

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 CUBILLAS - The Viña Cubillo wine comes from the vineyard “Cubillas”, which is 2 miles away from the winery. Its height is 1,348 feet above sea level and the vines have an average age of 40 years. The soil is from the terciaria age, composed of clay and limestone. The surface is 59 acres: Tempranillo, Garnacho, Mazuelo, and Graciano. Historically, the wines from that vineyard were called “Special Harvest”.

VIÑA CUBILLO CRIANZA, 2012/13 (red)



- **Region/Sub-Region:** Spain, Rioja, Rioja Alta.
- **Grapes:** 65% Tempranillo, 25% Garnacho, 5% Graciano and 5% Mazuelo.
- **Soil:** 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:** Hoppers de-stem bunches and gently break skins. Spontaneous fermentation in large 25,000L vats.
- **Aging:** 3 years in 225L American oak barrels handmade by the López de Heredia coopers, racked twice per year and at least 3 years in bottle before released.
- **Nose:** Terrific nose of leather, black cherry, dried raspberries and spice.
- **Taste:** Full palate and complex development, well balanced with firm tannins, red black fruits with earthy undertones.
- **Gastronomy:** All kinds of meats and grilled fish, leg of lamb stuffed with rosemary and garlic, cured meats, anchovies and fatty fish.
- **Color:** Dark deep ruby with garnet rim.

CRITICS AND REVIEWS:

James Suckling, Sept '21 – 93 points – “Enticing aromas of blackberries, leather and cedar with some dried flowers follow through to a medium to full body with firm tannins and a fresh, citrusy finish. Very traditional and real.”

Dr. Owen Bargreen, Sept '21 – 93 points – “Taken from this excellent, warm vintage in La Rioja, the 2012 ‘Vina Cubillo’ is a blend of Tempranillo (65%), with Garnacho (25%), and smaller parts Mazuelo and Graciano from their estate vineyards. The wine quite literally explodes out of the glass, delivering powerful red currant and red cherry aromatics, alongside tobacco leaf, freshly tilled soils and lemon blossom tones that all meld in the glass. The palate is dense, plush and beautifully textured with a wonderful sense of balance. Orange rind flavors combine with a bright core cran-pomegranate, baking spices and leather tones on the palate. A sensational wine now at the nine-year mark, this beautiful wine has another ten years to go in the cellar but is absolutely magical to consume now.”