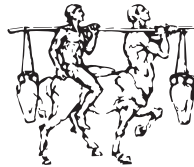


THE GARNACHA OF
QUEL



ONTAÑÓN
LAGARNACHA

— 2020 —

RIOJA
DENOMINACIÓN DE ORIGEN CALIFICADA
- RIOJA ORIENTAL -

QUEL, THE GARNACHA LANDSCAPES

Biodiversity in the extreme

One of the least known gems of Quel viticulture is its really valuable range of varieties and the very biodiversity of its historic spaces devoted to growing the vine, dotted with olive, almond and fruit trees such as cherries and plums, and an incredible collection of typical Mediterranean aromatic plants like rosemary, thyme, rockrose, gorse and juniper, among many others which spring at the foot of dense woodland at medium height, full of Aleppo pines and stone pines which occupy deep soils on slopes, in valleys and gullies.

This very rich and complex panorama to a great degree shapes the biodiversity in which our vineyards represent just one element in the living fabric of an ecosystem that, as Francois Chartier explains in his manifesto 'La biodiversidad: el eslabón perdido en el concepto global de terroir', has an aromatic impact on the grapes grown in such amazing enclaves as

those of Quel, and consequently, on the aromatic identity of the resulting wines. Like in this Ontañón La Garnacha, a fine, silky-smooth wine with subtle mineral notes, wild red berries and a delicate smoothness.

Ontañón LaGarnacha has been created to delve into the finesse and elegance of the rich tradition of the wines of this variety which are so closely tied to the winemaking tradition of Rioja Oriental, Quel in particular, where for a decade we have been conducting systematic recuperation work by adopting the zone's ancestral clones, the diversity of soil types and the altitude of the vineyards which are located in places on the extreme edge of the growing area. In making Ontañón LaGarnacha, we blend different parcels of vines from the Sierra de Yerga, small garnacha plots, with ages no higher than thirty years old and which are established in a patchwork of soils on slopes



and south-facing carasoles with a huge presence of pebbles.

The history of garnacha and how it arrived in Rioja is not sufficiently well documented, although two moments in history do exist which are related to two outbreaks of vine diseases: oidium in 1854 and in the first third of the 20th century, with the various replanting projects after the phylloxera catastrophe. From the outset, the town of Quel was to the fore in planting garnacha and in our panoply of vineyards of this variety, we have the gem of El Arca, a plot dating from the end of the 19th century, measuring less than a hectare, one of the oldest vineyards in the whole of the DOCA Rioja, which is, undoubtedly, a distant reminder of this grape's arrival in Rioja.

University professors from the University of La Rioja, Fernando Martínez de Toda and Juan Carlos Sancha, published an ar-

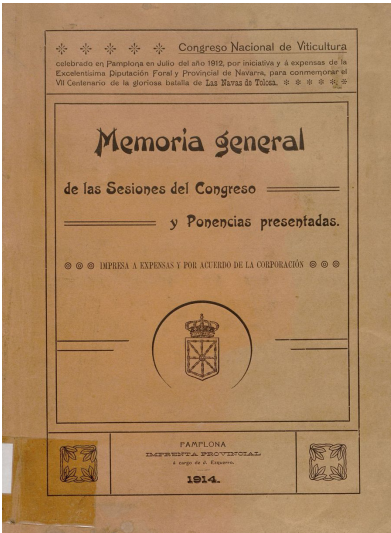
ticle in the Zubía journal in 1995 entitled 'Variedades de vid cultivadas en Rioja a lo largo de la historia' (Varieties of vine cultivated in Rioja down through history), and the first reference to garnacha appears in a manuscript from 1846 noted down in the Casa de las Señoritas de Briñas entitled 'Prevención para la elaboración de vinos destinados a Ultramar', which recounts the success achieved with wines made from the 'Tempranillo grape with a mixture of Garnacha, Graciana or Mazuela'. The first written reference in the world regarding garnacha (or grenache) dates back to 1321. In a sentence issued by the Paris Parliament, a shipment of 1,387 tonnes of wine half griec (a name which may have been given to moscatel and malvasia wines which came from Greece) and half varnacie (garnacha) is mentioned, the type of wine that the Venetian merchants spread all over Europe from the year 1204.

QUEL, THE ORIGINS OF GARNACHA

Rioja pioneers

The Agriculture Department of the Diputación de Navarra, set up in 1896, performed an extraordinary task in the foundations of the replanting of the vineyards which had been affected by phylloxera at the end of the 19th century. With Nicolás García de los Salmenes, one of the fathers of agricultural engineering in Spain, at its head, this body became a point of reference at both national and international level in the sphere of viticulture. In this context, García de los Salmenes proposed holding a National Viticulture Congress to mark the 7th Centenary of

the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa. His idea was accepted and the event took place between the 10th and 22nd July 1912. Over 1,500 attendees took part, from more than twenty European and American countries. On the 17th the King attended and chaired the academic session. The number of talks presented by the best national and international specialists was 46, covering topics related to viticulture and oenology, as is reflected in the Minutes published by the Diputación two years later (1914).



