

QUEIRÓN
ENSAYOS
CAPITALES

3

EST. MMXI
ASOLEAO

2020

RIOJA
Denominación de Origen Calificada
Rioja Oriental
VINO DE QUEL

HIGH ALTITUDE VINEYARDS

6.987 BOT.

EXPLORATORY RESEARCH PROJECT IN SUPPORT OF RATIONAL AND SUSTAINABLE WINEGROWING

A RIOJA WINE CRADLED BY THE SUN

Queirón present their Ensayos Capitaless No3, a high altitude varietal tempranillo which incorporates the age-old technique of exposing the grapes to the sun

The Queirón winemaking team never stops, is never satisfied. It reflects and searches. It dreams and turns its ideas into reality by steering between innovation and the rethinking of tradition. The here and now and more of the same. This is the background to Ensayos Capitaless No3, a high altitude varietal tempranillo from our La Pasada vineyard (among the crests of the Sierra de Yerga) cradled in the sun's rays well beyond the harvest. A new style of winemaking in Rioja inspired by the Quel tradition of sun-drying their greengage plums which are exposed to the sun on cane hurdles. "Everybody here has these cane hurdles at home for drying plums. In our fields the vineyards are interspersed with plots of greengage orchard, so it occurred to us that we could use this fruit's traditional sun-drying method for turning them into prunes for our grapes as well, in pursuit of greater concentration and the ultimate purification of the wine's sensation on the palate, on the nose and on the eye," explains the Queirón winemaker, Rubén Pérez Cuevas.

AGE-OLD PRACTICE

Sun-drying is an age-old practice for over-ripening the grapes by direct exposure of the clusters to sunlight, spread out in the open air so as to encourage partial dehydration in which the berries remain intact but with an evolution in their concentration without beginning to rot. In the She-

rry-making context, exposure to the sun was historically carried out with harvested bunches of grapes laid out on mats of different forms and materials, with the most classical being the use of circular straw mats made of esparto. "In Quel, the sun-drying is done on old cane hurdles which are used for drying plums, on which we carefully lay out the clusters after manual picking. We turn them over every day so that the rays of the sun have the most even effect on the grape berries as possible", Rubén stresses.

HIGH ALTITUDE VINEYARDS

6.987 BOT.

Exposure to the sun and the production of Ensayos Capitaless no 3

The grapes were harvested by hand on 9th October 2020, just at the ideal point of phenolic ripeness. Afterwards, the clusters were spread out on cane hurdles so that they would be sun-dried for around five days in order to increase the concentration and structure of the future wine. We are seeking the maximum concentration and during this process the grapes can lose between 7% and 10% of their weight as a result of dehydration. Once the sun-drying



process is complete, the grapes are taken in crates to the Queirón winery where they undergo a process of manual on at cluster level before destemming and are then selected again at individual berry level. The grapes are gently crushed before beginning to ferment in open barrels.

CONCENTRATION

Alcoholic fermentation proceeded for around 12 days and as a result of the dehydration of the grapes, we managed to achieve greater alcoholic strength (due to the water loss) and high concentration because the ratio between the quantity of must and the skins with which this is in contact is much higher. During maceration the must is stirred daily to achieve the ideal extraction of tannin and colour. Once alcoholic fermentation is complete, the wine is racked off into new American oak casks for malolactic fermentation to take place. When this finishes, the wine is racked again to eliminate the coarser lees and after this the wine passes to specially selected, French-oak casks to begin the ageing and refining process for five months, prior to bottling.

WHAT ARE THE ENSAYOS CAPITALES?

This line of wines from Queirón can be summed up as fun, daring and unusual. Ephemeral wines which are looking to stand out on the very edge of innovation, wines which come and go in a flash but which open up a path, which shape our bodega's most innovative line. We start from a minority grape variety. Graciano. That was used to make number 1, with no

added sulphites. A risk in winemaking and oenology with parallel fermentation processes (alcoholic and malolactic). Number 2 was the first Queirón white wine. What's more, from a natural mutation of tempranillo, which occurred at the end of the last century in a town in Rioja Oriental. An unusual process with the first part of the fermentation in stainless steel

vats to be finished off in the cask. And then, with only the free-run must, malolactic fermentation in the cask and refined in earthenware vats. Now comes the sun-dried tempranillo from a vineyard located at a height of over 800 metres with vines over thirty years' old. A new challenge which will be joined by further ones in the coming months.



The sun-drying technique in La Pasada

When Rubén Pérez Cuevas and his team decided to sun-dry the grapes from La Pasada, they looked for a space in the vineyard to place the cane hurdles. This vineyard has particularly rich terrain,

with mountain slopes and small meadows to set out the hurdles supported on stands so that the berries would have absolutely no contact with the ground. The hurdles were arranged as a set of para-

llel canes tied together. They have been used for as long as anyone can remember for making roofs or stockades. Cane is a very durable material, resistant to damp and bad weather. The cane plant is similar to bamboo but differs in that a single leaf springs from each

knot which sheathes the shoot. Natural insulation which is well-known in the villages of La Rioja and which gives the production process a nexus with the traditional culture of the people of the Cidacos Valley.

