



Vivanco
LA ISLA
VIÑEDO SINGULAR
2022
RIOJA
DENOMINACIÓN DE ORIGEN CALIFICADA

History of a place

It was in 2000 when I first went to see those plots of land. The grape harvest was about to begin. We had received a call from a famous French grape grower and winemaker who wanted to sell two plots of land that he had been growing till then in an area of Briones unknown to me. It was called La Isla (The Island), we were told. It was so named because it was isolated, almost hidden, in a location north-east of the town. My father and I went down a steep slope on a winding road and crossed the railway track without losing sight of the landscape that was opening up in front of us: to the north, the silhouette of San Vicente and Sierra de Cantabria; to the west, the tower of the church of Briones and, to the east, the castle of Davalillo dominating from San Asensio.



We got out of the car and the sound changed completely. There was almost absolute silence. Just the quiet flow of the river Ebro hidden by the trees on its banks. There were two plots, one opposite the other, both planted in 1973, with a road separating them. One, arranged north-south, consists of mostly bush-trained, ungrafted Viura grapevines, planted with vinifera rootstock, surviving phylloxera thanks to the particular composition of the soil. The other is arranged perpendicularly to the first, running east-west. It is mostly Tempranillo, trained on a trellis system which was among the first to arrive in Rioja in order to improve leaf surface exposure and achieve better cluster aeration. The grapes were smooth and crisp, with a freshness and ripeness that was very difficult to achieve at the time. The Viura had a special flavour, with exceptional complexity evincing the direct connection between the soil and the vinifera.

We immediately fell in love with the vineyards, overwhelmed by the twilight landscape of a late September evening. I closed the car door, looked at my father and said, "This place deserves its own wine." Since then, I haven't stopped thinking about it.

Twenty years later, after many harvests of knowledge and learning about these two areas, my dream (and that of my father) has finally come true. Two wines that tell the story of my first visit to this magical place we call LA ISLA.


Rafael Vivanco

WHAT IS A VIÑEDO SINGULAR?

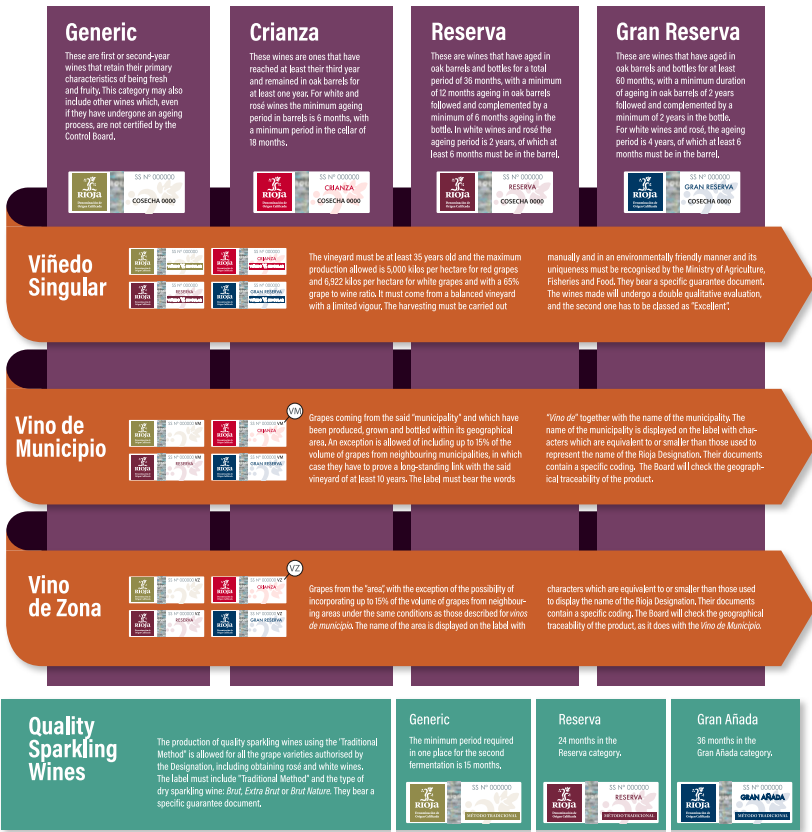
The Viñedo Singular (“exceptional vineyard”) category was approved in 2017 by the Regulatory Board of DOCa Rioja with the aim of giving visibility to wines from a single vineyard within a qualitative spot. It occupies the first position in the traceability pyramid applied to catalogue the origin and worth of the wines produced within the Designation.

The “Viñedo Singular” category includes the most demanding and qualitative set of regulations, which are summarised below.