FRONT COVER OF THE MINUTES OF THE NATIONAL VITICULTURE CONGRESS

General study of all the Spanish vine plants
Minutes of the Sessions of the Congress and Talks presented / National Viticulture Congress held in Pamplona in July 1912.

VARIETADES de uva de hollejo negro y de color morado.	PUEBLOS donde pueden adqui- rirse los tipos de ellas.	PARTIDOS JUDICIALES a que pertenece el pueblo.	VARIETADES de uva de hollejo blanco (blancas y verdosas).	PUEBLOS donde pueden adqui- rirse los tipos de ellas.	PARTIDOS JUDICIALES a que pertenece el pueblo.
Provincia de Logroño.					
Garnacho.....	Quel	Arnedo.	Anavés.....	Quel	Arnedo.
Tempranillo	Haro	Haro.	Chaselas	Idem.	Idem.
Mazuela.....	Quel	Arnedo.	Garcacha Blanca.....	Villar de Arnedo.....	Idem.
Monastel	Idem.	Idem.	Malvasia	Idem.	Idem.
Graciano de Haro.....	Haro	Idem.	Blanca	Alcanadre	Calahorra.
Monastrell	Villar de Arnedo.....	Idem.	Orujel.....	Idem.	Idem.
Royales	Idem.	Idem.	Navés	Alfaro	Alfaro.
Mazuela	Idem.	Idem.	Moscatel Romano.....	Idem.	Idem.
Morisca.....	Hormilla	Idem.	Pasera.....	Aldeanueva de Ebro.....	Idem.
Graciano de Alfaro.....	Alfaro	Alfaro.	Calagráño.....	Bañares.....	Santo Domingo.
Yatrel	Idem.	Idem.	Vina	Haro	Haro.
Granadina.....	Autol	Calahorra.	Moscatel	San Vicente de la Sonsierra.....	Idem.
Miguel Arco.....	Grávalos.....	Cervera.	Torrontés	Idem.	Idem.
Tintorera.....	Cenicero	Logroño	Naturana.....	Idem.	Idem.
Mollar.....	Hormilla	Idem.	Rojal	Cenicero	Logroño
Cornigacho.....	Cidamón	Santo Domingo.	Ribadavia.....	Navarrete.....	Idem.
Burdeos negro.....	Idem.	Idem.	Almudécar.....	Idem.	Idem.
Tempranillo.....	Idem.	Idem.	Blanca roja.....	Canillas	Nájera.
Morato	Idem.	Idem.	Teta de vaca.....	Idem.	Idem.
San Jerónimo.....	Idem.	Idem.	Jalnas	Idem.	Idem.
			Tobia	Estollo.....	Idem.
			Royal	Idem.	Haro.
			Blanca roya.....	Idem.	Idem.
			Cagazal	Idem.	Idem.
Provincia de Álava.					
Garnacha	Arceniega	Amurrio	Rojal	Laguardia	Laguardia.
Albavesa	Idem.	Idem.	Torrontés	Idem.	Idem.
Graciana	Idem.	Idem.	Naturana	Idem.	Idem.
Seda	Idem.	Idem.	Vina	Idem.	Idem.
Francesa.....	Idem.	Idem.	Jaén	Idem.	Idem.
Setout	Idem.	Idem.	Malvasia	Idem.	Idem.
Graciano	Idem.	Idem.	Calagráño.....	Idem.	Idem.
Cuñelo	Arrastaria	Idem.	Tobia	Idem.	Idem.
Francés	Idem.	Idem.	Blanqueroja	Idem.	Idem.
Ribadavia.....	Idem.	Idem.	Cagazal	Idem.	Idem.
Gascón	Idem.	Idem.	Jaén Verdigal.....	Idem.	Idem.
Tempranillo.....	Laguardia	Laguardia.			
Jaén	Idem.	Idem.			
Calagráño.....	Idem.	Idem.			
Mazuela	Labastida	Idem.			

CHART FROM THE TALK BY NICOLÁS GARCÍA DE LOS SALMONES

In one of the key talks during the event, García de los Salmenes presented a list of 42 varieties cultivated in the province of Logroño and 26 in Álava. As Martínez de Toda and Sancha point out, this list “is the most extensive of all those which appear in the bibliography on the beginnings of the grape variety heritage of Rioja”. And the extraordinary thing is that Nicolás García de los Salmenes mentions the cultivation of the varieties by village and highlights Quel as the main nucleus of garnacha in Rioja. (He also points out Quel for the presence of mazuela, anavés and chasela). This is the first time in history that a quantification of the varietal heritage has been

conducted with the varieties linked to villages and this gives even more value to the historic origins of the Quel garnachas, the pioneers of Rioja.

After the phylloxera, which destroyed a large part of the Rioja vines, there was a second big boost for the planting of garnacha in Rioja and particularly in Rioja Oriental. The Diputación Foral de Navarra directed the work to recover vine plantations and went with this variety. Thus, the close vicinity of the villages of Navarra with those of La Rioja meant that a transfer of grafts was commonplace for the creation of the new rioja vineyards after the disaster of this brutal plague.

