

VVN Wine Study Trip to Tenerife, 2-6 May 2026



We have been on a four-day wine tour of Tenerife, organized by Ed Carper and Arjan Bruins. The group consisted of Jolanda van Dijk, Rob Govers, Tjalke de Jong, Frank Bakker, Karel de Lussanet, Caroline Cocheret, Mariëlla en Nico Beukers, Bianca Meesen, Nellianne ten Kate, Pieter Westerhof, Ellen van de Schoor, Stefan Boer, Rebecca Carper, Marinda Drion, Ed Carper, and Michael Deen.

Guachinche Ramón



The first stop of our tour was for lunch at Guachinche Ramón. A Guachinche is a traditional, rustic establishment unique to Tenerife where local farmers sell their own home-produced wine directly to the public, accompanied by a limited selection of simple, homemade Canarian dishes.



To be considered an authentic Guachinche under local regulations, the establishment must meet specific criteria: it can only open for a maximum of four months a year (or until the season's wine is sold out), it must only serve wine produced by the owner, and the menu is restricted to traditional dishes. A Guachinche is similar to a Heuriger in Austria, or more broadly to an Agriturismo in Italy.



At Guanchince Ramón we tasted the house red of Listan Negro, as well as the Ruku Ruku wines (white and red). Ruku Ruku is a collaboration between Jessica Martín, who runs Guachinche Ramón, and her partner Tomás Mesa, an experienced enologist and consultant. The project is based in the Orotava Valley and focuses on organic farming and the preservation of the unique *Cordón Trenzado* (braided) vine-training system. The name Ruku Ruku is a local expression on Tenerife that refers to the state of pondering or being stuck in a loop of confused thoughts. It

reflects a personal story within the family: Jessica Martín was "ruku ruku"—ruminating and unsure—about how to approach her father and convince him to let her move beyond the traditional bulk wine of the Guachinche to create her own high-quality bottled wine. Ultimately, she and her partner, enologist Tomás Mesa, succeeded in this transition.



The house red was easy to drink. The Ruku Ruku Blanco is made from 100% Listán Blanco. It is fermented with native yeasts and aged on its fine lees for six months in 500-liter French oak barrels. It is a structured, saline white with a creamy texture from the lees aging balanced by vibrant acidity and mineral depth. The Ruku Ruku Tinto is primarily Listán Negro, but also includes 5% Listán Blanco. It is crafted with minimal intervention to preserve the "Atlantic" freshness and the peppery, spicy character of the grape. The wine did indeed have high acidity and a volcanic aroma.



This was also our first introduction to Canarian food. The excellent sourdough bread was colored by carbon and red wine, served with Almogrote, a savory mixture of grated aged goat cheese and Mojo Rojo. We sampled local goat cheese in both fresh and aged varieties. The Croquetas de Plátano y Gofio were a highlight—croquettes made with banana and gofio, a toasted wheat flour with a nutty flavor that is a staple of Canarian cuisine. These were served with Mojo de Mostaza, a sauce of mustard, honey, and cumin. No Canarian meal is complete without Papas Arrugadas. These "wrinkled" potatoes are boiled in a small amount of water with a high concentration of sea salt, then tossed after cooking to dry the skin and leave a salt crust. While there are several typical potato varieties on the islands, these were the prized Papa Negra, known for their dark skin and yellow flesh. They were accompanied by the classic Mojo Rojo (made with peppers, garlic, sweet and spicy pimentón, cumin, olive oil, and vinegar) and Mojo Verde (parsley, olive oil, vinegar, and garlic). The octopus was tender and flavorful, and we also enjoyed Garbanzas Compuestas, a hearty stew of chickpeas with pork, almonds, and raisins. For dessert, we had Timba: fresh goat cheese and Dulce de Guayaba (guava paste) sandwiched between biscuits.

