



ALLIANCE WINE

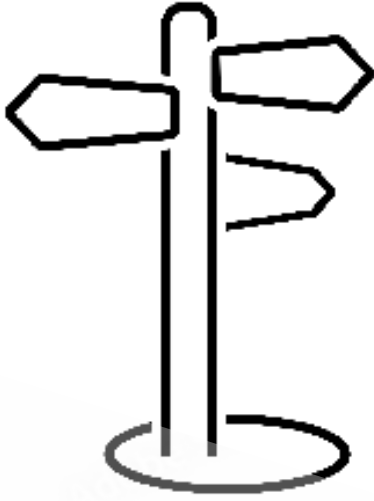
presents...

THE ULTIMATE RIOJA GUIDE



3. Introduction
4. Shop Rioja
5. Knowledge
8. Amaren
10. Luis Canas
12. Abel Mendoza
14. Manzanos
16. DeAlto





Introduction

WELCOME TO OUR ULTIMATE RIOJA GUIDE

Rioja is, and always has been, an important category for Alliance Wine. It is an evolving region with more stories to be told and more wine to be sold to your customers. So let us help you discover this!

We are proud to work with five outstanding producers spanning the length of Rioja, each with a very distinctive style, giving us the unique ability to fulfil all the Rioja needs our customers could have.

We are running a Shop Rioja campaign for the month of October, giving you the opportunity to win a trip to discover all of our Rioja producers.



Shop Rioja

GET INVOLVED IN SHOP RIOJA THIS OCTOBER!

To celebrate Shop Rioja and to help you increase sales of Rioja wines instore, Alliance Wine are giving you the opportunity to take part in a Rioja incentive running the 1st – 31st October.

OFF TRADE

Five lucky winners will receive an all-expense paid trip to Rioja visiting some of the best wineries in the region: Abel Mendoza, Bodegas Amaren, Bodegas Luis Cañas, Bodegas Manzanos and deAlto in the spring of 2023.

Discover the Rioja countryside with some tailor made activities and stay in Luis Cañas' bodega.

To be in with a chance to win, enter one of the following categories:

- Have the highest volume growth of wines from our five Rioja producers (2 customer places)
 - List the most new wines (2 customer places)
-

ON TRADE

Winners will receive an all-expense paid trip to Rioja to visit some of the region's best wineries in the spring of 2023.

We will judge winners based on their effective and creative offerings, for example:

- Introduce new BTG listings
- Take on wines from our new listings
- Increase sales volumes or put together a delicious seasonal Rioja menu

We would encourage you to contact your rep to discuss your ideas or to arrange a tasting.

Recent Changes in Rioja

RIOJA'S MOVE TOWARDS SITE-SPECIFICITY IN A NUTSHELL

The new system moves away from oak ageing as primary quality indicator in Rioja wines.

Instead, the focus is on single vineyard sites and championing regional microclimates.

Rioja can be labeled by its three official zones: RIOJA ALTA, RIOJA ALAVESA, and RIOJA ORIENTAL (or Eastern Rioja – originally called Rioja Baja.)



According to many RIOJA ALTA and RIOJA ALAVESA make the best wines, but that's not always true. If you like richer styles, you will find that wines from RIOJA ORIENTAL can pleasantly surprise you.

RIOJA ALTA and RIOJA ALAVESA tends to have more minerality and elegance due to higher altitudes and vines here are often old, mostly older than 20 years.

Rioja can now label wines after the village or municipal area where they're grown.

There are strict rules on blending - if a vineyard overlaps two municipalities, it's allowed to blend up to 15% of the neighboring village's grapes to the wine. However since this is brand new approach, we have yet to see which villages emerge as standouts. Currently there are 145 such municipalities (77 in RIOJA ALTA, 50 in RIOJA ORIENTAL, and 18 in RIOJA ALAVESA.)

Rioja Classifications



GENERICO - These are first and second year wines that retain their primary characteristics of being fresh and fruity. This category may also include other wines which even if they have undergone an ageing process are not certified by the Control Board.

CRianza - These wines are ones that have reached at least their third year and remained in oak barrels for at least one year. For white and rose wines the minimum ageing period in barrels is 6 months, with a minimum period in the cellar of 18 months.

RESERVA - These are wines that have aged in oak barrels and bottles for a total period of 36 months, with a minimum of 12 months ageing in oak barrels followed and complemented by a minimum of 6 months ageing in the bottle. In white and rose the ageing period is 2 years, of which at least 6 months must be in the barrel.

GRAN RESERVA - These are wines that have been aged in oak barrels and bottles for at least 60 months, with a minimum duration of ageing in oak barrels of 2 years followed and complemented by a minimum of 2 years in the bottle. For whites and rose, the ageing period is 4 years of which at least 6 months must be in the barrel.

