

O Raio da Vella Albariño



In 2012, Rodrigo Méndez launched a personal project under his own name with the goal of producing wines that authentically reflect the terroir of Galicia's Rías Baixas region while adhering to biodynamic farming principles. Rooted in his family's legacy and inspired by his grandfather's teachings, Rodrigo emphasizes simplicity, authenticity, and a profound respect for the land. His approach blends intuition and tradition, drawing on ancestral practices to express the character of Galicia's coastal landscape.

The winery, located in Meaño, Pontevedra, operates on a small scale and produces very limited quantities each year. Traditional methods are used, combining stainless steel tanks with oak barrels to craft wines that convey both purity and depth. Every aspect of production is guided by respect for nature, from vineyard management to minimal intervention in the cellar.

O Raio da Vella is made from young vineyards whose grapes are harvested manually. The wine is produced in very small quantities, with fewer than 2,000 bottles each year, reflecting Rodrigo's commitment to quality and authenticity over scale.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: O Raio da Vella is a single-vineyard Albariño that balances the vibrant intensity of young vines with the elegance achieved through extended aging in foudre. This wine stands out for its exceptional aromatic complexity and refined texture.

RATING HISTORY: 2023 96VM, 93+WA; 2022 96TA, 92WE, 92WA; 2021 94W&S, 93WA, 92WE; 2019 94VM, 93WA; 2018 92WA; 2017 92WA

GRAPE: 100% Albariño

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: O Raio da Vella's vibrant acidity and salinity make it an excellent match for grilled shellfish, citrus-glazed fish, or seafood paella. Its aromatic complexity pairs beautifully with creamy goat cheese, roasted vegetables like fennel and asparagus, and herb-infused poultry such as roasted chicken with lemon and bay leaf. The wine's texture and length also complement dishes with fennel or olive oil, enhancing its bright, mineral character.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Fermented with native yeasts and aged on the lees for 12 months in 4-year-old French oak foudre (2,500 liters).

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Rías Baixas lies in the lush, rolling hills of northwest Spain, just above Portugal, where it meets the deep blue Atlantic coastline. This stunning region includes Val do Salnés, the birthplace of Albariño, which stands out as the coolest and most fertile subzone of the D.O. Rías Baixas. The O Raio da Vella vineyard is located near the Atlantic in the municipality of Castrelo de Miño, Pontevedra. This 1.5-hectare estate is split between Albariño and indigenous red varieties, with a planting density of 1,400 vines. The vineyard is traditionally trellised and planted in sandy, kaolin soils of granitic origin.

TASTING NOTES This wine offers intense aromas of Meyer lemon, bay leaf, fennel, white grapefruit, lime rind, with subtle notes of paperwhites and lemon meringue. On the palate, these flavors persist, complemented by fennel, quince, and a silky olive oil texture. The wine has impressive length, with a vibrant backbone of acidity and salinity that reflects its coastal origins.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13%

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