

Bodegas Olivares

Ungrafted Vineyards Yield Stunning Wines

As Spain's winemaking revolution continues to flourish, one of the next hot spots promises to be Jumilla, 150 miles southeast of Madrid. Along with Quinta do Noval's Nacional vineyard and Bollinger's Vignes Françaises, Jumilla was one of the few places in Europe spared during the Phylloxera epidemic of the late 1800's. Virtually everywhere else on the continent, vineyards were devastated and, to this day, can only be planted when grafted onto American rootstock.

Jumilla's Secret

For Jumilla, the key to its vineyards' survival was their sandy soil—which is anathema to the Phylloxera insect. As a glorious consequence, Jumilla not only has some of the oldest vines in the world, but also the largest number of *ungrafted* vines. Most of these vines are Mourvèdre—or *Monastrell* as it is locally known—one of the most prized varieties of Mediterranean Europe. And Jumilla's summers boast hot days and cool nights, perfect for ripening grapes, while maintaining acidity.

Today, Jumilla is awakening to its vast potential, and a winemaking revolution has followed—led by growers like Olivares' Paco Selva. He owns 65+ hectares of ungrafted old vineyards in the northern part of the appellation, in La Hoya de Santa Ana. It is the coolest sub-zone of Jumilla, with sandy, lime-rich soils that yield intensely aromatic wines, while protecting the ungrafted vines from Phylloxera.

Harvesting Late

Prior to 1998, the Selva family's business was in bulk wine, but each year they made an

ambrosial dessert wine ("*Dulce*") for their own consumption. To produce this nectar, they left a few acres of vines to hang late into the Fall. Even in normal vintages, these vines

achieved spectacular ripeness. But, in favored years, morning fogs caused *botrytis* to form, concentrating and intensifying the sugars, while giving the juice a honeyed richness.

This wine was never sold. However, on a 1998 visit to the estate, Spain's top sommelier

was given a glass of this astonishing elixir to taste. He was bowled over by it and urged Paco to release the *Dulce* commercially. It was an immediate sensation in Spain, with top restaurants and shops rushing to feature it.

Inspired by the *Dulce's* success, Paco turned his attention to producing sumptuous red table wines from his priceless old vines. His first release came in 2000: Altos de la Hoya. Made exclusively from old, ungrafted vineyards, it is a *phenomenal* value.

As its experience with these new wines grows, and with a wealth of old vineyards to draw from, there is no limit to Olivares' potential.

Dulce Monastrell

1998 — Steve Tanzer: "92 rating ... an almost miraculous balance . . . and impressive palate-staining persistence."

2000 — Robert Parker: "93 rating ...offering loads of black fruits, licorice, tar, and earthy undertones."

"Altos de la Hoya"

2001 — Robert Parker: "91 rating ...a stupendous bargain!"



BODEGAS OLIVARES

Jumilla, Spain

OVERVIEW

First Vintage: 1996
Proprietor: Olivares Family
Winemaker: Francisco Selva
Vineyard Mgr: Pascual Olivares

VINEYARD INFORMATION

Soils: Sand/chalk
Zone: The northern part of Jumilla which offers superior growing conditions to the south. The vineyards are at higher elevations and the sandy soils make possible a percentage of ungrafted vines that could be unique in Europe.
Elevation: 825 m
Harvest: Late Harvest, begins 3rd week of October, finishes 1st week in November.

VINTAGE NOTES

2007 – A solid, fresh vintage.
2006 – A great vintage that appears to have yielded the most complete wines in a decade.
2005 – A year of great ripeness, though less extreme than 2003. The wines fall stylistically between 2003 and 2004.
2004 – Appears to be another stellar vintage, though more classic in style than 2003.

ADDITIONAL WINEMAKING NOTES

Fermentation of Dulce stopped by addition of ~2% alcohol. (final alcohol degree: 16%)
Functionally organic viticulture.

WINES

Dulce Monastrell

Fruit Source: From an 11-hectare parcel ungrafted vines planted between 1872 and present. Hand harvested.
Yields: <17 hL/hA
Blend: 100% Monastrell (Mourvèdre) from the vineyard's oldest vines
Aging: Bottled June after the harvest.
Production: 3,000 cases.

Altos de la Hoya Jumilla Monastrell “Ungrafted Old Vines”

Fruit Source: From an 11-hectare vineyard of ungrafted vines planted between 1872 and present. Hand harvested.
Yields: <25 hL/hA
Blend: 92% Monastrell / 8% Garnacha
Aging: Combination of barrique and demi-muid. A few new barrels are new, but most are 2nd & 3rd passage barrels from elite Burgundy producers.
Production: 25,000 cases.

Jumilla

Fruit Source: Various estate parcels.
Average vine age: 20 years old.
Yields: <25 hL/hA
Blend: 75% Monastrell / 15% Garnacha / 10% Syrah
Aging: Exclusively in tank
Production: 50,000 cases.