Casks are always 225l to comply with regulations. Larger barrels can be used but the wine then becomes Generico.



The New Categories of Rioja

VIÑEDO SINGULAR

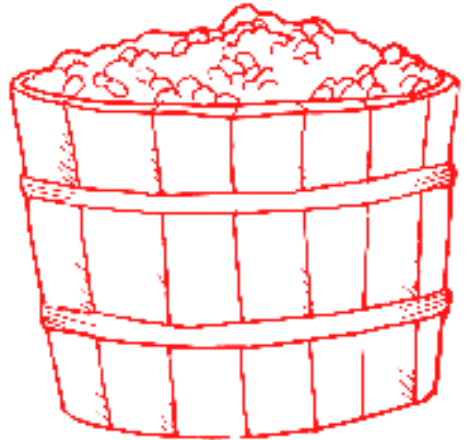
The vineyards must be at least 35 years old and a maximum production of 5,000kg per hectare. Harvesting must be manual and the vineyard managed in an environmentally friendly manner.

VINO DE MUNICIPIO

Grapes for these wines must come from a distinct geographical area where they are grown, fermented and bottled. The wine needs to be named with the name of the municipality, ie “vino de “.

VINO DE ZONA

Grapes for these wines must come from the defined area and the name must be stated on the label. 15% of the wine can come from a neighbouring area, as is the case with VdM.





BODEGAS AMAREN

Jon Cañas (Luis Cañas' grandson) is the imaginative winemaker behind Bodegas Amaren. Jon has been granted free rein to explore the character of Alavesa's vineyards, giving us a raw, modern interpretation of Rioja Alavesa. Bodegas Amaren is comprised of some of the best and highest altitude vineyards around the villages of Samaniego and Leza, where the soil is poor and gnarly vines, ageing up to and over 100 years old, produce small bunches, perfect for making highly concentrated Rioja wines.

In The Vineyard

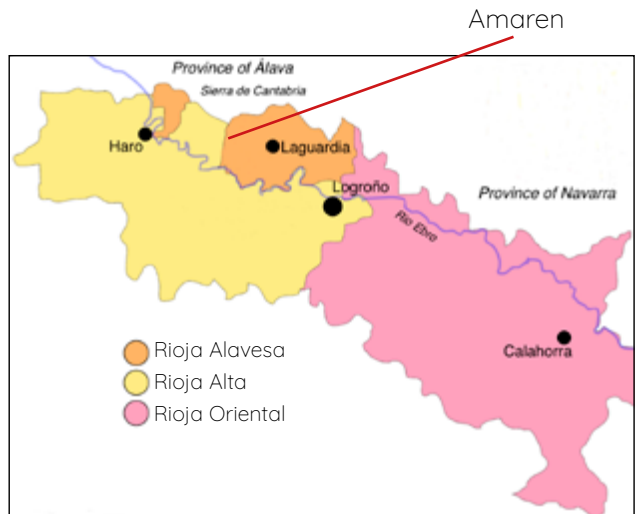
Vineyards are split into hundreds of individual plots, each with their own personality and used for different wines according to their characteristics. Sheltered under the magnificent Sierra de Cantabria range, these vineyards are planted on chalky-clay and limestone soils.

In The Winery

Jon Cañas employs native yeasts for his ferments, experimenting with concrete vessels and lees ageing to achieve expressive wines that are respectful of the ancient grape varieties that he works with, and staying true to Alavesa. The hierarchy of the Amaren range ignores traditional labelling (Crianza, Reserva, Gran Reserva). Instead, 'Rioja Alavesa' is at the forefront of each label, emphasising the importance of place.

Key Points

- The estate is comprised of some of Rioja Alavesa's best and highest altitude vineyards, where the soil is poor and produces small perfect bunches.
- Vineyards are split into hundreds of individual plots, each with its own personality and used for different wines accordingly.
- These vineyards average over 60 years old, planted with gnarly old bush vines on chalky-clay soils.





4584 - Bodegas Amaren
Blanco Barrel Fermented
2019



4586 - Bodegas Amaren
Selección De Vinedos
2019



4503 - Bodegas Amaren
El Cristo De Samaniego
2018



BODEGAS LUIS CAÑAS

In 1970 Luis Cañas changed two hundred years of tradition and became the first winemaker in Rioja Alavesa to bottle his young wine rather than sell it as bulk. This bold move, and his continued pioneering spirit, has cemented the winery's enviable reputation as one of the most progressive in the region. Sheltered below the watchful Sierra Cantabria, the vineyards are all old, small plots on chalky-clay soils with a dedicated team of vineyard workers carrying out organic practices when tending the vines.

