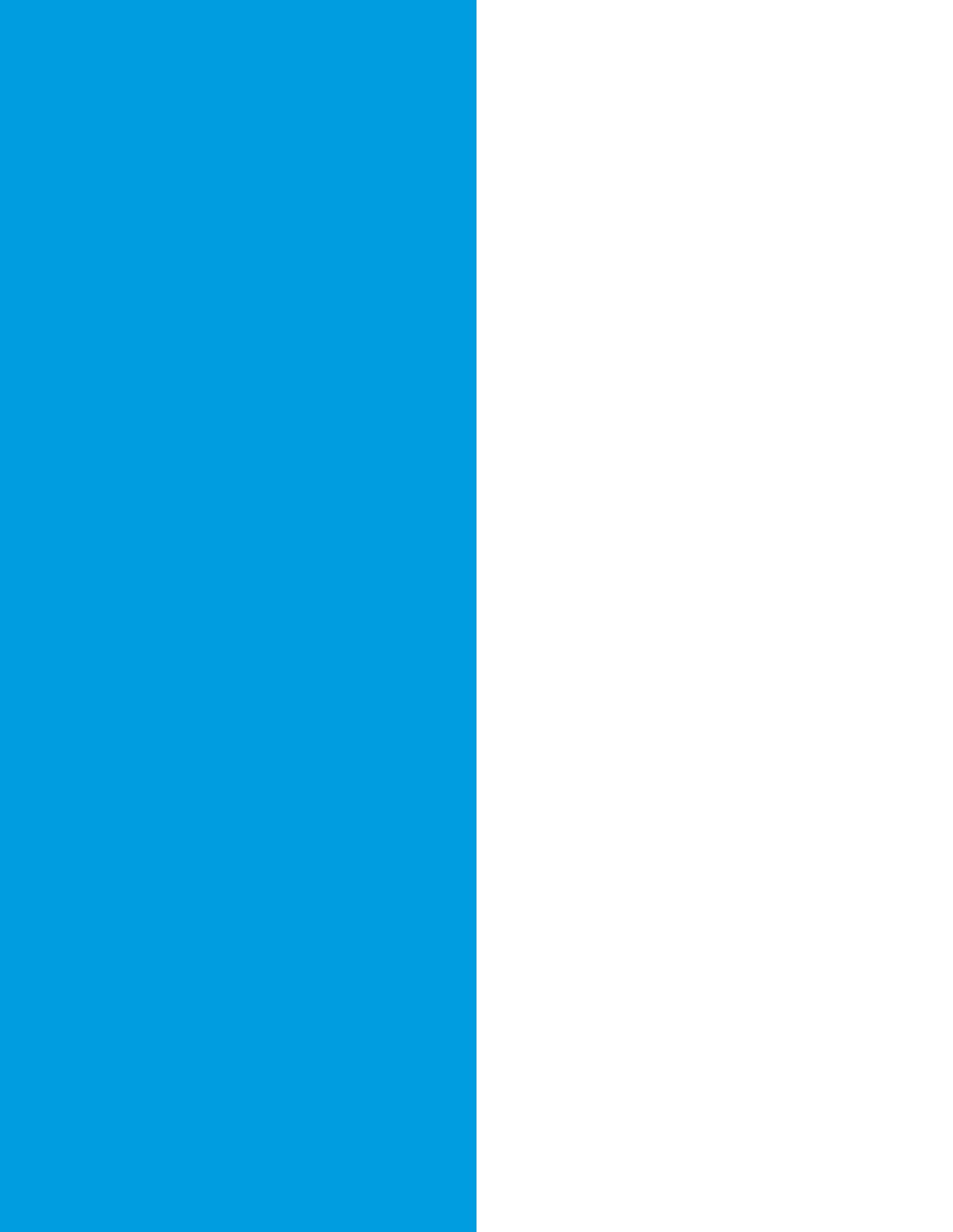




VIN°VI&CO.
SEASON 2015





Wine is an art form that expresses a sense of place as seen through the point of view of a winemaker. For the past eight years I have been committed to VINOVI & CO. with passion and persistence – traveling constantly to Spain to research, taste wines, visit vineyards and listen to wine “maestros” that I have come to admire.

