

Sierra de la Demanda Blanco



In the foothills of the mountains near the southern 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 harken 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 longer 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 produced with grapes grown in some of the highest elevation vineyards in Rioja, on north-facing slopes south of the Ebro. Vines are tended in mineral soils of silica, which are very rare in Rioja.

RATING HISTORY: 2016 93VM; 2015 93 VM; 2013 91 VM

GRAPE: 80% Viura, 20% Garnacha Blanca

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: Rich seafood such as seared scallops or baked crab. Fine fish such as Dover sole, turbot and halibut. Salmon with a beurre blanc or other butter-based sauce or salmon in pastry. Simply grilled veal or pork chops, especially with mushrooms. Roast chicken, guinea fowl or pheasant (provided the latter is not too gamey in flavour) Washed-rind cheeses such as Epoisses and Soumaintrain

VINIFICATION AND AGEING: Harvest takes place during the last week of October. Once fermentation is complete, wine is aged in French oak and Acacia barrels, out of which the first month the wine is with its lees.

PRODUCTION: 200 cases (12 pack/750ml)

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

TASTING NOTES Bright yellow-gold. Powerful citrus and orchard fruit aromas are enlivened by fennel, ginger, chamomile and iodine. Palate-staining Meyer lemon and pear skin flavors show a refreshingly bitter quality and a hint of smokiness. Powerful yet lithe wine with a jolt of spiciness sharpening the very long, incisive, citrusy finish.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 12.0%

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Alberto Orte