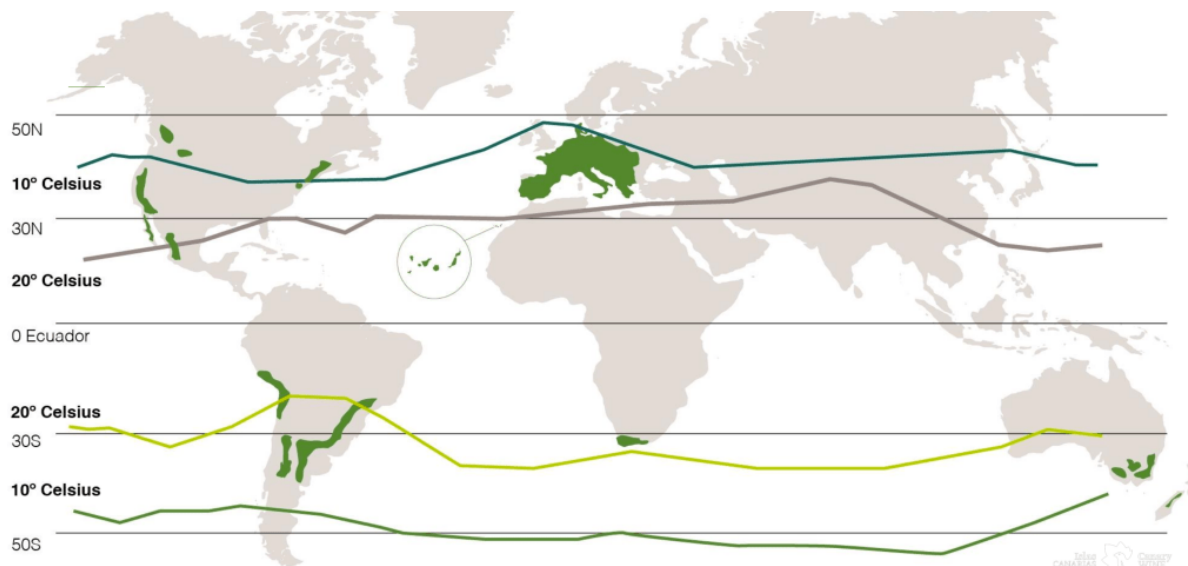
Canary Wine



Our next stop was a presentation by oenologist Juan Enrique De Luis Bravo of [Canary Wine](#). Viticulture was introduced in the Canaries in the 16th century by settlers from Spain and Portugal. Because of the isolated location and the volcanic soil, the vines were not affected by the phylloxera plague that devastated vineyards all over Europe in the second half of the 19th century.



Where everywhere else in Europe vines are now grafted on American rootstock to be resistant against phylloxera and are therefore very rarely older than 100 years or so, here there are many old vines of 250 years or more. And not only that, the grape varieties that were introduced from Spain and Portugal have had the opportunity to evolve for centuries and adapt to the local circumstances, thus creating varieties that are unique to the archipelago.



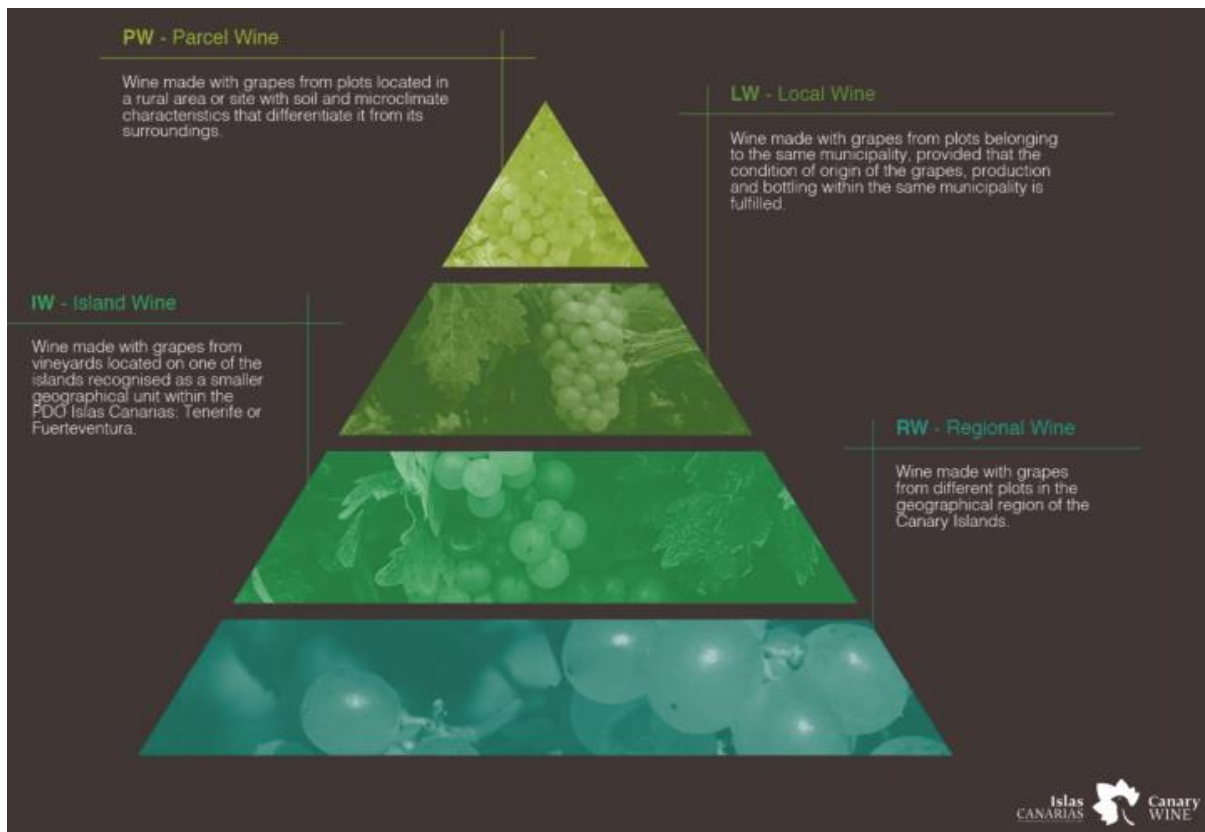
Another reason why Canarian viticulture is special is that at a latitude of 28 degrees North it is out of the usual geographical bounds for viticulture, which is between 30 and 50 degrees latitude. The climate here is often referred to as "eternal spring", because the maximum temperatures at sea level are usually between 20°C and 25°C (68-76°F) year-round. But with snow-capped volcanoes, cooler temperatures can be found at higher altitudes. This is why the harvest can start as early as June at sea level and continue until as late as November on the highest vineyards, which are the highest of Europe reaching up to 1685 meters (5,500 feet) above sea level.

