



VIÑEDOS DE ALCOHUAZ

La Era

Marcelo, or Reta as he prefers to be called, is one of Chile's most esteemed winemakers and a leader in a burgeoning back-to-the-soil movement sweeping through the country. When he joined Viñedos de Alcohuaaz, he was the iconic winemaker of DeMartino where he was already a proponent of site expression, heritage vines, non-interventionist winemaking, and a champion for wines made outside of Chile's Central Valley. Given the opportunity to not only work with vineyards organically farmed from the start, he could also implement a series of practices (or, more precisely, non-practices) to ensure that the uniqueness of Alto Elqui isn't lost in the cellar. Each variety is picked by hand and crushed by foot in stone lagars. Fermentations are spontaneous. After pressing, the wine is gravity-fed into concrete eggs, Stockinger foudres, or French oak vats for undisturbed aging. Some wines are made from single varieties and parcels, while others are blends where each variety supports the others. After fifteen years of tasting and blending, each cuvée has suggested itself rather than being imposed by some formula or plan.

ORIGIN

Chile

APPELLATION

Elqui Valley

SOIL

Sand, decomposed granite

AGE OF VINES

9-14

ELEVATION

1796 meters

VARIETIES

Malbec

FARMING

Sustainable

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, destemmed, natural yeast fermentation in stone lagars, crushed by foot

AGING

23 months in Stockinger foudres

All these steps reveal and preserve the natural acidity and freshness innate to this mountain fruit. They combine the radiant abundance of warm sunny days, a backbone of minerality from the granite, and the liveliness of cold summer nights in the mountains. These lo-fi wines are pure, vibrant, thrilling, and vital. Perhaps it has something to do with all those the ley lines that draw the new-agers to the area. We're more inclined to believe Alvaro's vision and Reta's confidently minimalist instincts.

Rounding out the trio of single vineyard and single variety of wines named after birds native to the Elqui Valley is La Era, a 100% Malbec from a plot of young vines covering less than a hectare and planted at an elevation of 1796 meters above sea level. This is completely unlike the more rustic wines of Cahors or the voluptuous examples across the border in Argentina. With a core of intense fruit matched with an equal amount of acidity, this engaging wine makes one long not only for some roasted meat but more examples of high-elevation Malbec to enjoy.

ACCOLADES

94 – 2017 La Era – Wine Advocate

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