

### **M. Antonio de la Riva (by Willy Pérez and Ramiro Ibañez)**

Manuel Antonio de la Riva founded his Jerez bodega in 1858. Located on the famous Arcos Street in Jerez, La Riva enjoyed great success with wines sourced from Manuel's vineyards in Pago Marcharnudo. More than a century later (after Manuel's death), it was bought by Domecq, who added La Riva to some of their best wines. With the decline and devaluation of Jerez after the 1960s, Domecq slowly began eliminating brands and La Riva ceased to exist; the brand names were sold to Beam International.



Before the end of La Riva, young winemaker Luis Pérez (who later founded Bodegas Luis Pérez) had started working as a winemaker in several of the Domecq subsidiaries: Blázquez, Florido, Hermanos y Sancho and ... La Riva! Luis learned the vineyards, practices and wines of the La Riva brands just before they were deleted. With the historical knowledge of Luis to guide them, next generation winemakers Willy Pérez (son of Luis) and Ramiro Ibañez decided to recuperate the brand and its historical wines before they became entirely forgotten. Willy and Ramiro bought back the rights to the La Riva brand, including its fantastic label in 2017. Then, they negotiated access to the famous plot in Pago Macharnudo from which la Riva was sourced (and which had become just another anonymous fruit source for un-aspirational chemical-industrial Sherries).

The heart of the project is recuperating the M Antonio de la Riva Palomino Blanco. Historically, this *Vino do Pasto* came from a tiny plot, 'el Notario', within the *parcela* (single vineyard) 'el Majuelo', itself within Pago Macharnudo. From this great site, now returned to organics, worked only by hand and with significantly reduced crop levels, Willy and Ramiro have recuperated La Riva Blanco, once el Marco's greatest wine. And guess what, it's not a 'Sherry' and never was! It's a Palomino enhanced by *soleo* then aged under *flor* with just a slight ullage for a year or so, with less age and lower alcohol than would qualify it as a *Fino*.



This project resuscitates an important wine, and is one of several wines currently rebirthing a historical style of *Jerezano* wine: *Vino de Pasto*. These were the *vinos cotidianos* (daily drinking wines) of old, particularly common in the wine-bars of Cádiz: shorter-aged, lower-alcohol variants of *Fino*. This is a specific vintage, statically-aged, barrel-specific *en rama* bottling: all deeply historical practises, all currently being brought back into daily life in el Marco.

If the Macharnudo Blanco *is* la Riva historically, the la Riva 'project' *today* includes this wine, plus a bunch of one-offs. Willy and Ramiro use the historic label as a gathering post for tiny parcels of rare, endangered, specific, fleeting, historical wine they find in-and-around el Marco. For us, la Riva Blanco is a portfolio wine – we expect you to want to access it through the year, and every year. all of the other la Riva wines we present to you are on a "one-and-done" basis ... we've bought a few bottles and expect them to sell on offer, so they'll probably never be listed in our portfolio, or on our website of TSA's actual ongoing portfolio of wines.



### **M.ANTONIO de la RIVA Macharnudo *single vineyard Palomino de Pasto***

La Riva Macharnudo Blanco recuperates a great wine based in the 'el Majuelo' vineyard (specifically in the tiny sub-vineyard parcela, *el Notario*) within Pago Macharnudo<sup>1</sup>. La Riva is a historical wine of Marco de Jerez which disappeared under Domecq in the 1980s. 'El Notario' faces north (just under el Castillo de Majuelo, a castle crowning *Pago Macharnudo*) at 115m altitude, 18km in from the Atlantic, in a mixed *poniente-levante* setting. The soils are *Tosca cerrada* and (mainly) *barajuelas* with a high level of diatomaceous fossils promoting great freshness. The fruit (Palomino 84) is hand-picked, with individual bunches selected in repeated passes over 2 months, which gain a degree or so of alcohol from a 6 hour *soleo*. It's then whole bunch pressed (only 50% of the free run juice is taken). An ambient spontaneous fermentation in 600l *bota* precedes 18 months ageing under a film of *flor*. The wine is hand-filled to bottle, unfiltered, unfined.



