

GOLD MEDAL WINE CLUB

# Taste the Adventure!

Canary Islands



**THE CANARY ISLANDS HAVE PRODUCED TOP QUALITY WINES FOR CENTURIES. TODAY THEY HAVE BECOME THE DARLINGS OF EUROPE. THESE INTERNATIONAL SELECTIONS WILL ALLOW YOU TO JUDGE FOR YOURSELF.**



The Canary Islands are actually an archipelago that sits some 70 miles off Morocco's west coast. They are the property of Spain and exist under a great deal of Spanish influence and its attitude toward modern-day winemaking. The Canaries as they are called, also have a long and somewhat distinguished past relating to wine.

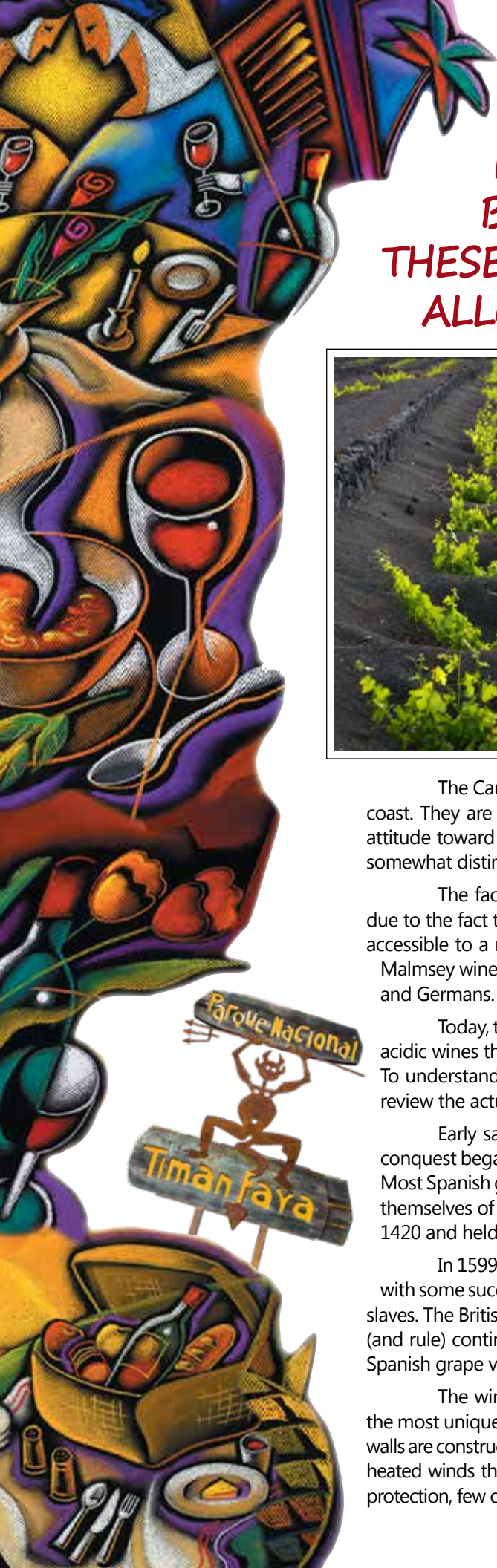
The fact that the Canary Islands sit at their position in the Atlantic Ocean is fortunate due to the fact that for many centuries naval trade routes crossed their path making their wines accessible to a number of European countries. For centuries, the region produced a sweetish Malmsey wine that was made from the Malvasia grape that was a favorite of the British, Dutch and Germans.

Today, the Canary Islands produce wines that are more favorable to modern tastes; dry, acidic wines that have become very fashionable in a number of top European wine markets. To understand the complexity of the wine industry in the Canary Islands it is necessary to review the actual history of the archipelago.

Early sailors and explorers visited the islands starting in the 14th century. Spanish conquest began in 1402 and was finalized between 1478 and 1496 by the Crown of Castile. Most Spanish galleons attempting to reach the New World stopped in the Canaries to avail themselves of favorable trade winds. The Portuguese conquered the Island of Gomera in 1420 and held it for almost 60 years.

