

Sherry Vinegar: the Noble Condiment



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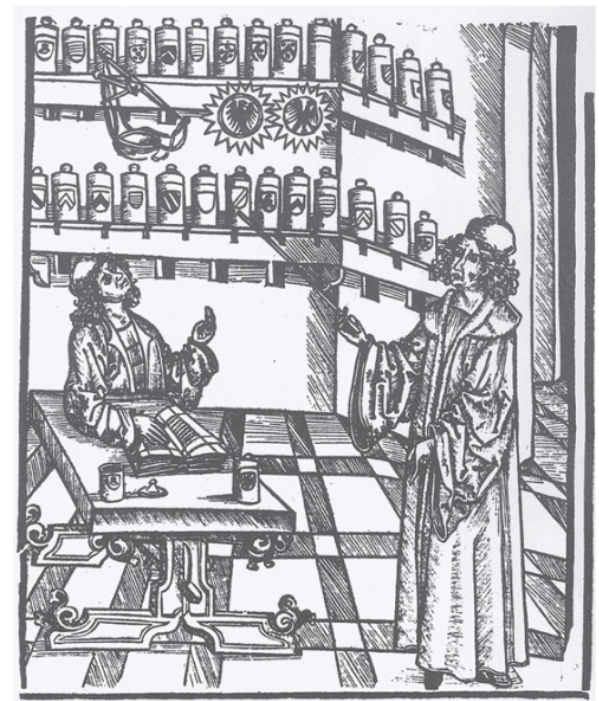
“Vinum Acre” – a very ancient product

- Together with wine, one of the first fermented foodstuffs used by mankind.
 - Multiple uses: from base for refreshing drink to preserver; from cosmetic and healthcare to food condiment.
 - A very common part of the diet in Spanish “Al-Ándalus” (Xth C.)



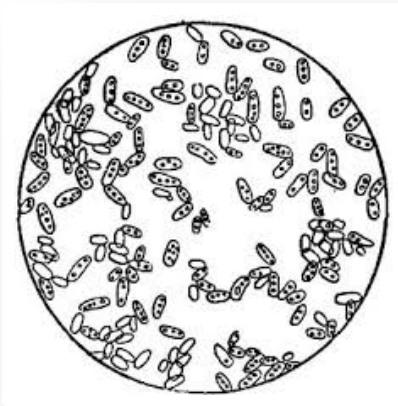
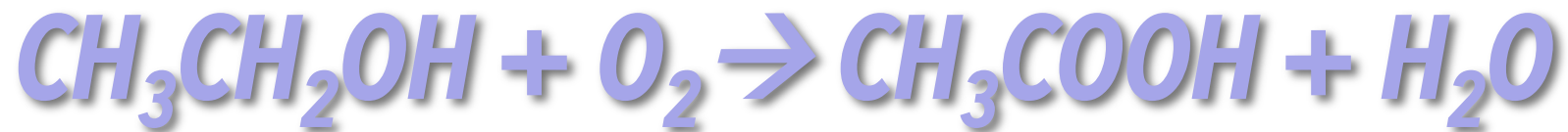
Finally, the mystery is revealed

- In 1732, Boerhaave refers to the “mother of vinegar” as a living nature.
- Louis Pasteur (1822-1895) introduces the concept of “organized ferment” as the key to acetification, and defines *micoderma aceti*, different to wine’s *micoderma vini*.



How is vinegar produced?

Vinegar is obtained through the action of acetic bacteriae over an hydro-alcoholic solution



(acetic bacteriae transform alcohol into acetic acid and water, in the presence of oxygen)

A two-step process



Many types of vinegar, depending on:

- the nature of the alcoholic base: rice, fruits, cane... WINE
- the use of other products to confere aromas to the vinegar
- the latter ageing of the resulting vinegar

Sherry Vinegar

The exceptional quality of Sherry Vinegar is the result of its many singularities:



- A unique **origin** – Sherry, the very special wines of the Jerez region.
- A centuries-old **tradition**.
- A truly genuine production **method**.
- The **guarantee** of the Protected Denomination of Origin.