*Deep, and brilliant brassy gold; brilliant in mouth too. A biscuit of chalk, straw in flint, deeply textural, spicy with a touch of smoke and whisper of saffron, curry, lanolin, deep long and slow. Ripe, but fresh with saline. Rich, golden with earthy chalk, leavened by tilled green herbs, it's mineral and fresh. There's a great tang in the side of the mouth, and at the tip of tongue; not exactly acid, it sums perfectly how Palominos in el Marco gain complex freshness. The 'cut' in the sides of mouth is deeply textural as well as providing*

*pucker and line, while the tongue is pricked, fresh. The barley malt fruit weight in the core, along with the earthen body somehow play second fiddle. They get the thing going, saddle it up, but it's the complex salt, diatom mineral and twitch of aldehyde sapid-acid textural snap of the thing which is the actual ride.*

La Riva faithfully reflects the origin and style of the structured white wine elaborated under this brand in the past. Willy and Ramiro drove past this great vineyard every day in their working life for years, terribly depressed that the region's jewel now grew chemically manipulated, high yield co-op quality fruit destined to become shitty *Fino*. A company search found that Jim Beam Corp owned the brand and label rights. Willy and Ramiro bought them back. Then they went to the vineyard's Big Sherry owners and asked if they could lease the parcel ("we'll pay you more than you make from it right now, and you won't have to spend capital on chemicals, machines or labour, ok?!" "Sure!"). Finally, it turned out that Willy's dad, the eponymous Luis of Bodegas Luis Perez had started out as a very young winemaker/viticultur working in el Majuelo to make La Riva Blanco! The greatest reference of el Marco isn't even a Sherry, as such. Now it's back and it's bloody magnificent – along with 'la Barajuela' it lays valid claim to be Spain's finest white.

As well as this historical wine, Ramiro and Willy also include in the M Antonio de la Riva family of wines a handful of kindred spirit wines united by their specificity: rareness and expression of place, as well as a certain pre-tech approach to growing and making. These other expressions include: a *Manzanilla* from Pago Miraflores Baja; and a *Manzanilla Pasada* grown in Pago Balbaina Alta. There are also one-off *almacenista* bottlings which include: a natural alcohol La Riva *Fino* from Pago Balbaina Alta; an extremely rare *Oloroso Viejísimo* from Pago Balbaina Baja (Puerto), a *Moscatel Viejísimo* from Pago Loma Baja (Chipiona), a *PX Viejísimo* from Pago Macharnudo, and vary rare bottlings from a tiny parcel in Pago Carrascal Sanluqueño – *parcela* Don Jose *Oloroso* and *Paxarete*. Of these, only the *Manzanillas* are wines you'll expect to see again.

### **M.ANTONIO de la RIVA *Manzanilla Fina* de Pago Miraflores Baja**

Grown on a combination of *lentejuelas*, *lustrillos* and some *parda* in the Casilla Verde vineyard, within the Sanluqueño Pago, Miraflores Baja, just 5km in from the Atlantic coast. The grapes have great acidity and a very slow evolution. Dynamically raised in a system of just 12 *bota* organised as a *soleraje* of one *criadera* and one *solera* by *almacenista* Luis del Rio, with an average age of about 3 ½ years. Bottled in May 2019.

*Ash, oil, citrus, intense but fresh. Willy describes it as having a low tide's petroleum smell (baja mar). Highly saline, light to finish with good body and expression mid-palate.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Willy and Ramiro are able to source fruit from 'el Notario' in el Majuelo, and they own an adjacent parcel, 'San Cayetano', which sits above Majuelo, facing back towards Puerto.

### **M.ANTONIO de la RIVA *Manzanilla Pasada de Balbaína Alta***

This wine is from a Jerezano Pago, handled in Sanlúcar. The fruit is from 'La Blanquita' vineyard (a sub-parcel within the famous 'los Cuadrados' *parcela*) within Balbaína Alta, 9km in from the sea at about 65m and the most coastal vineyard of the Jerez zone. The wine has an average age of about 18 years (twenty *bota* were left without withdrawal and freshening taking place since 2012). Only 2,000 bottles of *Pasada* were drawn, from here this *solera* will on-mature until it is *Amontillado*. It'll never be seen again in this evolutionary mid-point as a pure *Pasada* with a live *Manzanilla* heart (the shift towards *Amontillado* only showing as brass at the rim). We can never bottle and offer this wine again, 'cos it doesn't look like this in the barrel anymore ... These bottles are the only ones that will ever taste just like this. You know all those creepy rich dudes, who try to buy immortality with goat penis powder, formaldehyde, cryo-blah-blah ... you could just spend some \$\$ and experience this: it's life in pure form, fleeting, unrepeatable.

