

## Cillar de Silos, D.O. Ribera del Duero

### Archetype of the shift from co-op growers to family estate producer, first vintage 1995

This is an archetypal modern estate: the Aragon family have produced wines on their own estate since building their bodega in 1994. Previously, they were typical growers, working their own land and selling fruit to the local co-op. Nowadays, 68 hectares of the Aragons' own vines are maintained with great care: low-cropped, with organic best practice farming and sensitive handling in the purpose-built winery on the property.



The vineyards of Cillar de Silos have been accumulated by Amalio Aragon over nearly 50 years (the DO has only been in existence since 1982). Local Tinto Fino vines are planted on poor sand/clay soils at 860-900 metres altitude in “the roof of Ribera del Duero” in small plots scattered through the hills surrounding the villages of Quintana del Pidio and Gumiel de Mercado. In the northern reach of Ribera del Duero, the extreme continental climate has extremely cold winters and blazing hot summers. A massive diurnal temperature range promotes both the accumulation of grape sugar and the retention of grape acidity.

In 1994, Amalio Aragon yielded to his three kids. Oscar who would be winemaker, Roberto who would be business manager, and Amelia who would run marketing and exports. The kids took over the farm in what is one of the clearest examples of the shift in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century whereby great family producers could be established by withdrawing from volume-oriented production for the co-op (or the big company robber barons) and with lower crops and better viticulture make great estate wines. The Aragons did this at Cillar de Silos.

It's a significant story for several reasons.

- First and foremost, the wines of Cillar de Silos are beautiful – smart versions of earthy country wines, for drinking and not for show.
- Secondly, the whole story runs exactly counter to the socio-economic trends of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Instead of going off to the big smoke to study, work and live as city folk, the Aragon kids went away to study and then came back to take over the farm, maintaining a familial continuity and a re-affirmation and re-invigoration of ‘country life’.
- The wines they have made are so exceptional, so exemplary, that a decade or so later, the co-op asked the Aragons to make wines for them! Nowadays, there is a small range of wines released under the ‘el Quintanal’ label, whereby Roberto and Oscar advise the Quintana del Pidio co-op's growers on viticultural practice and then make a selection of the resulting fruit into quality wine for them ... revolutionary stuff.



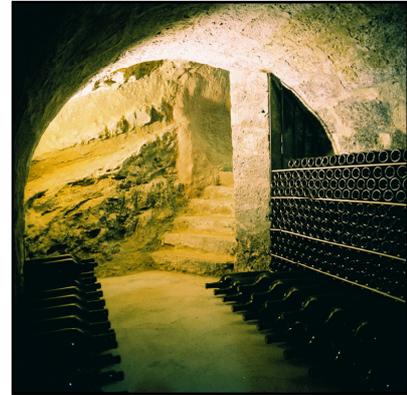
### An integrated hierarchy of wines is produced.

- A saignee-style Rosado wine
- An un-wooded *Joven*, structured by high quality natural, textural, fruit tannins and acid
- An estate blend aged in older French oak, labelled as *Crianza*
- 3 deluxe wines aged in newer French oak:
- Torresilo, Flor de Silos and La Vinya de Amalio.

The bodega is just a few hundred metres out of Quintana del Pidio on the way towards Gumiel and Burgos. This facility has been re-built, extended and amended every year or two in an ongoing commitment of capital investment.

All fruit is hand selected in the field and then hand-sorted upon reception in the bodega. Most fermentations are in stainless steel, all fruit is de-stemmed, and the wines are gently macerated for 7-10 days, with daily pump-overs, lightly pressed to undergo malolactic in French oak (except the Jovens). New oak is used for the deluxe wines, Crianza and Vermut are aged in 1-4yo wood (Joven is unoaked).

The maturation cellar was 'created' in 1995 when the Aragons bought three existing neglected ancient cellars under Quintana, renovated and amalgamated them into a single entity. This perfectly ventilated series of caves is a pure cellar, perfectly stable at 11 degrees year-round, and clean as a whistle – an underground dirt paradise!



### **Rosado de Silos**

My wine!

I claim with great pride (and a partial truthfulness) responsibility for this wine being commercially available at all ... when I first visited CdS in September 2000, while sitting with Roberto tasting their range of reds, I spied a bottle of what looked like pink wine in a clear bottle, unlabelled, open, standing on a draining board by the sink in the little kitchen of the tasting room.

“What’s that, Roberto?”

“What’s what, Scott?”

