

The Riojas of Telmo Rodríguez and Pablo Eguzkiza

Organic and biodynamic, indigenous genetics – no nursery clones, no chemicals, no trellises.

Viñedos de Lantziego:

Bodega Lanzaga 'LZ'

Bodega Lanzaga 'Lanzaga'

Bodega Lanzaga 'Altos Lanzaga'

Bodega Lanzaga 'el Velado' Viñedo Singular

Bodega Lanzaga Estrada' Viñedo Singular

Telmo Rodriguez 'Corriente' cosecheros wine

Viñedos de Labastida:

Telmo Rodriguez 'Las Beatas' Viñedo Singular

Telmo Rodriguez 'el Tabuérniga' Viñedo Singular

Long-term mates and now business partners, Telmo Rodriguez and Pablo Eguzkiza have been kicking wine goals together for nearly 30 years. They started working together in the late 1980s at Telmo's family Rioja estate, Remelluri, and went on to become leaders in changing conceptions of Spanish wine during the post-Franco era (one of significant recovery and re-imagining). As well as Remelluri, they have three separate Rioja projects. By way of a handle, they use Telmo's name for their wines, but are equals in every respect – beginning with intellect and passion.



Trained as winemakers at University of Bordeaux, with formative experience working for some of France's finest (Clape, Chave and co ...), Telmo and Pablo are among the most thoughtful of Spain's post-industrial organic producers, deeply committed to authenticity (whatever that may in fact be). Since the early 90s, they have attempted to move beyond the limits of 20th century practice; increasingly this involves deeply historical revisions. It would be a poor mistake to tag such cultural historians with any label such as 'modern'.

La Compania started in 1992 with a modest Navarra Garnacha. That same year they bought their first parcel of land (the Falcoeira cru in Valdeorras) and set about exploring Spain with the intention to re-discover, re-interpret and re-invent. Over time, they found parcels to work all over Spain: in Cebreros (a non-DO village west of Madrid in the Sierra de Gredos), DOs Valdeorras, Rueda, Malaga, Cigales, Alicante, Ribera del Duero, Toro and of course Rioja. Initially, they worked in old vineyards housing the (often endangered) genetic identity of these different regions. Nowadays, they are also doing much new planting, re-asserting the historical match of locally evolved cultivars (often as field blends) to best sites and practices. Of their many beautiful babies, there is no question that la Rioja is first among equals – here is Telmo and Pablo's spiritual home and greatest commitment.

Telmo and Pablo's Riojas

Telmo and Pablo are involved in four sub-regionally distinct Rioja projects. Firstly, Remelluri - the Rodriguez family's estate between Labastida and San Vicente. Nestled high in the foothills of the Sierra de Cantabria and looking down on all of Rioja, Remelluri is where Telmo and Pablo started out as young winemakers. After his father's retirement in 2009, Telmo and his sister Amaia took over Remelluri and began refining the viticulture of the property.



Along with Remelluri, Telmo and Pablo have established three site-specific projects in Rioja:

- Since 1998, they have worked on 'el Monte' – a single hilltop adjacent to the Basque village Lantziego (or Lanciego in Castellano), 20 minutes north of Logroño. Here, where Mediterranean and Atlantic Rioja meet, they make the village trilogy of LZ, Lanzaga, and Altos Lanzaga (two Special Vineyard releases replace Altos from the 2014 vintage).
- Also in Lantziego, Telmo and Pablo organise a 'Cosecheros' wine, representing the growers of Lantziego. As well as strengthening the village economy, 'Corriente' re-constructs a deeply historical Rioja, a view of the past over-written by big company agribusiness and faceless, placeless industrial Reserva wines. (A similar project 'Lindes de Remelluri' is undertaken at Remelluri, distinguishing the growers and terroirs of the Labastida and San Vicente villages either side of Remelluri.)
- West across the valley, above Labastida in very cold Atlantic soils looking down on Haro, they are also making two special Cru wines, 'Las Beatas', which had its first release from the 2011 harvest, now joined by 'el Tabuérniga' (first release 2014). These are pure terroir wines, representing historical vineyards in the most natural manner possible.

el Monte de Lantziego

Lantziego is a tiny village north of Logroño, in the rolling foothills leading up to the limits of wine-growing under the Cantabrias. Telmo and Pablo's holdings are a select patch-work of vineyards purchased on various soils on the hill (el Monte) adjacent to the village. The wines produced here, LZ, Lanzaga and Altos Lanzaga are a three-way telling of the wine story in this place. 'Lanzaga', the brand name, is an invention of Telmo's ... it points to 'Lantziego' without actually naming it on the label, which is as close as the law allows Telmo and Pablo to say, "this wine is from here" ...



