the PX. Sandy, tangy, savoury, a blue steel whisper ... expressive, relaxed, balanced, salt tang fresh.*

## FORLONG '80-20' Palomino Blanco

(an un sulphured skin contact or orange wine from white grapes)

80% of the fruit for this natural expression is drawn from Pago de Forlong (also known as Pago de Bilbaína Bajo) and the 20% balance from *parcela* 'Platalina' (Pago de Bilbaína Alta). After pressing, 80-20 undergoes a spontaneous fermentation in stainless steel vats. Skins from the pressed PX of the Blanco are added to the fermentation. The PX skins are removed after 25 days of skin contact fermentation, by which time a (very) subtle pinking has been imbued. The wine rests in tank for 4 months and naturally settles so it can be bottled unfiltered and unfined, with no addition of sulphites. The wine is labelled as 'containing sulphites', which occur naturally due to the interaction of limestone and fermentation (EU rules state that wines with +10 mg/l of sulphites require labelling as 'containing sulphites' and Forlong has about 15 mg/l). Current production is about 4,000 bottles/year. Skin contact in this instance does not result in a pointlessly cluttered wine – here is a 'natural' wine with line and clear terroir, not occluded by winemaking.

### FORLONG '80-20' Palomino 'Orange Blanco'



*A lustrous, very light, dusty pink. The nose rings of Albariza, and is filled with laurel, white nectarine pith, musky rose, pomelo. Saline sea-dash. There's candied lemon and citrus rind, jasmine and herbal balm. The finish is a tangle, a riot, a thrill of wild white fruit tannin. The solids input is controlled and the skin contact accentuates line. There is no theft of identity via winemaking, with varietal and terroir characters in full view.*

## FORLONG Burbuja (sparkling) Methode Ancestral 2018 Palomino



This is hand-picked organic Palomino grown in Pago Balbaina Alta, then given the *Ancestral* bubbling treatment. Not being a style supported by the DO currently, as with the other Forlong wines, it's labeled *Vino de Tierra de Cadiz*. Fermentation is the same for vinosity and for adding bubbles: the wine is bottled before the alcoholic fermentation has converted all of the sugar. This starts in tank and finishes in bottle. 8 months' later is a hand disgorgement

and the bottles are refilled with the same wine. 12% abv.

*Fresh, pure white peach, with lemon sour, wild hay, a hit of chalk, peach skin, white flours and saline. Flowing bead, nice earthy-savoury richness, gentle finish. it's really great!*

## Forlong 'la Fleur' 2016



Organic, hand-picked Palomino from 'Finca Forlong' in Pago Balbaina Baja, in Puerto de Santa Maria, grown in *Tosca Cerrada Albariza* with some alluvial *Lustrillo*. After picking, the fruit is given 2 days of *soleo*, is pressed, spends 6 months with lees in *bota* then 24 months under *velo de flor*. 15% natural abv; meets the requirements for *Fino* and in future will be labelled thus.

*Cumquat, lemon rind, pistachio flesh, almond skin, salted hay syrup and parmesan tang. Iodine screams of the ocean's nearness. The fruit is vertical and electric with great complex acid and cut through with a plastery yeast line giving soft richness and run. The Forlong bodega is marked by montuliensis, and their *Fino* has a good lash of wild, funky brioche.*

## **Other wines:**

### **2019 Forlong (Cabernet-Tintilla) Rosado 2019**

60/40 cabernet and tintilla (el lomo pardo pago, jerez). Grapes held at 3 degrees, then allowed to warm for fermentation of whole fruit with stems for an hour and pressed.

*Light, more orange than pink to look at and to drink. Phenolic, but nicely controlled, delicious, with depth and texture and fresh rather than nutty finish.*

### **Forlong '(An)For(a)Long' Tintilla 2018**

13%, 6-6.5 ta, 3.3 pH. Spontaneous fermentation in terracotta 2000 litre from Cuenca. In the cool of 2018, lighter-skinned fruit (late-harvested, during rains) had no ability to hold oak: it was simply fermented in terracotta with 40% stems and oak withheld. It's all own-planted material off the home block planted in 2014.

JV April 2019

*A beautiful flowing, fresh palate. An open wine of lightness and flow. It has a whack of violet lipstick with super soft-delicate tannins. Brambly mulberries, plums & violets, a black cherry pureness and really fresh. There is a laurel feel from the terracotta and refreshing clay like finish.*

SW November 2019

*It's Contemporary Tinto [without actually liking Hall and Oates]: light, savoury, floral, easy ... simple, dry [and clean]. Wild black strawberry, under-canopy vegetation, carnation at 10 paces ... short of mid-weight, fresh and Atlantic, not very herbal with a fine briary line of tannin. It's sweet and sour vegetal at the finish, nicely rolling, easy and a nice little back-palate perfume cloud lingering.*

## **Vino de la Tierra Cádiz**

The wines of Andalusia fall into two categories:

Wines with Denomination of Origin (DO) & wines of Protected Geographical Indication (PGI).

PGI wines in Spain are legally referred to as 'Vino de la Tierra' or VdIT (wine of the land) and do not have as strict and stringent regulations as the DO wines, which allows producers more freedom and creativity with varieties of grapes they source and also the techniques they can use in the bodega.

The two DOs of Andalusia are reserved the famous fortified wines of Jerez (DO Jerez-Xérès-Sherry & DO Manzanilla-Sanlúcar de Barrameda), whereas the VdIT designation is reserved for the table wines made from the region. This is one of Spain's more interesting emergent forces.

While having more 'liquid' regulations than a DO, there are still some rules to which producers must adhere in order to gain the designation for their wines.

For white wines the authorised grape varieties of VdIT Cádiz are:

Chardonnay, Garrido Fino, Macabeo, Montúa (Chelva), Muscat of Alexandria, Palomino, Pedro Ximénez, Perruno, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Verdejo.

For the reds: Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Garnacha Tinta, Graciano, Merlot, Mollar Cano, Monastrell, Petit Verdot, Syrah, Tempranillo and Tintilla de Rota.

Municipalities where the wine can be made, aged and bottle are also restricted:

Arcos de la Frontera, Chiclana de la Frontera, Chipiona, El Puerto de Santa María, Jerez de la Frontera, Prado del Rey, Puerto Real, Rota, Sanlúcar de Barrameda, Trebujena and Olvera.

The vineyards are planted mainly on limestone and 'albariza soils' which are porous with low PH and great water holding capacity, which is of particular use in the hot dry summer months. The other two soil profiles of the region are sand (arenas) and clay (barros), which provide higher yields and fuller, richer wines. The climate is strongly influenced by the region's proximity to the Atlantic where the sea breezes alleviate the extreme temperatures. In summer, temperatures are often above 30°C and can push towards 40°C with the Levante - a dry, hot, dusty wind from the interior.

There is a minimum ageing of 3 months for VdIT Cádiz wines in either stainless steel 'tiñas' or oak vessels of 500L or smaller. The maximum yields are 14 tonnes/ha for whites and 11.5 tonnes/ha for reds. The grapes must have a minimum 10.5° Baumé of potential alcohol.