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wines worth sharing

Valdespino 'Tío Diego' Amontillado Sherry

Grape Varietal:	100% Palomino
Growing Region:	D.O. Jerez, Andalucía - Spain
Chief Winemaker:	Eduardo Ojeda

The Valdespino family started in the Sherry Industry in 1430, making Valdespino the oldest Sherry Bodegas. Jose Estevez also from Jerez, purchased the Valdespino Sherry Bodega in September 1999 - the Grupo Estévez were able to fund and maintain the traditional methods for which Valdespino is famous - in the same year inviting Eduardo to head the team. Valdespino Sherries remain among the very best quality available.

Valdespino sticking to old methods and traditions, are more than anyone else showcase the importance of terroir. Most bodegas don't own vineyards any more. Valdespino owns 186 hectares of vineyards and controls another 220 hectares. Some of the more important vineyards are located in the Pago Macharnudo Alto, a renowned area producing grapes for specific Sherries like this Tio Diego, making them single-vineyard Sherry, a concept that is now rare. Moreover, they are still fermenting all wines in oak barrels - the last Sherry House to do so.

For this Amontillado Sherry, the grapes came from a single vineyard and was fermented in 600L American oak barrels. Once fermented dry and around 13% alcohol, the wine was fortified up to 15% - where a veil of 'flor' (yeast) started to appear on the wine's surface, protecting it from oxygen and beginning the transformation. The new wine 'Sobretabla' spent one year in barrel before being transferred to the 'Solera of Tio Diego' for fractional blending. It spent 8 to 10 years ageing naturally, during which time around 50% of the 'flor' dies.

Amontillado oxidises in a slow and controlled manor, exposed to oxygen through the slightly porous oak barrels, and gains a darker colour and richer flavour than Fino. While still having hints of 'flor', it will be less citrus focused - but with more elegance and palate structure. Then fortified up to 18%, and aged oxidatively for a further 6 years, in the 10 'criadera' solera system. The average age of the Sherry is over 15 years. The 'Tio Diego' Amontillado is in essence an oxidised Fino Innocente. Amontillado is often considered the most representative style of Sherry since it displays qualities of both styles.

As you pour - you are greeted by an intense amber colour in your glass. The nose is characterized by hazelnut aromas, dried fruits, herbs, a hint of toffee, caramel and tobacco, notes of oak and ever so ethereal. The fusion of two different aging processes makes Amontillado wines extraordinarily complex and intriguing to the senses.

The palate is dry and complex, medium-bodied and elegant, with a generosity and well-balanced acidity. Tío Diego Amontillado is now a little softer in style than 10 years ago, making it even more versatile and appealing. A classic Amontillado, aged 15 years with complexity and intense rich flavours on the long, dry finish. *Treat yourself - this wine is definitely worth sharing.*

This Valdespino 'Amontillado' Tío Diego Sherry has 18.5% Alc. Gently chill and serve at 10-12°C. Once opened, store in a cool dark place - and enjoy within 2 months.

Cellaring Potential:

Drinking perfect well at any time; plus, will hold nicely for another 3-4 years.

Food Pairing Suggestions:

Perfect aperitif and paired with grilled white meats, beef consommé, chorizo, jamon-serrano, medium-strong cheeses and pâté w/ chutney on toast - enjoy.

A very fine Amontillado, with complexity and elegance.

