



IPO WINES

2019 Dominio del Águila Albillo Viñas Viejas

IMPORTED BY European Cellars (Eric Solomon)

COUNTRY

Spain

REGION

Castilla Y León

APPELLATION

Ribera Del Duero

SOIL TYPE

Sandy clay limestone, clay, gravel

VARIETAL(S)

100% Albillo

FARMING

Organic

WINEMAKER

Jorge Monzon Pascual



ABOUT THE PRODUCER

As a young student of enology, Jorge Monzón traveled to Burgundy. Despite not speaking a word of French or having any recommendations, let alone experience, he convinced Domaine La Romanée-Conti to take him on as an intern. His eagerness and desire to learn led him to shadow maître de chai, Bernard Noblet, observing all the steps he took to create the famed wines of this historic Domaine. Returning to Ribera del Duero and his hometown of La Aguilera, Jorge worked a couple of years at Vega Sicilia, attempting to create a white wine to rival the estate's reds before becoming the technical director at Arzuaga-Navarro. While working for others, Jorge began purchasing old vineyards around La Aguilera – parcels in danger of being ripped up and replaced with more productive clones of Tempranillo as well as “fashionable” Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot, and Malbec. These undesirable vineyards were ancient, unproductive massale selections of Tempranillo mixed with a diverse range of other varieties, including a high proportion of white grapes – all “useless” in a region that prized extraction, production, and the everything new and shiny.

Jorge's years at DRC only focused his vision and conviction that *terruño* and tradition matter. His vineyards, some planted before phylloxera, or right after it struck, were planted exactly as they had been for centuries – predominantly Tempranillo with a wide genetic diversity alongside Albillo, Tempranillo Gris, Cariñena, Garnacha, Bobal, Bruñal and others so obscure that they haven't been identified yet. Ranging in age from 60-150+ years old, it is surprising that these vines survived at all considering the recent trends in Ribera del Duero.

With his wife, Isabel Rodero, Jorge founded Dominio del Águila in 2010, and they have expanded their vineyards to 66 hectares. Farming is certified organic and Isabel, an architect, supervised the renovation of three ancient cellars dating to the 15th century dug deep into the bedrock under the village. Natural yeast, whole cluster co-fermentations are the first step in the process with pigeage done by foot. After primary fermentation, the wines are placed in oak barrels for malo and aging. Their cold, subterranean cellars ensure that their wines' evolution proceeds slowly, allowing for the development of greater complexity and nuance.

WINE NOTES

Albillo is a catch-all name for a diverse collection of white grape varieties in Spain. Since the name derives from the Spanish word for white, Albillo can differ from region to region and can even be used for different varieties within a single D.O.! For example, in Ribera del Duero, several ancient varieties are called Albillo. Jorge makes it simple. He only selects Albillo with small clusters and a deep golden color when fully ripe to make his Blanco.

This is the Albillo Mayor from Ribera del Duero, unrelated to the other Albillo (Real, Criollo...) from vines that are over 100 years old, some ungrafted. The clusters were foot trodden, and the juice put in oak casks to ferment slowly with indigenous yeasts and without stirring the lees or anything, using minimum doses of sulfur. The wine matured in oak barrels for 35 months before it was hand bottled without being filtered or fined. This has a very Burgundian profile—it's aromatic, expressive, open, smoky, spicy and flinty. But this overdelivers for the adverse conditions of the harvest; it has very good balance and is tasty, intense and chalky.