'Here' at Lantziego is very cold and remote, at the limits of grape-ripening viability. The soils are varied: silty-sand, pebbles, ferrous clay, sandstone and limestone. A typical profile is a shallow ferrous clay textured with pebbles and sand over a first bedrock of sandstone, then a deeper silty-chalky clay over a second bedrock of limestone.

The vineyards, too, are mixed. Most are ancient field blends, planted to various Tempranillos, with significant portions of Graciano and Garnacha, plus some white Vlura and Moscatel giving natural light and shade - inherent complexity - and are a million miles from industrial monoculture and the stultifying contemporary closure around high and even ripening regimes. There is no dull regularity here.

Telmo and Pablo have 12 hectares of biodynamic vineyard at altitudes of 500-600 metres in Lantziego. For a long while, el Monte was interpreted as a hierarchy atop which was Altos Lanzaga, blending the very best parcels. Since the 2014 harvest, Altos has been broken down into two individual Finca releases: El Velado and Estrada.

The winery at Lantziego

Nowadays, Telmo and Pablo's Lantziego Riojas are fermented in raw concrete and mature in a cool cellar of Rioja dirt vented by pristine Rioja mountain air. For the first decade working here, the wines were made and aged in rented winery facilities (as Telmo and Pablo still do in other regions). However, long-term, their commitment to Rioja demanded they build their own joint. After great effort, time and expense, a new winery crushed, made and aged its first vintage Riojas from the 2008 harvest.



Telmo and Pablo wanted a working bodega, not a showy place, not a winemaker's ego place, and the Lantziego winery is stunning in its practicality - inherent and, appropriate. Set on the Atalaya - the high place of the region - amongst 'los cerezos del pinto' (literally, the 'crazy cherry trees'), the bodega nestles discretely in the landscape. Everywhere at the hilltop you see old dry stone walls being re-built among native herbs and wildflowers flourishing in ground recovered from chemical farming. This ancient soil, freed from the 20th century, nourishes ancient olives, cherry groves and low-density dry-grown bush vines.

What you don't see, at first, is a winery ... As you drive or walk, through the highest vineyards - 'Atalaya' itself, 'el Papa' and 'el Vasco' - you just see the natural curve of the landscape as it arcs away from the hilltop and reaches out and down to reveal the valley and the fabulous twists and curves, shears and graces as the vineyards run down to the valley floor to meet the more commercial Rioja plantings below.

This last reach of the Atalaya is actually the winery itself. Standing at the edge on a 'lawn' of wild herbs and flowers, you are in fact standing atop the roof of the barrel cellar. It's vented at the hilltop end to allow cold, wild mountain air into the bodega, which then drafts through the barrel room, out and down into the valley. The walls and floors of the cellar are made from rammed Rioja dirt and the wines are ageing literally *in Rioja*.



Very simple and very beautiful - it's an unassuming, perfect cellar, "on the human scale" as Telmo insists. Adjacent to the cellar is the smoke-glassed production winery. Grapes are driven in at ground level, sorted and then scooted by gravity into the fermentation deposits – a series of purpose-built concrete 'foudre' (for want of a better term). The fermenters were built to order, transported and installed and then the winery floor was built in situ around the fermenters' tops. There are 27 of these concrete deposits which each handle 6500-8500kg of hand-picked bush-vine fruit brought in from 35 small plots on the hillside of Lantziego, and undergo spontaneous indigenous yeast fermentations.

The Lantziego Wines

Corriente – the 'Cosecheros' wine, Lantziego



At the beginning of last century, cosecheros or growers from Rioja Alavesa usually produced a village wine called 'Rioja Corriente': common wine, young but honest, for everyday drinking, leaving "Riojas Selectos" for special occasions. The idea of such a wine held great appeal to Telmo and Pablo, who now reproduce the style with bush-vine fruit from six such cosecheros in the Lantziego municipality. Many of these are old vineyards

with a natural mix of Garnacha, Graciano and even some white vines among the Tempranillo. Corriente is made in raw concrete and aged in a mixed regime of barrel and foudre for a year.