“That pink wine I can see back there. I am crazy about Rosado. Dry pink wine is part of why I am in Spain on this discovery mission! For years I have been a leader of the (entirely imaginary) ‘Rosé Liberation Front’ in Adelaide and Melbourne. My wine lists always have a pink on by the glass, even in the depths of winter. I SEE SOMETHING PINK AND I WANT TO TASTE IT!”

“No you don’t. Now, about this Torresilo ...”

“Roberto!?!?”

“No!”

Then there’s a scuffle and a hubbub of vexed argument in Spanish at the doorway. Roberto’s father and sister, Amalio and Amelia appear. Amalio wants to know what Roberto and I are arguing about. He thinks it’s about Pink Wine. He is excited. The Pink Wine is *HIS WINE*. Oscar makes a couple of barrels a year of rustic pink to satisfy his dad’s recalcitrant drinking habits. ... I am on a winner. I smile at Amalio and ask in my best emergent Spanish, “es posible pruebo lo Rosado señor?” Amalio radiates a triumphant smile as Roberto’s arm emerges from the darkest of clouds and slops some pink into a fresh glass for me. Fuck it was great! At this point I decide to start a wine importing business, and tell Roberto that I will become his importer in Australia, solely on the condition that he bottles and labels at least a little Rosado de Silos for me each year. I love it when I get a result ...

### **ROSADO de SILOS**



With a bit of white in the blend (Albillo, Tempranillo Blanc and Verdejo along with Garnacha Negre feature as minor blend elements along with Tinto Fino), the old-school local name for this style is ‘Ojo de Gallo’ – chook’s eye pink! After a very short maceration, the bleed of Silos Joven and some pressings wine is fermented long (25 days maceration) and cool (16 degrees).

*The joy of pink - beautiful light red wine pared back but not stripped down. Not for describing, it’s pure drinking pleasure, dry, soft, deep and clear. The wine has a really lovely line and nice gentle roundness yet is very light in glycerol. Pale pink, effectively dry at 3 g/l.*

## JOVEN de SILOS



The unwooded young wine of Cillar de Silos. Joven de Silos shows all the attributes of Ribera del Duero. Old vines which yield fantastic textural tannins, the fruit brightness and gamey depth, the perfume and spice of Tinto Fino, and the wonderful soft natural acid retained by high altitude organically-farmed dry grown bushvines. In fact, that's all there is in Silos Joven – great fruit, natural acid and natural fruit tannin, perfect and effortless harmony from the vineyard.

*Trademark Ribera blue florals and carnal-meatiness, it shows both seriousness and lift. Very savoury, bloody with lovely spice, and nicely bright. Really fine and precise without any mean or tight character, red fruits, fine tannin gives a great long line, freshened by natural acid at the end.*

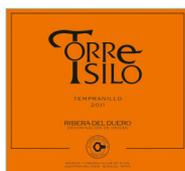
## CILLAR de SILOS Tinto Fino ('estate' or 'crianza')



This is our favourite lamb wine for restaurant use – it's just dying to cut some fat. Old vine fruit is gently fermented and sensibly extracted then aged a year or so in older French oak. Very little is 'done' to affect this gentle and characterful expression. Stainless steel fermentation, 13 months in low impact French oak.

*Juicy and alive, this earthen beauty has ginger in blueberry, delicate bark-balsam and fine satin florals. The pippy mulberry fruit is cut with anise and red heather, dreamy earthiness and nutty tannin aromatics. It's perfectly balanced in the mouth, with the generous inky blue fruit profile cut by admirable fruit tannin, finely judged oak, natural spice and acid. Gorgeous, fluid and long.*

## CILLAR de SILOS 'Torresilo'



Old vines, rendered poetic! Most of the fruit here is off vines in the 60-70 year old range, grown in sand and gravel (the clay patches are selected out for Joven and Rosado). Stainless steel fermentation, 16 months new French.

*Fine, deep blue-note cola aromatics are underpinned by gorgeous silty clay-dirt smells imbued with licorice, tobacco, cowhide and rainforest timber ... very pure, and very Ribera. Blueberry fruit in the mouth plus Silos' typical red heather perfume is cut by nutty tannins and precisely set tangy-anisey mineral acidity. So silky and creamy, but in no part fatty.*

## CILLAR de SILOS Golfo' Vermut Tinto



This is a really stylish, and serious vermouth based on old vines of dry grown Tinto Fino. These are fermented out to make a proper dry red base wine of extremely high quality, which is then carbon treated to remove some colour. The base is then sweetened with grape must, taking the alcoholic density down to 14% and balancing the wine with 100 grams/litre residual grape sugar. The resultant sweet red is macerated with herbs and once tannin, sugar, wine and herb are in balance, the Vermut is pressed off herbs and aged in old French oak barrels (previously used for CDS deluxe reds like Torresilo) for 6 months.