Canarian viticulture has had its ups and downs over the centuries. Between the late 16th century and the end of the 18th century, vines were the dominant crop on the islands for foreign markets. Canary wine was famous and shipped to ports all over the world, including the United States, India, and Australia. It was even mentioned by Shakespeare in the late 16th century in *Henry IV*, when Mistress Quickly says it "perfumes the blood." However, trade wars are not just a modern phenomenon. Due to geopolitical conflicts and competition from cheaper wines from the Spanish mainland, Canarian wine all but vanished until the current revival that started in the 1990s.



The trade winds usually ensure an ample water supply in winter, but for approximately the last 14 years, there has been an unusual drought, causing wine production to drop by as much as 80%. Fortunately, albeit unfortunately for us as visitors, this winter has seen a lot of rain, which the locals refer to as "back to normal." Whether this return to rainfall is a true restoration of the previous cycle or if the extended drought remains the new normal caused by climate change is a pressing question for the region's future. In fact, there was so much rain during our tour that we

Compared to Listán Negro, it provides significantly more color and aroma. Finally, Listán Prieto is the same variety known throughout the Americas as Mission, Criolla, or País.



The Canary Islands have 6,757 hectares (16,697 acres) of vineyards, producing 10 million liters of wine across 320 wineries. The appellation structure follows a logic similar to many other wine regions worldwide. The overarching Islas Canarias DO (Denominación de Origen) covers all the islands and is subdivided into separate DOs for each island.

Tenerife is further divided into five distinct zones: Abona, Tacoronte-Acentejo, Valle de Güímar, Valle de la Orotava, and Ycoden-Deute-Isora. My impression so far is that a classification by altitude would make more sense for Tenerife, as elevation is a more distinguishing factor than soil type, which is volcanic across the entire island. There is, however, a significant difference in rainfall between the wet northern and dry southern parts of the island. The Canary Islands have tried to mimic the Burgundy model by allowing municipalities and specific parcels to be listed on the wine label. However, I believe they may be overreaching with this approach. While Burgundy has a centuries-old tradition of identifying distinct climates, applying such a granular classification to these relatively new appellations risks complicating the message for consumers before the broader regional identity is fully established.



These were the wines we tasted:

- Viña Zanata Marmajuelo 2024 is a white wine made from 100% Marmajuelo, a variety known for its aromatic potential. This particular wine undergoes a cold pre-fermentative maceration for 12 hours to extract maximum aromatics before being fermented in stainless steel at low temperatures. It is then aged on its lees for three months. The result is a wine with a bright straw-yellow color and nose of passion fruit, supported by the characteristic volcanic salinity.
- El Sitio Malvasía Aromática 2024 is a "Vino de la Parcela" from the Bebederos vineyard, located in the south of Tenerife at an altitude of just 50 meters. It is fermented in stainless steel and aged on its fine lees for four months. It was highly floral and intensely perfumed, but the salinity of its seaside origin was also clear.
- Viña Engracia Tinto 2025 is Listán Negro with a small amount of Negramoll from the northern part of the island. Peppery and wild berry notes, soft tannins.

Viñático



Bodegas Viñático, located in the village of La Guancha in northwest Tenerife, is widely considered the epicenter of the modern Canarian wine renaissance. Founded in 1990 by Juan Jesús Méndez Siverio—a chemist, enologist, and fourth-generation winemaker—the estate has grown from a traditional family cellar into a state-of-the-art facility that serves as a living laboratory for the island's viticultural heritage.