Our portfolio comprises several producers from Spain. They are perfectionists. They have strong personalities. They follow their own obsessions. They are tireless workers. They have passion for their land. They have nurtured an intimate and spiritual relationship with their vines; they know each one, and they pamper them. They are farmers. They are gardeners. They are winemakers.

Their wines tell the story of a place and of a vision. They look for balance, sensuality and purity. They stress the maximum expression of the fruit and the soil. They farm with respect. In each wine there is a part of their soul, their story, their landscape. Their wines talk to us. They do not scream. They whisper their beauty to us. They are happy people. They love what they do and deeply believe in it, and they do it with excitement. Tending the vineyard and winemaking are their lives. One of them told me, “There is so much to learn. It is a beautiful challenge.”

What these winemakers have in common is what makes them successful. Their individuality is what makes every single wine seminal. These wines point to the path to the future of the craft of winemaking in my country, Spain.

I invite you to share my discoveries and take the journey with me,

Salut!

Núria Garrote i Esteve

VIN°VI&CO.

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FOUNDER

NÚRIA GARROTE I ESTEVE

- Is a native Spaniard, born and raised in Barcelona to a Catalan-Galician family.
- Has a Master's degree in mechanical engineering from Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (Barcelona).
- Speaks Spanish, Catalan, French and English and at home in all cultures.
- Travels extensively in Europe, Southeast Asia and North Africa.

MISSION

- To represent an elite Franco-Iberian group of trailblazers producing seminal wines.

VALUES

- Unhurried and patient pursuit of distinguished producers. After four years of repeatedly visiting makers, walking their vineyards and tasting their wines, a highly selective portfolio was assembled.
- I neither dictate nor intervene to tailor a wine to suit the peculiarities of my market.
- There are as many points of view, articulated through wine and cultivation techniques, as there are good wines. My producers are as different from each other as their farms.
- My producers work their farms, typically in emerging wine regions, to turn out small quantities of quality wine.
- My producers are true craftspeople committed to working their own farms in sustainable ways, respecting the environment and the integrity of their own landscape.
- The passion and vision of my producers deliver the ultimate wines of their respective types.

ASSETS

- Informed by 25 years of retail experience in the wine trade, with a deep understanding of the American consumer's preferences and inclinations.
- Comprehension of the needed sales and marketing tools to support our partners, the wholesalers and retailers.
- VIN°VI & CO. maintains offices in Barcelona and Detroit to facilitate logistics and communication.
- Our team's fluency in English, Spanish, Catalan and French languages allow for clear, unfiltered and swift communication with our suppliers.
- A thorough and deep knowledge of the Franco-Iberian market at all levels.

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CAN TUTUSAUS

CAVA, SPAIN



RAIMON BADELL & FERRAN GIL

“Wines that show intimacy.”

Geography is destiny in the world of wine. And when you combine visionary winemakers with a prestigious address, the results defy description. Cava VallDolina from Masia Can Tutusaus exists in its own rarified territory, a city upon a hill in the world of Spanish sparkling wine. Business partners and winemakers Raimon Badell and Ferran Gil are both blessed — by geography, skill and the soul of artistry.

Of all the areas in Penedès producing the classic Cava grapes, only the mountainous terrain in Massís del Garraf, the home of Masia Can Tutusaus, offers the cooling significance of a higher altitude that nurtures a higher acidity in the grapes. The result is a very crisp, highly floral and uncommonly fresh Cava. Of course, the wine cannot make itself. This is where Raimon and Ferran make their mark.

These two hip young men in their 30s met in college while studying viticulture and oenology. Raimon grew up in the wine business, and when he needed a partner to continue making wine at the family estate in Penedès, he found a kindred spirit in his old classmate. Both men believe in making contemporary wines that respect Mediterranean culture without becoming a slave to the past. They respect Mother Nature and, above all, they respect their vines and their soil.

“I am spiritually connected with my plants,” says Raimon, speaking for both men. “My soul is in each wine I make. It’s about making wines that show intimacy.”

