

# Drangewood Wines

*Small Wineries, Great Wines*

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## Introduction

Last month I wrote about the threat of 100% tariffs. That threat was not realized last month, a decision that will be reviewed in 6 months. The 25% tariff on selected countries and wines continues, however.

Over the last year, wine drinkers have been exploring various other white wines. One emerging success story is Albariño. (I love the way words sound with a tilde over the "n".) Leslie writes about the wine and the region it's from this month.

My Ramble this month is about the novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19. The only good news about this virus is that it does not relate to coronary disease or affect puns.

Portfolio Notes - by Leslie Zellmer

## Condes de Albarei Albariño

Tucked above Portugal in Northwestern Spain is the wet and windy region known as Rias Baixas (ree-yas buy-shus) in Galicia. Rias Baixas is located at sea level, right on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. Current data shows this to be the birthplace of Albariño, an aromatic white varietal. Grapes grown in this region have two hazards to overcome: harsh winds from the ocean and tons of rain (average is 50 inches per year). The good news is that Albariño has thick skin that enables it to handle the brutal winds. The vines are grown over pergola trellises and laid parallel to the ground. This does two things: ventilates the vines to dry them out to prevent rot and fungus and increases the exposure to the sun for optimal ripening.

In 1988, Rias Baixas qualified as a D.O., or Denominación de Origin. This is a classification system that is used to unify wines from different areas of Spain which encompass similar growing conditions. That same year, Condes de Albarei was founded by 362 farmers and landowners to create a cooperative. Albarei is the largest and highest quality producer of the region.

We find this to be a wonderful spring and summer wine. It is fresh, lively and vibrant with beautiful acidity. It has aromatics of white flowers (orange blossom), citrus (lemon and orange) and finishes with a touch of cream due to a little malolactic fermentation. It pairs well with seafood but can also handle aromatic spices. I recently had it with Moroccan spiced eggplant meatballs and it was *muy delicioso!*

## The Rambler

When I visited Phoenix for the first time (in 1975), everything was very strange to me. Brown rather than green, sun rather than cloud, straight roads rather than windy ones, bars rather than pubs, laws, government... everything. Yet I knew as I tried to absorb it all that this place would become familiar and comfortable. I was looking at my new world with excitement and anticipation.

I have been having a similar, but less positive, feeling about the unknown potential impact of COVID-19. Being "novel", we have no idea what the implications will be a year from now, though I bet we will not change which side of the road we drive on! In the short term, however, there are things that we need to understand.

The primary way that COVID-19 is transmitted is by airborne droplets being breathed in. When someone sneezes, lots of droplets can be broadcast into the air. This is why sneezing into a tissue, handkerchief or into your elbow is important. It seems that even without sneezing, some droplets emerge in conversation. Recommendations to stay 10 feet away from other people, keeping your social distance, reduces this. Not meeting other people at all (staying at home) is even better.

The secondary way that the virus is transmitted is by picking it up from a surface. The virus can survive several hours, or even days, on hard surfaces (not long enough to worry about your mail). How do the viruses get on the surfaces? Those droplets eventually land somewhere or someone with the virus rubs their nose and then touches something. In either case the virus can be picked up by touching an infected surface and then touching the eyes, nose or mouth (places where a virus can invade). This is why we are getting all these hand washing recommendations. They don't say this, but if you are living alone or in a small family, viruses are not going to spontaneously show up where you live. It's OK to scratch your nose. The risk shows up when you go to the supermarket. Now is the time to start using those wipes before you grab a cart or basket. Also a good idea is to keep your distance from other people and avoid touching surfaces that others may have touched: door handles, touch screens, keypads etc. Using an ignition key instead of your finger for the keypads and your elbow or knee to open doors are good ideas. As soon as possible after your expedition get those hands washed.

You will notice that hands are the important transfer mechanism. That is why washing them is recommended so strongly. It makes sense to me to give up shaking hands. Palm to palm - high risk. Bows or elbow bumps are likely to be our future social greeting. Of course if we knew that the other person was not infected it would be different, but it seems that people with no symptoms may be infectious.

Orangewood has suspended all meetings and encouraged everyone to be aware of their social distances when meeting other people - and washing their hands a lot.

Cheers,

Richard and Laurie  
Orangewood Wines

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