

## Silice Viticultores 'Blanco' 2016

**Producer:** Fredi Torres with brothers Carlos and Juan Rodriguez

**Provenance:** Ribeira Sacra, Galicia

**Farming:** Organic with Biodynamic elements

**Grape(s):** 70% Palomino as well as many other fractional inclusions of native varieties.

**Vineyard(s):** The grapes for the Silice wines are sourced from 16 growers in addition to the Rodriguez family plots with red grapes coplanted with whites. The vineyards or Ribeira Sacra are typically granitic and death-defyingly steep.

**Fermentation/ Aging:** Macerations of 7-12 days depending on pick time and variety, fermentation in steel. 8 months aging in steel on lees with occasional battonage. Blended shortly before bottling.

**Fining/ Filtration:** soft filtration

**Sulfur:** Added at crush, after alcoholic ferment, after malolactic conversion and just before bottling totalling 50 mg/ L leaving about 20 mg/ L free sulfite.

**Misc:** Seeking to harness more of the potential of the unique terroir, 2016 was the last time the wine was produced entirely in steel. Even after 2018 Fredi says he's still 'looking to find my way.'



### The Producer:

When people think of jetsetting oenologists they tend to imagine highly concocted, internationally-styled, animatronic wines without any of the local character we all crave. Fredi is the exception that proves the rule. He has come to occupy an unusual role in the wine world: always on the move and yet fixated on genuine regionality. The guy is all about terroir as expressed through a minimal approach but he's voracious, doing whatever he can do just constantly, always be making wine! Fredi's projects reach for the ideal of 'bottling emotion' and his restless nature has led him into all sorts of far flung collaborations. "The world is not enough!" exclaims Fredi with an impish grin.

Silice Viticultores is one such partnership between Fredi, his longtime friend Carlos Rodriguez and his brother Juan. Located in Ribeira Sacra, the project began as a pipe dream one fateful afternoon in 2013 under the declining summer rays. They started flirting with the idea of making wine from Carlos' old vines. Fredi was unsatisfied with the cellar situation so, like the maniac he is, the guy hustled like crazy to put together a cellar set up he could be happy with in the short time between that fateful beer and the harvest of 2013. Fredi jokes 'we're like a kids' Bad Boys band' when describing the

familiarity of the relationship. Carlos is responsible for the administration, Juan the viticulture and Fredi pilots the winery and brand work.

### **The Vineyard:**

The Rodriguez cultivate 6 plots of native varieties on the death defying slopes over the Sil river in Ribeira Sacra. The terraced, largely granitic vineyards are coplanted with vines ranging from 40 to 100 years old all tended by hand thanks to the perilous inclinations. The farming is organic with the inclusion of some biodynamic elements. In addition to their 6 vineyard sites they source grapes from an additional 16 growers all within Ribeira Sacra so the wines are defined not by the terroir of any particular site but rather by a regional terroir. The grapes are harvested by hand in three picks, first for acidity and the second two to achieve balance and depth of flavor. The blend is about 70% Palomino, the thick skinned white variety most of us associate with Sherry with a variety of other heritage varieties coplanted across the assorted vineyards.

### **The Winery:**

The winery is a tiny 'garage-style' cellar in a dainty village home to a mere 45 people where it is isolated and thanks to the surrounding forests it is kept naturally cool. Fredi always starts with a few pied de cuve, extremely small spontaneous ferments that allow him to select which native culture he likes the best to seed the larger ferments. The hand harvest grapes are briefly macerated between 7-12 days depending on variety and pick time, pressed, fermented spontaneously in steel and then aged in steel for an additional 8 months on the lees with occasional battonage to complete the texture. The different varieties are blended shortly before bottling with very light filtration.

Fredi is extremely circumspect and technical wherein sulfite application is concerned. He believes the conversation needs to shift away from the binary and into a more nuanced one, arguing that labels should include details of precisely *how much* sulfite was added and how much remains. For this wine he adds sulfite at crush, after alcoholic fermentation, after malolactic conversion and just before bottling totalling about 50 mg/ L with about 20 mg/ L free.

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