

t a n g e n t w i n e s

albariño OVERVIEW

VARIETAL ORIGIN

One of the few prominent Spanish white varieties, Albariño hails from the Rías Baixas region in the province of Galicia. Situated at the northwest tip of the country, Galicia is bordered on two sides by the Atlantic Ocean. The maritime influence ensures a cool growing season with a temperate, even climate. Wines from this region are referred to in Spain as “wines from the sea.” The generally low-yielding vines produce fruit with thick skins that are not only well-suited to this particularly damp climate, but can result in beautiful wines high in both acidity and flavor. Wonderfully aromatic, classic Albariño smells of peach, tangerine, lime and honey, and flavors range from salty ginger-spice to almond-vanilla.

As is found in most old-world countries, the indigenous wines and foods of the area make perfect matches. Galicia is the single greatest seafood region in a country legendary for fish, and its Albariño is a natural table-mate.

Albariño is also traditionally grown and made across the border to the south in the Vinho Verde region of Portugal, where it is known as Alvarinho or Cainho Branco. By whichever name, this varietal was and still is, the most expensive and highly revered white in both Spain and Portugal.

CALIFORNIA MODERN DAY

Albariño has become so popular in the Rías Baixas that it now accounts for nearly 90 percent of all plantings. In 1996 Kathryn and Michael Havens of Havens Wine Cellars visited the region and ultimately planted and made the first commercially-offered Albariño in America. Paving the way for other producers, they formally registered the variety in 2000.

Currently, there are few Albariño vines planted in California. In fact, most available acreage reports lump this small producer in the “other whites” category. The Niven family is out to change those statistics. They have carved out 50 acres of their renowned Paragon Vineyard in the Edna Valley to dedicate to Albariño, making it the largest vineyard planted to the variety in the U.S. These vines should begin contributing fruit to the tangent wine in 2008.

TANGENT ALBARIÑO

Grapes for this wine were grown on the rolling slopes of vineyards in the Edna Valley of California. Located halfway between Monterey to the north and Santa Barbara to the south, this tiny valley boasts one of the coolest, and longest, growing seasons in the state. Much like the Rías Baixas, the Edna Valley maintains a consistent, temperate climate from vintage to vintage. The extended hang time encourages full ripening and development of intense varietal character, a tangent imperative.

As tangent aims to produce vibrant wines of good acid structure to be naturally enjoyed with a wide range of foods, this wine was made without any oak influence, nor did any portion of it go through malo-lactic fermentation. It is a perfect match with most fish, and shellfish especially. Traditional Spanish tapas also work well, particularly when salty or a bit spicy.

“a departure from the ordinary, **tangent** explores the limitless possibilities of alternative white wines”