Sherry Vinegar – the Noble Condiment

The southern-most wine region in Europe

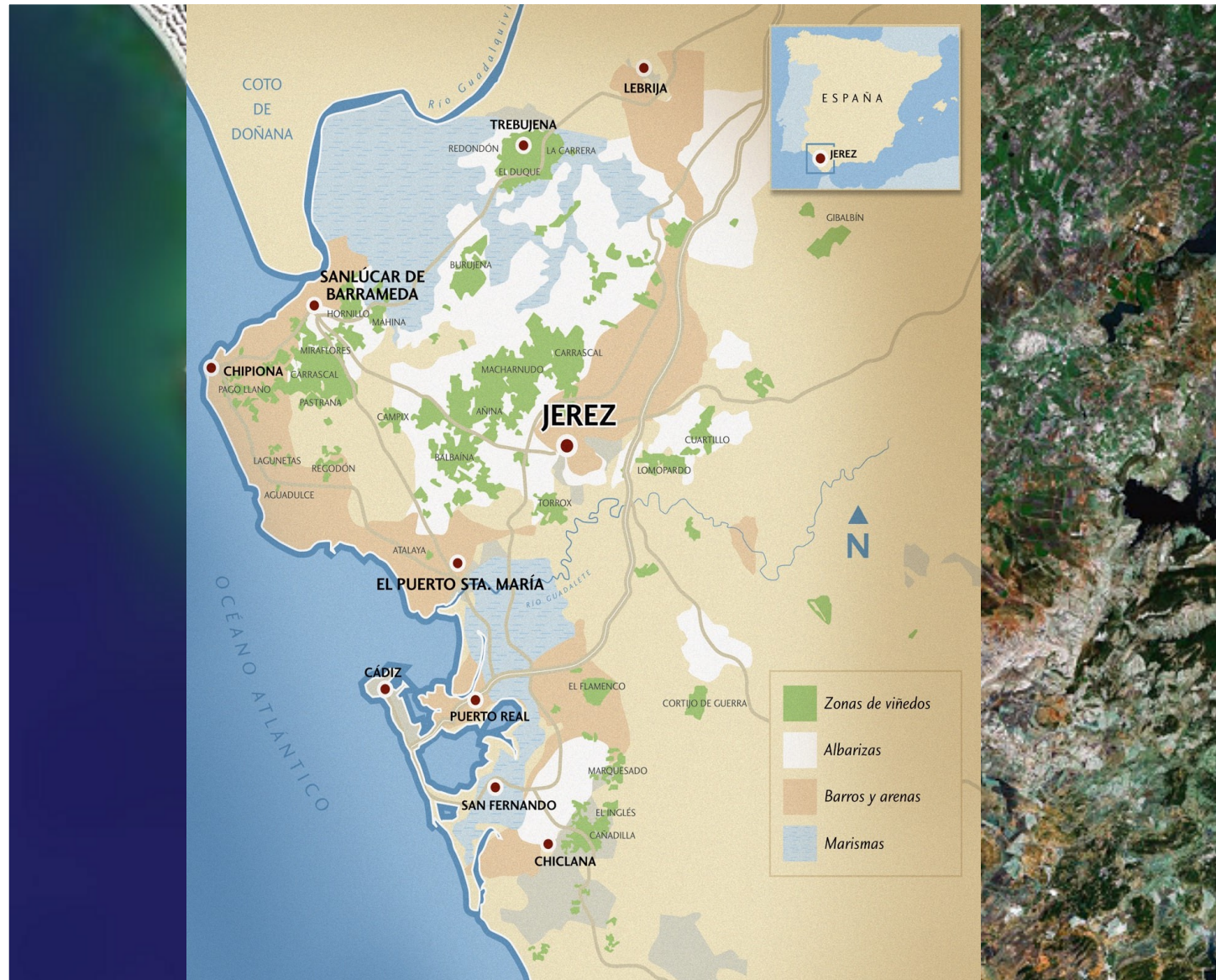


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Sherry Vinegar – the Noble Condiment