In 1599 a Dutch fleet of 74 ships attacked the capital of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria with some success. Some 17 years later, Barbary Pirates attacked and took 1000 captives as slaves. The British attacked in 1797 but were repulsed. It is also true that Spanish influence (and rule) continued through the 18th and 19th Centuries and Spanish winemaking and Spanish grape varietals dominated the vineyards.

The winegrowing techniques used throughout the Canary Islands are among the most unique and improvised in the entire wine world. In many instances, stone block walls are constructed to protect the vineyards (see Regions Section) from the terroristic heated winds that flow off the African continent on a regular basis. Without this protection, few of the vineyards would be able to survive.



The problematic growing environment that constitute the Canary Islands continues to be one of the more compelling within the wine world. The tenacity and perseverance that are necessary for growers worldwide, are everyday factors for Canarian farmers. Hats off to this incredible band of wine cultivators, and let their wines speak for themselves!

## REGION SPOTLIGHT: ISLAND OF TENERIFE

The Canaries were formed by volcanic eruptions millions of years ago and contain strata of volcanic soil that make for an excellent vine-growing environment. Depending on the elevation involved, anywhere between 1,300 and 2,400 feet are considered to have a Mediterranean climate, again an excellent milieu for vineyard growth and stabilization.

Each island has its own appellation while Tenerife enjoys the distinction of having five separate appellations that are called DO's (Denominación de Origen). As an explanation, the Island of Tenerife has abundant microclimates, due partially to the altitude difference between Mount Teide and sea level. In a distance of about eight miles, there is a 25% slope running through portions of vineyards that offer a great number of environments favorable to planting differing varieties. Such conditions allow for multiple DO's where sub-climates and differing soils produce remarkably different grapes and wines.

Of the areas that feature DO's, Lanzarote Island and Tenerife Island produce the highest quality wines that are generally favored in the worldwide export market.

Tenefire's wide assortment of wines are almost all exported and its vineyards are all located on rich volcanic soils. The aforementioned Pico del Tiede (Mount Tiede) is still considered an active volcano and its fertile slopes are perfect for quality grape growing. Red varieties include the Listán Negro (the most widespread grape in the Canary Islands, similar in many respects to the Gamay of France's Beaujolais Region), the Gegramoll, or Tinto Negro, Tintilla, Babosa and several others.

## REGION SPOTLIGHT: ISLAND OF LANZAROTE

Lanzarote gets the most attention from wine aficionados



due to its one-of-a-kind vineyards. Its landscape is almost moon-like; shallow holes dug into flat, black soil within which the vines are grown. A large stone wall encircles each vine, and protects the vine from strong, almost destructive winds. These winds have an upside in that they help moderate Lanzarote's desert climate. Mostly white varieties are grown here with the remarkable Malvasia the predominant grape.

Canarian whites are predominant in production and are mostly opulent and full-bodied, sometimes featuring a citric expression that is pleasing to the palate. Reds tend to favor Burgundian wines, complex and deeply colored with hints of pepper, mocha, caramel and smokiness.

The main white grape varieties are the Malvasia, Listen Blanco (also known as the Palomino, sherry great grape), Marmajuelo, Gual, Verdello, Forattera, Viljariego, Albillo and other, lesser grapes.



## WINE REGIONS OF CANARY ISLANDS

There are seven islands that comprise the archipelago of the Canary Islands. They sit at 28 degrees latitude (approximately the location of Houston, Texas or New Delhi, India) and are only a scant 80 miles west

of the beastly Sahara Desert and its incredible array of dispiriting winds. Daily temperatures range from between 56 and 84 degrees throughout the year and the area includes Spain's highest peak of Mount Teide at some 12,198 feet.

Physically, the Canaries fall into two groups. The western group comprised of Tenerife, Gran Canaria, La Palma, La Gomera and Ferro consists of mountain peaks that rise directly from a deep ocean floor. The eastern group includes Lanzarote, Fuerteventura Island and six islets surmounting a single submarine plateau, the Canary Ridge that rises about 4,500 feet from the ocean floor.

