

Cortijo Blanco



There are volumes written on the use of oak and the winemaking practices of Rioja, but to the team making Cortijo it all boils down to a simple proverb: to make better wine, you need to harvest better grapes. Rather than build a chateau or a beautiful tasting room, Cortijo focuses on cultivating the most meaningful ingredient (perfect, healthy grapes) and preserving its character after harvest by limiting the use of oak in all their wines. To uphold their resolve, since 2009 the winery uses only estate-grown fruit from the home of the best wineries in the valley, Rioja Alta. The elevation of Rioja Alta, its ideal climate and its limestone-based clay soils are all powerful arguments for declaring it the best place for grape-growing in the Iberian Peninsula. Cortijo Blanco is made from viura, the most widely planted white grape in Rioja and the backbone of all the most revered whites of the region. Aged 100% stainless steel, Cortijo offers an unadulterated look at the vibrance and minerality of viura from Rioja.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: A pure, bright expression of estate-grown fruit from one of the most humble-yet-quality-driven wineries in Rioja Alta. The emphasis is entirely on showing the mineral stone fruit flavors that define Viura, and rejecting the traditional oak elements that hide them.

RATING HISTORY: 2015 88VM; 2013 89IWC; 2011 89RP

GRAPE: 100% Viura. Vines planted in 1973. Tended in clay and limestone soil at 630 m (2,067ft) elevation

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: This white wine's clean character is a perfect pairing for grilled chicken or steak salads, thin-crust brick oven pizza (especially Margherita with fresh basil), and most seafood dishes. This wine's easy drinking character is an excellent match for most casual foods. It's also a perfect sipper all by itself, especially for the summer.



VINIFICATION AND AGEING: After picking during the cool morning hours, the grapes are transported to the winery in small boxes, and then they are de-stemmed and crushed. The skins mix with the unfermented juice for three days. Fermentation takes place in stainless steel tanks. The slow fermentation process (30 days at 12C or 54F) allows Cortijo Blanco to retain a high degree of richness and flavor. When vinifying viura, the challenge is to help the grape overcome any neutral aromas and flavors. Skin contact and long, slow fermentation are both strong solutions. After fermentation, the wine ages in stainless steel tank for 2 months on the lees. To retain freshness, the wine does not undergo malolactic fermentation. After a light filtration, the wine is bottled.

PRODUCTION: 10,000 cases

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: The estate-owned vineyards are located in the towns of Najera, within the Rioja Alta (Zone 3), at approximately 630 meters (2,067t.) elevation. The soils are clay and limestone. For climate, the average temperature from April-October is 61.5F with 18.3 inches of yearly rainfall. The moderately warm days and cool nights of this Continental Atlantic climate forces the grapes to ripen slowly, resulting in wines that show brighter aromas and more fruit flavors.

TASTING NOTES Pale gold. Sharply focused lemon zest, pear and floral scents carry subtle honey and herb overtones. Dry and fleshy in the mouth, offering bitter citrus pith and fresh fig flavors that put on weight with air. Nicely concentrated yet nervy, finishing with good energy and warm, fruity persistence.-- Josh Reynolds

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 12.5%

UPC CODE: 810411010242

