SHERRY WINE
Production process
By Daniel Ayuso and Isabel González

Geographic Location
The region of Jerez is situated in the province of Cadiz, in the Southeast of the Iberian Peninsula. The influence of the Atlantic Ocean and the Guadalquivir, Guadalet e and Sierra de Cadiz rivers are key to understanding the uniqueness of our wines. The ageing zone is restricted to the city limits of Jerez de la Frontera, El Puerto de Santa María and Sanlúcar de Barrameda.

The grapes
The varieties permitted by the Regulating Council of the Denomination of Origen “Jerez-Xérès-Sherry” and “Manzanilla - Sanlúcar de Barrameda” are the following: Palomino Fino, Moscatel and Pedro Ximénez. The first of these, Palomino, is the queen of dry Sherry, while the other are utilized traditionally for sweet wines.

Production process
The Palomino grapes are harvested fairly early in the fall, usually the first week of September. The fruit is pressed quickly at vinification facilities on the outskirts of Jerez or in the vineyards themselves, and then the must is put into giant steel tanks for fermentation. It's after fermentation that the Sherry-making process really begins. Step one for the Sherry bodegas is to identify the batches of wine that will become finos and the ones that will become olorosos.

Solera ageing system
The ageing of Sherry is the key to the difference, the ancestral wisdom of the winemakers to elevate a wine to its maximum expression through the solera system. There are usually three or four criaderas in a Sherry solera, each containing wine of a different age. The first criadera contains the youngest wine, while the second criadera contains the next youngest wine, and so forth and so forth until you get to the solera row containing the oldest wine. When it's time to bottle a finished Sherry, wine is removed from the solera row, with wine from the oldest criadera replacing what was taken. In turn, wines are taken from each previous criadera to refill the next-oldest criadera. Finally, fresh wine is used to top off the first criadera. In general, finos and manzanillas spend about five years in the solera system, but sometimes more. Basic amontillados and olorosos spend 10 or more years in criaderas, but it is typical for much older stocks to be blended in with younger wines to create high-end reserve wines. These wines rarely indicate an age on the bottle, but they can contain elements that are well over 100 years of age.

Benefits of drinking sherry wine
New research published in Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture suggests that sherry may have the same health benefits as red wine. Sherry contains antioxidants that help control cholesterol levels. Studies have shown that sherry, like red wine, contains antioxidants called polyphenols, which reduce the occurrence of coronary artery disease. They work by preventing the oxidation of Low-Density Lipoproteins (LDL), which is associated with the disease. Drinking sherry can also increase the body's production of High-Density Lipoprotein (HDL) cholesterol, which is associated with longevity and a decreased incidence of coronary artery disease. They say those results suggest that it's certain compounds in the palomino grape that are responsible for sherry's heart-healthy benefits rather than the alcohol.

By: Daniel Ayuso
Isabel González
4º C Teacher: Pilar Franco