As an exercise in resurrecting history, Corriente speculates at how lovely 'regular' Rioja may have been in the late 19th century, and thus demonstrates how far things had slid by 2000. Perhaps also it signals a future Rioja whose everyday wines are a little more real than factory Crianzas ...

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'Corriente' Tempranillo-Graciano-Garnacha

Telmo Rodriguez 'Rioja Corriente' 2014

The cold clay soil of Lantziego speaks very clearly on the nose, partnered by equally typical 'red heather' smells of the locale (thyme, lavender and more). No fruit bomb, it's a countryside wine, with meat, cherry, mint and licorice all in a swirl. There are hints of sweet spice and it has great freshness. The palate opens with succulence, juicy and laden with red berries, then glides out and down into the mineral-flecked beauty of gravelly natural fruit tannin, and closes out with perfectly judged astringency.

BODEGA LANZAGA 'LZ' Rioja



LZ is a free-range expression via gravity and concrete. Un-oaked, juicy, deft, utterly typical of its place. Always wonderfully expressive of the cold clay dirt, LZ features crimson-spiced cranberry with rose petal florals and red lavender among plentiful herbs – pure smells of place. The palate is built on a trademark fruit tannin-natural acid twin-track. Simple and beautiful, with plenty of depth, spiced, earthily perfumed, ovoid, lissome, satisfying and focused.

BODEGA LANZAGA 'LZ' 2016

Wonderfully expressive of the cold clay dirt of Lantziego with a burst of Crimson spices, flower petals and all of the herbs! Wonderfully focused without any creamy vanilla but with plenty of depth and deeply satisfying.

BODEGA LANZAGA 'Lanzaga' Rioja

'el Monte' at Lantziego is the ultimate meeting point of the Mediterranean and the Atlantic. Lanzaga is the gently-oaked big sister to LZ. It's a village wine, combining 35 plots, handled separately and blended after selection. Aged a year or so in an oak regime where half the wine is aged in relatively neutral 1500-2000 litre wood and the rest in a mix of 225 and 600 litre barrels (at most 10% new oak). A natural wine of the earth, there's no winemaking in sight when drinking Lanzaga.

BODEGA LANZAGA 'Lanzaga' 2010



Red cherry and red heather with the freshness of a herb-laden mountain breeze and a touch of undergrowthy savouriness. The palate is easy and flowing, the fruit's juiciness wonderfully cut by natural structure. The brilliant fleshy tannins give a great sense of movement down the palate line. Indelibly marked by the great energy and vibration typical of the best 2010s.

BODEGA LANZAGA 'Altos Lanzaga' Rioja

Altos Lanzaga is a hand-made, biodynamic blend of Telmo and Pablo's best old patches in the upper parts of the Lantziego hillside (Crus named Fidelas and Verikete). Aged mainly in foudre (about 30% is in barrique and only 25% new), it is nurtured in a centuries old cave in the village of Oullari, a few kilometres from Haro. This little cellar was restored by hand by Telmo a few years ago. From the 2014 harvest, Altos Lanzaga will be replaced by single vineyard wine, which will be matured in the Lantziego cellar, as Oullari is now dedicated to the Labastida vineyards nearby (Las Beatas and el Tabuérniga).

BODEGA LANZAGA 'Altos de Lanzaga' Tempranillo 2012



Fennel, wild thyme, cinnamon and bark, smoky-juicy red fruits glinting with mineral on nose, and the palate is the most harmonious slinky-savoury deep-set tannin, carrying a touch of soil, some anisey rocky minerality, and a dramatic sense of flow with floral-cherry-berry high notes and deeper cola-carob touches, leavened by fine juicy acidity and indelibly marked by the Lantziego soil.