7,000 hectares of vineyards



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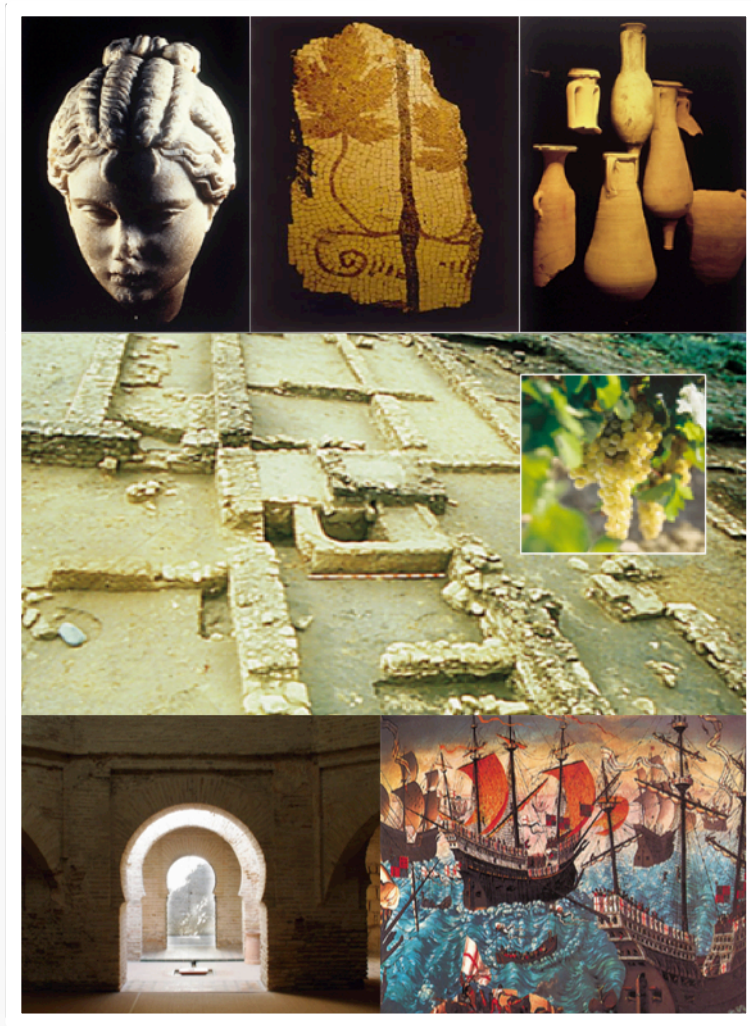
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The “albariza” soil



- White soil (alba=white), made from the sedimentation of marine diatoms.
- Very chalky: high content of calcium carbonate, with more than 40% limestone.
- Poor in both organic material (1.3% to 1.5%) and nitrogen.
- Highly porous – helps retain moisture.

3,000 years of wine tradition



- Phoenicians introduced the cultivation of vineyards (1,000 bC).
- Wine-related activity was continued by many other cultures established in the region.
- Wine, an export good since ancient times.
- XVIIIth C, development of Sherry's specific wine production technics.

Sherry vinegar in the XIXth century

The environmental conditions, as well as Sherry's specific production methods, naturally favoured the acetification of wine, but...

- Sherry vinegar remained a **“hidden” product**. Highly acetic wines used to be separated from the rest and put to age in isolated bodegas.
- These wines would rapidly increase its vinegar character, and only **limited releases** would be made for the family and for very special friends.
- Specialized **food manufacturers** (mainly French) started to trade with these produces, as a base for different foodstuffs .

XXth C. – the protection of the origin

- The Spanish National Law on Wine of 1933 established the first Denominations of Origin.
- Jerez-Xérès-Sherry was the very first DO legally constituted in Spain (1935).
- In 1994, protection was also granted to Sherry Vinegar, again the very first D.O. of its kind in Spain.



A very unique production process

- An exceptional raw material – Sherry wines.
- A unique ageing method – the solera system.