MORE AT WWW.VALLDOLINA.COM

ALEMANY I CORRIO

PENEDÈS, SPAIN



IRENE ALEMANY & LAURENT CORRIO

*“As soft as
a gentle kiss”*

Irene Alemany and Laurent Corrio share a passion for winemaking — and for each other. Partners in marriage and the vineyard, theirs is a love story, rich with personal adventure, family, the study of oenology and respect for the French tradition of winemaking. These influences ultimately manifest themselves in the bottle. “Our wine is as soft as a gentle kiss, but one where you end by passionately biting your partner’s lip,” says Irene.

The couple, who met at the University of Burgundy in Dijon, apprenticed in vineyards in France and California. But the turning point was a stopover at Irene’s parents’ home in Penedès on their way back from the United States. It was there that Irene’s father insisted they use the family vines to begin their own operation. The first harvest was in 1999, the first bottling in 2002. From the start, they followed the French school, remaking the classics in their own way.

Their wines — the valuable everyday cuvee Pas Curtei and the notably profound Sot Lefriec — both blend Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Carinyena grapes. Both wines reveal an allegiance to the values of balance, measured reserve, natural process and a sense of place. These are wines that could have come from only Alemany i Corrio. “What we want to accomplish,” says Irene, “is that when people taste our wines there is something in the soul of the wine that talks to them and will make them remember.”

MORE AT WWW.ALEMANY-CORRIO.COM

BILLO

PRIORAT, SPAIN



BLAI FERRÉ JUST

“I like being self-sufficient.”

Making wine is not for the faint of heart. It is hard, difficult work, rarely lucrative and such a mysterious alchemy of art, craft and science that those with the skills and personality to make a go of it like to joke about their mental state. Blai Ferré Just, a young winemaker in his 30s, likes to say that he is the “burro” of the family — the not-so-smart one.

Don’t let him fool you. Blai knows exactly what he is doing. That’s why he has accomplished so much so swiftly. He fell in love with winemaking while as a teenager working the fields for the Spanish wine star Alvaro Palacios. Soon Blai was studying viticulture and oenology, and at 22 — an age at which most young men don’t know who they are or where they’re going — he purchased two small lots in Priorat to start Billo. Don’t expect rapid growth. “I like being self-sufficient and doing everything myself,” says Blai.

Though he could make more money by producing more wine, he purposely limits his output to only 7,000 to 8,000 bottles, relying only on the finest fruit produced in his vineyard. He knows that it’s about quality not quantity. The proof, of course, is in the bottle, where Billo’s blend of Garnatxa, Syrah, Carinyena and Cabernet Sauvignon reveals an intensity, ripeness and balance. The smartest winemakers know the simple truths. As Blai says, “A good wine comes from good work in the vineyard.”

MORE AT WWW.VINOVICO.COM

CA N'ESTRUC

CATALUNYA, SPAIN



FRANCISCO MARTÍ BADÍA

*“I was born here,
and I will die here.”*

Francisco Martí remembers working the vineyards of Ca n'Estruc as a child, riding a donkey through the fields with his grandfather. Today Francisco nurtures those same vines, many of them 80 years old, located near Barcelona in Penedès in the shadow of Montserrat. This is sacred land to Francisco. “I was born here, and I will die here,” he says.

From creation to consumption, Francisco is deeply involved in every aspect of the wine trade. He co-owns Vila Viniteca in Barcelona, the finest wine shop in Spain, and he's a partner in a leading distributor. But his connection to wine starts, as it must, in the vineyards, where he produces some of the best Xarel-lo grapes in Spain, leading to white wines of unusual depth and complexity. Both his whites and reds are highly aromatic, balancing deceiving delicacy with unimpeachable structure.

Francisco takes nothing for granted, building on his heritage with a restless curiosity and drive to carry the spirit of his grandparents into the 21st Century. His vineyards remain a work-in-progress. Recently, for example, he began tightening the space between vines, forcing the roots to compete for nutrients, leading to even more concentrated fruit. For Francisco wine-making is not about aping the past. It's about finding his own way, creating new traditions and using the wisdom of his family history as a compass to help lead the way forward.

