

PAOLA MEDINA

Williams colección sherries de añada

"Unique, unrepeatabl" current releases (all are 500ml bottlings).

Selected from the 18 vintages Paola has in her *sacristia*, the first sacas of 2019 delve deep into the project's antiquity. What will be released next? A young *Fino* 'eco' from 2016, her first *Fino*-strength *Amontillado* from 2005, another *saca* of the magisterial 2009 *Oloroso*? Who knows, but it'll be deadly exciting when we find out ... in the meantime, these are extremely rare bottlings, not usually sold outside Spain:

PAOLA MEDINA's Williams Colección Añadas (currently available):

Fino en rama 'Jaleo' 2010 saca de enero 2019, \$45

Amontillado en rama 2001, saca de enero 2019, \$125

Palo Cortado en rama 2002, saca de enero 2019, \$125

Oloroso en rama 2001, saca de enero 2019, \$125



One of the large, historical houses of conventional sherry-making, Williams and Humbert nowadays offer a layer of distinct wines within the fluidity of 'Sherry' styles. Under the young generation leadership of Paola Medina Sheldon, the Williams Coleccion is a series of astonishingly delicate and singular vintage sherries, or *añadas*: statically aged single-vintage wines, with terroir as important as bodega influences. Paola mainly takes fruit from the 'las Conchas' vineyard within Pago Añina (jerez), and some from old vines in Pago Carrascal (jerez). A new organic *Fino* was added to the range in 2018, after a first *saca* from *añada* 2015 - this is from Pago de Burujena, in Trebujena.

Paola's '*añadas*' are a welcome renaissance for this house: established in 1877, a century later it was a significant victim in the Rumasa disaster¹. The Medina family bought W&H back in 2005 and re-established it as a family bodega. Old *soleras* from the 19th century are intact, as is a small museum, or library, of old *añadas*: W&H used to make vintage wines, and a few butts from the 1920s and 1930s remain. Paola has taken this legacy and made it her focus: the Williams Coleccion Añadas comprises vintages of *Fino*, *Amontillado*, *Palo Cortado* and *Oloroso*. As a quite young winemaker, Paola started this series with the 2001 harvest.

Each year, around 30 barrels of *Fino* grade palomino *sobretablas* are laid down: all are identical first-press, free run *palmas* - pure palominos from pure albariza. Some barrels naturally take flor and become *Finos de añada*, aged biologically, but statically². The rest are aged as *Olorosos de añada* (these are at 18% abv in topped barrels, but only from delicate free-run palomino with no pressings³). Each barrel does its own X/Y chromosome thing, choosing spontaneously and unprompted whether to age oxidatively or biologically. Nuancing the story, some go on to become individual casks of very rare *Amontillado* or natural mutations as *Palo Cortado*.

¹ Rumasa was a 'ponzi-like' scramble of wine businesses set up by Opus Dei fascist and life-time crook, Jose Maria Ruiz-Mateos. Rumasa was a tangle of scandal, with giant mergers, splits and sales of Sherry Bodegas commencing in the 1960s and not truly ending until the current decade. Ruiz-Mateos oversaw a ridiculous boom in planting of Jerez vineyards in the late 1960s, followed by massive and constant decline. In 1960, there were more than 350 bodegas; now there around 60. Vineyard plantings are a fraction of the historical mean, and export sales of sherry declining from 150 million litres in the 1970s to 20 million in 2017. Vineyard origin (the terroir identity of wines through specific pagos) has all-but-disappeared and the entire business has devolved to depend on cheap supermarket blends of low quality generating little profit. The sherry business still hasn't recovered from Rumasa.

² Fractional blending facilitates what is termed 'dynamic' biological ageing under flor yeast, via constant blending and refreshment in a solera-criadera system with regular *sacas-y-rocios*. Single vintage wines are statically aged, unblended, with each barrel distinct and neither homogenisation nor refreshment from 'running the scales'. Vintage wines aged statically are different to dynamically-aged solera Sherries. The developmental profile is different, and barrels of the same wine from the same year can have quite different characters.

³ In distinction to 'regular' *Olorosos*. These often come from lesser soils (clay or sand), 'fatter' fruit and pressings wine.

PAOLA MEDINA's Williams Colección Añadas *Fino en rama ecologico* 2015, saca de marzo de 2018
15% abv, from Pago Burujena (trebujena). 3.2 pH, 4.2 g/l TA.
Fortified to 15.5% with organic alcohol, spontaneous flor.

Marzipan and wild rice grass, a deep soft sense of chalky soil, a boisterous young whisky character (3yo Glenlivet), opening out and soft finishing, gently dry and starting to show a touch of nut in the brine-sour water.



PAOLA MEDINA's Williams Colección Añadas *Fino en rama* 2012, saca de noviembre 2018

This is all about rise and fall within a fabulous Sherry rim approximating a Margarita, with salt, aldehyde, mandarin blossom. Within, golden, flossed brass-caramel threads run through a bed of ripe barley and rice, with flor in ginger biscuit mode. It's deep, soft and round, an ovoid oral disc filled with field and coastal elements. A compelling, inviting wine of cereal and chalk.

PAOLA MEDINA's Williams Colección Añadas 'Jaleo' *Fino en rama* 2010, saca de enero 2019

Based on old vines in Pagos Añina and Carrascal (jerez). Product of a cool, humid vintage. The 2019 saca is the last bottling of this incredible *Fino*. 'Jaleo' means a 'racket' or 'commotion' ... it sure gives us the commotions! 'el Jaleo' is the title of a John Singer Sargent oil depicting a flamenco scene ...