Authorised grape varieties

palomino



pedro ximénez



moscatel



The acetification of sherry wines

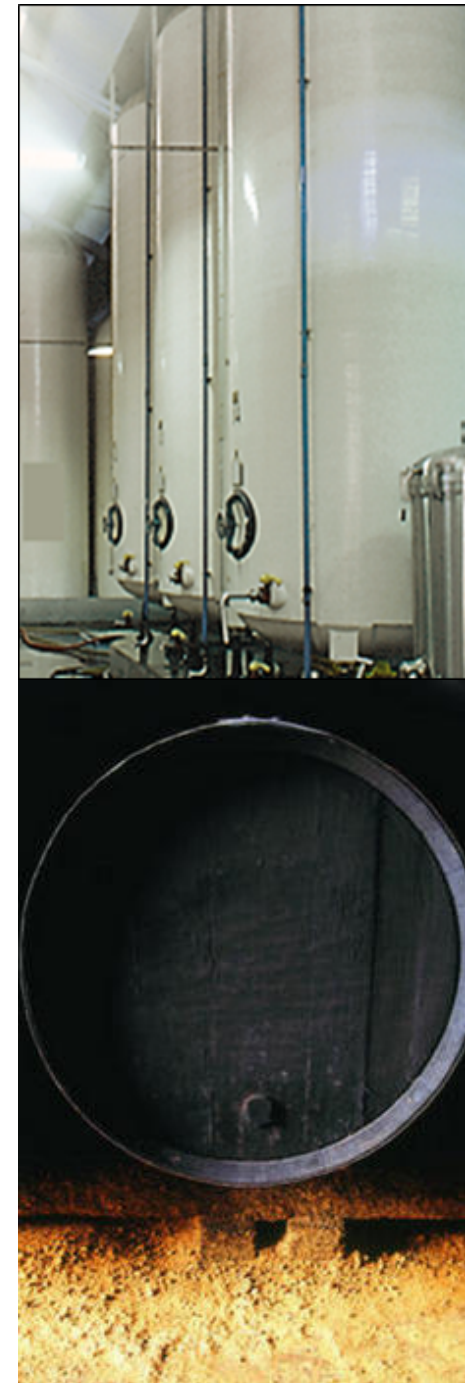
Sherry vinegar appears as a