

Bernabeleva

Extraordinary New Wines Born from a Rich Family Legacy

With a modern highway nearing completion, San Martín de Valdeiglesias lies a mere 75 minutes from Madrid and its three million inhabitants. Yet, the journey feels much longer, both in distance and in time. As one drives west from the capital city, the terrain quickly becomes rugged and mountainous, the air cooler, and one begins to see signs of an earlier era.

BERNABALEVA



Above, Vincente's daughter, Luisa, sitting atop an ancient stone "bear."

Here, on the eastern edge of Spain's Sierra de Gredos mountains, a renowned Madrid doctor, Vincente Alvarez-Villamil, purchased land in 1923. The site, which at that time was a full day's travel from Madrid, spoke of its Celtic past, with ancient bears carved from boulders to mark forests dedicated to the hunt goddess.

But the estate, which Vincente named Bernabeleva ("the bear's forest"), held

more than just an ancient history—it was, he believed, a special place to plant the noble Garnacha (Grenache)—a place whose wines might exhibit profound character.

But the next decade brought increased political instability to Spain, and the Civil War of 1936 devastated the country. Though the family held onto the land, Vincente's dream of making wine ended ... for the time being.

THE DREAM LIVES ON



Above, the modern-day estate symbol.

In 2006, two of Vincente's great-grandchildren, Juan Diez Bulnes and Santiago Matallana Bulnes, vowed to fulfill their ancestor's dream. The estate's vineyards were now 80-years-old, and there were Garnacha vineyards to purchase from neighboring properties as well. Rejecting

current fashions in Spanish wine, the cousins resolved to make wines of purity and expressiveness that were in harmony with the beauty of their ancestral land.

Juan and Santiago's ambitions were well supported by the *terroir*. The vineyards are more than a half mile above sea level, with warm days but cool

nights, and with poor, sandy soils. The resulting wines have ample ripeness, but also astounding bouyancy and freshness.

The cousins wanted, above all, to protect the unique personality of their estate, and they hired consultant Raúl Pérez, a master of cool-climate winemaking, to help them develop the project.

Just as important, they hired as full-time manager a young Catalan named Marc Isart Pinos. Marc's devotion to demanding viticulture and to non-interventionist winemaking have served the cousins' vision well.

Their regime emphasizes long fermentations, and minimal handling. Wines are aged in barrels of different sizes, but very little new wood is used so as not to mask the glorious aromatics.

THE WINES

CAMINO DE NAVAHERREROS—Fermented and raised in large neutral wood, it is explosive and fresh.

NAVAHERREROS—This wine is the essence of San Martín Garnacha. A selection of estate Garnacha aged in 2nd & 3rd passage oak barrels.

CARRIL DEL REY—Eighty-year-old south-facing

vineyard. Powerful wines, with dark aromas.

ARROYO DEL TÓRTOLAS—North-facing vineyard at 800m elevation yields bright, intensely aromatic wines.

VIÑA BONITA—Shallow sand over granite produces meager yields and intense, complete wines.

BERNABELEVA

San Martin de Valdeiglesias, Spain

OVERVIEW

Established: 2006
First Vintage: 2007
Proprietor: Juan Diez Bulnes
Winemaker: Raul Perez & Marc Isart Pinos

San Martin de Valdeiglesias lies at the northwestern corner of the Viños de Madrid appellation. Located at a high elevation, with deep sandy soils, it produces wines unlike anything else in the Madrid region.

VINEYARD INFORMATION

Soils: Granitic sand
Vines: Primarily old Garnacha, with small quantities of Albillo
Elevation: 700-900 m
Appellation: Viños de Madrid – San Martin de Valdeiglesias
Harvest: by hand

VINTAGE NOTES

2009 – A hot dry summer stressed the vines, but September rains allowed them to complete ripening. Careful selection was necessary to eliminate over-ripe or desiccated grapes.
2008 – Cool summer with beautiful Indian summer harvesting condition.
2007 – Difficult year with some rain near harvest.

ADDITIONAL WINEMAKING NOTES

No filtration or fining
25-60 day maceration
Minimal usage of new oak
Organic, leaning to Biodynamic, viticulture

The Wines

“Camino de Navaherreros”

Fruit Source: Estate vineyards and purchased fruit
Avg. Yields: ~35 hl/hA
Oak Aging: Aged primarily in large wooden upright vats.
Avg. Production: 2,000 cases

“Navaherreros”

Fruit Source: A selection of estate and purchased fruit
Avg. Yields: 30-35 hl/hA
Oak Aging: Aged primarily in used oak barrels
Avg. Production: 1,200 cases

“Carril del Rey”

Fruit Source: A single vineyard with southern exposition and 80-year-old vines
Avg. Yields: 25-30 hl/hA
Oak Aging: Oak 225-, 300-, 500-, and 600-L barrels, with no more than 25% new
Avg. Production: 200 cases

“Arroyo del Tórtolas”

Fruit Source: A single north-facing vineyard at 800+m with vines over 65 years old
Avg. Yields: 30 hl/hA
Oak Aging: Oak 225-, 300-, 500-, and 600-L barrels, with no more than 25% new
Avg. Production: 220 cases

“Viña Bonita”

Fruit Source: A single south-facing vineyard at 700m with extremely shallow sandy soils
Avg. Yields: 30 hl/hA
Oak Aging: Oak 225L barrels, with no more than 25% new
Production: 95 cases