

The Lusch List

UNIQUE WINE RECOMMENDATIONS & EXPERIENCES



Tempranillo Rules!

Spain's Tuscany. Picasso's Cubism Movement muse. Wine inventory for years. This is Rioja, one of the oldest and most well-respected wine regions in the world. Rioja is as age-worthy as the wines of Bordeaux and Burgundy yet flies under the radar compared to its more well-known peers. What does this mean? Well, that stellar bottle of Rioja can be discovered for far less of a price tag than those others from France.

The Wine: [La Rioja Alta Vina Alberdi Reserva, 2015, Rioja, Spain](#)

Where I Purchased: [Pogo's](#)

Cost: \$23

Rioja wine takes its name, like many other wines made in the Old World, from the Rioja region in Northeastern Spain. Tempranillo is the dominant grape, traditionally is blended with Garnacha, Graciano, and Mazuelo (Carignane), and produces age-worthy wines that range from medium to full bodied, with high

tannins, rich flavors of dark berries, plum, tobacco, and herbs. The white wines of the region referred to as White Riojas, are made from Viura (a.k.a. Macabeo) which yields delicious and ageable options and accounts for about 10% of the region's production. Rose wines made from Tempranillo and/or Garnacha also play a significant role.

Rioja is divided into three subzones: Rioja Alta, Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Baja, with many of the region's best wines hailing from Alta and Alavesa while the warmer, more southerly Baja region specializes more in Garnacha and darker, fuller-bodied Tempranillos. The red wines of Rioja are split into four classification levels. Each classification indicates the amount of time the wine spends in oak and will be labeled clearly on the bottle.

The four classifications are:

Generic/Rioja (Vin Joven) – low to no oak; 1-2 years of aging; inexpensive wines; ranging from \$9-12

Crianza - 1 yr oak, 1 yr bottle; most accessible wines, “daily drinkers” showing value & quality; ranging from \$12-19

Reserva – 1 yr oak, 2 yr bottle, starting at \$25+

Gran Reserva – 2 yr oak, 3 yrs bottle, age-worthy; 2% of wines produced in regions; starting at \$35+

(Gran Anada – new classification used for sparkling wine)

And here is a fun fact: because of the long aging requirements, producers could stop production today and still have enough inventory for many years, some up to 10 years!

La Rioja Alta, the region's most “fiercely traditional and proud of it” winery, has been in business for over 125 years. It was founded in 1890 in the wake of the phylloxera epidemic that devastated French vineyards. Five investors pooled their resources and seized a lucrative opportunity to supply wine to Paris palates. Since the 1970s, the “staunch traditionalist” has refined and modernized their approach without sacrificing the founding members' original vision. La Rioja also remains, at its core, a family enterprise still run by the descendants of the founding families. They continue to produce complex, high quality, traditional Rioja wines that are benchmark examples of the style.

Tasting Notes:

100% Tempranillo

Style: aromatic, medium-bodied, classic style, rustic

Nose: ripe red fruits- raspberries, red cherries, plum, spice, balsamic background of vanilla, toasted caramel, biscuits

Palate: red fruit jam, vanilla, coffee,

Finish: fresh and balanced, good acidity, polished tannins

Pairing:

This wine has versatility and is an ideal companion with regional specialties such as Jamen Serrano (Spain's version of Proscuitto), salty chunks of Manchego cheese and ripe green olives. Or try a hearty vegetable stew, braised lamb or a chorizo enhanced dish with roasted pork.

Where to buy:

[Pogo's Wine & Spirits](#) people! Love their selection of Spanish wines and this is a score both in style and price point.

Until next time!
Courtney
The Lusch List



©2020 The Lusch List | 9943 Ridgehaven Drive

[Web Version](#)

[Forward](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

Powered by
[GoDaddy Email Marketing](#)®