

Los Frailes, 1771 Monastrell 2011 Valencia 17.5 Drink 2013-2020

I love Monastrell, and I have just tasted one that I feel will join the trio of Pie Franco, Estrecho and Alfynal which are my favourites, about which I've written already. This is so new that not only has it not yet been released, but the release date has not yet been decided, the label has not yet been designed and the price has not been set. But I loved it so much, I found it so elegant and refined, that I fell in love with it immediately. This is grown in the south of inland Valencia, a region called Terres dels Alforins, where a few young wineries are making exciting wines, trying to find their identity, in many cases looking at traditional methods – read amphora – and grape varieties such as Monastrell, which was probably the main variety in the region before phylloxera. It's the property of the Velazquez family, unrelated to the great Spanish painter as far as I know, Velazquez being quite a common surname in Spain. It's a big estate, with some 130 ha of vineyards. The wine is made by Dominique Roujou de Boubée, a Frenchman who is consulting and making wines in Valencia, Priorat, Galicia and Extremadura. Here he followed the old traditions and used as little technology as possible. The result is stunning. This is still a barrel sample waiting to be bottled.

Bright ruby translucent colour, the colour of the wines from the past. This particular wine has not yet been released, it has not even been bottled, so look out for it in the future if you know someone who sells or imports the winery's wines. The nose screams Monastrell. Violets, tree bark, scorched wet earth and black truffles. In the mouth it's also very typical, with the tell-tale elegant rusticity, an apparent contradiction in terms, but something that you find in the best authentic, unpraised wines in the world, fine tannins and very fresh. So good now, with an even better future. A legend in the making. (LG) 13.5% €20

