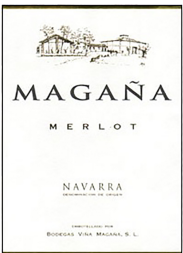


Viña Magaña Merlot



Diego Magaña

Magaña Merlot an estate-bottled wine made by Bodegas Viña Magaña in the Navarra DO, a wine region located just northeast of Rioja. The 100-hectare (247 acre) estate is located in the southern part of Navarra, just south of the Ebro River. Spanish wine aficionados who consider Navarra strictly a source for bulk wines would do well to reflect on what owner Juan Magaña has accomplished. Thirty years ago, Juan had a vision. After researching the best wines in the world, he decided to grow Bordeaux grapes in Navarra. He bought Merlot cuttings from a nursery that sold to a famous chateaux in St. Emilion and Pomerol, and most notably the hallowed Chateau Pétrus. Starting as a pioneer in Navarra, over the years Juan's bodega has become a reference point for quality in the region. Magaña Merlot is a limited-production wine made only in the best vintage years. Since 1976, this wine has been released just nine times: 1980, 1982, 1985, 1987, 1989, 1990, 2001, 2005 and 2007. One of the secrets to Magaña's excellence can be found in the unique qualities of its place of origin. The vineyards are special. The limestone soil in the southern district of Navarra imparts distinct characters of minerality and acidity. Of all the grape varieties grown on the estate, Merlot is best able to capture the minerality of the soil.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: Since 1976, this wine has only been made 9 times. The wine is produced from a single vineyard owned by the Magaña family. The vineyard has limestone soil and the vines were propagated from Petrus Merlot cuttings (181 Class A). The vineyard has a unique microclimate that helps produce Bordeaux-like (Pomerol) wines with good acidity. Magaña Merlot communicates with precision the mineral identity of the soil of this special vineyard.

RATING HISTORY: 2011 89WA; 2009 91IWC; 2007 92+RP

GRAPE: 100% Merlot. Vines planted in 1975. Tended in limestone soil with river stones at 335 m (1,099ft) elevation. This is a vegan wine.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: This voluptuous red wine will pair very well with rich, opulently flavored meats and fowl with a sweet, gamey character. Lamb and veal fit the bill, as does partridge, pheasant, game hen, duck and chicken, especially when roasted. The richly layered flavors of Merlot also find a perfect foil in sauces based on wild or heirloom mushrooms.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: The wine is aged for fourteen months in French oak barrels that are two years old.

PRODUCTION: 300 cases (6 pack)

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Zone 4, at an elevation of 335 meters (1,099 ft.). The vineyards are just 400 meters from the Rioja border south of Alfaro. Of the five districts in Navarra, Ribera Baja, where Magaña is located, is unique compared to the other districts because of its limestone bedrock and distinct microclimate. The winery is located in the town of Barillas. For soils, thick river stones sit atop solid limestone bedrock. The climate is classified in Zone 4, Continental and Mediterranean. In short, it is warm and dry. Magaña's temperatures from April-October average 63.7F with low levels of rainfall, 8.3 inches per year. The microclimate of the Magaña vineyards imparts a hearty character to these wines, making them richer, beefier and vibrant with bright acidity, all of which helps them age for many years!

TASTING NOTES Bright red berries and cherry on the perfumed nose, with sexy Asian spices and a floral element adding complexity. Deep and sweet but at the same time lively and focused, presenting vibrant bitter cherry and floral pastille flavors. Silky tannins build on a very long, pliant, smoke- and spice-accented finish.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 14.5%

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