



OLIVIER RIVIÈRE

Ganko Rioja

With about 25 hectares of rented and owned vineyards in Rioja Alta, Rioja Baja, Rioja Alavesa and in up and coming DO of Arlanza, and splitting his time between his own wines and consulting with other producers, it would be a gross understatement to say that Olivier Rivière is a very busy man. 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.

Olivier was born and raised south of Bordeaux in Cognac. He later studied enology in Montagne St-Emilion focusing on biodynamic farming, followed by practical experience there, and later in Burgundy. The list of estates where he has worked is impressive by any standards from the most dedicated fans of natural wines (Elian da Ros & Domaine de Chassorney) to ultra-traditionalists (Domaine Leroy.) When his plans to set up a domaine in Fitou fell through, Olivier decided to spend a few years consulting in Spain, and he's never left.

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. Ganko is another nickname that Olivier has acquired but this one came from his Japanese importer. It means "stubborn", which is a useful trait for any outsider, especially one making wine his own way in Rioja. Ganko comes from a site at 600 meters in elevation near the village of Cárdenas in Rioja Alta. Here Olivier farms 60–90 year old Garnacha and Mazuelo in sandy and ferrous, red clay soils. Olivier considers this wine to be his 1er Cru Village Rioja.

ORIGIN

Spain

APPELLATION

Rioja

SOIL

Sandy red clay

AGE OF VINES

60–90

ELEVATION

600 meters

VARIETIES

Garnacha, Mazuelo

FARMING

Organic with biodynamic practices, some purchased is sustainably farmed

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, whole cluster, natural yeast fermentation in concrete tanks

AGING

16–18 months in foudre and French oak demi-muids

ACCOLADES

96 – 2016 Ganko – James Suckling

93 – 2016 Ganko – Vinous Media

94+ – 2015 Ganko – Wine Advocate

