



OLIVIER RIVIÈRE

Pozo Alto

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. According to records, Pozo Alto was registered in 1930 but it was most likely planted well before this time so the vines are about 90 years old. At the foot of the Sierra de Cantabria just outside the village of Leza, Pozo Alto has a sandy clay soil of decomposed limestone and sandstone. This site is planted mainly with Graciano with smaller amounts of Tempranillo and Garnacha – making it rather unique as Graciano fell out of favor after phylloxera.

ORIGIN

Spain

APPELLATION

Rioja

SOIL

Sandy clay limestone, sandstone

AGE OF VINES

90+

ELEVATION

600 meters

VARIETIES

Graciano, Tempranillo, Garnacha

FARMING

Organic with biodynamic practices

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, destemmed, natural yeast fermentation in concrete vat

AGING

16 months in 228 French oak barrels

ACCOLADES

97 – 2016 Pozo Alto – Jeb Dunnuck

97 – 2016 Pozo Alto – James Suckling

96 – 2015 Pozo Alto – Wine Advocate

