

# Oloroso Sherry

*by Steve Gunning*

## Classification

Fermented out to 14% to 18% per-cent alcohol, aged and developed without recourse to Flor. Age in greater contact with the air, turning dark brown and gaining in concentration and alcohol through evaporation in barrels. In their natural state high quality Olorosos are Dry, but taste full on the palate, with layers of complexity and flavour.

## Method

1996 Palomino: Source – Central Valley California.

Crushed and pressed. Added sugar to bring SG up to 18%. EC1118 and yeast nutrient were added when must was warmed up. Long fermentation sugar feed. Gypsum was added on third racking. Stirred from time to time. In 1998 the wine was fined and settled then racked into the barrel. Remaining wine was bottled for topper. No acid or So2 was ever added. Evaporation is about 1 bottle per month.

1994 Muscat: Source New York Muscat – Ontario.

The grapes were crushed, pectin enzyme is added and they were left on skins for 24 hours and then pressed. Added sugar to bring SG up to 14% than added EC1118 and yeast nutrients. Muscat grape concentrate was added to sweeten the finish wine before fining and filtering. Wine was moved in to the barrel in 1997. Barrel is keep topped with more of the same. Evaporation is slower because of the sugar.

## Recommendations

Always use the best quality fruit, the right equipment and technique. This will give you your best Sherry style Wine.

Real Sherry is a regional wine that comes from Jerez in Spain and is unique. Your Sherry style wine will be unique to you. Enjoy it. Don't worry that it is not an exact duplicate.

In the case of dry Sherry keep your alcohol level to 18% or higher so that you will develop the right nutty aromas. Low alcohol will only oxidize to aldehyde.

In the case of the Muscat, sugar will work with the alcohol to preserve the wine over time and develop a different group of flavours and compounds.

If you wish to improve the nose of your Olorosos added a little Fino. This is a good case for making all the styles of Sherry.

If you are going to fortify use a good quality high proof nutural alcohol. Don't use brandy.

Sherry does not improve in the bottle. So only take out enough wine for your needs, then top up.

When do you bottle the barrel? Never Start another barrel, keep a good supple of topper around (oh it looks like the start of a solera). The wine will continue to concentrate and get more interesting over the decades. Teach your children how to appreciate and care for them, and they will inherit a very valuable treasure.

## Rancio Character

Chemically rancio derives from the oxidation of the fatty acids in the spirit, producing the Ketones which produce the richness felt on the palate. This is further complicated by the formation of organic compounds such as aldehydes, Acetaldehyde, Pylmerized Anthocymins, acetals and esters, mix in

some Caramel and Wood Resins and you get endless combinations of flavours and aromas of Hazelnut, Almond, Butterscotch, Soy Sauce, Chocolate, Molasses, Vanilla, Burnt Toast, Coffee. These oxidize compounds are the most important part of the flavour profile for Sherries, Madeiras, and Tawny Ports; giving them a dry complexity in finish and preserving them for decades.

**Madeira:** Is effected by “estufagem” a slow heating process by which Madeira’s sugars are caramelized. Oxidation takes place while wine is in cooperage. It carries what appears to be a perilous load of volatile acetic acid and more than it’s share of aldehydes. No Wine is more stable or as long lived as a Madeira.

**Tawny Port:** Is kept in cooperage from 10 to 30 years, raked from time to time, oxidizing until the colouring compounds gradually precipitate (polymerized anthocanins) reflecting the progressive change from red to reddish brown to light brown to a final, almost golden.

**Sherry:** Is coopered in a Solera system over a period of 4 years where oxidization and evaporation take place. Young wines are blended into old wines to maintain consistency of style and quality.

## Alcohol

In order to raise the alcohol strength to 16 – 24% by volume, man’s intervention is required. There are three basic techniques used:

1. **Sugar Feeding:** This consists of injecting the must with an alcohol resistant yeast which will continue to ferment the sugar sources up to 14 – 18% alcohol. The wine maker keeps replacing the fermenting sugar until the yeast burns out. Some natural wine alcohol’s are:
  - Ethanol Isoamyl
  - Glycol Act. Amyl
  - Propanol Hexanol
  - Isopropane Heptanol
  - Butanol Phenethyl
  - Isobutanol Tyrosol
  - Sec. Butanol Tryptophol
  - Tert. Butanol
2. **Freeze Fractionation:** Once the must has been fermented and cleaned-up, the wine is frozen which separates alcohol, sugar, solids from water. The water that has turned to ice and is removed, there by concentrating the remaining liquid.
3. **Fortification:** Neutral grain spirits are added.