

BODEGAS LAS CEPAS

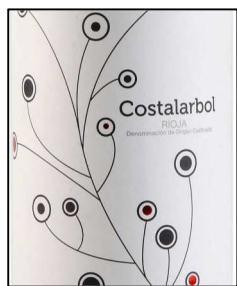
DOCa Rioja (uruñuela)

Bodegas las Cepas is an organic producer of Rioja from the village of Uruñuela, 20 km south and west of Logroño in between Rio Ebro and Sierra de la Demanda. The nearest village is Najera, a significant source of quality Garnacha. San Asensio and Cardenas are to the north and south, placing us square in 'Clarete-land'. This is very dry country, and there is a wealth of biodiversity around and in the vineyards. The lack of humidity is crucial to Las Cepas, who specialise in growing Graciano. In all, they have 50 hectares of vines, most in the 40-100 years age range.

Las Cepas is a family winery, founded by two brothers Alberto and Santiago Ramirez. Alberto is the winemaker and Santiago the viticulturalist. Graciano is a variety of great utility (added long, noble structure, firm tannin, fine acidity), but also low yielding near to the point of uneconomical, and Graciano wines can be a little firm and unilateral (much in the manner of Touriga Nacional). Not so at Bodegas Las Cepas ...

Bodegas Las Cepas 'Costalarbol' Graciano blend

Costalarbol is 60% Graciano, with 20% each Tempranillo and Garnacha. It's fermented in 3,000 litre porous concrete, controlled at mild temperature. Malo takes place in barrel, after which the varieties are blended and the wine ages 6 months in French oak.



Aromatic, wild blueberries fill the nose, which is sleek and composed, gently compelling. The structure of Graciano is clear in the mouth, with fine and elongated tannin yielding to gently persistent acidity. A wine of great line and freshness, fleshed out by beautifully judged fruit to engender a sense of relaxed ease. Graciano lays the table, Tempranillo and Garnacha come to the party. In a triumph of Viti over Vini, the tannins are perfectly formed and filled with the flavour and texture of ripe sweet seeds, so there is pip and dust subtly informing the tannin line, yet not a skerrick of excess fruitiness, or vinosity.