In The Vineyard

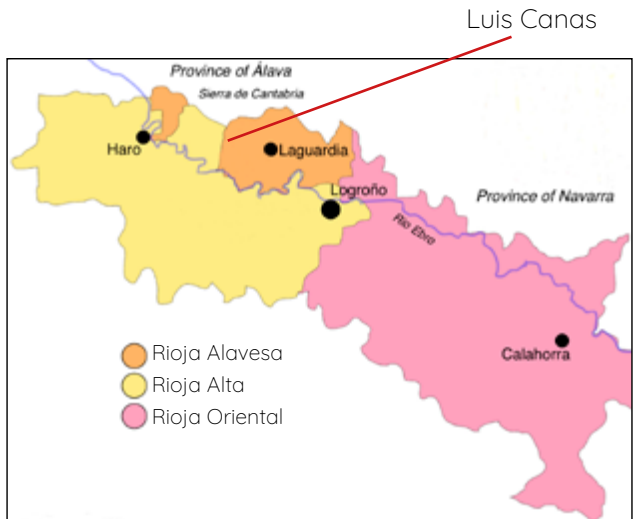
Juan Luis Cañas is now the powerhouse behind this highly accomplished winery. With 350 hectares of outstanding vineyards, split across 870 different plots, the viticultural department control every aspect. Each of the plots has its own personality and is categorised and used for different wines according to its characteristics.

In The Winery

All Bodegas Luis Cañas wines undergo a double selection process. The grape clusters are first sorted by hand and then checked a second time to ensure only the best are selected. Wines are aged in new French and American oak barrels from among the best cooperages in the world. The casks are renewed continuously with an average age of just three years.

Key Points

- Organic Principles are used in vineyards as well as biodynamic methods.
- Vines are hand harvested.
- Double selection process on the sorting table to ensure quality.





7320 - Bodegas Luis Cañas,
Rioja Crianza, 2018



7340 - Bodegas Luis Cañas,
Rioja Reserva, 2015



4502 - Bodegas Luis Cañas,
Finca El Palacio, 2018



ABEL MENDOZA

Modest, passionate and in no small part obsessive, Abel Mendoza and Maite Fernández have been making understated wines from their old vine vineyards, high up in the Cantabrian mountains near San Vicente de la Sonsierra since the late '80s.

His intimate knowledge of the diverse terroirs in this spectacular part of Rioja is enthralling, and every barrel tasted reveals startling provenance and true character of the vintage. Abel doesn't make wines that flatter, they don't speak of oak regimes, but rather of the quality of his fruit, expressed in its most honest form.

In The Vineyard

For two generations Abel Mendoza's family has been farming vineyards in Rioja, and today works 37 individual parcel, scattered in and around the village of San Vicente de la Sonsierra (towards the border of Rioja Alta and Alavesa). More than anything in the world, Abel cares for his vineyards, each plot tended to enable an authentic expression of the location, and harvested entirely by hand. The grapes planted are all indigenous varieties, including Malvasia, Viura, Tempranillo Blanco and Tinto and Graciano.

In The Winery

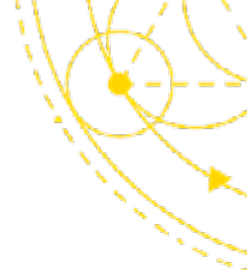
His wines could be described as modern in style in that he uses only French oak and ages the wines for shorter periods than is traditional in Rioja. He produces both red and whites, ignores the local regulations of using age statements on the labels (such as Crianza or Reserva). Abel and his wines have a sophistication and refinement that mark them out as one of the finest producers in Rioja and also one of the region's best kept secrets.

Key Points

- Undeniably one of Rioja's top white wine producers, but also producing beautiful, understated reds of impeccable finesse.
- With an attention to his vineyards verging on an obsession. Sustainability and living vineyards are at the heart of his philosophy.
- Awarded 'Winemakers of the Year' by Tim Atkin MW in his Rioja Report 2015 ... with other notable winners including Jorge Muga and Telmo Rodríguez

Abel Mendoza





1709 - Abel Mendoza,
Garnacha Blanca, 2020



1713 - Abel Mendoza,
Jarrarte Tinto, 2020



1721 - Abel Mendoza,
Graciano Grano a Grano, 2016





BODEGAS MANZANOS

On the border between Rioja and Navarra, Victor Manzanos carries on the work of the four generations before him. With over 250ha of owned vineyards at his disposal, including some of the oldest vines in Rioja, Bodegas Manzanos is fortunately placed to put both the sub-region of Rioja Oriental and the name Manzanos firmly on the map as one of the most important areas and producers in Rioja. This range of wines is a modern take on the traditional landscape of Rioja, championing the native grape varieties, Tempranillo, Viura and Garnacha. The team is the youngest in the region, a talented a group of people with the sole purpose of making wines that people will enjoy.

