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The island of Lanzarote is one of the world's most unique winegrowing regions. With a population of 150,000, there are nearly 2,000 registered vine-growers and 21 wineries. There are 5 native varieties, whose vines are planted ungrafted and often well over 100 years old. The Canary Islands have a great history of winemaking and once produced world-famous wines, drunk by royalty, aristocrats and writers; Shakespeare was a huge fan. Millions of litres of Sack or Malmsey, as it was known (the nickname for the Malvasía grape), were exported to the UK and America between the 16th and 18th centuries, as the islands lay on busy trade routes.

Between 1730 and 1736, Lanzarote had a constant flow of volcanic eruptions, in what is now known as the Timanfaya National Park. Around 30% of the Island was affected; the fertile farmland buried beneath lava and volcanic ash, known as rofe or picon. The first vines were planted in the soil beneath the rofe, which could involve manually digging large holes up to 4 meters wide by 3 deep, down to the soil, often topped with a dry lava stone semi-circular wall known as a zoco around the northern edge of the hole to protect against the strong trade winds. Lanzarote only receives 150ml of rain per year on average, and the vines are not watered by manual irrigation, even today. The volcanic rock retains the little available moisture (rain and humidity), allowing the vines to survive. This incredible, lunar-style of cultivation is the signature of the La Geria region. Away and north of La Geria, the rofe is thinner, and some vines are planted in low rows behind lines of stone walls. In the Chabocos region, you can find vines planted in narrow volcanic gullies up to 3 metres deep, the vines growing up over

the top edge.