MORE AT WWW.VINOVICO.COM

CAN GRAU VELL

CATALUNYA, SPAIN



JORDI CASTELLVÍ

“I have to care.”

Winemaking shouldn't be a hobby, and it shouldn't be a job. At the highest level winemaking is a calling. Jordi Castellví is obsessive about every detail of his operation. Who else would custom-make chairs for his harvest workers so they don't feel rushed in the vineyards and can look the fruit “in the eye” to better judge when it's reached perfection? He knows when each vine was planted and if one should die he grieves as if a member of the family has been lost. “I cannot do it any other way,” says Jordi. “I have to care.”

Can Grau Vell is a rarity — an urban vineyard in an industrial suburb of Barcelona, an unlikely spot for a world-class winery. When Jordi first saw the property, it was planted with olive trees and wheat. A friend in the business told him it was folly to buy the land, but a smitten Jordi followed his heart. The results justify his intuition.

His signature Alcor, a deft blend of Syrah, Garnatxa, Cabernet Sauvignon, Marselan and Monastrell, is intense and sophisticated, full of the can-do spirit of Barcelona. Jordi makes only 6,000 to 8,000 bottles annually, much of it earmarked for the restaurant he owns in Barcelona, the Cafè de l'Acadèmia, which has been recognized as one of the top spots for lunch in Spain. You can only taste his food by traveling to Barcelona but, luckily, his wine comes to us.

MORE AT WWW.GRAUVELL.CAT

CASTELL D'ENCUS

COSTERS DEL SEGRE, SPAIN



RAÜL BOBET

“An act of humility.”

You can tell a lot about a winemaker not only by what he puts in the bottle but what he puts on the label. And the names that Raül Bobet chose for his wines open a window on his philosophy. “Taleia” comes from the Catalan word for obsessive commitment. “Ekam” means unity of the Gods. “Thalarn” was the medieval village south of Castell d’Encus in the Costers del Segre region in the northwest corner of Spain.

Obsessive. A Zen-like belief in the unity of art and science. The primacy of geography. These lie at the core of Raül’s success in turning out sophisticated wines that express a purity of fruit and concentrated intensity balanced by fresh acidity and elegance.

“Castell d’Encus is the result of my love for agriculture and the enjoyment of the challenge of pursuing my own vision,” he says. “It’s a true quest for knowledge and an act of humility in front of mother nature.”

Raül has a Ph.D. in chemistry, but he is no technocrat. The profound marriage of intuition and science and a sense of discovery distinguishes his portfolio, which includes a Syrah (Thalarn), a Riesling (Ekam) and a Sauvignon Blanc-Semillon blend (Taleia). Sitting in the shadow of the Pyrenees, the high elevation of Castell d’Encus has created a unique microclimate and soil that are unmistakable in the bottle. Taste the wines. You’ll know immediately that they are one of a kind.

MORE AT WWW.ENCUS.ORG

DOMINIO DEL UROGALLO

ASTURIAS, SPAIN



NICOLÁS MARCOS

“I like to drink wine.”

The mountainous principality of Asturias in northwest Spain is better known for hard cider than for wine, but Nicolas Marcos is a pioneer. An intense personality, independent thinker and a bit of a provocateur, he left his home in Toro for Asturias because he saw the potential of the region’s soil, climate and indigenous grapes to produce the kind of wines that he loves -- elegant, aromatic, low in alcohol, that pair beautifully with food and express a personality as distinctive as his own.

While many in the wine press shower praise on highly extracted and heavily oaked fruit-bomb wines, Nicolas prefers balance and finesse. Why? “Because I like to drink wine,” he says bluntly.

Nicolas comes from a wine making family, but he had to leave the cozy nest in Toro to follow his muse. A turning point came when he studied under the legendary winemaker Alain Graillot in Crozes Hermitage. It was here that Nicolas’ priorities shifted toward creating more drinkable wines of greater distinction and character. “Alain changed my life,” he says.

Now Nicolas devotes his heart and soul into making red and white wines he calls Pesico, tilling the severe slopes and difficult-to-farm terrain of Asturias. The refined beauty of his wines tells you he knows what he wants and how to get it. As he puts it, “Wine is made by the time it arrives at the winery.”