ELABORADO POR EL MÉTODO TRADICIONAL DE GRAVEDAD Edición Especial Limitada

2020 HARVEST

A complicated year for the Rioja vineyards. The quality of the harvest was conditioned by a degree of instability in the weather during the lead-up, with average rainfall of over 550 (high compared to other years) and problems such as hail. After explosive early budding, the end of the cycle saw a stable berry-weight, higher than in 2019, and perfect phenolic maturation. The light rainfall in September and winds entering from the north, with a fall in night time temperatures, ensured better balance and improved the quality indicators. The quality of the grapes improved with the passing of the days prior to harvesting.

EXTREME VITICULTURE

This wine is made exclusively using grapes from a particular terroir plot in La Pasada, a vineyard located on the edge of the cultivation area at the top of the Monte Yerga, in Quel, at an altitude of between 810 m and 720 m and a drop of 70 metres and inclines of over 30 percent in some places. The land is layered, running from a sandy surface with sandstone and coarse stone followed by masses of old clay and limestone planes which allow the roots to grow deeply in search of moisture and deep layers with more clay which retain the moisture during hot summer days, Texture of the soil; loamy-sand (16.9% loam, 73.1% sand, 10% clay).

RUBÉN, THE OENOLOGIST

“We wanted to link the wine from Quel with a tradition which is deeply rooted in the memory of our people. Combining the ripening method used for the plums with the world of wine. The sun-drying technique is very old in oenology and we think it is nice to incorporate it into Rioja wine through a concept which brings together tradition and innovation”.

-In oenological terms, what would you highlight from this sun-drying?

-We are seeking natural concentration without interfering in the grape. For it to be the sun which provides controlled dehydration and allows the deepest, highest, most subtle transfer of aromas. The tempranillo from La Pasada is late ripening, it simmers on a low heat because it has a longer cycle. With sun-drying we achieve more depth, more complexity in the wine.

-What is the wine like?

-It has a depth and a length on the palate which has surprised us, which has excited us. La Pasada is a unique plot, because of its altitude, its poor soil and for the freshness of the wines it gives us. Now, through sun-drying. It offers us a new version of itself.

-Is it a gastronomic wine?

-For sure. It's a wine which surprises you with its structure, its acidity, because it gives a new interpretation of one of the territories of La Rioja with the most surprising wines.

ENSAYOS CAPITALES Nº 3 ASOLEAO

RAE DICTIONARY DEFINITION: TO EXPOSE SOMETHING TO THE SUN FOR A CERTAIN TIME.

What the sommeliers and chefs we have consulted have to say about the idea of ASOLEAO for our Ensayos Capitaless n° 3.

Chefe Paniego, ECHAURREN (MICHELIN): “It is a wonderful story. When I take a bottle to propose to diners I need to go further, to be able to tell a story. And being a sun-dried wine is a new narrative. Something different. I love it”.

Carlos Echapresto, VENTA MONCALVILLO (MICHELIN): “There is nothing remotely similar in Rioja; what defines the wine is the grapes’ exposure to the sun after the harvest and before vinification. In addition, it represents a nod to Sherry,

to their impressive wine culture”.

Ernesto Jesús Cruz, ÍKARO (MICHELIN): “The first Ensayos Capitaless really impressed me. Now this sun-dried wine seems amazing. I am Andalusian, I love the culture of Sherry wines from Jerez and it is really something for a Rioja wine cellar to be inspired by the wine-making methods of my home region. Keep going with the name”.

Jorge Rodríguez, sommelier for LUMBRE: “I love the

name because it encompasses so many ideas which I can tell the customers at the table”.

Two more people we have asked to comment about Asoleao are **Félix Jiménez, the chef at KIRO SUSHI (MICHELIN)** who explained that the name seemed very evocative and that this special way of making wine was a great idea worthy of inclusion on restaurant wine lists, and **Fernando Sáenz, ice-cream maker of DELLA SERA**, also stresses the importance of making authentic products as a result of curiosity and exploration. In addition, the name is really lovely.

TASTING

Colour: Intense, black-cherry, very deep, dense robe, bright.

Aroma: Complex, lots of very ripe dark fruit (ripe red plums, blackberries, black cherries) with hints of very fine wood (pepper, tobacco leaves, liquorice).

Flavour: Powerful, very long, with lots of body, excellent acidity, ripe tannins.

Alcohol: 14,5 %

PRODUCTION

Number of bottles: 6.987

SERVING AND STORAGE TEMPERATURE

Best served at 16°C - 18°C

CELLARING POTENTIAL

If stored under ideal conditions (12-14°C) at 60% relative humidity and protected from temperature variations, it has excellent cellaring potential.

ENSAYOS CAPITALES CHALLENGES ON THE EDGE

Nº1 GRACIANO WITH NO SULFITOS

An amazing achievement in viticulture and winemaking. Graciano, a minority grape in Rioja, with parallel alcoholic and malolactic fermentation. Total health in the vineyard and precision in all the winemaking processes. The search for a new method of creating wines.

Nº2 TEMPRANILLO BLANCO. ‘LAGRIMA EN TINAJA’

Limited production of a tempranillo blanco wine from an estate vineyard in Quel at nearly 600 metres, from which the winemaker gives a new twist to the versatility of Rioja white wines by experimenting with some slight oxidation. With maceration with the skins and some light ageing both in the earthenware vat and in the cask.