### La Gomera:

La Gomera DO

### El Hierro:

El Hierro DO

### La Palma:

La Palma DO

### Tenerife:

Abona DO

Tacoronte-Acentjo DO

Valle de Guimar DO

Valle de la Orotava DO

Ycoden-Daute-Isora DO

### Lanzarote:

Lanzarote DO

La Palma

La Gomera

El Hierro

Santa Cruz

Tenerife

Gran Canaria

Lanzarote

Las Palmas

Fuerteventura

(Morocco)

# Canary Island: Fun Facts!

- One of the more unique aspects of the Canaria is the fact that Phylloxera never reached there due to the volcanic soil and the relative isolation in the Atlantic. Varietals from Spain and Portugal of the 1500's, that would have been lost to history, still thrive on the islands. Many of the vines are old -- very old to be exact. These hundred-plus year-old vines produce superior quality fruit and therefore, exceeding high quality wines that are consistent and well-regarded.
- The Canary Islands name brings to mind small yellow birds, however it is derived from the Latin term *Insula Canaria*, meaning "Island of the Dogs". The 'dogs' in this case were most likely Monk Seals, which in Latin translates to "sea dogs".
- Despite having the Pyrenees mountains located in the north of the country, the highest point in Spain is actually on the island of Tenerife. El Teide is 12,198 ft high. El Teide is the third largest volcano in the world and boasts the world's largest telescope. Many beaches on Tenerife are covered with black shingle or sand, reminding one of the volcanic origins of this island.
- There is a typical Canarian food called 'ropa vieja', or 'old clothes'. It is typically made of chicken and beef mixed with potatoes and garbanzo beans. It leads you to wonder what they use as 'spice' in the mix!
- The strangest vineyards in the world can be found on Lanzarote, a volcanic island that has little to no soil or vegetation. Each vine is placed in a small depression with a semicircular wall of lava stone around it to protect it from the wind. The vines take root on the lava rock and get water from the moisture that condenses on the rocks. Harvesting is a difficult and hands-on process.



**Photos, top to bottom, left to right:**

- A row of El Grifo's vines planted in the unique moon-like craters that protect the plants against the forceful Atlantic winds.
- These clusters of Listán Negro grapes soak up their last few days of sunshine before harvest. One of the widest planted grape varietals on the Canary Islands, it is found mostly on Tenerife.
- The view from Bodegas Candido Hernandez Pio's vineyards overlook the Northern coast of Tenerife towards Mount Teide - the world's 3rd largest oceanic island volcano.
- The Fire Devil sign welcomes you to the entrance of Timanfaya National Park, home of Mount Timanfaya on Lanzarote Island - one of the 7 volcanoes that make up the Canary Islands.
- This beautiful *Echium wildpretii*, also known as Tower of Jewels is a native flowering plant to the island of Tenerife of the Canary Islands. It thrives at high elevations and can grow up to 10ft tall.
- A good perspective on the size of these crater-like depressions that hold only one vine per hole. If you look close enough, you'll see a worker at El Grifo standing next to the unruly grape vine.

## THE FLAG OF CANARY ISLANDS



The current flag of the Canary Islands consists of 3 vertical bands of white, blue and yellow. Its origins were from the Canarias Libre movement of the 1960s. The flag includes the Coat of Arms in the central band of blue, which along with the white band portray the Province of Santa Cruz de Tenerife and the blue and yellow colors portray the Province of Las Palmas. The Coat of Arms consists of two dogs supporting a blue shield (depicting the seven volcanic islands) topped with the Spanish Royal Crown. Above the crown is a banner with the word *Oceano*. There is a controversy regarding the collars on the dogs' necks, as this is a symbol of submission that should be removed, according to one political party. However, the other party does not support removing the symbol, so the issue remains in limbo.



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## FEATURED CANARY ISLAND WINERIES

After centuries, these three wineries from the Canary Islands accomplish the nearly impossible task of growing top-quality grapes in solidified lava and basalt to become the darlings of Europe and beyond.

### BODEGAS EL GRIFO

Bodegas El Grifo is the Canary Islands' oldest winery and arguably its best known. Antonio de Torres Ribera's parents owned the original plantation in the San Bartolome area before the volcanic eruptions from 1730-1736. He inherited the land soon after and ended up planting the grapevines and constructing the original bodega, which is currently the museum located on the property. Today's winery and museum operation covers an impressive 140 acres in the Lanzarote DO. The winery gets over 40,000 visitors each year. The current owners are the 5th generation of the Duran family that acquired Bodegas El Grifo in 1880.