MORE AT WWW.DOMINIODELUROGALLO.COM

ALBERTO LEDO

BIERZO, SPAIN



ALBERTO LEDO

“I wanted to bring back the family tradition.”

What’s in a name? History, tradition and the promise of excellence. The Ledo brand is legendary Spain. The company ranked as one of the leaders in quality canning for nearly 200 years, before closing in the mid-1990s. But in his late 20s, Alberto Ledo, scion of the famous family, has revived the name for his winery. Alberto was devastated when the factory closed. “I always wanted to bring back the family tradition,” he says. “I always hoped that I could re-open the factory and work here.”

Alberto had been farming and selling his own grapes since 1997. It dawned on him that he could take the next step and make his own wine. He shrewdly realized that the hardest part of making wine is the cultivation, the work in the vineyards, and he had already become an expert. “The wine is made in the vine.”

His Bodega is located in Villafranca del Bierzo, a small village in Castilla y León in the northwest corner of Spain. Alberto’s operation is tiny. He is a one-man band, turning out less than 7,000 bottles annually. Call the Bodegas when he is in the vineyards and his mother is likely to answer the telephone. Made from 100% Mencía, his Ledo .8 crianza captures the essence of fruit in a bottle: jammy, pretty, irresistible. The legacy of the Ledo name raises high expectations, and Alberto soars past them like a man on a mission.

MORE AT WWW.ALBERTOLEDO.COM

ALMAROJA

ARRIBES, SPAIN



CHARLOTTE ALLEN

“Making wine is my life.”

The English-born Charlotte Allen, known as Charlie to her friends, always dreamed of becoming a winemaker. But the odds were stacked against her. She did not come from a winemaking family. She knew nothing about farming or grapes. She did not come from money. And she was a woman hoping to break into a male-dominated industry. When she was working in the wine import business in the United Kingdom a decade ago, even her close friends believed her aspirations were nothing more than a pipedream.

But Charlie knew better. “Making wine is my life,” she says. “It’s all I do, and it is very important to me. That day that I bottled my first wine and put the label on, I started crying.”

She left her job to study winemaking in France and South Africa. Then on the recommendation of friends she landed in Spain, where four years ago she found her way to Fermoselle, a tiny medieval village on the west side of the country in the winemaking region of Arribes. The terrain is difficult and isolated but offers 70-year-old vines and granite soil that impart a complexity, concentration and mineral quality to Almaroja’s red Pirita. There is also a dazzling variety of 17 grape varieties.

“I love the idea of presenting to the world unknown grape varieties,” says Charlie. “My goal is to create a complex and balanced wine, a wine that whispers not that screams.”

MORE AT WWW.ALMAROJA.COM

BELONDRADE

RUEDA, SPAIN



DIDIER BELONDRADE

“We do pioneer work.”

White wines are too often treated like the unloved stepchildren of Spanish winemaking. The conventional wisdom says they don't offer the complexity, power or subtlety of the finest of their red brethren. But as is so often the case, the conventional wisdom is wrong — and it's the innovative vision of Didier Belondrade that helps prove the point. The inspired Rueda produced by Belondrade offers a remarkably profound experience in the glass: crisp but rich, with depth and a sublime balance of fruit, oak and acidity. Here is everything the Verdejo grape was meant to be.

“We consistently do pioneer work,” says Didier, a gentleman farmer and elegant man who favors jaunty pocket-square handkerchiefs with jackets.

The big bang of Didier's revolution was his insistence on fermenting and aging his wine in French oak barrels. Seduced by the potential of Verdejo and the climate and soil of Rueda, he brought the quintessentially Burgundy techniques of barrel fermentation and aging to the region for the first time in the 1990s. This is what has elevated Rueda to new heights. For Didier, the French concept of “terroir” reigns supreme: The character of a wine, he believes, should always reflect the address of its creation.

Marta Baquerizo, the winemaker at Belondrade, puts it this way: “Our wines are an expression of our soils and the Verdejo grape along with Didier's personal interpretation and touch.”