BODEGA LANZAGA 'La Estrada Alta' Viñedo Singular

In 2014 Telmo and Pablo finally felt the time was right to release two individual parcels as special Fincas of Lantziego. Estrada is one of the highest vineyard sites in all of Rioja, save for Remelluri, at 630+ metres altitude on the 'Atalaya' or high plateau above the village of Lantziego. Estrada has very shallow soil of pure chalky clay, facing a very cool north-east among forest and a multitude of local herbs. Estrada was planted in the 1940s to a bush vine field blend of Tempranillo, Graciano and others. Organic and biodynamic, Estrada is a parcel of just 0.6 hectares. The wine was fermented with natural yeast in 3,000 litre open oak casks, then aged around 15 months in foudre. Just over 1,000 bottles made.

BODEGA LANZAGA 'La Estrada Alta' Finca de Lantziego 2014 Viñedo Singular



erbal, elegant, classical and refined, red fruited with touches of anise, fennel herb and pepper. Great elegance, incredibly fine tannin and very pure Rioja-ness. Sweet, herb-saturated red cherry berry fruit, beautifully round and delicate, almost capering in the mouth with sour cherry acidity. The berries are

sweet, the tannins are sweet, the acidity is sweet, and the wine, delicate, gently briary, round, energetic verging on electric, tangy and savoury and entirely not sweet, but joyously un-strict.

BODEGA LANZAGA ‘el Velado’ Viñedo Singular

Velado typifies the unique meeting of Atlantic and Mediterranean at el Monte above Lantiego, and was the vineyard which started Telmo and Pablo’s love of and great commitment to this village of 600, which to this day nurtures 20-odd tiny village wineries, maintaining a direct continuum with the long history of Rioja, rather than the ‘Reservas-etccetera’ contemporary under the Consejo Regulador. Velado is an old, beautiful vineyard: it faces south-west, and while a very cool mountain site, is relatively warm compared to exposure to Estrada, and thus is a Garnacha-predominant field blend with Tempranillo, some other old varieties, including whites. Planted at 620 metres, on infertile soils with very little moisture retention, it’s a vineyard of 0.92 hectares yielding just 500 bottles! The natural yeast fermentation took place in open 2,000 oak casks and the wine matured 16 months in big barrels.



BODEGA LANZAGA ‘el Velado’ Finca de Lantiego 2014 Viñedo Singular

Leather and soft chocolate lead with cedar, white pepper and red currant, it’s not garnacha-ey as such, nor warm in any way, but you can feel the quiet insistent tug of the Mediterranean, and the wine has a brilliance and energy that is pure cold-soil Rioja. It’s Rioja, son, but not as we know it!

The vineyards at Labastida: ‘Las Beatas’ and ‘el Tabuérniga’

Tightly situated in sharp valleys below Sierra Cantabria and Rio Ebro, wines from the municipality of Labastida are definitively Atlantic Riojas, and Labastida perhaps Rioja’s foremost historical wine village.

Here, 5 km north of Haro, on the flank of the Sierra de Cantabria, between the hamlet of Briñas and Labastida village, Telmo and Pablo have been busy nurturing two very old vineyards back to health – las Beatas and el Tabuérniga. They are nestled between the Montes Obarenes and Sierra de Toloño sections of the Cantabrias. Beatas and Tabuérniga face each other across a ridge, with pretty much opposite aspects (Tabuérniga faces south-east towards the Mediterranean, while Beatas faces north-west, directly into the cold Obarenes). If you were to travel a little further east along the Sierra de Toloño, passing behind Labastida, you would arrive at Remelluri.



Las Beatas and el Tabuérniga were on Telmo and Pablo’s radar for 20-plus years, until Beatas was acquired in 1998 and Tabuérniga in 2010. Both vineyards were neglected before purchase; now recuperated, Beatas produced its first wine from the 2011 harvest and Tabuérniga from 2014.

Telmo Rodriguez ‘Las Beatas’ Rioja Viñedo Singular

Las Beatas is a spectacular 1.9 hectare property into which Telmo and Pablo have invested tremendous time and energy. 15 years of renovative viticultural work took place before a single bottle was realised.

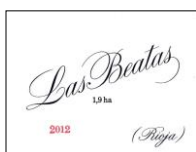


Las Beatas is extremely cold sandy soil facing north-west. There are ten or eleven grape varieties grown on eight terrace levels, predominantly Tempranillo with 30% Garnacha, some Viura and traces of many other rare, perhaps unidentified cultivars. The vines are densely planted and hand-worked. Purchased in 1998, Las Beatas has 0.8 hectares of very old field blend material and the rest are young vines massale-selected from the original genetics of the place. In 2011 a small harvest of the old gear and about 10% of the young plantings yielded 500 bottles; in 2012, 1500 bottles were produced from the old vines plus about 20% of the young vines.