The soils are entirely volcanic, having been covered by lava and ash. Vineyards were first planted soon after the eruptions, either by removing part of the ash or by punching holes through the lava to find usable soils.



### BODEGAS CANDIDO HERNANDEZ PIO

Bodegas Candido Hernandez Pio is a medium-sized, family run operation with vineyards spread out over the Tacoronte, Acentejo and Gulmar Valley on the Island of Tenerife. Claudio Hernandez Pio and his son Oscar own the business that farms just over 60 acres of vineyards with their estate, The Reconda, (in the village of Candaleria) continually producing extraordinary wines. The vineyards are terraced on solidified lava, a combination of basalt and surface sand that provide an insight into the



volcanic minerality of the entire area. Varietals include Vijariego Tinto, Marmajuelo and Malvasia. Emphasis at Bodegas CHP is on quality and not quantity.

Bodegas Candido Hernandez Pio has garnered numerous international awards for its wines that are sold in many European and Scandinavian countries.

### BODEGAS EL LOMO

Bodegas El Lomo was founded in the mid-1980's by Felix Rodriguez when he converted an old stable on property he had just bought into a small winery. The location was in the municipality of Tegueste in the northeastern part of the Island of Tenerife. The winery's success allowed a new, modern facility to be built that provides specialty buildings for each step of the winemaking process. This success is due in part to Winemaker Alberto Gonzales Plasencia, recognized as Spain's 2nd Best Winemaker in 2015 at the Master Wine Challenge.

Bodegas El Lomo's three producing vineyards moderately sloping at altitudes between 1,400 and 4,000 feet and are open to the sea, providing minerality and deep flavor to the resultant fruit. Listán Blanco is the predominant white varietal in the area and consistently produces superior fruit and highest quality wines.



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## EL GRIFO 2016 'ARIANA' LISTÁN NEGRO/SYRAH

Lanzarote, Canary Islands

The 2016 Ariana is a unique red blend of 70% Listán Negro and 30% Syrah. The Listán Negro contributes the Atlantic character, fresh and alive, while the Syrah cultivated at the El Grifo bodega contributes the necessary structure for barrel aging. Each variety has a different vintage and are fermented separately. In September the blend between the two wines is completed and it is put into French oak barrels. The goal is to create a greater complexity and balance between the fruit and wood during the barrel aging. This 2016 Tinto is a rich, elegant red color and has raspberry, black currant, toasted toffee and caramel on the nose. This wine offers a fresh and balanced flavor harmony with ripe tannins at the back. Enjoy this labor-intensive wine, paired with red meats, venison or sancocho canario stew.



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4+ Btl. Members:	\$34.00	\$31.50	\$30.25

## CANDIDO HERNANDEZ PIO 2017 'CALIUS' TINTO

Tenerife, Canary Islands

This 2017 Calius Tinto by Bodegas CHP is a blend of traditional Canarian varieties – Vijariego, Tintilla and Listán Negro. The vineyards where these grapes are grown is deep, solidified lava with dry sand on top. With a climate that is dry, sunny and windy, this is one of the most challenging places on Earth to grow grapes. From vineyard to bottle the entire process is done by hand. Calius Tinto is cherry colored, and a medium-high intensity on the nose with fruits of the forest and the volcanic earth. In the mouth it is robust broad, round and balanced giving a taste of ripe red fruits and a fine mineral thread characteristic of volcanic wines. Enjoy with grilled meats and fish, pasta, sausages and cheeses.



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4+ Btl. Members:	\$25.00	\$22.50	\$21.25

## EL LOMO 2018 LISTÁN BLANCO

Tegeste, Tenerife, Canary Islands

A blend of 85% Listán Blanco and 15% Forastera Gomera, the Bodeas El Lomo 2018 Listán Blanco is a fresh blend of two of Canary Islands' most notable varieties. It was born of a manual harvest with a double selection of the clusters of grapes during their optimal point of maturity. After a cold maceration in stainless steel tanks for 6 to 10 hours, they were then gently pressed to obtain the must that was slowly fermented and bottled. The 2018 shows golden hues of straw, very clean and bright. On the nose it is fresh with aromas of tropical fruits, stone fruit, citrus and a background of white flowers. The palate is silky with a fresh, smooth and lingering finish. Enjoy with fresh fish, seafood and pasta.



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