MORE AT WWW.BELONDRADE.COM

CÉSAR PRÍNCIPE

CIGALES, SPAIN



IGNACIO PRÍNCIPE

“Unlock the magic of the vine.”

Picasso had his brush. Heifetz had his bow. Ignacio Príncipe has his pruning shears. A virtuoso in the vineyard, he wields his sharpened blades like a sculptor. Blink and you’ll miss it. Snap. Crackle. The hands blur. In less than 45 seconds, a voluptuous vine is pruned to its concentrated essence, three fundamental branches remaining to form a “seat” with enough strength and structure to hold the weight of a man should he need a place to rest. Now it is nature’s turn. The less promising buds have been sacrificed for those more likely to produce glory in the glass. How does the winemaker know which is which? That’s why it’s called the art of winemaking.

“I strive to unlock the magic of the vine,” says Ignacio.

Bodegas César Príncipe is located in Cigales, a small, fast-rising region just north of the well-known Ribera del Duero. The cognoscenti know that Cigales winemakers like Ignacio are creating masterpieces from Tempranillo. Made from 60- to 70-year-old vines, his wines have true density, and they are certainly fit for the cellar. Yet they also offer harmony when young and immediate gratification. Intense fruit, lively acidity and pleasing tannin all come together to deliver maturity. Yes, this is wine making as it should be. Ignacio is a hands-on producer. Not every winemaker is as comfortable with his hands in the soil. But then, not every winemaker is an artist.

MORE AT WWW.CESARPRINCIPE.ES

DOMAINES LUPIER

NAVARRA, SPAIN



ELISA UCAR & ENRIQUE BASARTE

“We had to do something.”

The past holds the seeds of the future. So it is with art, music, literature and wine. Enrique Basarte and Elisa Ucar, the husband-and-wife team behind Domaines Lupier, know that today’s innovations in viticulture will be built on knowledge of history and tradition. In their case it’s all about old vines: They have rescued abandoned garnacha vines, some as ancient as 109 years old, that other producers around San Martín de Unx in Navarra were ignoring.

“It was spiritually painful to us,” says Elisa. “Being in love with garnacha, we had to do something.”

And so they have. The couple, both of whom have been involved in the wine industry for some 15 years, studied parcels in the area, tasting grapes from each to select the most interesting and the most promising. They acquired 27 micro plots at various elevations, each a treasure offering its own unique terroir.

Elisa and Enrique believe in biodiversity and in using microbiology to assure their soil remains alive with nutrients, but their philosophy of winemaking remains rooted in three words: purity, simplicity and authenticity. Their two cuvees – each made from 100% garnacha – are at once dense and clean, hinting at the traditionally savage profile of garnacha but transformed by soft tannins and exquisite finesse.

In the end, the wines are made in the vineyard.

As Elisa explains in Spanish, “Es lo que es” (“It is what it is”).

MORE AT WWW.DOMAINESLUPIER.COM

GARCÍA BURGOS

NAVARRA, SPAIN



D.O. NAVARRA



JAVIER GARCÍA BURGOS

“I wanted to share.”

Sometimes promises are meant to be broken. Javier García Burgos represents the 9th generation of grape growers in his family and the first to establish the García Burgos winemaking estate. Yet on his deathbed, his father, concerned about the hardship of a farmer’s life, made Javier promise to abandon the family business. Destiny, however, had other plans. Javier was drawn inexorably to the land; his aunt relieved him of his burden, telling him she would make it right with his father in the afterlife.

“There was something very special about our grapes that I wanted to share,” says Javier.

Bogedas García Burgos is in Murchante, a farming town in Navarra, known for its great wines (and great vegetables.) Javier’s philosophy involves treating the vines as if they were cherished members of his family — the fruit is coddled with respect, love, attention and an intimate understanding of the soil and the whims of nature. When Javier touches the vines he feels as if he is touching his own soul. “They are a part of me,” he says. “We’re a team. They know I understand them. Together we achieve the objective of making big wines.”

Javier’s Vendimia Seleccionada is made from Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot; his Sh comes from 100% Syrah. Both wines express a maturity, classicism and supple elegance. If Javier’s father were here to taste them, he would be as proud of his son as only a father can be.