In The Vineyard

250ha of vineyards are planted on clay-limestone soil at an average height of 400m above sea level. Meticulous attention to detail in the vineyards, coupled with the extreme climate, offer the perfect conditions for the production of great wines.

Grapes are all hand-picked in early October.

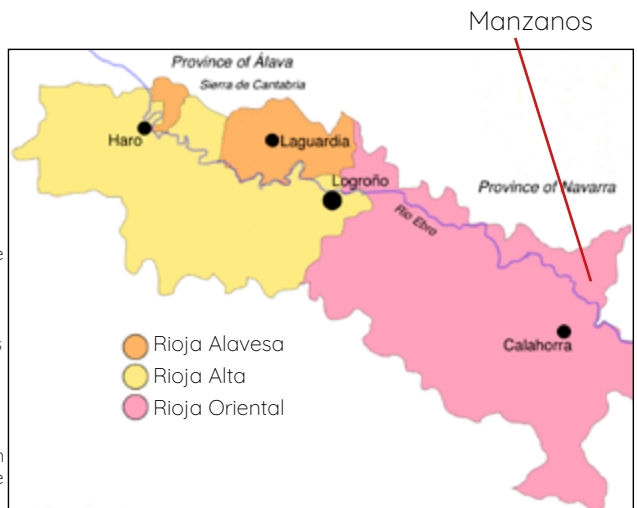
In The Winery

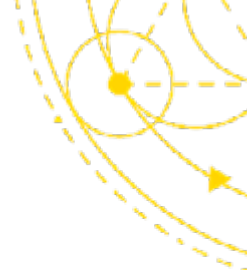
Borja Ripa and Victor Manzanos control the winemaking and influence the modern, fresh and vibrant Manzanos style at their state of the art winery. They use gravity flow systems to avoid over-handling of the juice.

Fermentation is carried out in a variety of fermentation vessels which adds complexity to their wines, temperature controlled to retain fruit purity and meticulously aged in a combination of French and American oak.

Key Points

- Manzanos remains a family run winery, run since the 1990s by fourth generation Victor
- Finca Manzanos and Voché exemplify Rioja Alta's distinct character with a more Mediterranean climate. With 250 hectares of owned vineyards (and a further 700 hectares under their control) over the three areas of the Rioja appellation, the combination of which determine the uniqueness of each wine, lower rainfall, higher average temperatures and reliable ripening.
- Finca Manzanos and Voché exemplify Rioja Oriental's distinct character with a more Mediterranean climate, lower rainfall, higher average temperatures and reliable ripening.





2809 - Finca Manzanos
Garnacha, 2020

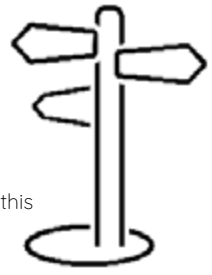


2824 - Finca Manzanos
Graciano, 2021



7483 - Finca Manzanos
Crianza, 2019





Bodegas deAlto

With such a deep reserve of old vine Garnacha, our “artesanal” Rioja wines focus on this variety with judicious use of old vine Tempranillo.

Eschewing the conventional ageing criteria in favour of a pursuit of place and purity, these are wines founded on fruit quality and low intervention winemaking in order to preserve their balance and provenance.

In The Vineyard

Working predominantly with old vines, deAlto works with sites which can express provenance in a fresh, energetic style. El Primero is sourced from 3 parcels: Quiñones is old low trellised garnacha. Juan Bueno is old bush vine Tempranillo; the final parcel being younger Garnacha close to San Adrian. La Planta Magica is a remarkable old, bush trained Garnacha vineyard close to the town of Aldeanueva. Very low yielding, with small berries, it is also farmed with ecological diversity in mind.

In The Winery

deAlto works on the principal that if something doesn't need to be done, don't do it. Fruit is hand-picked, ferments are wild and use whole bunch inclusion to promote structure and freshness. Fermenters are open, small and shallow to allow for gentle extraction. Oak usage is supportive and 500l puncheons are preferred rather than the more traditional 225l barrels.

Key Points

- Wild fermented with whole bunch inclusion
- Small, shallow fermenters to allow for very gentle maceration
- Bottled unfinned and unfiltered





4285 - deAlto,
La Planta Magica,
Garnacha Viñas Viejas,
2019



4206 - deAlto,
El Primero, Rioja, 2020



2672 - deAlto,
Tradicional, Rioja, 2020

NOTES



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Reframing Rioja