Next to the winery is a small vineyard with many different varieties and training systems of French, Portuguese, and Spanish origin that are all used on the island.



Juan Jesús has dedicated over three decades to identifying and recovering more than 80 indigenous grape varieties that were on the brink of extinction. His work involves meticulous genetic mapping and experimental micro-vinifications to understand how these pre-phylloxera, ungrafted vines interact with the island's diverse volcanic microclimates.



The winery itself is an architectural tribute to the terroir, built into a volcanic cone using local stone. It utilizes gravity-flow winemaking and natural ventilation provided by the Alisios trade winds to minimize energy consumption. Rainwater is caught and all waste water is captured and purified to be used again.



The annual production is about 120,000 bottles due to the recent drought and heatwaves, whereas 180,000 bottles would be needed to break even.



Here are the wines we tasted at Viñátigo:

- Viñátigo Malvasía Aromática 2024: Harvested in August, the grapes are chilled to -5°C to avoid oxidation, allowing for minimal sulfur use. It is a limited, numbered edition that is intensely floral with notes of peach, bitter orange peel and a vibrant Atlantic freshness and salinity. More delicate than the El Sitio.
- Viñátigo La Guancha 2023: Listán Blanco in clay amphorae, produced exclusively for the wine list of two Michelin starred El Rincón de Juan Carlos led by the Padrón brothers. Very mineral, aroma reminiscent of raw lobster or crushed seashells.

- Viñátigo Camino de la Peña 2022: Listan Blanco from the highlands of Icod de los Vinos (450m), fermented with indigenous yeasts and aged statically on its lees for 10 months. Racy acidity and earthy, similar to a natural wine.
- Viñátigo Rosado de Listán Negro 2025: rosé is made from 100% Listán Negro, high acidity, mineral, aroma of fig leaf.
- Viñátigo Listán Negro 2024: old vines, three months in old French oak barrels (not new, 4-7 years old). Reductive with sulfur minerality, soft but present tannins, fresh.
- Viñátigo Ensamblaje Tinto 2024: blend of 6 varieties Listán Negro, Negramoll, Tintilla, Vijariego Negro, Listan Prieto, and Baboso Negro, each vinified separately. Volcanic minerality, fresh, complex, balanced, firm but soft tannins.



At the end of each visit, as a small token of our gratitude for the hospitality and technical insights shared by the winemakers, we offered them a taste of our own heritage: Dutch stroopwafels.

Tito's Bodeguita



We had dinner at Tito's Bodeguita at Puerto de la Cruz. Due to the downpour we had to sit inside rather than enjoying the courtyard of the 17th-century colonial mansion. The dinner was accompanied by wines from Suertes del Marqués:

- "La Solana" 2023. 100% Listán Negro from the "La Solana" plot, featuring ungrafted vines over 100 years old trained in the Cordón Trenzado system, between 350 and 450 meters above sea level, aged 11 months in 500-liter neutral French oak barrels and bottled unfiltered to maintain its character. This wine needed to be decanted to remove the deposit.
- "Cool" 2022, Listan Negro with 5% Listan Blanco from the Valle de la Orotava, a lighter style with 12% alcohol.

The wines paired well with the main of grilled strip steak, but not so much with the appetizers of Croquetas de Plátano y Gofio, potatoes with Almogrote, and shrimp in a creamy Parmesan sauce.

Bodega Tierra Fundida



On the second day of our tour, the first visit was to Bodega Tierra Fundida, a family operation in Los Baldíos run by husband-and-wife enologists Loreto Pancorbo and Gabriel Morales out of their family home. This is a small operation; our group could barely fit into the cellar space. Loreto, originally from Rioja and currently studying to be a Master of Wine, moved to Tenerife in 2009.

They manage 7 hectares (approximately 17.3 acres) of vineyards in the Orotava Valley and began making wine from their own grapes in 2017. Starting with only 1,700 bottles, they have now reached an annual production of about 10,000. They work exclusively with indigenous grapes sourced from vineyards at altitudes ranging from 460 to 700 meters.

Loreto favors high levels of acidity and allowed us to taste a barrel sample of the La Cuesta 2025. This is an Albillo Criollo produced with 15 days of partial skin contact. While the wine was not yet ready and still very acidic, it showed promising aromas that hinted at the structured, mineral profile they are known for.



Loreto has a very specific and charming way of blending her passion for music with her winemaking. She is known for labeling the fermentation tanks and wine deposits in the cellar with her "musical hits." Instead of just technical data or batch numbers, she uses the songs she loves to identify and track the evolution of each wine. This reflects her belief that wine is a living, evolving thing that responds to the energy of the environment—and it adds a layer of personal "soundtrack" to the labor-intensive process of manual winemaking.



