

2013 Ponce Depaula

Yes, this is the Ponce from Manchuela, but last year they started producing a Monastrell from Jumilla that was named after Juan Antonio's young daughter. So this time I tasted the 2013 Depaula that was produced with grapes purchased from Casa Castillo then fermented, raised and bottled. Contrary to what he does in his winery in Manchuela, here the grapes were destemmed and fermented in stainless steel vats and then as in the mother winery, the wine matured in used 600-liter oak barrels. It is a Monastrell with personality that sticks out like a sore thumb among the Bobales showing notes of smoky bacon, beef blood and hints of tree bark. The palate reveals very fine tannins, some rusticity and incredible acidity for Jumilla. Superb value. 13,000 bottles were produced.

I met with Juan Antonio Ponce to taste through his latest wines and he was ecstatic about the quality and the style of 2013, a vintage he says "should happen more often as it really shows the potential of each vineyard. It was not an easy harvest by any means as we had plenty of rain, but if you worked well in the vineyards, you got your reward. We had the patience to let the grapes finish ripening and absorb the water. When you're able to harvest on October 25 wit...

- Luis Gutierrez (February, 2015)

2013 Ponce Clos Lojen Bobal

The 2013 Clos Lojén is pure Bobal like Juan Antonio Ponce has never seen before. It was harvested at the end of October with very moderate alcohol levels. The whole clusters were fermented in 4,500-liter oak vats and one-fourth of the wine aged in these vats, while the rest matured in used 600-liter oak barrels. It has a fragrant nose with notes of raspberries and strawberries with balsamic notes of aromatic Mediterranean herbs with mineral touches. The palate is medium-bodied with moderate, fine-grained tannins (he does short maceration, as Bobal can be very tannic) and gentle with refreshing acidity. This is a great value; a serious red. 28,000 bottles were produced.

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2010 Ponce Pino

The 2010 Pino offers up a similar aromatic and flavor profile but is more developed and will require less cellaring to reach its peak.

Bodegas y Vinos Ponce's new releases from the DO of Manchuela are all first-class. Manchuela, a part of the province of La Mancha, was once regarded as a backwater but in recent years wineries like Ponce have brought it to life.

Importer: Christopher Campbell, C & P Wines, New York, NY; Tel. (917) 846-1708

Importer(s):

T Edward Wines, 66 W Broadway Suite 406 New York, NY 10007, 212 233 1504, www.tedwardwines.com

- Jay S Miller (June, 2011)

2013 Ponce Reto

Pure Albillo from Manchuela, a white variety that is different from the Albillo found in Gredos and in Ribera del Duero, the 2013 Reto, is from a vintage that pleases winemaker Juan Antonio Ponce very much, especially for white wines. It is sourced from different small plots with a variety of soils, stones, clay, chalk and granite, all quite old at altitudes ranging from 700 to 750 meters altitude. Each vineyard is fermented and aged separately but following the same pattern: the whole clusters are pressed and the must transferred to well-seasoned 600-700-liter oak barriques where it ferments without any addition. The wine matures in those barrels in contact with the fine lees for six-seven months without bâtonnage. It's a surprisingly stony, mineral wine that is austere and slowly developing some faint white flower notes. This complex and elegant wine changes with time in the glass and even displays some marine notes (seaweed, low tide). The palate shows both good volume and superb acidity that is sharp with a tasty, mineral and almost salty finish. "Reto" means challenge, as it was a challenge for Ponce to produce a white with this grapes. I think he has succeeded. It's a great, mineral white at a great price. 8,000 bottles were...

- Luis Gutierrez (February, 2015)

2013 Ponce La Casilla

From a cool and long growing season, the 2013 La Casilla is pure Bobal from different vineyards with mostly chalk soils, which follows the same modus operandi as the rest, the full clusters ferment in oak vats with indigenous yeasts and the wine ages in used 600-liter oak barrels for some ten months until bottling in July 2014. It has a very floral nose combined with mineral hints, fragrant and elegant, you would never think of Bobal. The palate is also elegant and streamlined, with fine, if abundant tannins and very good acidity, approachable now, but even better if you could hold it for one more year. 10,000 bottles were produced.

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- Luis Gutierrez (February, 2015)

2013 Ponce Buena Pinta

An unusual blend of Moravia Agria -an indigenous red form Manchuela- blended with some 10% Garnacha, the 2013 Buena Pinta is a young unoaked, light wine with only 12% alcohol and high acidity because of the natural acidity of Moravia Agria and because of the growing season. This wine was first produced in 2009 and the idea was to create a Garnacha-based red. But as 2009 was very ripe and warm he used some Moravia Agria, a grape that was considered unable to make fine wine (agria means sour). He cofermented the two grapes to add acidity and lower the alcohol and met with surprising results. He has been increasing the amount of Moravia Agria depending on the vintage with the idea to perhaps make a pure varietal wine. Barrel-fermented with full clusters, the wine ages for six months in well-seasoned 600-liter oak barrels. Very light, translucent ruby-colored, the nose is an explosion of wild strawberries and lilies with some black pepper spicy undertones, more Atlantic than Mediterranean, especially in a cold, long growing season like 2013. The palate is quite light, like a refreshing berry juice with high acidity and low tannin that is supple and refreshing. This is a approachable, but as the initial vintages are evolving well, I th...

- Luis Gutierrez (February, 2015)

2013 Ponce P F

Ungrafted vines are called pie France (franc de pied in French). This is where the 2013 P.F. gets its name. This 2013 vintage of P.F. is produced with the grapes from three old, ungrafted Bobal vineyards (where there is always a field blend with small amounts of other grapes). It is whole-cluster fermented in oak vats with indigenous yeasts and matured in third- and fourth-use 600-liter oak barrels for 11 months. There is an extra creaminess compared to the 2013 La Casilla that has red and black fruit plus mineral hints. The palate is medium-bodied, with abundant tannins and mineral tones of sand and rock. This is an austere, slightly intellectual wine that with time in bottle should polish and melt those tannins. If you want to open it now you should go for some powerful food like meat stews or game. This is different from the other wines, but like the others from this producer it's a sure value. 12,000 bottles produced.

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- Luis Gutierrez (February, 2015)

2011 Ponce La Casilla

The 2011 La Casilla is pure Bobal from Iniesta and sees 10 months maturation in used French 600-liter barrels. It is bestowed with a glorious bouquet of black currant leaf, iodine and dark cherry that has a beguiling sense of "animation." The palate is packed full of crunchy black fruit. The tannins are firm and quite dry, yet it is perfectly entwined with the pure fruit that adopts a more red profile towards the almost Loire-like finish. This is another outstanding wine from Bodegas Ponce. Drink now-2018+

Readers will already be aware of my high regard for these wines, which offer exceptional value for money.

Importer: T. Edward Wines, New York, NY;
tel. (212) 233-1504

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T Edward Wines, 66 W Broadway Suite
406 New York, NY 10007, 212 233 1504,
www.tedwardwines.com

- Neal Martin (April, 2013)