

La Antigua Clásico Reserva



La Antigua Clásico is one of Alberto Orte's most enduring history projects and shows off an unexplored region of DOCa Rioja, the western mountain range of Sierra de la Demanda. Inspired by the style of winemaking that was popular in the first half of the 20th century, Alberto's winemaking emphasizes freshness and minerality, leading to balanced, long-lived wines. To that end, he has found old vine Garnacha, Tempranillo and Graciano in Sierra de la Demanda, south of the Ebro river in Rioja Alta. The north-facing, high-altitude vineyards receive far less sunshine than those in the valley, resulting in grapes that ripen slowly, showcasing intense flavors of greater balance and focus. This poses quite a risk that only hands-on viticulture can remedy: this area is one of the last to harvest in all of Western Europe, usually in early November! In addition to the cool climate, Sierra de la Demanda's vineyards are extremely scattered and steep. This terrain is impossible to mechanize, and all vineyard work must be done by hand. The result is a handcrafted wine of precision and elegance – fresh and beautiful to drink now, with built-in longevity.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: A classic style Rioja produced from high elevation vineyards located in the Sierra de la Demanda area of the Rioja appellation. Old vines of Garnacha planted since 1940. Vines are tended in mineral soils of red silica, which are very unique and rare in Rioja.

RATING HISTORY: 2015 91WE; 2014 90JS; 2012 94WE, 92JS, 91IWR, 91D; 2010 91JS, 91VM, 92+VFTC; 2008 94JS

GRAPE: 60% Garnacha, 30% Tempranillo, 10% Graciano. Vines planted from 1940 to 1955. Tended in red silica sandy soil at 700 m (2,296 ft) elevation

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: This wine pairs well with braised meats, roasted mushrooms, stewed beef, duck and game.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: 72 months in 60% French and 40% American oak barrels and 10 months in bottle.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Vines planted from 1940 to 1955. Tended in sandy, limestone soil and red silica at 700 m (2,296 ft) elevation. The average temperature during the April to October growing season is 22C (71.6F). Annual rainfall: 210 mm (8.3 in).

TASTING NOTES Deep red. Lively smoke- and spice-accented cherry and red berry aromas are complemented by floral oil, game and pipe tobacco flourishes. Seamless and focused on the palate, offering juicy raspberry and bitter cherry flavors that become sweeter with air. Shows very good energy and suave floral character on a long, fruit-driven finish that's given shape by well-integrated tannins. -- Josh Raynolds

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13.5%

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