We tasted these wines:

- **Cercado del Pino Blanco 2023:** A blend of 65% Listán Blanco and Albillo Criollo. The vintage was affected by the bushfires, causing the grapes to be smaller and more ripe than usual, with lower acidity. Nevertheless, the wine showed vibrant acidity, as well as salinity, volcanic minerality, and a lot of structure.

- **Cercado del Pino Verdello 2023:** 100% Verdello aged in cement eggs and demi johns for 9 months. High but balanced acidity, mineral aroma of crushed shells.
- **Tierra Fundida Tinto 2024:** 100% Listán Negro produced with minimal intervention, fermented with native yeasts, and contains 12% alcohol. A lighter that emphasizes volcanic minerality over heavy extraction.
- **Tierra Fundida "Vino de España" Tinto 2024:** A complex red blend featuring Listán Negro, Negramoll, and Castellana Negra. Still young with present tannins, volcanic minerality, and pronounced acidity.

LoHer



Fátima Hernández is another female winemaker. She has taken over the family business from her father Lorenzo Hernández in 2013 and named the boutique winery LoHer after him.



Fátima shared the sobering reality of recent years: due to a severe and prolonged drought, her production has plummeted from 40,000 bottles to just 10,000. This 75% loss forced her to let go of her entire staff, leaving her to manage the operation completely alone. From the manual labor required to maintain 14 hectares of her own family vineyards to the final logistics of personally delivering cases to restaurants across the island, she has become a one-woman show. It is a testament to her resilience, though it highlights the precarious future small artisanal producers face in a changing climate.



We tasted these wines:

- LoHer Finca El Loro 2022: blend of 90% Listán Negro and 10% Negramoll, fermented and aged in French oak barrels for 1 year. Velvety tannin, good body, cherry aromas, only a faint volcanic aroma.

- LoHer 100% LN Finca El Loro 2023: 100% Listán Negro from old vines, aged for 1 year in oak. Volcanic minerality, body, and ripe tannin.
- LoHer Crianza 2020: 55% Listan Negro, 30% Syrah, and 15% Negramoll. The Listán is from 120-year old vines. The wine has aged for 12 months in oak. This was one of the favorite wines of the group of the whole trip. Despite being from 2020 the oak still needed some time to integrate. A complex and full-bodied red with only faint volcanic minerality.
- Cosechera by LoHer 2019: This 100% Listán Negro features tannins softened by time, yet it retains a remarkably racy acidity. While Listán Negro is rarely credited with aging potential, this wine emphatically proves otherwise. Our group was in total agreement that this bottle still has more development ahead of it. The name "consecchera" means "female harvester" and is a different wine each year. Each vintage, Fátima uses this name for her best creation.
- Lorenzo Hdez 2024: This limited edition bottling, named in honor of the family patriarch, is a young red wine from the 2024 harvest that we tasted as a special preview. It is destined for another eight months of bottle aging before its official release. The wine is a complex blend of Listán Negro, Negramoll, Castellana Negra, and Vijariego Negro, each vinified separately and aged for one year in oak. At this stage, the tannins, oak influence, and acidity remain quite prominent, signaling a structure built for longevity.

Bodegas Monje



Bodegas Monje is run by a family with winemaking tradition dating back to 1750. Since 1956, the estate has operated under the Monje name and is currently managed by the fifth generation of the family. Notably, it holds the distinction of being the first winery to export Tenerife wines to the Spanish mainland. The winery is famous for its avant-garde approach to wine tourism, most notably its "Wine & Sex" events. These quarterly shows are held in the barrel cellar and use music, eroticism, and theater to explore the sensory relationship between wine and intimacy.



Rather than tasting the wines of the bodega we went straight to lunch with traditional Canarian dishes:

- **Garbanzas Compuestas:** A chickpea stew prepared with pork.
- **Potaje de Berros:** Watercress soup served with accompaniments of gofio (flour of toasted wheat) and red onion.
- **Cochino Negro Canario:** Pulled pork from the local black pig breed, paired with pickled chayote (a local fruit).
- **Papas Arrugadas:** Traditional wrinkled potatoes served with both red and green mojo sauces.
- **Quesillo:** A frothy cream of condensed milk and eggs, topped with crumbled biscuits and filled with dulce de guayaba (guave paste).
- **Vinegar Bonbons:** A specialty chocolate featuring a filling made from the estate's own local vinegar.



Of course there was wine with lunch as well, the estate's Listán Blanco and Listán Negro. We ended with a sweet Moscatel.

