



ALVAR DE DIOS

Tío Uco

Toro is like the 1980s – big shoulder pads, teased hair, and flashy energy that seems to be chemically enhanced. It's a DO that, in most regards, is caught in a time warp, much like that mauve and teal bathroom you've meant to remodel. But, having built its reputation on a style of wine that is now decidedly out of fashion, Toro is long overdue for a breath of fresh air – or fresh wine in the case of Alvar de Dios.

Alvar was born and raised in the village of El Pego near the southern boundary of DO Toro. His family had tended vineyards in the village for generations, but Alvar didn't stay in Toro to learn his trade; instead, he fell in with a pair of vinous rebels working in the Sierra de Gredos – Fernando Garcia and Dani Landi. While working as the cellar master for Fernando at Bodega Marañoses, he began acquiring vineyards of his own in and around his native DO, splitting his time between the Gredos and Toro.

In 2009 Alvar purchased Vagüera, a tiny half-hectare plot of abandoned vines at an elevation of 950m just south of the legal border of Toro, growing outside of Toro. Having expanded, Alvar explores the newly established DO of Arribes. This region, officially recognized in 2007, offers granitic sand soils reminiscent of Gredos. Alvar assembles vineyards in Villadepera and Famoselle, creating Camino de los Arrieros, a village wine from 40-60-year-old vines. Near Villadepera, he discovers Las Vidres and Yavallo, 80-90-year-old vineyards producing unique expressions. Lastly, in Toro's northwestern part, Alvar crafts Tío Uco, a wine from 25-40-year-old Tempranillo vines grown on various soils, emphasizing organic farming and traditional winemaking techniques.

In addition to his single-vineyard wines, Alvar makes wine from three plots of vines and some purchased fruit located in the northwestern part of Toro. Ranging in age from 25-40 years old, these Tempranillo and Garnacha vines are grown on a variety of sandy soils. Named Tío Uco, this wine like those from his single vineyards, is made from organically farmed grapes, fermented whole cluster with indigenous yeasts, sees only a gentle maceration with pigeage by foot, and is aged primarily in neutral French oak foudres ranging in size from 1000-3500L. Formerly pure Tempranillo, Tío Uco since the 2016 vintage includes about 10% Garnacha in the final blend.

ORIGIN

Spain

APPELLATION

Toro

SOIL

Sand clays, gravel

AGE OF VINES

25-40

ELEVATION

900 meters

VARIETIES

Tempranillo, Garnacha

FARMING

Sustainable

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, partially destemmed, 24-48 hour pre-fermentation maceration, native yeast fermentation, 20 day maceration

AGING

5 months in 1000-3500L French oak foudres

ACCOLADES

91 – 2021 Tío Uco – James Suckling

91 – 2021 Tío Uco – Wine Advocate

90 – 2019 Tío Uco – James Suckling

