



Bodegas Zarate

There are five subzone D.O.s in Rias Baixas in the north-west corner of Spain. Bodegas Zarate is located in the Val do Salnes, named after the ‘sal’ (salt) the Romans used to harvest there, and home to around 70% of the regional production. Albariño is dominant here, with a little Treixadura, Loureiro, Caiño (tinto and blanco) and Torrontes (not the Argentine varietal). This small but brilliantly run cellar was established in 1920, Ernesto Zarate was pivotal in promoting Albariño in the area, which at that time was in danger of being replaced by mildew resistant higher yielding hybrid varietals. In 1954 Ernesto joined together with three friends to found the Cambados Albariño Festival, which now attracts hundreds of people to the area every year. Current winemaker Eulogio Pomares (Ernesto's grandson), studied in Bordeaux and Germany investigating parallels between Albariño and Riesling, his knowledge of the Albariño grape is second to none. Since he took over management of his family vineyards in 2000, he has focused on improving them. He started to work organically, abandoning mineral fertilisers. Instead he uses shells from the surrounding coastline which provide the calcium and magnesium the vines need, and don't get from the acidic soils. He also uses local seaweed as compost. In the cellar he is low intervention and his wines are characterised by their Atlantic freshness and age-worthiness.

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