Telmo and Pablo see Las Beatas as “a memory of Rioja from long ago, before the industrial Riojas of the 20th century, for which the process is more important than the origin”. Here they will reinstate an antidote to the easy virtues of modern industrial plantings lower down by the river. In las Beatas, they will attempt a vineyard Grand Cru – a significant, emotional wine of place. According to the Consejo Regulador this is an “illegal”, “experimental” vineyard. It’s also the history of Rioja.

1.9 hectares, 1500 bottles and an amazing history in one vineyard. This is a field blend of genuinely ancient cultivars, but call it Tempranillo if you must. One day, this will be known as the Glory of Rioja. After thousands of years and just two vintage releases, I think it one of the great wines. Beatas is made and aged in a single 1200 litre old French foudre. It blends the 0.8 hectares of old field blend Las Beatas (Tempranillo, Garnacha, other reds and some white), and 20% of the young vineyards which have been replanted to Las Beatas’ genetic mix and in 2012 gave their first or second yield.

Telmo Rodriguez ‘las Beatas’ Rioja 2012 Viñedo Singular



Bluebells and violet, fennel, cherry blossom and fresh clay soil. It is very floral, very much of the soil, lovely and very delicate. Open, purple and electric. There’s pomegranate in the violet, angelica, mountain air, and lots of space in a palate which is fine and clear, featuring very lovely delicate tannins. The brilliant, luminous fruit folds into astonishingly good natural structure, but really it is too good for mere words.

Telmo Rodriguez ‘el Tabuérniga’ Rioja Viñedo Singular

Telmo and Pablo purchased Tabuérniga vineyard in 2010, and its first vintage was made in the Oullari cellar from the 2014 harvest. However, they have been watching and hoping to purchase this special site since working nearby at Remelluri in the late 1980s. South-east facing, looking over a blind towards las Beatas, Tabuérniga is a 4.1 hectare place with several ‘lugares’ occupying different terraces and varying aspects (the ‘lugar’ (or lieus-dits) names are: San Cristobal, Chifla, Canal and Tabuérniga). Tabuérniga is planted to Tempranillo, some Graciano, Mazuelo and Garnacha, and lots of Garnacha Blanca (there is one sizeable plot of Garnacha Blanca planted solo, but most of the place is field blend). There are nine or more cultivars in total (the genetics have not been entirely identified – Telmo and Pablo like the mystery!), with traces of Viura, Moscatel, Maturana, Blanca Roja and Gran Negro too. The soils are shallow, stony, silty chalk-clay of very low fertility. Altitude is 540-630 m, with 2.7 hectares of the little valley planted. The wines are naturally fermented in 3-4,000 litre open wooden casks, and aged 14 months in 1500 litre foudre. 2,000 bottles were made in 2014, the first release of Tabuérniga.



Telmo Rodriguez ‘el Tabuérniga’ Rioja 2014 Viñedo Singular



Wow! A nose of incredible depth quintessentially Rioja, it draws you in and down, vortex-like. Clay, red berry and black lavender and (wild raspberries on/and the bush), and a host of herbs waft up from the incredible depth of smell here. Not merely regal but outright imperial in register, without any puffed chest self-awareness. Soft and delta-reach fruit slows down on a shore of deep fine tannin prickled with extremely flavoursome (herb and spice countryside tasting) acidity.

Non-current vintages

Telmo Rodriguez 'Corriente' 2013

This 'Rioja Regular' is entirely typical of this part of Rioja - plenty of clay in the chalk, floral red berry Tempranillo and Garnacha with excellent volume ... lovely roundness without heft, a touch of briar, open-weave, with a full fruit-tannin embrace. Relatively light, utterly delicious.

Telmo Rodriguez LZ 2013

Dark nose clearly recalls the scrubby balsamics and the cold clay-based soils of Lantziego, opening to a pastrami-like (delicious!) cold beef which quickly leads into subtle blue-note florals in a Nebbiolo mode, and the heartwood of old vines and fruit skins is a final tannin perfume element in the song, save for a mineral shimmer. Rounded but open, never heavy or sugary, with a deft tannin-into-acid through line giving all needed sense of movement in the mouth, this unwooded wine is very successfully grooved on an entirely natural structure.