A 'Golfo' is a party guy.

GOLFO is the first Vermouth from the Ribera del Duero - a Turin-style aromatised red wine.

Oscar Aragon, winemaker at Cillar de Silos, learned to make Vermouth while studying Oenology in Logroño and each vintage made a few litres for domestic consumption.

Herbs: worm-wood, gentian, quinine, marjoram and savory (a genus of aromatic plants from the family Lamiaceae, related to rosemary and thyme, native to North Africa, Southern and South-Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia).

## **OTHER WINES, OTHER VINTAGES NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE**

### CILLAR de SILOS Blanco 2015

White experiment, release forthcoming, barrel fermented with a few months' batonnage. Very nice complex fresh cut fruit, sour berry thrill throughout, dances like a sliced pear daiquiri.

### CILLAR de SILOS Rosado barrel fermented 2015

Pink experiment, release forthcoming. fermented and aged 5 months large old oak and now sitting in concrete. Deeply textured, vibrant and thrilling.

### Cillar de Silos Tinto Fino 2015

*Lovely pippy-spiced red-purple dazzle-fruit, earthen-cherry-clafoutis, fruit-tannin seamless nudged with good acid, darkness with free flow and herb relief. Tannin lifts and drives then releases into earth, acid and flowers. Minerals dazzle in the tannin.*

### Cillar de Silos Tinto Fino 2013

*Electric, mineral, violet, anise and cold stone, spiced purples; a lovely squeak runs through otherwise gorgeously supple fruit, plush, fun, well-organised (this vintage is a special Estate blend, as it contains all the material which usually makes Torresilo, Flor de Silos and la Vinya de Amalio, and resultantly has been made with 60% new oak.)*

### Cillar de Silos Tinto Fino 2012

*Blueberry, tobacco and hung beef - it's gotta be Ribera! Well, good Ribera anyway ...With a pronounced earthiness, cool and precise in line, low in fructose, elegant and fine. Not a wine of bigness, it's a lovely, pure and beautifully composed. Dark cherry fruit is specked with tobacco, violet, purple spices and and peppermint. These meld into a fine carob-tannin line redolent with earth and wired on steely minerals and fine natural acidity.*

### CILLAR de SILOS 'Estate' 2010

*If you can go POW! gently, then that's what this does. The energy and nerve of 2010 is on full display here. Cherry in an earthy pie with mineral tang, blood and florals, silty clay and the lovely astringency of field herb oils. As harmonious as all get-out, it has exceptional maturity and wonderful freshness in perfect balance. It's a prototypical Cillar de Silos palate with nutty, mild chocolately tannins and great earthiness melded with mineral freshness.*

### CILLAR de SILOS 'Estate' 2009

*Classically 2009, it's oozing with soft, generous natural extract and is fresh to finish, round yet naturally structured. Ferrous soil in lovely mature red fruits, with cassia and cinnamon bark woodiness, chocolatey roundness folds into nutty tannin and a touch of fresh acidity to finish. As Oscar says, 2009 "is the book"!*

### Cillar de Silos 'Torresilo' 2015

*Really fine clay-cherry nose marries place and grape, followed by a sense of tobacco dotted with spices, like touches of anise in an Asian broth. Lots of character, but very controlled glycerol, soft fruit deftly structured, disarmingly effortless.*

### Cillar de Silos 'Torresilo' 2014

*Very mineral, with brushy balsamics, clay-carob-mineral finish ... Beautiful sense of coming from the soil; wonderfully supple, juice is well organised over oak/clay/carob tannin structural core keeping it neat.*

### Cillar de Silos 'Torresilo' 2013

*Oaky attack, then carob and a fantastic flash of mineral, carnal but lively with great purple floral coda; round, very good harmony, nicely spiced, supple, round and well-edged.*

### Cillar de Silos 'Torresilo' 2011

*Spiced purple fruits with lifted florals, deep earthiness and a fat line of gun-bullet-metal minerality. The palate's red-black fruit interplay also has earth-carob-coffee-spice tensions wandering through the fine, long and open groove of this outstanding (and utterly typical) 2011. A beautiful open weave is held gently to great length by typical Silos nutty tannin and mineral acidity. honest. Really charming and compelling.*