Requirements

1. Grapes exclusively sourced from plots that constitute the "exceptional vineyard".
2. Old Vineyard: 35 years old at least.
3. Maximum production: 5,000 kg/ha in the case of red varieties and 6,922 kg/ha in white varieties.
4. Maximum yield: 65 liters of wine every 100 kg. of grape.
5. The “exceptional vineyard” must be balanced and have limited vigour. During ripening of the grape, the growth of vegetation must be totally stopped.
6. A single shoot trimming is authorized.

7. Hand harvest.
8. Double qualification of the wine through blind tasting. First, to get the wine qualified as Viñedo Singular once produced. In the second tasting, before launch onto the market, the average score will be excellent (95 points or more) otherwise the wine will not be able to be released onto the market as Viñedo Singular. The tasting panel is formed by winemakers, sommeliers and independent technical resources from the Rioja council board.





LA ISLA, THE SPOT

La Isla is a small spot within a unique landscape, located on the border between Briones, San Asensio y San Vicente de la Sonsierra, within the heart of Rioja Alta. It is situated in a small depression, with the river Ebro as its northern boundary and the railway line closing the southern edge. It is made up of a diverse blend of small plots of land historically used to grow grapes, with some of the oldest vines in the Briones area.

All the vineyards share a similar type of soil, alluvial, with some sandy deposits and limestone cobbles, laid out in terraces descending to the Ebro. The closer we get to the river, the greater the percentage of cobbles, which thin out as we move southwards and get closer to the border area, which is more calcareous and less stony. Its wines show a subtle salinity, coming from this calcareous environment of alluvial origin.

Climatically, on top of a marked Atlantic influence characteristic of this high part of Rioja Alta, the area is strongly influenced by the River Ebro, affecting harvest dates, which are usually among the earliest in the area, ensuring full ripening and medium-high acidity with wines that are very expressive and with high potential for laying down.



LA ISLA: PLOTS OF OUR “VIÑEDO SINGULAR”

Within this spot, Bodegas Vivanco owns two different but very close plots since 2000: one, on ungrafted vines, mostly of the Viura variety and, the other, of an old massal selection of mainly Tempranillo. Both were planted in 1973 and are grown under organic certification, representing the ultimate expression of this unique and singular location.

For all these reasons, in 2019, they were qualified as “Viñedo Singular” by the Rioja Council Board and the Spanish Minister of Agriculture.

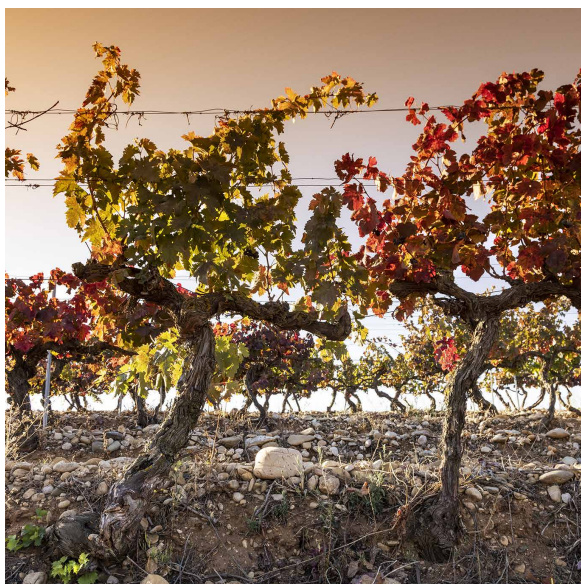


LA ISLA, RESCUING AN HISTORIC RIOJA VINEYARD

The definition of an old vineyard is not only based on its age. Behind the history of each of its grape varieties lies a common element: diversity. Normally, different varieties coexist in this type of vineyard as a result of an ancestral planting process: first, an American vine was planted to prevent the attack of the phylloxera and, a year later, once the trunk already formed, each vine was then grafted, one by one, with plant material (vine shoots) previously selected by the grape grower.

In this process, some vine shoots of other varieties were mixed in, accidentally or on purpose, with the desired one and grafted onto rootstock. When the plants budded, the vines appeared interspersed across the vineyard, providing a diversity that would be almost impossible today with modern techniques. In our plot in La Isla, besides the Tempranillo other varieties appear, such as Garnacha, Moristel, Viura and another white variety called Calagraño. And all this in 1973, a time when the beginnings of the modernization of viticulture and its methods could already be glimpsed.

With La Isla in its red version we recover this historic personality of Rioja vineyards, represented, in this case, in a plot that has two distinct zones. The upper part on descending terraces, has less vigor and most quality with the most uniform ripening. The flatter part requires, in most years, a later and more selective harvesting process.





VINEYARD DATA SHEET

Spot: LA ISLA (Briones).

