



ALVAR DE DIOS

Tio 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 Marañones, he began acquiring vineyards of his own in and around his native DO, splitting his time between the Gredos and Toro.

While assembling his vineyards in Toro, Alvar became interested in the nearby and newly created DO of Arribes and the surrounding area. Officially recognized in 2007, Arribes is where the Duero becomes the Douro as it carves a steep valley out of the granitic mountains forming the border between Spain and Portugal. Here he found not only soils reminiscent of the Gredos – granitic sand with a lot of mica – but a range of indigenous varieties capable of expressing elegance and freshness. Alvar has assembled 5 hectares from 36 separate vineyard parcels from which he makes a village wine and two parcel wines.

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 Tio 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, Tio 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 – Wine Advocate

90 – 2019 Tío Uco – James Suckling

91 – 2018 Tío Uco – Wine Advocate