Sentiterra



Sentiterra is a project of three wineries (Raza, La Esquina del Viento, and Las Galanas) working together in regenerative winemaking with winemaker Raúl García. They produce "vinos de autor",

small releases of only 400-600 bottles aimed at chefs at Michelin starred restaurants. Wines that push the boundaries of regular winemaking. They also aim to preserve old vineyards.



The wines from Las Galanas are marketed under the name "Medianero" as a tribute to those who historically worked the land. A medianero in the Canary Islands is a traditional sharecropper, someone who works land owned by another person in exchange for a portion of the harvest, historically *half* (hence the name, from "*a medias*").



We tasted these wines:

- LB 2021 from La Esquina del Viento. Listán Blanco from 1,300 meters above sealevel. Notes of bruised apple, racy acidity, and very structured. Aged for 1 year, part in oak and part in stainless steel. For the oak barrel they use a special technique called "asuellado",

which means that the toasted inside layer of the barrel has been shaved or sanded away to prevent any oak flavors and allow the volcanic minerality of the wines to shine.

- El Medianero (tan label/gold cap) 2022. Listán Blanco from sea level, aged for 1 year in "asuellado" barrique. Golden color, aromatic, balanced, complex, structured.
- El Medianero (grey label/silver cap) 2022. Albillo Criollo, made with 1 week of skin contact, then fermented in stainless steel and aged for 1 year in barrique. Golden color, complex, structured.
- LN 2021 from Raza. Listán Negro made with a 'double harvest' technique. Half of the grapes are harvested early for acidity, and the other half late for maturity. They are vinified separately and aged for 5 months in used French oak barriques before being blended. No added sulphites. High acidity and volcanic minerality.
- El Medianero (red label/black cap) 2022. Listán Negro, without added sulphites, aged for 1 year in French oak barrique. Also with volcanic minerality, but more body.



There was also a selection of local cheeses:

- Media Flor de Guía (DOP) from Gran Canaria (Northeast region), made in part with vegetable rennet from the flower of the cardoon.
- Cabra Ahumado from La Gomera. Made from raw goat's milk and smoked.
- Vaca-Cabra Untado en Gofio from Tenerife. A mix of cow and goat milk and the rind is rubbed with **Gofio**(toasted grain flour).

As well as some nice Iberico charcuterie from the mainland. Finally, there was Gofio Amasado, also called Pella de Gofio, which is gofio (toasted flour) kneaded with honey, almonds, and raisins.

Bistro Lucas Maes



We had an Italian-Canarian fusion dinner at [Bistro Lucas Maes](#).

La Suertita



Our first visit on the third day was [La Suertita](#), a small family winery and guachinche. The name means "a bit of luck," a fitting moniker for a project Suso and Monica started twenty years ago.

They source a large portion of their grapes from family and friends, but production has been hit hard recently. Due to the ongoing drought, their annual output has dropped to just 7,000 bottles, down significantly from their usual 22,000.



We tasted these three wines:

- La Suertita Blanco Seco 2024. Listán Blanco from Valle de la Orotava, aged 2 months on the lees. Structure, balance, small bitter note.
- La Suertita Blanco Bagazo 2023. 85% Listán Blanco blended with Moscatel, Albillo Criollo, and Verdello. Aged for 4 months in new oak and 2 months sur lie. Aromas of oak and grapefruit, structure, balance.
- La Suertita Albillo Criollo 5 meses barrica. Aged for 5 months in 2-year-old French oak barriques, 3 months sur lie. A lot of structure, needs more time in the bottle.

La Viña



We had lunch at restaurant La Viña, where our guide Arjan Bruins is the chef. Before lunch we tasted two wines he had selected for us from Bodega Juan Dios in the Valle de la Orotava:

- Bencheque Albillo Criollo 2024, aged 6 months in French oak, extremely limited production with less than 100 bottles produced. Structured with racy acidity.
- Bencheque Tintilla 2024, made from a single plot owned by the bodega, aged 6 months in oak barrels, limited production with only 333 bottles produced. Intense violet-garnet color, present but velvety tannins, only faint volcanic minerality.



The lunch prepared by Arjan featured several classic Canarian dishes:

- **Queso Asado:** Slices of local goat cheese, seared until soft and golden, served with red and green mojos.
- **Papas Arrugadas:** Small, skin-on potatoes boiled in highly salted water until "wrinkled," served red and green mojos.
- **Gofio Amasado,** toasted flour kneaded with honey, almonds, and raisins.
- **Garbanzas Compuestas:** A hearty chickpea stew with pork.
- **Ensaladilla Rusa:** A Spanish staple consisting of boiled potatoes, carrots, and peas, bound together with a generous amount of mayonnaise.
- **Condomio de Conejo:** A traditional rabbit stew. In this preparation, the potatoes are parboiled and briefly deep-fried before being added to the stew, allowing them to absorb the savory cooking liquid like a sponge.
- **Mousse de Gofio:** A light, airy dessert made from toasted grain flour (*gofio*) with *miel de palma* (palm syrupy sap from La Gomera).