Telmo Rodriguez LZ 2015

Fat cherry, smoky tree boughs and a graphitic buzz are typical on the nose. The palate is inky-smoky and bright fruit over full grainy tannins, which grip and hold to build palate presence then release to a sweet-nutty ripe natural acid closure.

Telmo Rodriguez 'Lanzaga' 2009

Darker and a little fuller than 2008, this is perfectly pure Rioja. Dark cherry fruit has meat and leather savouriness, with a mountain thyme and red lavender lift. It is extremely supple with a nicely fructose entry which rolls out into a textured palate. It's as perfectly reflective of site as wine can get, and barely 'made'.

Telmo Rodriguez 'Lanzaga' 2008

Lashings of deep, briary knobbly old wood smells, straight from old vines deeply rooted in cold earth, clove and nutmeg spiced, deeply earthy and very savoury, with blueberry skin leathery tannins smells and a skylike acid freshness almost like the smell of rain after a dry spell. In the mouth, this is a stunning tale of natural fruit tannin and ultra-complex and flavoursome acidity and all matters of fruit and oak and winemaking are effortlessly carried along within this eructation of place, as if a berry plucked dragged its terroir screaming like a blanket into the crusher.

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'Altos Lanzaga' Tempranillo 2013

Featuring lots of licorice, Altos Lanzaga is pregnant with local thyme and other field herbs, studded with orange peel and cardamom and radiates lovely deep blue florals. Especially mature and beautifully resolved tannins unite juice and skins perfectly. There's lovely roundness early in the palate before tannins take over and draw down and back.

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'Altos Lanzaga' Tempranillo 2011

Cherry cola and cherry tree wood with field herb and birch-brushy undergrowth on the nose, all of which repeat on the palate. It's long and very, very fine. Perfectly grained, tooled without tightness, sweet ripe seeds and skins have yielded a mature tannin-acid frame of great class. Beautifully integrated, it's a dark, glorious Rioja with lovely sour elements dominating anything rich, or big. A perfect amalgam of berry, briar, tart fruit acid, touches of chocolate and blueberry, creamy oak and an alcohol touch, all melded in a glorious and gliding complex unit, with counterpoint at every sticking place.

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'Altos de Lanzaga' Tempranillo 2010

Unfathomably deep on the nose, meat glaze meets old vine heartwood, leather, tobacco and deep spice. Expansive in the mouth, it's equal parts power and evanescence, it's essence and ether, leaving the palate powder-coated with soft chocolate dust, and everywhere is a defiant sense of mineral nerve and briary buzz, rising through and above all the earthy-old-vineyeness ...

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'Altos de Lanzaga' Tempranillo 2009

Cherry cola and cherry tree wood with field herb and birch-brushy undergrowth on the nose, all of which repeat on the palate. It's long and very, very fine. Perfectly grained, tooled without tightness, sweet ripe seeds and skins have yielded a mature and sweet tannin-acid frame of great class. Beautifully integrated.

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'Altos de Lanzaga' Tempranillo 2007

Tobacco, Indian ink, anise and lots and lots of field herbs, mineral, a subtle unrolling of fruit, inky spice ... already a masterpiece of harmony and understatement, and with a long future ahead. The beautiful new label is a homage to ancient, classical Rioja (before the machine age and giant factory approach took hold).

Telmo Rodriguez 'las Beatas' Rioja 2014

A wine of gentle sweet-and-sour interplay, largely expressed through a 'click' of fantastic fruit tannin running low in the mouth and almost inseparable from an ultra-fine, long thread of natural acid. With a lovely grip, release, re-set, repeat sense of movement through the palate, it uses all spaces of the mouth without cramming anywhere. Wonderful.

Telmo Rodriguez 'las Beatas' Rioja 2015 *This reeks of the place! Vineyard smells of soil, briar, herb and mountain air. It's a pure and effortless wine laden with sweet spices and ever-so-deft in the mouth. There's a lovely sense of movement, and an easy confidence, calmness and composure. Some things just are!*
