

## SPAIN

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# A sip on the sherry trail

Sherry is having a revival, but it never went out of fashion in the city of Jerez, writes **Paul Ewart**

**T**HERE'S no denying it, sherry is having a "moment". No longer the preserve of grandmas, the fortified wine is back with a bang as the hipster's tippable of choice.

Specialist sherry bars have been opening around the world for the past few years (there are now close to 40 in London alone) and since conquering the British capital, the sherry revival has hit our shores, with numerous bars popping up nationwide. But there's no better place to see this sherry revolution in action than in the birthplace of the drink itself – Jerez.

In southwest Spain, Jerez de la Frontera or simply "Jerez" has been at the centre of the world's sherry industry for thousands of years. Even the word sherry comes from the city's original medieval name "Sherisch". And its reputation for producing world-class wine continues to this day, with the city being named as the European Capital of Wine in 2014.

Here cobbled alleys, plazas and baroque churches intermingle with an abundance of lofty ceilinged wine warehouses or "bodegas". Unlike most wineries, the Andalusian bodegas are within city boundaries, which makes for easy touring. Even in a few days you can explore the vast range of sherry styles, from bone-dry Manzanilla to syrup-like Pedro Ximenez.

It's in the city that you can also experience sherry in its natural habitat on the unofficial Jerez sherry golden mile. Just as the drink has had a revival elsewhere in the world, in Jerez the younger generation have also adopted the drink and the old-fashioned bars or "tobancos" in which

it is traditionally served. Once basic stores selling wine from the barrel, all serve phenomenally good wine – specifically sherry – at bargain prices. There are bars on every corner. The densest concentration is in a compact area east from Calle Larga to Barrio San Miguel. There's even a route map available in participating bars.

## Top five bodegas

### Lustau

The biggest winery in Jerez – and the most awarded – its tours include a 12-wine tasting with samples from the three sherry towns (Jerez, El Puerto and Sanlúcar) to highlight the differences, which allows you to taste how the slightly different climates and geography of each town inject their own character into the sherries. Tastings can also incorporate food, brandy and vinegar too.

See [lustau.es](http://lustau.es)

### Fernando de Castilla

This traditional cellar produces a standout sherry vinegar and brandy alongside its large range of wines.

See [fernandodecastilla.com](http://fernandodecastilla.com)

### El Maestro Sierra

Founded in 1830, this bodega is renowned for its focus on mature sherries. However, it also worth a visit for its collection of Spanish paintings, from the 15th to the 19th centuries.

See [maestrosierra.com](http://maestrosierra.com)

### Gonzalez Byass

Next door to the Alcazar, this is one of the most popular bodegas in the city



**LOCAL FLAVOUR:** You'll find well-priced and tasty sherries in a typical local tabanco in Jerez. **Picture:** Paul Ewart

## ESCAPE ROUTE

### JEREZ

#### GETTING THERE

Etiha Airways offers four weekly one-stop connections to Madrid from Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Perth via Abu Dhabi.

Ph 1300 532 215 or see [etihad.com](http://etihad.com)

Travelling from Madrid to Jerez is easy with Rail Europe offering regular connections between the cities.

See [raileurope.com.au](http://raileurope.com.au)

#### DOING THERE

Book a tailor-made sherry tour with Jerez-based tour company, Genuine Andalusia. Founded by sherry expert and Andalusian-born Ivan Rico, its tours are bespoke in every sense of the word and sherry is his speciality.

See [genuineandalusia.com](http://genuineandalusia.com)

#### MORE

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(with more than 200,000 visitors a year). Booking ahead – particularly for the food-pairing session – is advisable.

See [gonzalezbyass.com](http://gonzalezbyass.com)

### Bodega Tradición

While this is one of the newer bodegas in Jerez, its reputation and extensive collection of wines (many older than the company itself) make it worthy of a visit.

As well as rare, single-barrel aged sherries, Tradición also boasts a great private art collection, which includes important works by Goya.

See [bodegastradicion.es](http://bodegastradicion.es)

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