*A lead-off rip of salty ozone quickly gains a bronzed oxidative touch in a nose of yellow apple, hay and chalk. Dry (unsweet) caramel, salted of course, hay and rosemary run through a palate which is both earthen and maritime. It's very elegant, fresh and vertical, super saline. There's basil-anise along with all the saline, bitter to finish with a deep perfume of old straw.*

### **La RIVA ephemerals: 'one-and-done' occasional rare releases**

#### **2022 la Riva *coleccion***

This year's la Riva Ephemera *coleccion* (some of these only number 30 bottles globally):

A sixpack *coleccion de Flor Andaluçiana*: 6 wines under flor from across Andalucia, not just from el Marco. and ... just a few bottles each of six *Sacas unicas*:

- A one-off *Manzanilla Pasada* from Pago Balbaina Alta
- A one-off *Amontillado Superiorisimo* from Balbaina Alta
- A *Cuatro Cortados* release from Pago Veracruz
- And a *Manzanilla PX* from Pago Miraflores Alta
- There's also 1 magnum each of a *Manzanilla* and *Manzanilla Pasada* from Miraflores Alta

#### **la RIVA *Manzanilla Fina en rama de Pago Miraflores Alta, saca única en magnum***

An abandoned *solera*, last fed with new wine in 20080 (from a *grand cru parcela* of very pure *Tosca Cerrada* for the most part, and a bit of *Lentejuelas* in the east of the vineyard). The wine was recovered from the now extinct *Bodega* of Pedro Romero in Sanlúcar. When Willy and Ramiro came across it, there were just 4 *cuartas* (quarter barrels of just 125 litres), and each contained a residual puddle of *Manzanilla*. Willy and Ramiro recuperated and bottled this remnant. 60 litres only: 40 magnums bottled, 1 for Australia. *Citrus, pastries and beeswax. Medium bodied, persistent and very attractive.*

#### **la RIVA *Manzanilla Pasada en rama de Pago Miraflores Alta, saca única en magnum***

Following from the above, one of the four *cuartas* was classified as a *Manzanilla Pasada*. 30 litres of it are now a one-off bottling of 20 magnums, 1 of which is for Australia.

*Bajamar (the smell of low tide), curry, soy and celery. Powerful, but velvety.*

#### **la RIVA *Amontillado Superiorisimo en rama de Pago Miraflores Alta, saca única 375ml***

Further following from the above, one of the four *cuartas* was classified as a rare wonder, an *Amontillado Superiorisimo*. 40 litres of it are now a one-off bottling of 100 half bottles, 12 of which are ours. *Iodine, ocean, tar and the extreme salinity of Sanlúcar.*

#### **la RIVA *Cuatro Cortados en rama de Pago Veracruz (Trebujena), saca única 375ml***

Another extinct winery, *Bodega Veracruz* up in Trebujena. An ancient blend of Palomino and Perruno varieties having long oxidative ageing. Perruno was Trebujena's dominant variety in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, until the walls closed in. This is an extremely rare natural *Palo Cortado*. Willy and Ramiro found just a single remnant *bota* (the *solera* only ever contained eight butts), containing 16 *arrobos* (17 litres each) of this incredible wine, and which became a one-off bottling of 700 half bottles, 12 of which are ours.

*Incense, balsamic, carpentry and nuts. Very powerful, great structure and muscle.*

### la RIVA PX en rama de Pago Miraflores Alta, *saca única* 375ml

above we describe the *Manzanilla, Pasada, Amontillado* progression which was curated from an abandoned *bodega*. Historically, there was an accompanying PX. The fourth of those *cuartas* contained forty litres of PX, which became 100 half bottles, bottled at just 15% abv.

*Dried apricots, prunes and ginger. Unctuous, medium body and good acidity.*

### 2020/21 la Riva *colecciones*

#### la RIVA Balbaina Alta *Fino*



Fino 'La Riva' comes from the 'Campanilla' vineyard growing on *albariza parda* within Pago Balbaina Alta, at 65m and 10km in from the Atlantic. Campanilla is 3.5 hectares in the north of Balbaina, and a source of spectacularly delicate *Fino* material. The wine is bottled at 15% natural abv after 10 years of dynamic ageing, and only a single *saca* per year is taken, as there are just 5 *bota* distributed as one *criadera* and the *solera*. With such occasional withdrawal and refreshment, it effectively unifies aspects of dynamic and static ageing.