consequence of the activity of acetic bacteriae on either:

- base wines (non-fortified), or
- aged Sherry wines

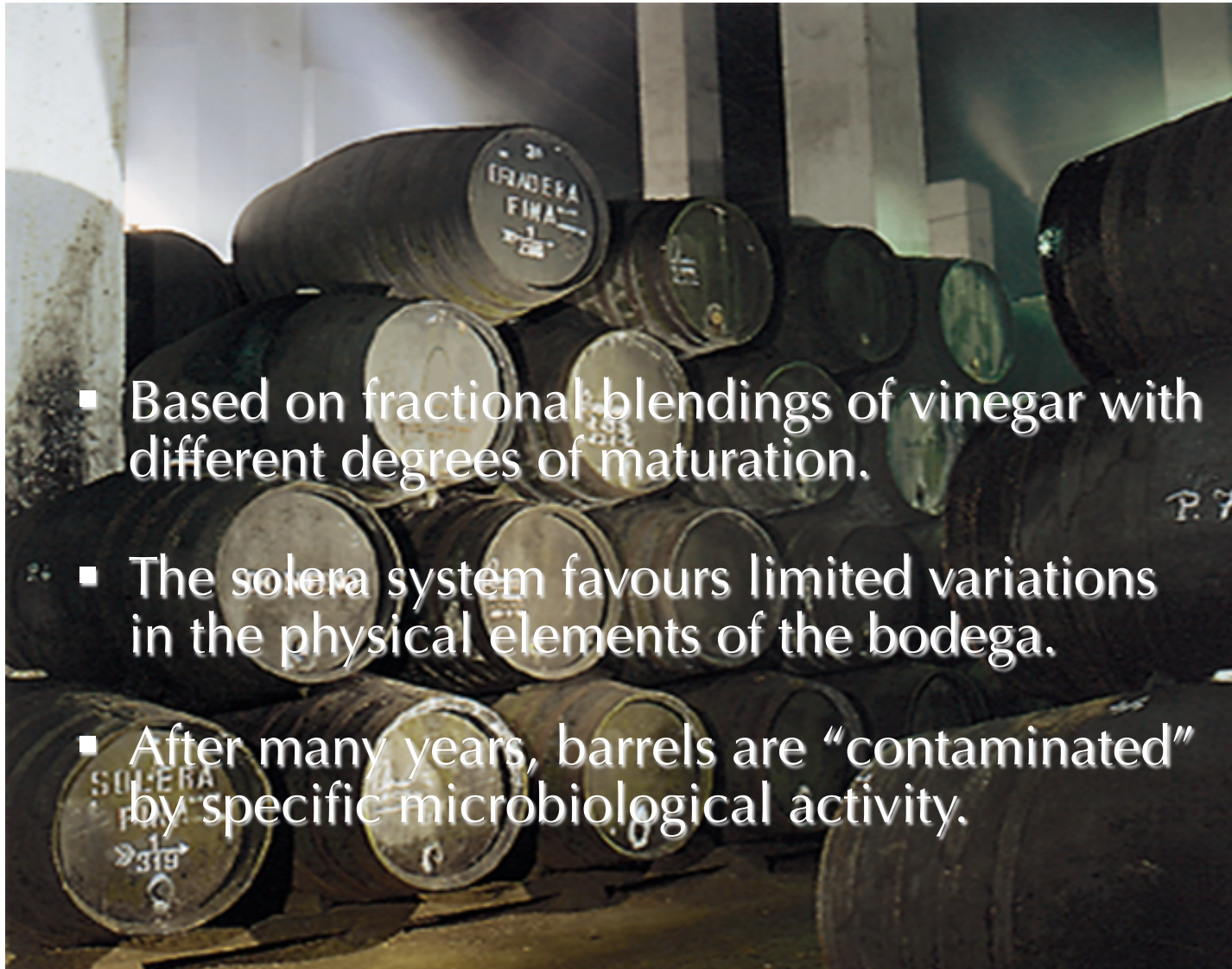
Acetification can be:

1. Accelerated, in specially designed tanks (micro-oxygenation).
2. Naturally produced, inside the ageing barrels (botas), previously used for the ageing of Sherry wines.

(usually a combination of the two)

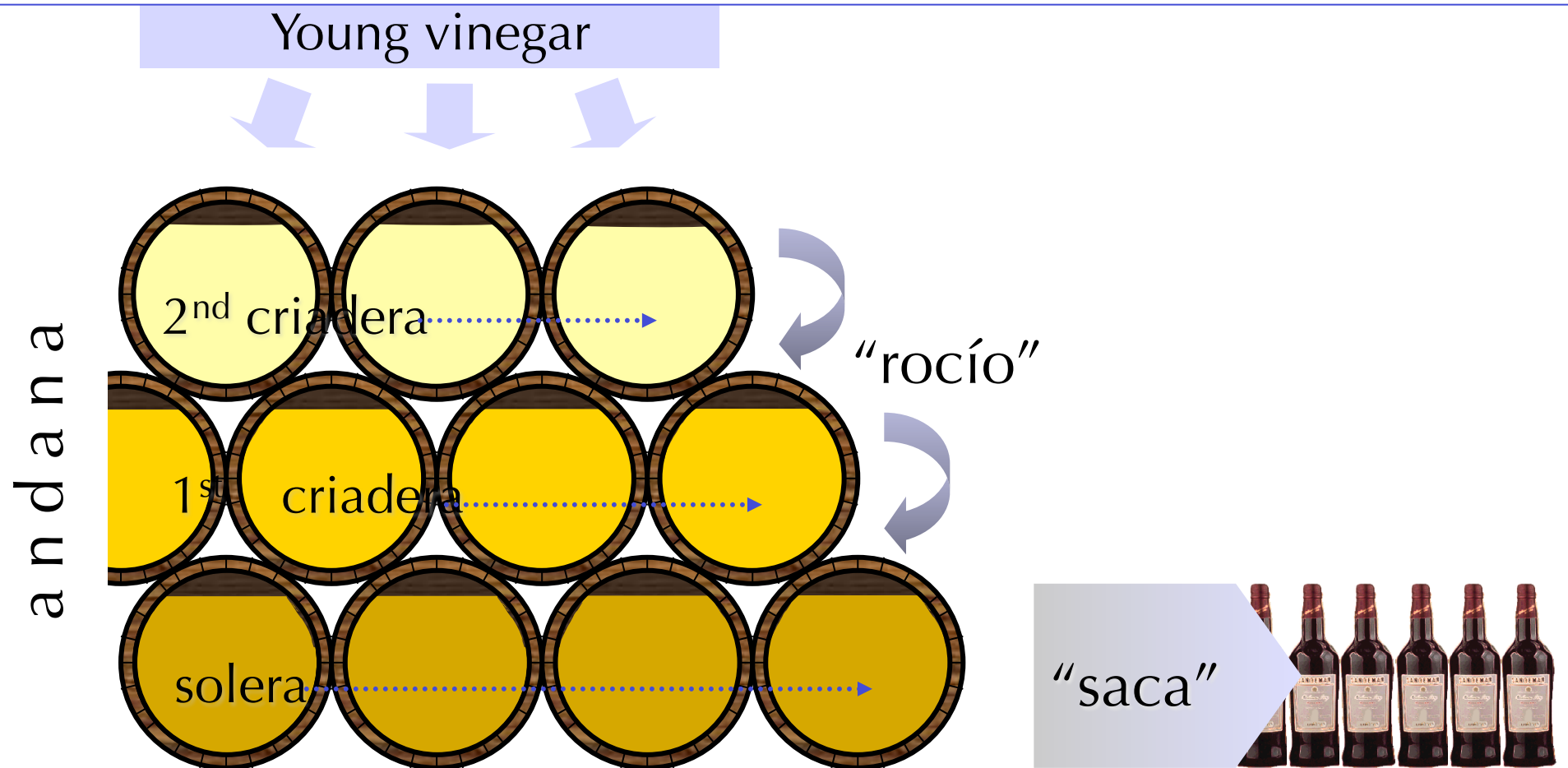


Dynamic ageing - the solera system



- Based on fractional blendings of vinegar with different degrees of maturation.
- The solera system favours limited variations in the physical elements of the bodega.
- After many years, barrels are “contaminated” by specific microbiological activity.

How does the solera work?

