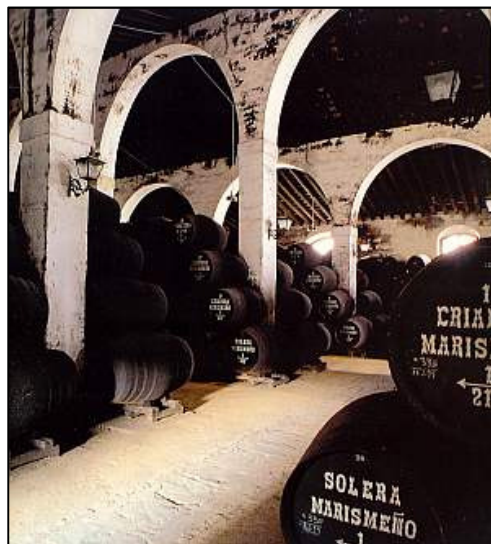


Sánchez Romate, D.O. Jerez

Sánchez Romate was founded in the late 18th century by Juan Sánchez de la Torre, and is one of the few Jerez wineries still in the hands of local, family owners. Over time, the winery has grown and adapted to modernisation and technology, while maintaining respect for traditional viticulture and winemaking. Located in Jerez, the Romate Bodegas are 230 years old. They are a significant producer of Brandy and Vinegar as well as Sherry. The current winemaker is Jose Luis ('Pepe') Infante.

Romate is a middle sized sherry house, with 70 hectares of the best white *albariza* soils of Jerez on the famed Pago Balbaína, about 8 km west of Jerez towards Sanlúcar. This is an area of gentle rolling hills, with situation being critical – altitude and aspect are highly influential in the possibility of growing truly 'fino' fruit. The friable chalk soils are very deep and humid, retaining moisture like a sponge, allowing un-irrigated Palomino to grow roots up to 20m deep (the first 6 or so being *albariza* chalk).



All of Romate's wines come from these holdings, save for Moscatel which comes from the coastal town of Chipiona, west of Jerez and south of Sanlúcar. PX is another matter: although it's sold as 'Sherry' (implying it's from Jerez), virtually all Jerezano PX comes from another DO: Montilla-Moriles, inland north-east towards Córdoba. Romate buy young PX wine on long term contract from a single grower and transport it to Jerez to mature (see detailed note later).

Palomino wines are aged in two phases: initial winemaking and ageing takes place in a processing bodega right in the vineyard. Before the next vintage the 'añada' wines are sent into Jerez to be available for blending and ageing in the various soleras. Each of the three main classifications (Fino, Oloroso and PX) which Romate plans to produce are pressed separately at different pressures to get more or less 'body' from the fruit, depending on the wine style being produced.

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Palomino Fino is picked in early morning into small baskets to avoid fermentation, bruising and browning. Bunches are then destemmed, pressed as whole grapes and fermented under temperature control in stainless tanks. The first press is aged as Fino and the second pressing becomes part of the selection for Oloroso (later, tasting in barrel will see some of the Fino re-classified as Oloroso or perhaps Palo Cortado). To commence becoming 'Sherry', the young wines (about 12% abv) are filtered and racked into a stainless deposit where fortifying spirit is added, then racked again to barrel (the 500 litre 'bota') where flor yeast in the bodega auto-innoculates and spreads over the wine. The base wine, tasting of chalk and lemon, spends a year in the vineyard winery gaining its first layer of 'sherryishness' in barrel under flor before transfer to the Jerez bodega¹. On arrival, the young sherry is re-filtered and held in tank as *añada* – young wine ready for solera maturation. As needed, it's introduced into the youngest criadera the target solera.

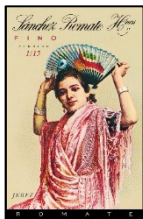
Note, Romate maintain four distinct Fino-Amontillado systems in four separate Jerez bodegas:

- the solera produces the entry level Romate Fino and which in turn feeds the most basic Romate Amontillado solera.
- there is a distinct Fino Marismeyo Solera - also the source material for Amontillado NPU.
- a third system of old Amontillados is maintained to feed the Old+Plus Amontillado Solera.
- and there are the 15 bota which comprise the Fino Perdido as a 4th distinct system.

A host of additional solera systems are maintained for their Amontillados, Palo Cortados ... and so on, plus various solera systems for Brandy and Vinagre de Jerez.

¹ This makes Romates 'sobretablas' (1 year old, fortified mosto ready for addition to the last criadera of a solera) a very rare occurrence: base material for sherry literally aged on wood, rather than in stainless steel, as 98% of entry wine is nowadays.

Sánchez Romate Fino en rama 'Perdido' Solera 1/15



This is an 8 year-old Fino-Amontillado from a selection of 15 bota² in a discrete cellar called Bodega Celestino. are on-matured barrels from the solera of Fino Marisemeño (Romate's premium *solera*, 600 butts of 7 year old Fino, not currently shipped to Australia). Romate's selection from Celestino is bottled *en rama* (3 micron filtration) as a celebration of a virtually lost historical style of Fino. Only 800 sixpacks are bottled annually.