On the second day, we were supposed to visit Bodegas Guayonge, but because our bus broke down, we had to skip that visit. Winemaker Pedro Sánchez Rodríguez was kind enough to come to La Viña and present his wines during our lunch. The winery is located within the DO Tacoronte-Acentejo and is known for producing small-batch, high-quality wines, several of which have won recognition in international wine competitions. Its style emphasizes authentic Canarian varieties, sustainable viticulture, and traditional winemaking approaches.

During the lunch, we tasted the *Érase una vez: 40 Días y 40 Noches* line. The Blanco Seco 2024 is a blend of Listán Blanco, Gual, Vijariego Blanco, and Marmajuelo, aged for 40 days (hence the name) on its lees. The wine has a lot of body and structure, but as yet a restrained nose. The Tinto 2024, made from 100% Listán Negro, is also macerated for 40 days and nights in concrete tanks. It was very elegant and balanced. The highlight of this tasting was the *Hambre de Tierras*, a blend of Tintilla and Listán Negro. What is special about this wine is that the LN comes from three different altitudes: sea level, 400 metres, and 800 metres. The wine is fermented in concrete for 25 days and then aged for 1 year in oak. It had a beautiful aroma of ripe cherries, and was balanced and complex.

Bodegas Arautava



Although Bodegas Arautava in the Orotava Valley is owned by the García family and led by Carlos "Quique" García, Tomás Mesa has long served as their consultant enologist, providing the technical expertise that has helped shape their reputation for precision. Since Quique was unavailable, Tomás received us at Bodegas Arautava.



The estate is known for its commitment to traditional Canarian viticulture, particularly the use of the unique Cordón Trenzado (braided cord) system for their centuries-old vines. Traditionally this method of training the vines was used to create space to grow other crops such as potatoes in the same field. The soil here is very deep, up to 5 or 6 meters, so it holds water very well. The deep

soil and very old vines with an established root system have been a great asset during the recent years of drought.



The bodega manages 5 hectares (12 acres) of vineyards featuring heritage vines of Listán Blanco and Listán Negro that are over 100 years old. These vines are cultivated using the traditional cordon trenzado (braided cord) system, while the Albillo Criollo, planted approximately 25 years ago, is trained using the cordon royat method. To supplement their own estate fruit, the bodega buys 30-40% of its grapes from local growers who work under their direct support and supervision.



The wines are crafted for aging and are held at the bodega for a minimum of two years before release. The vineyards are situated at high altitudes, ranging from 550 to 800 meters above sea level, to provide the high acidity required for longevity. Oak is used exclusively to provide the structure necessary for longevity, rather than to impart noticeable oaky flavors. While the winery produces a core range under the Arautava label, our tasting focused on the premium selections released under the Finca la Habanera label.



- Finca la Habanera Listán Blanco 2022. 100% LB made in stainless steel, 8 to 10 months on its lees. Fresh and mineral.
- The Finca la Habanera Albillo Criollo 2023 is aged for three months on its lees, with 50% of the wine spending six to eight months in oak barriques while the remainder stays in stainless steel. The winemaking process involves a specific technique to ensure a natural start to the cellar work: two weeks before the main harvest, a small portion of unripe grapes is picked to create a preferment. Once the primary harvest is complete, this active starter is used to initiate fermentation with indigenous yeasts.
- Finca la Habanera Listán Negro 2023 was fermented on the skins for five days before being pressed to continue fermentation. It was then aged for 12 to 13 months in 500-liter oak barrels. Due to the heat of the 2023 growing season, this vintage possesses more body than previous years. The resulting wine is juicy, featuring velvety tannins and a subtle hint of volcanic minerality.
- La Quinta Roja 2023 is also a Listán Negro, but the small size of the grapes this season resulted in a wine with more body, firmer tannins, and a higher alcohol content of 14.5%. These structural elements are balanced by pronounced aromas of dark fruit, notably lacking even a hint of volcanic minerality.

Bodega Tajinaste



Bodegas Tajinaste is a historic family winery located in the Valle de La Orotava. While the family has cultivated its own vineyards since 1939, they began bottling their own wine in 1979. The estate manages 12 hectares (30 acres) of vineyards and is dedicated to preserving the region's volcanic terroir through the traditional cordón trezado vine training system. To highlight the diverse soils and microclimates of the Orotava Valley, they vinify individual parcels separately.



