

Suertes del Marqués, Trenzado 2024 Valle de La Orotava, Tenerife



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VOLCANIC WINES



A piercingly fresh and smoky white from the unique braided vines of the rugged north coast of Tenerife. From [€14.50, \\$27.90, £35.50](#). Above, Jonatan García Lima pruning a braided Listán Negro vine in his La Solana vineyard just below the winery.

The Spanish island of Tenerife in the north Atlantic, the biggest of the Canary Islands, is dominated by the photogenic Mount Teide, or Pico del Teide, an active volcano rising to 3,715 m (12,188 ft), making it the highest point in Spain.



The island's northern coastline is rugged and often difficult to access, the hairpin roads teetering above the sea, all so very different from the busy beaches of the south. In late January when my wife Dee and I were in Garachica on the north coast for a week's holiday, the sea was raging and several parts of the coastal road were closed.



I was disappointed not be able to swim in the sea but the wet winter has been great for the vines, apparently.

I had special dispensation from Dee to visit one winery during the holiday and it was an easy choice to head east along the coast towards the town of La Orotava. It's here on the basalt foothills of Mount Teide in the Orotava Valley, bordered by two escarpments and sloping down to the sea (see the photo at the top and the map below), that Jonatan García Lima and his father Francisco, both with backgrounds in business administration, have 12 ha (30 acres) of vines at elevations of 350–750 m (*c* 1,150–2,460 ft). The vines are predominantly Listán Blanco (known as Palomino Fino in Jerez) and Listán Negro, plus other local indigenous varieties such as Vijariego Negro, Baboso Negro, Castellana Negra, Malvasía Rosada and Torrontés Volcánico. Banana plantations dominate the flatter land closer to the sea.



Jonatan García Lima and the view from the Suertes del Marqués winery east towards the Santa Ursula escarpment

Today they own 12 ha (30 acres) of ungrafted vines and also buy some fruit from other local growers in the valley. They farm organically but have chosen not to apply for certification. Rootstocks have never been needed on the island but since the discovery last year in abandoned vineyards in the Tacoronte subregion in the north-east of isolated instances of phylloxera, there is a growing awareness of the need for precautionary measures, though the introduction of rootstocks might be the end of one of the unique features of the region's viticulture.