Perdido refers to a 'lost style' of Fino, largely forgotten since the advent of modern technology. Ultra-white Manzanillas and Finos as we know them are technological styles only possible since the 60's with the advent of sterile chill filtration and all-stainless steel handling. Prior to that, all 'Finos' were darker and more oxidative, brassier and nuttier, a little like this ...

Honey-brass in colour, it smells of fine old toffee, gingerbread, wattle grove. The toasted almond, wattle toffee palate is textured but very dry; plush at the centre with great sherry snap at the rim.

Sánchez Romate Amontillado 'NPU'

20 years of barrel ageing includes seven years of its life becoming a mature Fino Marisemeño. It's pretty and elegant: mahogany, hazelnut and roast almond mingle in a dry, spicy palate with a trace of green olive. Very, very long, a close to perfect Amontillado: achingly dry and spare; fine, elegant, lingering and precise ... JOY.



Sánchez Romate Oloroso 'Don Jose'

15 years of barrel age. Rich, woody-nutty, with walnuts and quince fruit. Soft, round middle is given grip by oak. Delicate, languid, round but not fatty, with a light spicy dry finish and ripe walnuts releasing at back. Very good example of the dry-but-glyceric richness of Oloroso.

Sánchez Romate Palo Cortado 'Regente'

Palo Cortado is the weirdest of Sherry classifications: a mixture of Oloroso aromatics and the lean drive of Amontillado. A great Sherry to serve with meats. 15 years old, it's maintained by a reserve of young Oloroso-style *añadas*. 20 butts of this serve the 20 butt *criadera* and 26 butt *solera* of 'Regente'. Has a golden syrup rich nose, the mustard fruits on palate at entry becomes increasingly lean and dry with an ultra salty-flinty finish ... the memory of the Fino it so-nearly was.

Sánchez Romate Cream 'Iberia'

Oloroso plumped with 15% PX. Walnuts meet prune juice, with delicious honey bear biscuits and anise lollies - very good balanced sweetness. Really excellent wine to serve cool with mixed cheese plates.

Sánchez Romate Moscatel 'Ambrosia'

Very old, but nervy material, thanks to Moscatel's lovely fresh natural acidity. Rich and heady, with dried fruits and fresh motor oil. Balanced, silky back palate, drying finish.

Sánchez Romate PX 'Romate'

A 3yo PX blended with 15% oloroso.

Romate Pedro Ximénez 'Cardenal Cisneros'

Raisiny, prune juice, chocolate dates—rich, sweet, viscous, with spice and a persistent through-line, gentle grip to off dry finish. Far more than simply sweet, it's quite outstanding! 20 years old.

Sánchez Romate Pedro Ximénez 'Old+Plus'



Pedro Ximénez grapes are picked very ripe and then left out in the sun to attain a higher sugar concentration, yet the 16% alcohol belies the heady concentration of this wine. Pedro Ximénez 'Old&Plus' has been aged in solera for more than 35 years. Layers of deep prune fruit, with mace and sweet spices. Essence, for sure - but almost ethereal in its dancey, light-hearted finish. Remarkably refined PX.

² Romate have around 80 barrels of extra-aged Fino, on-matured from the Marisemeño solera. Some of these are bottled for a US importer as his 'own' blend, and likewise, a lot of the cellar is selected by and blended for The Wine Society in London as their brand.

CAYETANO del PINO y Cia, Almacenista Palo Cortado sherries, Jerez

As well as all their own production, Sánchez Romate are responsible for packaging and marketing the wines of a special Almacenista in Jerez, Cayetano del Pino.

Almacenistas are small 'warehousing' businesses (*almacén* is Moorish for warehouse). Not all Sherry businesses are licensed to sell wine under their own label. Almacenistas are only licensed to mature wines, and must on-sell their stocks to the Bodegas. Usually, these are hobby businesses in which one or two small buildings age a limited quantity of Sherry, usually only working with a single style.

In the past, there was a large number of Almacenistas (perhaps as many as fifty), currently they are just fifteen. Their wines become very useful to the Sherry Houses in times of high demand and resultant stress on the age and depth of the Soleras, particularly during the Feria de Sevilla. Late in the 20th Century, Lustau started bottling some of these Almacenistas under Lustau's license but with the Almacenista's name on the label, and for the first time these wines did not disappear anonymously into blends. Sánchez Romate are delighted to follow suit and present the beautiful wines of Cayetano del Pino in their own light.