MORE AT WWW.BODEGASGACIABURGOS.COM

ARTUKE

RIOJA, SPAIN



ARTURO & QUIQUE DE MIGUEL BLANCO

“Work to be done.”

Brothers Arturo and Kike Blanco were born into the vineyard. Their family had given its soul to growing vines in Rioja for nearly a century when, in 1991, their parents founded Artuke Bodegas y Vinedos in the small town of Baños de Ebro, Álava. In 2005 the brothers assumed responsibility for the winery, elevating its ambition and expanding its portfolio of wines. The results have been a deeply personal statement of their vision. They are driven by excellence. “There still is a lot of work to be done,” says Arturo.

The brothers represent the new generation of Rioja, but they are guided by tradition. They believe in non-interventionism, biodynamic practices and manual harvesting. And Artuke is one of only a few producers in Rioja who stomp their grapes by foot in fermenting vats. The practice helps create the full body and seductive mouth feel of Artuke’s profound village wines: its singular Carbonic Maceration (“CM”) and Pies Negros.

The vineyard sits in the rarified terroir of the Rioja Alavesa, which helps impart to Artuke’s wines a kind of beautiful balance and finesse (but also full body) not often found in the wines of Rioja. Like the brothers who make them, Artuke wines are sophisticated but also refreshingly down-to-earth.

“We are from a very small peasant town and very proud to be,” says Arturo.

MORE AT WWW.ARTUKE.COM

MAS L'ALTET

VALENCIA, SPAIN



NINA COOLSAET & ALFREDO ESTEVE

“Each bottle has its own life.”

At the heart of Bodega Mas l'Altet are the twin passions for family and for wine. Nina Coolsaet and Alfredo Esteve, the wife-and-husband team behind this small, artisan winery in Valencia, met by happenstance on the first day of master's study of oenology at Aranda del Duero. Both engineers, the couple had enrolled independently to indulge their love of wine. When Alfredo entered the classroom, there was only one seat open – next to Nina. The rest, as they say, is history.

When it came time to start their own project, Alfredo and Nina turned to family history for inspiration. Alfredo's beloved grandfather was a farmer who shared with his grandson the dream of reviving the winemaking tradition on the family land, where the vines were all lost a century ago to Phylloxera. (Even before Alfredo met Nina he had experimented by planting some vines on the property.) But now the couple together planted two hectares, and as an homage they decided to call the resulting wine “Avi” – the Catalan word for “grandfather.”

Made from Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Garnatxa the wine is notable for its freshness, ripe fruit, good acid and integrated wood. Balance and harmony in the glass and in the field are touchstones for Alfredo and Nina who strive to make wine that infused with the spirit of life, love and culture. “With total respect for Mother Nature we make wine,” says Alfredo. “Each bottle has its own life.”

MORE AT WWW.MASLALTET.BLOGSPOT.COM.ES

SONHO LUSITANO

PORTUGAL



RICHARD MAYSON

“I wanted to prove it.”

