

POMARINA, Sidra de Asturias

Pomarina is a specialist natural cider from the small Asturian *pueblo*, Vilaviciosa. Since 2012, Pomarina has been a specialist sub-brand of Grupo el Gaitero, who make Spain's biggest selling commercial *sidra*. El Gaitero's heritage cider mill is on the banks of of Ría de Villaviciosa, about 8km inland from the river's delta on the Asturian coast (the beautiful Basque bays west of Bilbao), near to fabulous Ribadasella.

'el Gaitero' means 'the Piper'. (It pays to remember how Celtic Galicia and Asturias are: if you are in Spain and need to hear a bagpipe ...)! The business started in 1888 with the Valle, Ballina and Fernández families, but it has been owned and run by Ángel Fernández and his descendents since 1895. In 1898, they introduced CHAMPAGNE SIDRA, a sparkling iced cider, aka Sidra-champan!

Asturian *sidras* became popular in America, facilitated for trade by the nearby Port of Gijón, an access point for sea trade in the late 18th century. The *espumoso* style was developed as a strategy for protecting the cider from spoilage during the long voyage. El Gaitero continues to be Spain's most popular cider, but more specialised brands have entered the equation.



POMARINA Espumoso Natural Vintage Sidra de Asturias



Pomarina takes its name from the Latin word for apple; Poma.

In autumn, organically-grown apples are carefully selected and harvested from El Gaitero's own orchards and local growers, which are regulated under the PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) Sidra de Asturias.

El Gaitero use about 60 apple varieties, planted in clay-limestone soil. Five of these are selectively used for Pomarina: Duroña de Tresali, De la Riega, Verdialona, Raxao and Regona. These are a mix of red, green and mottled varieties. Most of the apples are fairly small, and really hard and dense-fleshed.

The fruit is washed and sorted while bobbing around in *lagares*, then crushed, cold macerated for 12 hours to extract rich aromatic compounds, and pressed. The free-run juice is then slow fermented at low temperatures in stainless steel. The second fermentation to embed bubbles uses indigenous yeasts. The vintage *sidra* is aged 24 months in bottle before release in Champagne cork closures (bottled at 3 atmospheres) 6 packs x 750ml 7% abv. Gluten and GMO free.

Golden with straw/yellow hue. It's floral, skinsy, deep and open in style. There are sweet, nutty, savoury and bitter elements. Abundant small bubbles add to the skin richness, mouthfeel and weight. The freshness of air-dried-apple granola in the cool of morning jostles with the perfume heft of a muggy wheat field after rain. Skins, then seeds and later, a touch of apple core bitterness gives rim to a mouthfeel of brilliant balance, which holds beautifully and releases with a delicate acetic rinse. Apple poetry!