#### Cillar de Silos 'Torresilo' 2010

*Unbelievably classy, natural wine (no, no, no - not that! ... great wine that is unaffected and free of winemaking artefact, and delicious ... with a necessary minimum of added sulphur). Delightful red-black berry fruit in a succulent tannin bath gain a wonderment of earthy complexors on nose and palate: red lavender and anise, briary-smoky low herbs, tobacco, wood fungus, betel, subtle licorice and gentle spices. The feel is a seamless juicy-savoury-nut-tanned-softly-spiced continuum with an electric barbed-wire acid thread.*

#### CILLAR de SILOS 'Torresilo' 2009

*Cherry clafoutis and glorious Ribera dirt smells ... Spicy-sweet-sour berry thrills with tobacco, flowers, dirt, sky and more, and an aching thread of volatility gives the rosey-nose arc and reach. Such things repeat in a palate which is spare, suggestive, juicy and crisp, beautifully composed and unbelievably good. Redolent with hope in the face of experience.*

#### **FLOR de SILOS**

A single parcel grown at 860 metres, deep and very stony sand.

#### CILLAR de SILOS 'Flor de Silos' 2013

*Pepperminty garriga, brush and sticks and soil, anise-stones, cold clay at night .... Wonderful slow release, spicy mint and anise in a very fine clay-cola-carob tannin thread, plenty of tannins but gorgeous, spicy and so un-fruity ...*

#### CILLAR de SILOS 'Flor de Silos' 2010

*Fancy, fine and beautifully correct wine, neither big nor over-powering as such. Where Torresilo is floral and lush, Flor is more dark and masculine, linear and reserved—sort of the Burgundy v Bordeaux argument about Tempranillo's natural style in a sister-brother face-off!*

#### CILLAR de SILOS 'Flor de Silos' 2009

*Great volume to this, very savoury and a naturally fresh, almost crunchy finish. Here the Tinto Fino fruit has dark earthy spices, with a touch of silty baked earth, and menthol and fennel traces.*

#### **CILLAR de SILOS 'la Vinya de Amalio'**

A clay-sand single parcel, named for the Aragon kids' dad. It's a gamey, round and open wine.

#### CILLAR de SILOS 'la Vinya de Amalio' 2011

*Oh-so-old-viney, but delicately extracted for balance and harmony. As with most Silos wines, fructose plays second fiddle to earthy complexors and natural structure. Old vine wood smells mingle with smoked lavender and thyme, anise, blood, native pepper pod and silt in a deep, profound aromatic profile. The palate's brambly berry, earth and spice are carried in a fineness of tannin and ripe acidity which conspire to render the deep, concentrated old vine gear dancey, ethereal and deceptively light.*

And ...

#### **DOMINIO del PIDIO**

A new range of 3 wines made and aged in DOMUS: the stunning re-constructed underground cave in Quintana del Pidio. 5 old, decrepit cellars reconstructed are now home to a special range of red, white and pink, all aged in French oak 18 metres underground after fermentation in concrete.

- There's a Tinto from old vines in clay-sand-limestone, and containing a significant quantity of Albillo blanco, aged 16 months in 500l barrels.
- The Albillo blanco is also from old bush vines and spends 8 months on lees in 500l oak.

- The Rosado is a red-white hybrid, aged 4 months on lees in wood.

Also,

**VIÑA y TIA 'Hacienda del Carmen', Tinto Fino and Syrah, Arlanza**

Made by Oscar and released under the Vina y Tia brand name, with which they release all non-CdS estate wines, including a Rueda Verdejo made from bought in fruit, and the 'el Quintanal' wines made for the Quintana del Pidio co-op. This is the Aragon kids' grandmother Carmen's 4 hectare plot at 1050 metres altitude in Arlanza to the north of Ribera del Duero. It has been re-planted to Tinto Fino and Syrah, and in 2010 yielded its first crop. Aged six months in 500l new French oak.

VIÑA y TIA 'Hacienda del Carmen' 2015, Tinto Fino, Arlanza

*Croze-Like Syrah with Tempranillo has earthy herb character and lovely crispness. A crush of blackberry and tart plum fruit with purple flowers, trodden green herbs, and a rocky/austere moment, all bespeaking freshness.*