

Sierra de la Demanda Tinto



In the foothills of the mountains south of the banks of the Ebro River, Alberto Orte found some very special vines and vineyards to compose the wines of Sierra de la Demanda. From these north-facing old vine plantings, Alberto crafts Rioja wines of incomparable minerality and focus that hearken back to a much older and more traditional style of Rioja winemaking, emphasizing specificity of terroir, elegance, and balance. Using some of the oldest, highest altitude vines in the region necessitates painstaking work, but yields remarkable results. In most vintages, this vineyard is among the last to be harvested in all of Spain, let alone Rioja, sometimes extending into November to achieve phenolic ripeness. This extreme hang time lends grace, profound depth, and complexity to the Sierra de la Demanda wines. For the most part, vineyard owners in this area are farmers who sell their fruit to larger producers. Alberto Orte controls the fruit for Sierra de la Demanda from budbreak to bottling, showcasing the profound minerality and precision of this unique terroir.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: A pure, precise Rioja wine made from grapes grown in some of the highest elevation vineyards in Rioja, on north-facing slopes south of the Ebro. Old vines of Garnacha were planted in 1930. Vines are tended in mineral soils of silica, which are rare in Rioja.

RATING HISTORY: 2015 94WE, 93IWR, 92JS, 92VM; 2014 91VM, 93View from the Cellar, 92JS; 2013 95JS

GRAPE: 75% Garnacha, 20% Tempranillo, 5% Viura from vines planted in 1930.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: This wine matches beautifully with salmon or other fatty fish, roasted chicken, duck and other game birds, casseroles or, of course, stews like beef bourguignon.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Harvest generally takes place during the first week of November. These vineyards are nearly always the last to be harvested in Rioja. After 48 hours of cold maceration and 28 days of whole cluster fermentation, the wine is aged for 18-19 months in French oak barrels, out of which the first 6 months the wine is on its own lees.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Sustainably grown very-old vines planted from 1930. Tended in red silica soil at 700 m (2,296 ft) elevation, which is 400 ft higher than many vineyards of Rioja Alta. Average temperature during the April to October growing season is 16.3 C (61.5 F). Annual rainfall is 465 mm (18.3 in).

TASTING NOTES An exotically perfumed bouquet evokes ripe black and blue fruits, peppery spices and fresh flowers, with a touch of pipe tobacco in the background. Gently sweet and floral on the palate, offering intense blueberry and black raspberry flavors that tighten up on the back half. Energetic, precise wine with strong closing lift and spicy persistence; subtle tannins build slowly and add shape.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13.0%

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