

Dominio de Pingus

“One of the greatest young red wines I have ever tasted.” Robert Parker

While other Spanish wines have achieved international recognition, Pingus is one of the very few that has joined the ranks of the world’s most coveted wines. Like Coche-Dury’s Corton-Charlemagne, Guigal’s LaLa wines, or Giacomo Conterno’s Monfortino, Pingus is known and revered wherever great wine is discussed.

Like those other esteemed names, Pingus has a quality that is often lacking in today’s “modern”

wines—a sense of utter individuality. For there is no other wine in the world today that shares Pingus’ unique signature and, ultimately, that singularity is one of the fundamental requirements for great wine.

The Early Years

Pingus is produced by the visionary Danish winemaker Peter Sisseck. Peter arrived in Spain in 1993 to manage a new project, Hacienda Monasterio. While planting and developing Monasterio, he began to dream about the old vines he saw dotted around the Ribera del Duero landscape. By the 1995 vintage, Peter had found a group of old vines that spurred him to embark on his own project. He called it “Pingus,” after his childhood nickname.

One can only imagine what the reactions were like when Peter showed up in Bordeaux at the March 1996 *en primeur* tastings. Yet, by the end of the week, Pingus was perhaps the greatest story of that season’s futures campaign. Robert Parker announced the wine on the back cover of his *Wine Advocate*, bestowing an unheard of 96-100-point score. The world took notice, and Pingus was on its way.

Pushing the Limits

From the beginning, Peter’s vision was to push

Tempranillo to its upper limits. He spent the first few years pruning his vines back to a healthy balance—the trunks were straightened, lowered, and canes were pruned back to 1-2 buds per stump. Yields have typically been under one ton per acre.

Pingus is fermented in large wooden vats and, once in cask, is mostly left alone. It is largely raised in new *barriques*, though the flavors of

the oak vanish into the enormous concentration. Pingus is indeed a wine that is magical in the way that it balances otherworldly richness with a rare sense of elegance.

Peter’s winery work has been widely imitated, and many wines can mimic the exotic textures that Pingus possesses. Yet, while they might approach Pingus’ style, none of these newcomers has the substance that defines Pingus.

Over the past decade, Peter has continually refined his original vision. Since 2001, he has employed biodynamic viticulture to capture a healthier balance in his vineyards. In the winery, he has made subtle changes aimed at taming the region’s natural power, and giving more delineation and depth to the Pingus voice.

Flor de Pingus

From the beginning, Peter has expressed his vision through two wines: Pingus and Flor de Pingus, the latter made from several rented parcels of old Tempranillo. In many respects Flor mirrors Pingus itself, with similarly high standards of winemaking. It is no wonder that in 2008, *The Wine Advocate*’s Jay Miller wrote of Flor de Pingus: “In the price/quality sweepstakes, this might be Spain’s finest wine.”



Peter Sisseck

