

R. LÓPEZ DE HEREDIA VIÑA TONDONIA (D.O.C. Rioja, Spain)

Founded in 1877, López de Heredia stands out as one of the few worldwide wineries that respects and adheres to core principles taught by their ancestors.



photograph courtesy of Viña Tondonia

THE WINERY

“Perhaps no winery in the world guards its traditions as proudly and steadfastly as López de Heredia does... it is paradoxically a winery in the vanguard, its viticulture and winemaking, is a shining, visionary example for young, forward-thinking producers all over the world... At López de Heredia, there is serenity that comes with adherence to core principles...” August 12th, 2009 by Eric Asimov, *The New York Times*

There are few wineries in Spain, or in the world, whose name conjures the heritage and prestige evoked by R. López de Heredia. Little about this winery has changed in the 142 years since its founding by, Don Rafael López de Heredia. The family adheres to a winemaking doctrine blueprinted in the 1880s – to make wine only from their own vineyards.

When it comes to the winemaking process, the work in the vineyard has not changed since the 1880’s. R. López de Heredia is a “traditionalist” through and through and keeping the traditions alive today is important to maintain not only the quality but the personality of the house. Working by hand with some of the best terroir, respecting the soil, and working with nature on what it needs is something R. López de Heredia is very proud of.

Fermentation takes place in their 72 large oak vats, some of which are 142 years old. After fermentation, the wines are ready to be aged in 14,000 handmade American oak barrels.

The wines will remain at R. López de Heredia's underground cellars, stored at perfect temperature and tranquility for a minimum of 3 to 10 years. Wines acquire their smoothness and bouquet during the bottle aging that follows, a minimum of 3 years for Crianzas, and 10 years for Gran Reserva wines. Aging wines should be seen as a pedagogic act; the wine is "educated", hence should never be rushed through sped-up improvisations which would destroy the biological process that give it its special character. Wines need to spend a minimum of three years in barrels to begin to manifest their "education" and their soul.

Map of Rioja DOCa (Denominación de Origen Calificada) R. López de Heredia is in Rioja Alta in Haro



THE VINEYARD TONDONIA - Don Rafael López de Heredia acquired Viña Tondonia from a group of clergies in 1913. The Tondonia vineyard is a beautiful vineyard of over 247 acres, 1,600 feet above sea level, situated on the right bank of the Ebro River in Rioja Alta. The soil is Alluvial clay with a high concentration of Limestone. Tondonia vineyard has a few acres of white grapes (Viura and Malvasia), from which R. López de Heredia makes their Tondonia Blanco. This small section of the vineyard is widely regarded as some of the most definitive “terroir” for white Rioja.

VIÑA TONDONIA GRAN RESERVA, 2001 (white)



- **Region /Sub- Region:** Spain, Rioja, Rioja Alta.
- **Grapes:** 90% Viura, 10% Malvasia.
- **Soil:** Alluvial clay and Limestone.
- **Harvest:** End September-early October, all done by hand, cutting with a curved knife "corquete", prevents the grape breaking causing fermentation prematurely. Bunches are placed in conical wood containers made at the R. López de Heredia cooperage.
- **Vinification:** Grapes are crushed immediately releasing their must and with as little contact with skins as possible. Spontaneous fermentation in 16,000L vats.
- **Aging:** 10 years in 225L American oak barrels, handmade by the López de Heredia coopers, racked twice per year and at least 9 years in bottle before released.
- **Nose:** Bees wax, citrus zest and stewed apple, with notes of mushrooms and dried flowers.
- **Taste:** Smooth, round and well developed. Rich but still fresh on the palate, black tea and tree nuts.
- **Gastronomy:** All kinds of fish, white meats, egg dishes, truffle pasta and cheese dishes.
- **Color:** Rich gold and evolved oxidative amber rim.

CRITICS AND REVIEWS:

James Suckling - 98 points - “Top 100 Wines of 2020” - “Wonderful aromas of almonds, nougat, dried peaches and vanilla bean follow through to a full body with a dense palate of ripe fruit and amazing, unique vanilla cream. Some candle wax and light varnish, too. Historical taste of Rioja that every wine lover should try. Drink now.”

Wine Advocate, Oct '20 – 99 points – “The palate has pungent flavors and great length. There is great balance and harmony, all the pieces are there to deliver a wine that is going to last 40 or more years. There is a Jura-like twist of rancid nuts and some spices in the nose, which is clearly above all the other whites, complex, layered, nuanced and intense. It has very pungent, penetrating flavors of mushroom and forest floor, more powerful but subtle, finishing with a pleasant bitter and salty twist. The complexity and balance here are brutal, with bitter, sweet, salty, acidity...and umami!”