Bodegas Amaren, Malvasia, Rioja Alavesa, Spain, 2021

Product code: 4809

PRODUCER PROFILE

Jon Cañas (Luis Cañas' grandson) is the imaginative winemaker behind Bodegas Amaren, having been given free rein to explore the character of Alavesa's vineyards.

Jon aims to create a raw, modern interpretation of Rioja Alavesa by employing native yeasts for his ferments, and experimenting with concrete vessels and lees ageing to achieve expressive wines that are respectful of the ancient grape varieties he works with. The hierarchy of the Amaren range ignores the traditional classification of Rioja wines (Crianza, Reserva, Gran Reserva) and instead puts 'Rioja Alavesa' at the forefront of the label, thereby emphasizing the importance of place.

VITICULTURE

From El Pomal vineyard in the village of Leza planted in 1912. The Malavasia Riojana has, traditionally, been present in their vineyards often as part of a mixed field blend with Tempranillo, Viura and other grape varieties. In this particular old vineyard they have preserved this grape, also known as "Rojal" given the pink hue it takes when ripe.

WINEMAKING

Manual harvest in baskets and a grape by grape selection at the winery. Fermentation in a concrete 1.700 litre "egg". Ageing on its own fine lees in the same "egg" for 20 months with weekly Crianza "bâtonnage". No barrel ageing. Aged for 2 years in bottle in the Amaren cellar before release.

TASTINGNOTE

Pale yellow and intense, bright-green hues. A wine of great aromatic complexity. On the nose there is ripe fruit such as pineapple and pears as well as delicate floral aromas such as orange blossom, dried flower petals, nutmeg, and pastry such as "brioche". A full fruit sensation gives way to floral and balsamic essences on the after taste. Very complex. The ageing on its fine lees and "bâtonnage" ensures a rich and full flavour, dense full bodied and long.

FOOD MATCHING

A perfect aperitif wine but where it shines is on the table, accompanying seafood, fish with powerful sauces and even meats.

AWARDS

Tim Atkin Rioja Special Report 95 Points
A wine that was genuinely revolutionary when first made in 2014, and remains one of the region's best whites, this Malvasía Riojana from a 113-year-old vineyard is fermented and aged in a concrete egg. Petrichor and gunflint aromas are a scented introduction to a palate of green apple, white pepper and quince and a crunchy, celery-like finish. 2025-30. 95 Points, TA, February 2025.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Varieties:
Malvasia Riojana/Rojal 100%

Features:
Vegetarian
Vegan
Producer works organically

ABV:
13.3%

Closure:
Natural cork

Colour:
White

Oak Ageing
No oak ageing **Style:**
Still wine

Case Size:
6 x 75cl