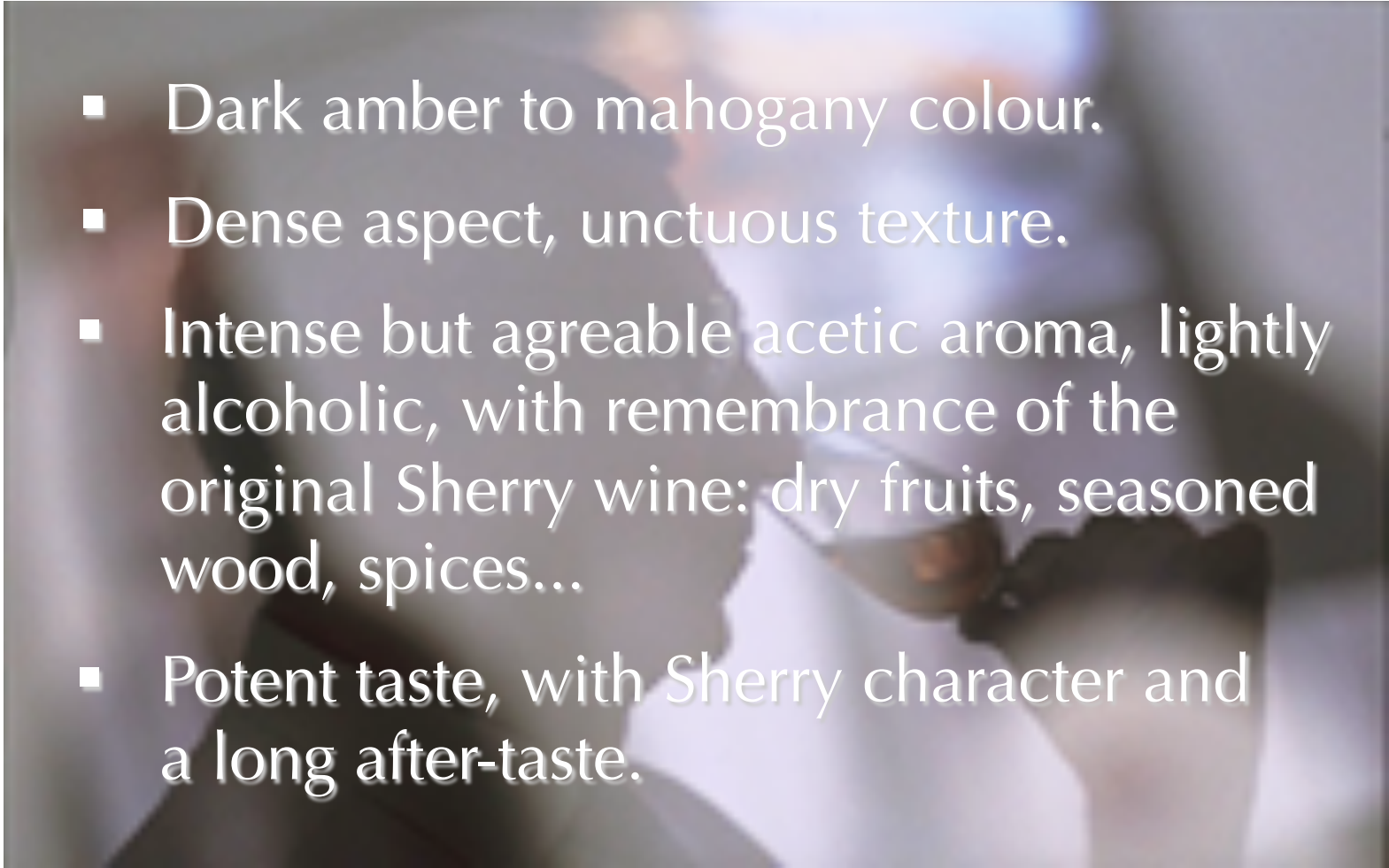


Analytical characteristics of Sherry Vinegar



- Minimal total acidity of 70 gr/L.
- Residual alcohol content of less than 3% vol.
- Cabone 14 level in line with its biological origin.
- Minimal dry extract of 1,30 gr/L per degree of acetic acid.
- Ashes content between 2 – 7 gr/L.

Tasting characteristics of Sherry vinegar

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- Dark amber to mahogany colour.
 - Dense aspect, unctuous texture.
 - Intense but agreeable acetic aroma, lightly alcoholic, with remembrance of the original Sherry wine: dry fruits, seasoned wood, spices...
 - Potent taste, with Sherry character and a long after-taste.

Sherry vinegar types

Depending on the **time of ageing** in oak butts:

- Vinagre de Jerez (6 months)
- Vinagre de Jerez Reserva (2 years)
- Vinagre de Jerez Gran Reserva (10 years)

Depending on the wines used in the **blend**:

- Vinagre de Jerez
 - Vinagre de Jerez al Pedro Ximénez
 - Vinagre de Jerez al Moscatel
- } semi-sweet vinegars

Sherry vinegar in Gastronomy

- Irreplaceable, both in the traditional and the modern cooking.
- In salads, vinaigrettes, sauces, reductions... and as a “magic” ingredient in any plate.



- No need to use big quantities. It is very potent and small doses confer all the flavour.

Magic drops

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- Aperitifs and salads → Ideal because of its moderate acidity, great intensity and perfume.
 - Pasta & vegetables → Perfect to enhance all dishes of the Mediterranean diet.
 - Meat and stews → Great in sauces and reductions for grills and barbecues. For pickles and marinades: specially for duck, partridge, pheasant, etc.
 - Fish and shellfish → Pickles and marinades. Amazing complementarity with blue fish.
 - Puddings / icecream → Great for a good caramel; adds intensity and balances sweetness in chocolates and jams.

Amazing sauces,
perfect vinaigrettes
and even delicious
desserts...



Ingredient for a healthy diet

- Has no salt or fat: helps control obesity and cholesterol.
- It helps regulating the level of glucose in blood.
- Strengthen our bones.
- Great properties as a diuretic.
- It has a satiation effect.





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