



A Thirst for Rioja



Rioja is very well-known for its style of wine, yet the region itself is still the 'path less travelled' and there are many discoveries still to be made and shared –from traditional bodegas and medieval caves to modern, jaw-

dropping and exquisite architectural cellars. It is also a region abounding in mouth-watering cuisine and extraordinary wine set in a picturesque landscape of rolling hills, and walled cities. Rioja has got it all. It is indeed a region in Spain that is considered as the most important and finest producer of premium wines. The best wines are made to last, for decades and whether you buy for pleasure or for gift-giving, premium Rioja is definitely worth the bet. At Txanton, we also have a list of our favourite and top picks of Rioja wines to recommend for wine enthusiasts and collectors.

R. Lopez de Heredia
VIÑA TONDONIA

BODEGAS LOPEZ de HEREDIA One of the oldest wineries in Haro and underground labyrinth of corridors lined with ageing bottles. This winery is world-famous for Viña Tondonia. They managed to maintain the traditional vineyards and their wine-making methods, which have not changed for more than 133 years. They also feature an interesting juxtaposition of the old and new winery experience. Don't miss the opportunity to try the Viña Tondonia reserva and the Gran Reserva.



BODEGAS RODA

Haro · Rioja Alta · España

Perhaps the most impressive (mahogany-scented) winery where everything is about the production and retention of grape quality - the modern approach to wine through viticulture is nowhere given more commitment. 'Roda' (known as 'Roda II' up until the 2001 vintage), 'Roda I' and 'Cirsion' are the three crown jewels of a bodega that exports 50 percent of its produce to more than fifty countries, the most important being: the US, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Germany, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Colombia and Brazil.

inspiring cellar hewn into the rock beneath the Castle of San Vicente de la Sonsierra, he has turned his parent's garage into a tiny winery and his 2004 and 2005 vintages were awarded 100 points by Parker, sending the wine's reputation (and price) into the stratosphere. However, perfectionist Romeo refused to produce a vintage in 2006, sighting indifferent fruit as the reason which superseded any commercial concerns. Truly, this is a man who cares about quality, which clearly shows in his powerful, expressive and totally exquisite Rioja.



ARTADI

Vinédos & Vinos

Owner Juan Carlos López de Lacalle has been surrounded by old vines and great wines since early childhood when he used to accompany his grandfather during harvest time in Rioja. Dedication to detailed, delicate and hard work is something he learned at an early age, and these are governing principles for his three award-winning wineries in Rioja, Navarra and Alicante. Artadi's ideology is that "the value of a great wine is intimately linked to the land and its people." The conviction to safeguard this intimate link is what drove Juan Carlos to make wine in three distinct regions of Spain including their jewel, Viña El Pisón. Although Artadi's decision to leave the Rioja appellation is just one example of a movement among Spanish winemakers and wine writers to promote recognition of single vineyard sites and village terroirs as well as the wines produced on them as a means of showing the huge diversity of soils and landscapes in Spain.

Bodega **contador**

Considered as the new kid on the block, this winery was founded as recently as 1995, but the fact that it has become one of Rioja's most respected wineries in such a relatively short time is testament to its superb terroir and the brilliant winemaking skill of proprietor Benjamin Romeo. Starting off with an awe-



BODEGAS BILBAINAS

HARO · RIOJA ALTA

The largest owner of vineyards in the municipality of Haro, the emblematic capital of the Rioja Alta. It is the winery with the largest area of underground cellars in the region. The privileged quality vineyards are spread over an area of 250 hectares that provide the cellar with locally harvested grapes, which ensures, produces, within its range, some of the most prestigious and iconic wines of the Rioja, most especially being the best known Pomal Vineyard. Bodegas Bilbainas has always made estate wines with strong connections to the origin of the land, as shown by their names.



FINCA ALLENDE

Situated in the Rioja Alta, Finca Allende is one of the very best producers in Rioja, mainly sourcing fruit from their own vineyards in La Rioja Alta. Owner Miguel-Angel de Gregorio is a passionate advocate of using New French oak and modern wine-making methods, the resulting wines are rich, concentrated but also structured and will last for decades after release. His top wine Aurus is sumptuous, produced from 60-year old vines the wine is unfiltered and vinified with whole bunches to the highest standard, with a lengthy maceration adding depth and a supple texture.





MARQUES DE VARGAS

A single, large vineyard, covering over 65 hectares, all of which are extremely well located and produces benchmark Riojas. Under the expert stewardship of the La Mata family the wines have maintained a traditional Rioja identity but have their own individual personality achieved through a combination of meticulous husbandry in the vineyards and a fine attention to detail in the winery. The grapes are fermented and then pressed and the wines are then aged in new oak barrels for 15 months. They are then kept in bottle a further 2 years prior to release. Only red Reservas are produced and the wines are well structured, fruit-driven and stylish.



SEÑORIO DE SAN VICENTE

This is the flagship estate of the Eguren, a legendary Rioja winemaking family. Their zealous attention to detail and passion for making wine see them regularly produce some of Spain's greatest wines year after year. The estate comprises one single 18 hectare vineyard, Finca la Canoca, planted with the high quality Tempranillo peludo clone on limestone clay soils. The vineyard is run as organically as possible and an exhaustive manual harvest is carried out, combined with a severe selection in the winery. Minimal extraction and judicious ageing in French and American oak make for a great modern style Rioja of complexity and finesse.





VIÑEDOS DE PÁGANOS

Viñedos de Páganos is an exclusive winery located in the medieval village of Laguardia, which arises in the Rioja Alavesa subarea, close to 600 meters in altitude, an environment surrounded by dolmens, archaeological sites, chapels and ancient medieval churches. Surrounded by vineyards La Nieta and El Puntido, this winery is the only holding of the Eguren family in the Rioja Alavesa.

The La Nieta is sourced from Finca La Nieta, a bottle cuvee of densely planted, low yielding Tempranillo vines. That's why they select it grape by grape. The wine was barrel fermented and aged in 100% new French oak for 18 months before being bottled unfiltered. With time and air it develops a subtle balsamic note of aromatic herbs, it's a great elegant, subtle Rioja

The vineyard name El Puntido (old word meaning 'landing', similar to the terrace formed between the Sierra de Cantabria and the Ebro basin), is influenced by an Atlantic climate with shades of continental, protected from cold winds north by the Sierra de Cantabria, and its soil is calcareous clay or loam texture with high mineral presence, a feature that gives the wine a unique mineral character and an extraordinary personal-



Remírez de Ganuza

Founded in 1989 by Fernando Remírez de Ganuza the Bodega is located in the village of Samaniego, at the foothills of the Sierra de Cantabria, in the heart of the Rioja Alavesa. Fernando, previously the largest vineyard broker in the region, now owns 68 hectares of prime vineyard spread across more than 100 plots in the Rioja Alavesa, where the average vine age is 60 years old.

Bodegas Remírez de Ganuza's quest for perfection is truly admirable and Fernando has implemented very strict selection procedures. Crucially, as the grape bunches pass along the sorting table Fernando ensures that the "hombros" (grape bunch shoulders) are separated from the "puntas" (bunch tips). This is to ensure only the higher quality "hombros", that are richer in both colour and tannins, are selected for the reserve wines. For Fernando, quality is all that matters.



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2294 CHINO ROCES AVE. EXTENSION, 2ND FLOOR, ALEGRIA ALTA BUILDING, MAKATI CITY, PHILIPPINES
Telephone No.: +63 3 812 2040 local 112