



## Overview

**Rioja:** named for the Oja river, was the first region in Spain to be christened as Denominación de Origen Calificada—in 1991—and has been a viable wine-producing area for over 2000 years. Here, as in the other many of the other major winegrowing regions of Europe, Christian monks guided viticulture in the Middle Ages.



**Grapes:** Tempranillo is the main grape of red Rioja; its traditional blending partners are Mazuelo (Carignan), Graciano, and Garnacha. Together, these four grapes (along with Maturana Tinta, authorized for Rioja in 2007) must comprise a minimum 85% of the red Rioja blend, or 95% if destemmed. “Experimental” grapes such as Monastel or Cabernet Sauvignon may make up the remainder.

**Climate:** Rioja is sheltered to the north by the Cantabrian mountains and to the south by Sierra de la Demanda, leading to a moderate climate. Temperatures tend to be mild and combine with an average of 17 inches of rain a year to provide an ideal growing environment.

**Soil:** Rioja is subdivided into three zones, Rioja Baja, Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Alta. In the Baja alluvial soils (sand) and clay predominate, in the Alavesa limestone and clay predominate, and in the Alta limestone, clay and alluvial soils are present. This variety of soils at different elevations leads to some of the stylistic differences between bodegas.

**Winery:** The winery is based in the town of Huercanos, Rioja Alta and was established in 1962. The majority, 90%, of the winery’s plantings are to Tempranillo.

**Wine:** This wine is sourced from vines averaging 60 years of age. Traditional production methods are used; de-stemming and lightly crushing the fruit, followed by 3-5 days of pre-fermentation maceration. Fermented in stainless steel tanks at moderate rather than high temperatures looking for more finesse in the tannin structure of the finished wine. After pressing malolactic fermentation takes place in stainless steel as well, followed by aging in tanks for a few months prior to bottling.

## Reviews:

“Deep ruby. Straightforward dark berry aromas are enlivened by a subtle note of cracked pepper. The palate shows brighter red fruits, with juicy acidity adding lift and bite. Fresh and very easy to drink, with a strong echo of raspberry on the finish. This is a great value.”

**88 points** *International Wine Cellar* issue 145 June '09



**Vintner Select**  
6215 Hi-Tek Court  
Mason, OH 45040  
800-597-1491  
fax 513-229-3633  
www.vintnerselect.com