

2021

VARIETIES

A monovarietal crafted from ancestral Garnacha vines in Quel.

VITICULTURE

El Arca is the inaugural Viñedo Singular (Single Vineyard) wine from Queirón, with 2021 marking its fifth vintage since the 2017 debut. This exclusive wine embodies the soul of one of the ancestral strongholds of original viticulture in the DOCa Rioja. El Arca is a minuscule Garnacha plot of less than one hectare, situated at the northern edge of Quel Castle. Records of vine cultivation on this site date back as far as 1892.

Texture of the soil: Sandy-loam (28.8% silt, 61.4% sand, 9.70% clay).

Altitude: 520 meters.

2021 HARVEST

The growing season was defined by a cold, wet winter, which allowed for the accumulation of excellent water reserves in the soil. A cool spring followed, bringing April frosts that particularly affected the lower reaches of Rioja Oriental, leading to a notable reduction in yields. While the summer was warm, temperatures remained moderate, and sporadic rainfall helped alleviate water stress. The precipitation between the 10th and 20th of September arrived at the perfect moment, allowing the vines to achieve optimal phenolic and alcoholic ripeness. This "gift" resulted in wines of great volume and body, with intense colour and remarkable aromatic expression. **Harvest Date:** 7th October.

WINEMAKING

The clusters from El Arca were hand-harvested on the morning of 7th October 2021, beginning at 8:00 am. An initial selection took place in the vineyard to discard any fruit not in pristine sanitary condition. Following the harvest, the grapes were placed in crates and chilled in a cold room at 12°C for 24 hours. The next day, a second manual selection was performed on the sorting table before destemming. The berries were then gravity-fed into new 300-litre American oak barrels. Two master coopers attended the Queirón winery specifically to manage the opening and sealing of the barrel heads.

Primary fermentation occurred within the barrels over ten days; remontage was performed by manually rotating the barrels three times a day (three full rotations each time). After these ten days, the mosto lágrima (free-run juice) was extracted, while the remaining skins were moved to a vertical press. Both the free-run wine and the press wine were transferred separately into 225-litre French oak barrels. Malolactic fermentation took place in these French barrels to encourage greater micro-oxygenation. After 15 months of ageing in oak, the free-run and press components were blended and moved to a concrete egg for a further three to five months. Finally, El Arca was bottled five months prior to its commercial release.

TASTING NOTES

Colour: Medium-high depth, bright. Cherry red with vivid ruby glints, indicating moderate evolution and a sophisticated maturity.

Aroma: High intensity, remarkably elegant and complex. It evolves subtly yet constantly in the glass, unfolding a wealth of aromatic nuances. Initially, ripe red and black fruits take centre stage: cherry compote, cherries in liqueur, blackberry, blueberry, raspberry, and prune. These are joined by delicate floral notes (violet), aromatic herbs, and Mediterranean scrubland (rosemary, thyme), alongside subtle truffle undertones that speak clearly of its terroir. Subsequently, delicate dairy notes appear (fine pastries, café au lait), complemented by spices (white pepper, clove) and well-integrated oak: fresh tobacco, toasted bread, bitter almond, and vanilla. All elements exist in perfect harmony, always respecting and enhancing the core fruit character.

Taste: Powerful, voluminous, and savoury on the palate, showing great breadth and roundness. It possesses significant mid-palate weight, excellent balance, and a marked yet beautifully integrated acidity that provides freshness and tension. The tannins are finely polished, silky, and completely tamed. It leaves a very pleasant, coating sensation that invites another sip. The finish is long and persistent, echoing its full complexity on the retro-nasal passage, with ripe fruit and spicy notes as the final protagonists.

Alcoholic strength: 15% ABV.

Number of bottles: 1384 bot.

TEMPERATURE OF SERVICE AND CONSERVATION

Best at 16-18° C / 60-64 degrees Farenheit

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Its excellent acidity and backbone will enable it to continue to improve over time.