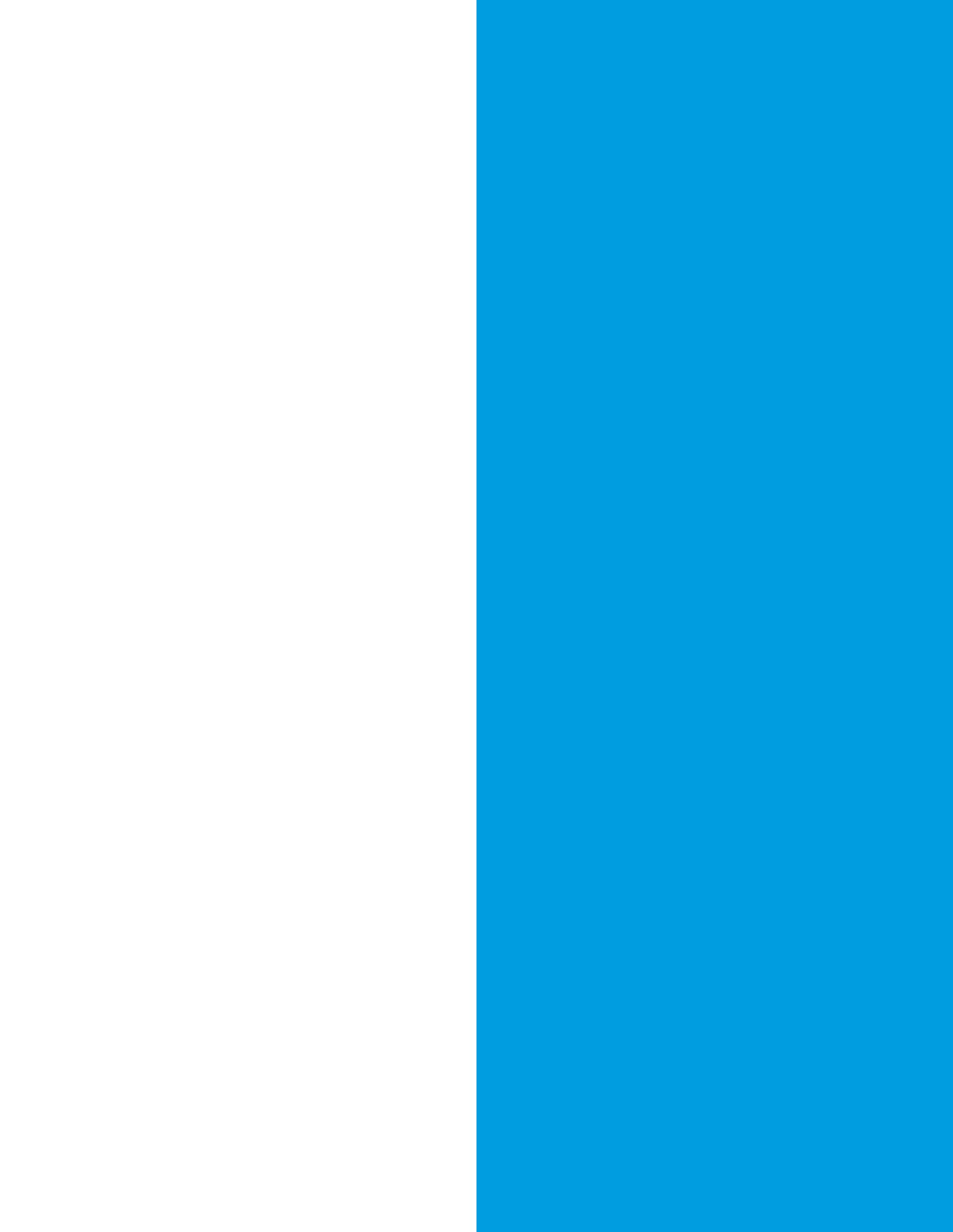
As a distinguished wine writer and author of five books on Portuguese wine, the British-born Richard Mayson has championed Portugal as a treasure trove of varied terroir and indigenous grapes with world-class potential. So when he decided to put his money where his mouth was and make wine himself he knew the stakes were high. “I wanted to prove it,” Richard says.

He fell in love with Portugal in 1979 when he worked for a summer at a restaurant in Algarve. As early as 1989 he had identified the under-the-radar Portalegre sub-region in the Alentejo in the south as an ideal breeding ground for great wine: The high altitude of the Serra de São Mamede mountain range, the moderate climate and the soil of granite and schist all promised to produce miracles in the glass.

Richard purchased the Quinta do Centro vineyard in 2005 and created Sonho Lusitano (“Lusitanian Dream”) with partner Rui Reguinga, a winemaker and consultant. From the start Richard aimed to make a splash on the international stage with wines firmly rooted in the local terroir. He produces three red wines, each a distinctive blend of grapes such as Trincadeira, Tempranillo, Alicante Bouschet, Touriga Nacional and others. The wines are highly concentrated but beautifully balanced, showing earth, acidity and finesse. “I want to put our obscure corner of Portugal, the Serra de São Mamede, on the world wine map,” says Richard.

Actually, he already has.

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