We were received by Agustín García Farráis in the tasting room of the bodega. He represents the third generation of the family to run the winery and serves as the head winemaker (*enólogo*) and driving force behind modern Tajinaste. Agustín was also of great help in organizing our wine tour

of Tenerife. While the focus remains on quality and volcanic expression, the production is significant for a boutique Canary Island producer, reaching around 180,000 litres in 2015.



- We started our tasting with the Paisaje de las Islas Espumoso 2024, a traditional method sparkling wine made from 100% Listán Blanco with zero dosage. It presented mineral aromas, a subtle touch of brioche, and a soft mousse.
- The Paisaje de las Islas Blanco 2024 is a blend of 50% Malvasia Aromatica and 50% Marmajuelo, which is aged on its lees with regular stirring. This wine is highly aromatic, featuring notes of passion fruit within a full-bodied, well-structured, and balanced profile.
- The CAN 2022 consists of 50% Vijariego Negro and 50% Listán Negro, aged for nine months in French oak barrels that are two to five years old. It offers aromas of ripe dark fruits, such as plums and berries, and is full-bodied yet characterized by freshness and soft tannins.
- The Paisaje de las Islas Naturalmente Dulce is produced from Malvasia Aromatica and aged for four months on its lees followed by six months in 500-liter oak barrels. It possesses a complex aroma, with its 80 grams per liter of residual sugar being nicely balanced by its acidity.

Con Pasión



For dinner we went to Con Pasión, a gastro-winebar and wineshop in Puerto de la Cruz run by a group of Dutchmen. They specialize in Canarian wine and have a huge selection. The tapas were excellent.

Bodegas Altos de Trevejos



Our visit to Piedra Fluida, the highest vineyard in Europe at 1,687 meters above sea level, was unfortunately cancelled due to extreme rainfall and snow. Instead, we headed directly to the final stop of the trip: Bodegas Altos de Trevejos. Founded in 2012 by the Alfonso family, this winery is located on the south side of the island within the D.O. Abona. The vineyards here sit at a significant elevation of approximately 1,300 meters above sea level. The estate is housed in a traditional Canarian building dating back to 1890. The family manages 40 hectares (100 acres) of vineyards, which consist of both modern trellised plots and very old bush vines.



We had a tour of the winery, which is used to produce sparkling wines. Due to the small production, all the steps of the traditional method—involving a second fermentation in the bottle—are done by hand, including the riddling to move the yeast deposit to the neck and the disgorgement to remove it. We tried both the traditional method and the ancestral method, where partly fermented wine is bottled so the initial fermentation concludes in the bottle to create the bubbles. Both versions used Listán Blanco and were aged between 8 and 12 months on the lees.



Apart from a tour of the wonderfully restored and furnished 19th-century house, we also had a demonstration of the preparation of Mojo Rojo. The sauce was made using a mortar and pestle to combine peppers, garlic, salt, cumin seeds, sweet paprika powder, spicy paprika powder, olive oil, salt, and vinegar. This traditional sauce was served alongside Canarian potatoes and a potato tortilla.



The lunch also included smoked goat cheese, almonds, gofio amasado, potaje de berros, and Atún en Adobo. The latter is a classic Canarian dish of tuna marinated in adobo, consisting of garlic,

chilli pepper, paprika, cumin, oregano, thyme, bay leaf, vinegar, olive oil, and salt. We finished with local biscuits, including one with aniseed.



With lunch we tasted some of the bodega's wines:

- Listan Blanco 2023. Old vines of 70-100 years old. Structured and fresh, showing already some tertiary notes.
- Listan Prieto 2023. Old vines of 100 years old. Vegetal notes, fresh, light tannins.
- The Boboso Negro 2023 is produced from a variety with small grapes originally from El Hierro that is notably susceptible to raisining in hot weather. The resulting wine offers aromas of nicely ripe dark fruits along with notes of pepper and licorice. On the palate, it is characterized by velvety tannins and a distinct freshness.
- Aromas de Trevejos 2022. 100% Malvasia Aromática. Aromatic with notes of orange peel.

This visit concluded our wine tour of Tenerife. These wines are not easily found outside the island, so they remain relatively unknown to the wider world. It is interesting to note that although the Canary Islands receive more than enough visitors to consume the entire local production, many local restaurants do not even offer Canarian wine on their menus. This is a missed opportunity, as the wines are remarkably high in quality and offer a fascinating profile shaped by unique grape varieties and volcanic terroirs. Local wine should be an easy sell to any curious traveler.

Viticulture in the Canaries is often described as "heroic" because the steep terrain, small plot sizes, and traditional planting methods mean that almost all vineyard work must be done by hand. Some parcels are so remote they cannot even be reached by car. Today, the challenges of shifting climate patterns and the pressures of the international market have made the dedication of Canarian winemakers seem even more heroic.