Cayetano del Pino is a family-owned Almacenista business dating to the mid-1880s, procuring and nurturing sherries in small lots for re-sale down the track with enhanced character. Cayetano himself was an agriculturalist, growing beet, wheat, sunflowers, while maintaining this small cellar of incredible quality Palo Cortado. Since the 1960s, his descendants have concentrated on the wine business, in a small cellar in the south-west *poniente* corner of Jerez. These days, the cellar is not worked much, and has gained considerable aged character. Sánchez Romate purchase³ and bottle the annual output of these tiny soleras, one each of 15 and 5 butts, with minimal filtration. Cayetano del Pino specialise in Palo Cortado, that strange and beautiful half-world between Amontillado & Oloroso.

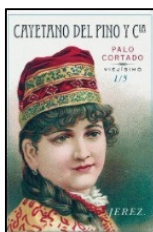
Palo Cortado Solera 1/15



Average aged of 20 years, bottled in 750ml screwcap. There is a *solera* of 133 butts, with *criadera* of 112 and 139 further, and some very old reserves which feed these. The *sacas* are of just 2 *arroba* (33 litres) per butt per annum, so it is a very slowly worked system!

Relatively fresh-smelling: saline and nutty with fine timber aromatics, some rinded cheese and rancio complexity. Balsamic oranges very pretty over nuts. Relatively light, slightly creamy in middle, then a fresh nippy finish. Very pure and lovely, immediately likeable with great lines.

Palo Cortado Viejísimo Solera 1/5



This incredibly complex wine is the product of a single annual bottling from one butt in a Solera of just five, these are fed by three *criadera* totalling 45 butts, and which are fed by the younger Palo Cortado *solera*. Average age more than 35 years. Everything is done by hand, including rinsing and filling of bottles. Bottled in 375ml screwcap.

Spare, elegant, detailed and beautiful, this is reserved and very fine-smelling. Hazelnut praline all through, great depth and definition without getting at all full. Long rancio, salted and spicy finish. Drinks like a great old brandy with wonderful fruit life. Yum.

³ Lustau also take some wine from CdP, perhaps 3,000 litres/year.

BRANDIES de JEREZ

Sánchez Romate are significant players in the lucrative Brandy de Jerez market, arguably the highest quality producer. Brandy de Jerez is classified into several 'types' depending on time spent maturing in barrel, as for Cognac and others.

- Solera brandy - 6 months' minimum
- Solera Reserva - 12 months
- Solera Gran Reserva - 36 months or more



CARDENAL MENDOZA Brandy de Jerez Solera Gran Reserva



This amazing value old brandy is from a Solera commenced in 1871. It has a 'linear' age of 15 years. It begins life as white Airen grapes in La Mancha, distilled via pot stills and aged statically (no blending or movement) for 2 years in old barriques. The eau-de-vie is now at an in-between stage called 'Holandas', although it technically qualifies as brandy. However, Romate do not call it brandy until it has been blended into the Cardenal Mendoza Solera (3600 barrels in 8 Criadera plus the Cardenal Mendoza Solera itself). Brandy is bottled from the Solera up to five times a year, each bottling required the 9 scales to be run, culminating in new *Holandas* entering the youngest Criadera and immediately beginning its transformative inheritance, assimilating the enormous aged character of this extraordinary Solera. This is the same pain-staking labour-intensive drill that occurs with bottling and running the scales for Sherries. The bodega which houses Cardenal Mendoza (in fact two whole bodegas adjacent to one another) measure 2.5 hectares.

With an average age of 15 years, Cardenal Mendoza is one of the most famed (and popular) brandies in Spain. It's a ripe, smooth, sweet-spiced style. Lashings of xmas pudding (from maturation in old PX and Oloroso barrels). Great length and finish from such a generous style.

NOTES ON PX: Bodegas Galán, Montilla-Moriles

Bodegas Galán have been exclusive PX supplier to Romate for 35 years, as EU exceptions to normal DO regulations allow Montilla-Moriles wine to be aged in Jerez and sold as Sherry. Montilla is a solely PX appellation. Covering 17 villages, it's about the same size as the Jerez/sherry zone. Increasingly, the Montillanos also produce red wine, but these are VDT. Finos from Montilla are made from PX at about 15% natural alcohol, dry with no fortification, but aged biologically (ie under flor). Amontillados from Montilla are fortified slightly so as to kill of yeasts and are bottled at around 18%abv.

PX is hand-picked and sun-dried (the 'soleo') on mats in the vineyard for 8 days or so. Picked in late August, they are about 15 beaume at harvest, and 24 bé after drying. In the winery, the bunches are destemmed, broken in the press and then fortified to 9% with distillate from La Mancha Airen grapes. This young Mosto of PX is delicious, with the appearance of cloudy honey, a slightly greenish golden tan, and tastes like honeyed plums. This part-fortified, un-fermented mosto is cold-stabilised, but un-filtered. It's held in stainless for 3 months or so, after which Romate collect it, truck it to Jerez, finish the fortification and add to their PX soleras as required. Bodegas Galan produce PX to several grades, and Romate purchase according to the dictates of the solera to which it is destined. Sánchez Romate only take the free run PX – the second pressings are sold as Montilla, and 3rd pressings make Orujo Arguardiente.