



OLIVIER RIVIÈRE

Mirando al Sur Rioja Blanco

With about 25 hectares of rented and owned vineyards in Rioja Alta, Rioja Baja, Rioja Alavesa, and splitting his time between his own wines and consulting with other producers, it would be an understatement to say that Olivier Rivière is busy. Originally lured to Spain in 2004 by Telmo Rodriguez to convert his vineyards to biodynamics, Olivier came to appreciate the rich history of Rioja and the diversity of its soils and grape varieties. In 2006 he started his own project, and owing to the high cost of land in Rioja, he traded his farming talents for access to grapes from the best sites he could locate.

Coming from France, Olivier has an innate sense of terroir. Unlike many of his peers in Rioja, he bases his cuvées not on political boundaries or the length of barrel aging but on terroir. He believes in a quality hierarchy inspired by Burgundy with generic Appellation and Village wines at the base and Premier and Grand cru wines at the top. This is how to understand best what Olivier is doing in Rioja, rather than the traditional Crianza, Reserva, Gran Reserva model or traditionalists versus modernists.

In keeping with his education and advocacy, nearly all of Olivier's vineyard sources – whether owned or leased – are farmed organically with biodynamic practices. Harvested is manual and each variety is fermented separately. Depending on the source, it may be partially destemmed or fermented whole cluster. Fermentations are with indigenous yeasts. Macerations are gentle and short. Aging takes place in stainless steel or cement tanks, foudre, and barrel with each container chosen to benefit the expression of the terroir. SO₂ is kept to a minimum, usually added only before bottling. These are not your grandparent's Riojas, nor are they your parent's. These wines represent a novel approach that relies almost entirely on the specificity of site and the transparency of winemaking necessary to capture it.

Mirando al Sur is made from Olivier's oldest vines of Viura located near the village of Labastida in Rioja Alavesa. It is named Miranda al Sur (Looking South) due to the fact that it is aged in used Sherry butts after whole cluster fermentation in new French oak barrels. Harder to place in a Burgundian context due to the impact of the biologic aging of this cuvée, the wines of Jura might be a better analogy for this wine.

ORIGIN

Spain

APELLATION

Rioja

SOIL

Rocky clay limestone

AGE OF VINES

75

ELEVATION

500 meters

VARIETIES

Viura

FARMING

Practicing organic and biodynamic

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, whole cluster pressing and natural yeast fermentation in foudre

AGING

Aged 6 months in foudre then 12 months two 600L former sherry butts (one Fino and one Amontillado)

ACCOLADES

93 – 2020 Mirando al Sur – Wine Advocate

95 – 2019 Mirando al Sur – Wine Advocate

95 – 2018 Mirando al Sur – James Suckling

