

Pedro Ximénez

Sweet Pedro Ximénez (or PX) is one of our planet's oddest wines. Made from grapes dried in the sun, it comes closer to a fig syrup than wine as we know it. Amongst the sweetest wines anywhere (400 g of residual sugar is not uncommon), they also have rather low acidity and are sometimes bland. But properly aged PX can be a delightfully complex, surprisingly deep wine. Almost all PX sold under the Jerez D.O. is in fact made in the Montilla-Moriles appellation near Córdoba, well east of the sherry triangle, and only aged (or bottled) in Jerez. Montilla-Moriles producers are rightfully proud of their own bottlings, but I haven't tasted these widely and so have only included a few scores here.

96**Emilio Hidalgo • Pedro Ximénez Santa Ana «1861»**

D.O. Jerez-Xérès-Sherry • 15%

Opening with the tell-tale black fruits bouquet of great Pedro Ximénez, this uber-dense rendition has to be tasted to be believed: dense as treacle (the residual sugar is around 600 g/l...) yet flowing freely like freshly pressed juice. Superb depth of flavour, and capable of sharpness, too, which you can't say about many PXs. It is only after a solid minute you notice some burnt toast and drying out in the aftertaste. There is a small release of up to 100 bottles each year, worthy of any sherry lover's collection.