*This smells of mature standing grass, straw and cracked clay, with traces of fine caramel, like barley water as pure perfume. A *Fino* of great depth without weight, and incredible poise in the mouth, sitting and radiating gently. Saline and tangy as heck, whisper clear with a trace of whisky-wildness.*

PAOLA MEDINA's Williams Colección Añadas 'Tiento' *Fino en rama* 2007, saca de 2017

'Tiento' is a musical referent midway between counterpunctual strictness and virtuosity (from the Spanish verb 'tentar', meaning 'touch', 'attempt' or even 'tempt'. Just two botas - #5 & #6 of those laid down from 2007 were blended to bottle *en rama* after 10 years of barrel development.

Bees wax, ancient grains, preserved lemon, golden toffeed apple, fennel pollen, camomile, marigold, sea spray, golden shale, parmesan rind, hazelnut skin, pollen pollen pollen and an incredible line.

PAOLA MEDINA's Williams Colección Añadas *Fino en rama* 2006, saca de 2014

2006 was the first in Paola's line of vintage *Finos*, and the first such Jerez *Fino* produced in memory. Of 15 barrels aged statically, only 2 were selected to be bottled as *Fino*.

*Smells of hay, bread, almond, orange, with only delicate yeast aromas and quite mineral. More power and round richness than conventional *Fino*, but well short of *Amontillado*. Sweet and sour elements in the mouth, which is long and dry.*

PAOLA MEDINA's Williams Colección Añadas *Oloroso en rama* 2009, saca de octubre 2017

*Acorn husk, chamomile (in an *Oloroso*!), marzipan, polished timber, salt-dried orange segments (both fruit and rind), brown ramen broth, kelp pellet, cereal in a pre-whisky mash register, marjoram resin, macadamia, pollen and brine. A chewy soft, rich, ripe walnut mid-palate awaits the strong spice-acid rim which develops with time. At 9 years' age, it's a beautifully direct and characterful 'youngster'. It's open to view, and blossoms with the reveal.*



PAOLA MEDINA's Williams Colección Añadas *Oloroso en rama* 2003, saca de febrero 2016

ABV 20.5 %. 2.32pH, 4.65 g/L tartaric acid

Deep and gentle orange, a speedboat made from polished walnut planks, mahogany gold, a room someone smoked a cigar in yesterday, now full of light and air, a dried tobacco leaf. Rich, dry with faux sweetness, gently round, delicately laced and rimmed with acidity, fine bright, mineral, persistent, but glowingly ovoid, hanging and shimmering.

PAOLA MEDINA's Williams Colección Añadas Oloroso en rama 2001, saca de enero 2019

Note from Spain:

Super deep and complex, rich and saline, with a pure developed perfume. Mapled acorn-rich, lightly glyceric, deeply spiced, strong at the rim, releasing to an ethereal boof from a structural base. Fine glazed toffee nut, orange blossom, sunflower and pumpkin seeds, dried chestnut honey, toasted hazelnuts, delicate tangerine caramel, brandied citrus, sandalwood. The acidity itself is incredibly complex, carrying brine and rind, fine old wheat and praline in a gloriously patinated, running mouthfeel. Finish = forever!

Noted in Australia:

Smelling of spiced, pickled orange rind, dried bark, marzipan, and walnut leather, it's beer nut salty, gloriously alive, hovering ovoid, simply thrilling wine to smell. It's complex, but comes in washes, never heavy. Toast and treacle traces only go as far as tangerine tea cake, orange butter and ginger biscuits. The palate is drop dead gorgeous - easy but in no way simple, and beautifully arranged in the mouth, it hangs ovoid like a third dimension unto itself, into which our tastes are allowed, and are thus tutored in fine arts of dance and suspension. At last, a round of spiced alcohol warmth serves to allow a finish to the impossible ethereality of it all.

PAOLA MEDINA's Williams Colección Añadas Amontillado en rama 2001, saca de enero 2019

ABV 20%. Only 750 litres bottled. After delicate fermentation (17-22 degrees), the original *Fino* was aged biologically at 15.5% and later re-fortified to 18%. Later *Amontillados* (after 2003) have not been re-fortified at all. This, Paola's first *Amontillado* was aged biologically for 10 years, at which time it was re-fortified, topped and aged oxidatively for a further 8 years until classified *Amontillado*.

*A brilliant amber colour – tangerine gold. A gorgeous and easy, open, rolling and effortlessly expressive wine with a savoury, salty, dry mineral energy. It smells of maple (shavings, not syrup), wheatfield pollen, almond husks, barley water, seville orange-bittered praline and surfboard wax. A fine, remote saline wash and a faint memory of kelp recall its former life as a *Fino*. With time, a touch of pickle. It's stunningly dry, with a delightful sweet-sour rim of sherryish abstraction.*

PAOLA MEDINA's Williams Colección Añadas Palo Cortado en rama 2002, saca de enero 2019

2.9 pH, 6.3 TA, 20% abv. As with the other wines, the fruit source is Pagos Añina and Carrascal. This wine is from a fruit selection of extremely fine young material which Paola hoped might develop naturally into a *Palo Cortado*. It was set to age oxidatively from the get-go, in topped barrels fortified to 18 degrees. After 17 years' ageing the wine was finally classified *Palo Cortado* in 2018.

Extremely fine and silky wine, roundly elegant. An orange shortbread nose, salted sour, with smoked blue metal, a brandy snap aldehyde streak, a burst of ozone and a lightly roasted brazil nut bump. The gentle oxidative loosening that saw this re-classified in barrel from fino-amontillado to cortado is evident in the mouth, which is silky, all timber and tobacco, quince and fatty nuts sitting low in the mouth. It's calm and slow, really easy, still light and bright.