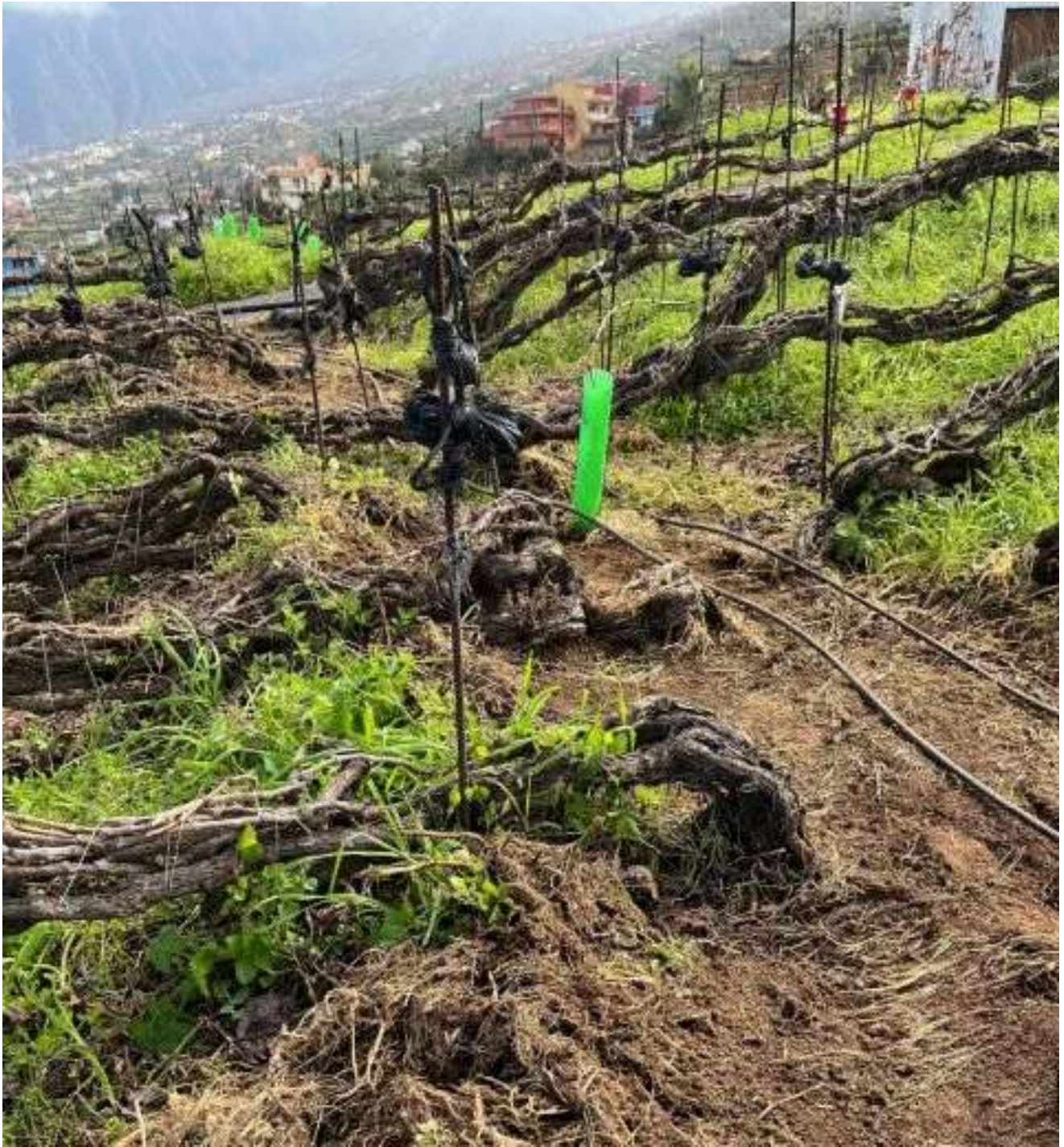


The name Trenzado is explained by the image on the label and the photograph below: *cordón trenzado* means ‘braided cordon’. This is the traditional training system in the valley. Jonatan told me that it was once thought that this method was not the best for quality but he is convinced otherwise, as long as the vines are pruned appropriately and yields are controlled, and he is now carrying out the laborious process of converting some of their trellised vines to *cordón trenzado*.



Experienced vineyard worker Nena tying a braided cordon with string and then attaching it to the stakes for further support and to keep them off the ground

This bone-dry, intensely fresh white wine, with a light smoky/stony impression and razor-sharp grapefruit and green-fruited flavours, is made exclusively from Listán Blanco from vineyards aged 60–150 years in the west of the valley. Thanks to the cloud cover and cooler temperatures of northern Tenerife, here the variety typically has much higher acidity than where it is grown for sherry in Spain's hot, dry Andalucía. The location and winemaking combined add a deliciously dry, chalky texture to Trenzado.



The braided cordons go in two directions from the same roots, up and down the slope

The relationship between volcanic soils and this smoky/mineral impression is a hot potato (look out for our forthcoming coverage of this year's Volcanic Wine Awards), not least because there are so many types of volcanic soils, but as Jonatan explained during my visit, the connection is indirect, caused by vine stress in these poor, acidic soils, which in turn leads to stress on the yeasts during fermentation. (For more on this, see Ferran's article on [Canary Island wine](#), including the discussion he had with Jonatan on this very topic.)

Smoky or flinty aromas and flavours are typically associated with [reduction](#) and sulphur-related compounds. Such flavours can be created, encouraged

or highlighted by winemaking methods such using more cloudy juice in the fermentation, ie with more solids from the grapes. (See [The secrets of funky/flinty Chardonnay](#).)

However, in order to demonstrate the connection between the vineyard's poor volcanic soils and the taste of the wine itself, García Lima eschews such techniques. He settles the juice so it is clear and also adds lime to the soil to raise the pH. Even so, a certain smoky character is inevitable and desirable: the imprint of the vineyard on the wines not winemaking artifice. The 2024 vintage of Trenzado is perhaps a little less marked by this quality because there were no heatwaves in 2024 and the vines were less stressed, García Lima explained when we tasted the wine together.



In the winery, the clear juice is fermented with ambient yeasts in big wooden foudres (2,000–4,500 litres) and some 500-litre casks. After fermentation the wine spends nearly a year on the lees and goes through only partial [malolactic conversion](#), the former adding texture and depth to a wine that is moderately low in alcohol (12.4%), the latter helping to maintain its attention-grabbing freshness.

García Lima makes 17 wines, including the 11 that I tasted, shown in the line-up below. Some are made in very small volumes but the Trenzado is the

most widely available white. In case you cannot get hold of it, I would also recommend the more intense and slightly smokier (and more expensive) white Vidonia 2024, made from their own vineyards, as well as the fragrant and tangy, chalky-dry first-level red, 7 Fuentes. It was only while I was writing this article that I remembered I had chosen the [7 Fuentes 2016](#) as a wine of the week in 2019.



There are several importers of Suertes del Marqués wines in the US, including Polaner Selections (NY and NJ, email info@polanerselections.com for stockists), Free Run Wine Merchants (VA, DC, info@freerunwinemerchants.com) and Oz Wine Company (MA, info@ozwineco.com). The UK importer is Keeling Andrew and the wines are available from Shrine to the Vine ([online](#), in Noble Rot restaurants and in their three London shops) and [Vin Cognito](#).

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For more on Tenerife's wines, see Ferran's 2018 article [Tenerife – island of wine \(and historic\) discoveries](#). For tasting notes on many more wines from the Canary Islands, see our [tasting notes database](#).

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