QUEL, LA GARNACHA FROM ONTAÑÓN

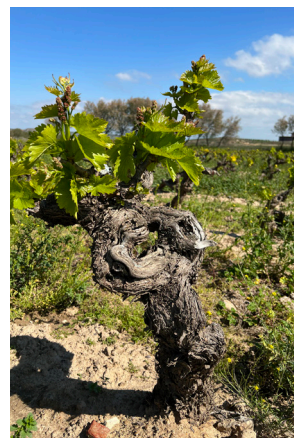
Exceptional finesse

One of the first descriptions of garnacha is the work of José Valier and it sounds beautiful: 'Garnacha is the plant of poor, dry, arid soils, like those with a lot of silica or sand, stony ones and the sulphates and calcareous carbonate on slopes and at altitude. It is beautiful and very robust, with abundant leaves, light-green on both sides, and its clusters are well spread and hang from the node of its third méritalle, so that very few touch the ground. It stands drought and little or bad tilling, and finally, pets eat its leaves in preference to any of the other species. It is, in a word, the poor man's vine. Its wine, always sweet or semi-sweet, ferments if the temperature of the space it is in rises to 34 degrees centigrade'.

Juan Marcilla, a pioneer in the microbiology of winemaking in Spain, described garnacha thus: 'Upright carriage, very

hairless adult leaves, medium or small in size, and light green in colour. Very abundant flowering, but fruit setting is never complete, especially on Ruprestis de Lot. The grapes ripen late and achieve a lower alcoholic strength and greater acidity than tinto de Madrid. The colour of the wines is not intense and they have a marked tendency to turn 'onion skin colour', of oxidised wine, with ageing'.

One of the Ontañón Family's great passions is the vineyard and that is why we are recovering old bush vines and planting new garnachas with genetic material from the Quel district. We use vertical training to achieve the best ventilation and insolation of the clusters. The soils in which these vines stand are poor and we fertilize them with the organic matter left by the flocks of sheep which eat their leaves at the end of each harvest.



2020 VINTAGE

Waiting till the end

2020 was a complicated year in the Quel district. The quality of the harvest was conditioned by a certain instability in the previous weather features, with average rainfall of over 550 (high compared to other vintages) and episodes such as hail. After explosive, early bud burst, we reached the end of the cycle with a stable berry weight and higher than in 2019, as well as phenolic ripening with higher than average values. The light rain in

September, accompanied by a northerly wind blowing in and a fall in night time temperatures, meant better balance and an improvement in the quality indicators. The quality of the grapes continued to rise with the passing of the days prior to the harvest. We waited until the end of the cycle in order to achieve those ripeness values which make garnacha such a unique and exciting variety.



WINEMAKING PROCESS

For sweet mouth-filling tannins

To extract the classic aromas of these Quel garnachas, we worked with different temperatures in the prefermentation and fermentation processes. The temperatures

• **< 8 degrees in the prefermentative maceration.** The must has not fermented yet and does not contain alcohols and an exchange of compounds takes place between solid and liquid parts. We look for nuances of colour and aroma which will contribute to the singular nature of the wine. The skins provide a good quantity of colour, thanks to the extraction of anthocyanins in the aqueous phase, which will help us to polymerise with the tannins and stabilise the colour of the wine; primary aromas which are the ones which come from the field and the ones we will fix in a first stage as a reminder of the variety and the zone.

• **28 degrees at the start of fermentation** for the multiplication of the yeasts and to ensure the right fermentation of the must till the end, the time when we increase the extraction of colour. The yeasts come from our vineyards and are native to the Quel district.

• **23 degrees for fixing the fruit aromas.** We must guarantee the end of the fermentation phase and control the temperatures perfectly, so as to be able to combine the primary and secondary aromas and to make the variety, zone and fruit dominate in the whole of the wine's life.

MIXED BARRELS

We are looking for a sweet tannin that fills the mouth, the sensation of silkiness on the palate. The ripe, sweet tannins of these garnachas are blended with the tannin from the French and American-oak barrels over the five months it spends ageing. The staves of the barrels are made of American oak and the lids from French oak. The percentage of contact of the wine with the oak is as follows:

70 % AMERICAN OAK
30 % FRENCH OAK

The result is a sensation of length and roundness in the mouth. The finesse we are seeking in a wine which expresses the personality of Quel garnacha to perfection.



TASTING

Colour: A bright, cherry-red wine, very lively and with darker shades at the rim.

Aroma: Very varietal, fruity, mineral on the nose, with huge complexity and a lot of elegance. Floral notes which tend towards red fruit such as cherries, plums and strawberries with a fresh, mineral sensation.

Taste: Lively acidity, persistent in the mouth and very mouth-filling. Elegance which is sustained by a silky, delicate passage through the mouth. It brings a velvety, long aftertaste which encourages you to want to keep drinking and to enjoy it with the delicacy and subtlety which captivate us in each sip.

Alcoholic strength: 14,5 %



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