96% Tempranillo of great genetic variability as a result of an old massal selection from Briones, 2% Moristel and Garnacha Tinta and another 2% of white varieties, mainly Viura and a small part of Calagraño. Planted in 1973.

3.1 ha

Viticulture certified as Organic since 2013 and including green corridors of natural vegetation surrounding the vineyard in order to preserve the biodiversity and indigenous fauna.

E-W facing.

Altitude 451-457 438-447 metres above sea level.

Soil: alluvial terrace over the Ebro river. Deposits of sand and limestone round stones with low capacity holding water and nutrients, very appropriate for a low yielding and high quality viticulture.

Wire-trained ,with double-cordon, from the very beginning (one of the first vineyards in Rioja under this technique) with an east-west facing and two distinct zones. The southern area, furthest from the Ebro river, is a slope with an average gradient of 10.4%, while the northern part has a gentler gradient averaging 3%. It is located at an altitude of 438-447 metres a.s.l.

Planting density: 3,700 vines per hectare.

LA ISLA, THE 2022 VINTAGE

Heat, scarce rainfall, and vineyard resilience define the 2022 vintage. Above all, the heat: average temperatures were more than one degree higher than the previous year, with an unprecedented early June heatwave in the second week of the month, reaching above 40 °C. Extraordinary. The vines responded well, protecting themselves by reducing their activity. Old vineyards under organic viticulture, as is our case, showed greater adaptability. Vineyard operations were kept to a minimum, maintaining as much leaf cover as possible around the clusters to protect them from sun exposure. Water was scarce, yet disease pressure from mildew and oidium was very low. Harvest took place two weeks earlier than usual, yielding fruit of exceptional quality, with sweet but fully ripe tannins. The key challenge was achieving balance—an ongoing struggle against climate change. The wine reflects and expresses vintage effects with clarity.

LA ISLA 2022

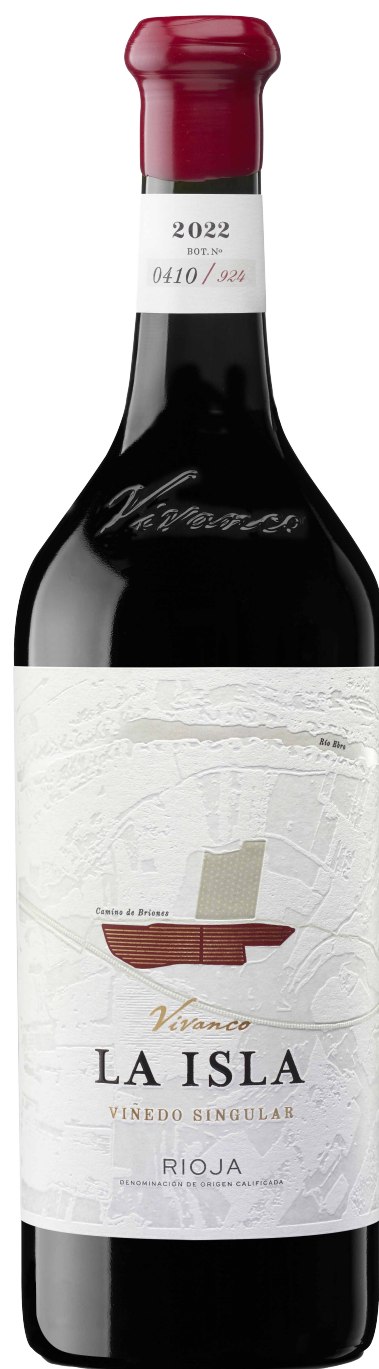
GRAPE VARIETIES: Tempranillo (96%), with high genetic variability from an old massal selection, complemented by Moristel and Garnacha Tinta (2%), and a further 2% of white varieties, mainly Viura with a small proportion of Calagraño. Vineyard planted in 1973.

HARVEST: Entirely manual harvest carried out on September 25, 2022, in small crates.

VINIFICATION: All grapes were cooled in a cold chamber and passed through a double selection table for clusters and berries. After a gentle crushing, the berries were gravity-fed into small French oak vats, where they underwent fermentation and maceration on skins at a controlled maximum temperature of 28 °C. Gentle pump-overs and punch-downs were applied over approximately 20 days.

AGEING: A significant proportion of the wine aged for 12 months in fine-grain French oak barrels (225 L and 500 L), previously used for one or two vintages. The remaining portion matured on its lees in small vats over the same period. Bottling took place in November 2023, followed by a minimum of 24 months of bottle aging in underground cellars prior to release.

Nº of bottles: 1,434 bottles (75 cl) and 24 magnums.



TECHNICAL DATA

ALCOHOL DEGREE: 14% vol.

PH: 3.65

TOTAL ACIDITY: 5.3 g/l

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.2 g/l