

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. There are 4 varieties of red grapes planted in this vineyard: Tempranillo, Mazuelo, Graciano, and Garnacho. The vineyard has a few acres of white grapes (Viura and Malvasia).

VIÑA TONDONIA GRAN RESERVA, 2012 (rosé)



- **Region/Sub- Region:** Spain, Rioja, Rioja Alta.
- **Grapes:** 30% Tempranillo, 60% Garnacho, and 10% Viura.
- **Soil:** Alluvial clay and Limestone.
- **Harvest:** End September-early October, all done by hand, cutting with a curved knife "corquete", prevents the grape from breaking causing fermentation prematurely. Bunches are placed in conical wood containers made at the R. López de Heredia cooperage.
- **Vinification:** Hoppers de-stem bunches and gently break skins releasing the must and skin contact soaking period. Must is transferred to 25,000L vats where spontaneous fermentation takes place.
- **Aging:** 4 years in 225L American oak barrels handmade by the López de Heredia coopers, racked twice per year and at least 5 years in bottle before released.
- **Nose:** Fresh and fruity, with suggestions of bitter almonds, and hazelnuts.
- **Taste:** Smooth, and fresh with body and complexity due to the aging conditions.
- **Gastronomy:** Great with spicy foods, Indian, Mexican, and Chinese style cuisine. Perfect with sausage, charcuterie.
- **Color:** Onion skin, velvety, hints.

The Vintage:

There are very few vintages of Gran Reserva ever made in the history of the winery. The 2009 vintage was a very good year. There was good fertilization and absence of spring frost followed by a dry hot summer free of fungal diseases, which produced an abundant harvest. White grapes were harvested at the end of September and the reds were harvested in October.

CRITICS AND REVIEWS:

Wine Advocate, Aug '22 gave 96+ points, Viña Tondonia Gran Reserva (rosé) 2012 – : “I love the rosé 2012 Viña Tondonia Rosado Gran Reserva, perhaps the finest vintage (together with the 2010) of the modern releases produced again since 2008. It’s a textbook example of this unusual rosé a blend of 60% Garnacho (they use the masculine form of the name of the grape), 30% Tempranillo and 10% Viura that matured in American oak barrels for four years, during which time the wine acquired an orange color and nutty nose with notes of candied orange peel, mushroom and forest floor.”

Vinous Media, Apr '21 gave 95 points, Viña Tondonia Gran Reserva (rosé) – “Bright, copper-hued orange. Intensely perfumed strawberry, cherry, blood orange and floral scents are complemented by emerging spiciness and a hint of nuttiness. Energetic red berry, citrus fruit and candied rose flavors show impressive depth as well as vivacity. Lingers with outstanding tenacity on the penetrating finish, which strongly echoes the floral, spice and red fruit notes. This singular wine is showing even better than it did a year ago.”