*Bracing and super fresh, it's alive and floral, like a sup on briny branch-water crazed with sour herb. It clearly reflects Jerez's coastal influence and the palate is vertical with deep, deep chalk. Within are walnut-amber tones, spicy wild honey, aged straw and a high level of nutty, complex aldehyde through the sea breeze salinity.*

#### M.ANTONIO de la RIVA Oloroso Viejisima Balbaina Baja (Puerto de Santa Maria)

'La Riva' Oloroso is 80 years old, 22% abv, 14.8 g/l TA, 18 grams glycerol. This incredible old wine comes from the *Tosca cerrada* soils of the Limbo and Santa Ana vineyards of Pago Balbaina Baja (Puerto), 8km in from the Atlantic<sup>2</sup>. It was raised in Puerto de Santa Maria by Cuvillo y Cia in the 1930s. The house got into financial trouble and traded wine for payment of a debt to an architect, who then left it un-managed in a Jerez warehouse for 40 years, by which time 50% had evaporated.

*Volatile, salted licorice, leather, slightly sweet, fermented black bean, agrodulce, aggressively edgy! Thick and thin as well as sweet and sour ... crazy shit.*

#### la RIVA PX Viejisimo (Parcela San Jose, Pago Carrascal Sanlúqueño, 375ml)

Another relic, this is the remains of the now extinct *Sanluqueño* bodega of M. Garcia Monge. Willy and Ramiro managed to salvage 1 *bota* each of Oloroso, Cream and PX from this mythic bodega. The fruit comes from *Finca San José*, on pure *lentejuelas* and *lustrillos* in the extreme south of Pago Carrascal Sanluqueño. In May 2019 a single *saca* realised 300 half bottles. Total acidity: 9.7, 12% abv, 565 g/l residual sugar.

*A rim so thick it stays painted on the glass. Savoury and salty, black and malted tar meets marmite beef stock. Bitter, with iodine and tar, hints of curry leaf, incredibly thick, chocolately and dark.*

#### la RIVA Oloroso Viejo (Parcela San Jose, Pago Carrascal Sanlúqueño, 375ml)

There are in fact (come on, it's Spain!), two Pagos called Carrascal. There's BLP's above Jerez with its *Toscas Barajuelas*, and another near the Atlantic coast - Pago Carrascal Sanlúqueño, which has *Lustrillos y Lentejuelas*. San Jose is a famous *parcela* within Sanlúcar's Pago Carrascal, hidden from the Atlantic, allowing for development of a *mosto* more aromatic than usual in *Manzanilla* country, and this was taken to the extreme with late harvest and extended sun drying, until a degree of 22 abv was reached after a very slow evolution. This is 80 year old *Oloroso* with massive alcohol, acid and glycerol, both an extremely fine coastal wine, but also sneaky powerful like a *Balbaina Baja* wine, thanks to the long, quiet evolution.

This abandoned wine spent 40 years in a warehouse, slowly evaporating and concentrating. Only 457 half bottles for the world, and then it's gone forever.

*This is haunted by a wash of pink grapefruit over an incredibly deep, reduced and concentrated Oloroso nose. Volatile, with salted licorice and fermented black bean power, which releases to a marmalade of river reeds.*

---

<sup>2</sup>This close to the coast, most of the soils are *lustrillos* and *barrios*, but these vineyards are just high enough to protrude pure *albariza*.

*Once again, Madeira comes to mind in the form of old, crumbly clay pipes and salted plantains. Agrodulce, t's somehow still fresh despite the ancient Cask-DNA concentration.*

**la RIVA Paxarete Viejo (Parcela San Jose, Pago Carrascal Sanlúqueño, 375ml)**

If Cream Sherry were a traditional style, this would be its last man standing. Palomino Listan, PX and about 15% 'vino de color' (mosto de Listan heated and reduced to 1/5<sup>th</sup> of its volume) from Finca San Jose. 17% abv, 309 g/l residual sugar and 10.3 TA! Just 319 half bottles.

*Savoury and salty despite the massive sweetness, his really is a marvel! Flavour-wise, it melds deep 'pasta' (dried reeds) character with iodine, tar, beefstock, treacly reduction, curry leaf and river silt. In the mouth, it's incredibly graceful – beautiful sweetness is layered with tamarind pulp. It's rich but gentle, all things tucked together and puckering with interest. 309 grams/litre of residual sugar nestle in folds, and there remains room in the mouth as it resolves in an incredibly gently sweet-sour-bitter-rich interplay. A rim so thick it stays painted on the glass, incredibly thick, chocolately and dark.*