OLÉ & OBRIGADO
WINE & SPIRITS WITH HEART & SOUL

La Antigua Clásico Blanco

La Antigua Clásico is one of Alberto Orte's most enduring history projects and shows off an unexplored region of Rioja, the western mountain range of Sierra de la Demanda. Inspired by the style of winemaking that was popular in the first half of the 20th century, Alberto's winemaking emphasizes freshness and minerality, leading to balanced, long-lived wines. To that end, he has found old vine Garnacha, Tempranillo and Graciano in Sierra de la Demanda, south of the Ebro river in Rioja Alta.

The north-facing, high-altitude vineyards receive far less sunshine than those in the valley, resulting in grapes that ripen slowly, showcasing intense flavors of greater balance and focus. This poses quite a risk that only hands-on viticulture can remedy: this area is one of the last to harvest in all of Western Europe, usually in early November! In addition to the cool climate, Sierra de la Demanda's vineyards are extremely scattered and steep. This terrain is impossible to mechanize, and all vineyard work must be done by hand. The result is a handcrafted wine of precision and elegance – fresh and beautiful to drink now, with built-in longevity.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: La Antigua Clásico Blanco is inspired by the white Rioja winemaking of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Made from heirloom clones of old-vine Viura, Garnacha Blanca and Tempranillo Blanco. Partially aged under flor, La Antigua Clasico Blanco showcases a style that is savory and umami-rich, paying homage to a time when wineries were allowed to add Fino or Manzanilla sherry to the wine to increase structure and stability.

RATING HISTORY: 2019 94WE 'Cellar Selection', 91WS; 2018 93WE, 92IWS; 2016 91VM; 2014 91VM; 2013 92JS

GRAPE: 70% Viura, 20% Garnacha Blanca, 10% Tempranillo Blanco. Vines planted since 1965. Tended in red silica soil at 700 m (2,296 ft) elevation.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Aged for 14 to 18 months - depending on vintage - in a blend of 80% French and 20% American oak barrels; a blend of new and used. 10% of the wine is aged under natural flor: a thin layer of native yeast naturally forming on top of the wine in barrel.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Sustainably grown vines planted since 1965. Tended in red silica soil at 700 m (2,296 ft) elevation.

TASTING NOTES Green-tinged gold. Meyer lemon, toasted grain, ginger and white flowers on the mineral-accented nose. Fleshy and dry on the palate, offering concentrated citrus and orchard fruit flavors and complicating notes of tarragon and honey. Shows a suave blend of richness and vivacity. Finishes spicy and very long, featuring lingering notes of bitter pear skin and candied ginger. -- Josh Raynolds.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 12.0%

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