

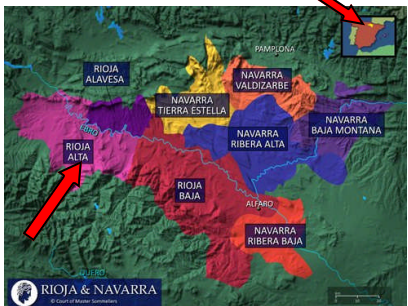
Bodegas Vinacola

Rioja D.O.Ca

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Spain

Rioja D.O.Ca

Overview

This Bodega was started in 1992 by master distiller and winemaker, Miguel Ángel Rodríguez. The cellars are located in the village of Albelda de Iregua in Rioja Alta. They have a total of 25 hectares of vineyards in 4 different zones of Rioja Alta. Traditional, chemical-free viticulture is practiced, all grapes are harvested by hand and sorted again at the winery on a sorting table prior to crushing and fermentation.

Rioja D.O.Ca.

Wine was likely grown here by the Romans with the first modern boom in production happening in the 1860's as merchants from Bordeaux arrived after outbreaks of vine diseases in France. Along with trade to France, the merchants also brought the idea of aging wine in small oak barrels giving rise to traditionally styled, oxidized wines. Rioja was the first region in Spain to gain status as a D.O. in 1925. Recently, in the 1960s and 70's, style shifted to wines with a combination of ripe fruit and unctuous oak followed more recently by a trend to produce intense, concentrated "modern" wines with less time in the bottle but plenty of new oak. In 1991 the region was elevated to a D.O. Calificada, one of only two regions to gain that status, which recognizes the quality and consistency of products from the region.

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.

Grape Varieties: Four red grapes are allowed in the D.O. with Tempranillo comprising 65% of all plantings, the other allowed red grapes include Graciano, Mazuelo (Cariñena), and Garnacha. Three white grapes are allowed, Viura, Malvasia, and Garnacha Blanca.

Winery:

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Wine: Vina los Valles Crianza

Grapes for this wine are also harvested into 15 kilo tubs. Vines average a minimum of 25 years of age. Grapes were only partially destemmed prior to fermentation in 50 hectoliter oak vats. Malolactic fermentation took place in new American oak barrels. The wine was aged for 15 months in a combination of 60% French and 40% American oak barrels, followed by a further 9 months aging in bottle prior to release.

Grapes: 70% Tempranillo, 30% Graciano

Reviews: "Deep red. High-pitched aromas of wild strawberry, cherry, Asian spices and minerals; there's something intriguingly pinot-like about this. Spicy, precise red fruit flavors are nicely lifted by tangy minerality. Finishes with strong mineral snap and good persistence. Drinking well now but has the balance and verve to age." **89 points International Wine**

Cellar issue 152 Sept/Oct 2010

"A succulent red with gamey intensity, this was made from organically grown grapes. There's some superripeness to the fruit, edging toward prunes and pomegranate, but the velvety texture also carries its share of fresh acidity and spice. For chicken liver toasts." **Best Buy 90**

points Wine & Spirits November 2010

