

The Village Riojas of Telmo Rodríguez and Pablo Eguzkiza

Organic and biodynamic wines from indigenous genetics – no clones, chemicals or trellises.
Pueblo-specific wines from Lantziogo and Labastida.

Vinos de Pueblo - Lantziogo:

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

Vinos de Pueblo - Labastida:

Telmo Rodriguez 'Las Beatas' *viñedo singular*

Telmo Rodriguez 'el Tabuérniga' *viñedo singular*



Long-term mates and business partners, Telmo Rodríguez 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 lead changes in conceptions of Spanish wine in the post-Franco era (a time of significant recovery and re-imagining). As well as Remelluri, they have three village Rioja projects. The company name has been Telmo's (until now), but they are equal partners in every respect – starting with intellect and fearless commitment.

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': their practise is much more about history than the advantages of contemporary technology.

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 Rioja is first among equals: la Rioja 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 Rodríguez family's estate between Labastida and San Vicente. Nestled high in the foothills of the Sierra de Toloño 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 *pueblo* Lantziego (or Lanciego in *Castellano*), 20 minutes north of Logroño. Here, where Mediterranean and Atlantic Rioja meet, they make the village pair of LZ, Lanzaga, and two special vineyard wines.
- 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, recovered from big company agribusiness and faceless, placeless industrial *Reserva* wines.
- West across the valley from Lantziego, above Labastida in very cold Atlantic soils looking down on Haro, they are also making two special cru wines. 'Las Beatas' had its first release from the 2011 harvest, and was joined by 'el Tabuérniga', first vintage bottled being 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. To this day, Lantziego nurtures 20-odd tiny village wineries, maintaining a direct continuum with the long history of Rioja, rather than the 'Reservas-etcetera' contemporary under the Consejo Regulador. For Telmo and Pablo, it was the perfect place to attempt to recuperate 'Rioja'.



The work Telmo and Pablo are doing here stands in stark contrast to contemporary practise. Here you see ugly water towers, set to make irrigated mountain wines, a patchwork of soils killed by chemical farming, trellises, nursery clones for high yield ... even old stoney vineyards which have been built up with dirt trucked in from the fertile valley floor.

Telmo and Pablo's holdings are a select patch-work of vineyards on various soils on the hill (el Monte) adjacent to the village. At altitudes of 500-600m, they have 15 hectares of organic/biodynamic vineyards across 35 tiny plots, which are divided into 27 Lantziego fermentations. Their beautiful *parcelas* each have their own dry stone wall, rebuilt by hand over 20 years, and many of them feature an old *Choza* (a dry stone farmer's hut in the vineyard). It's a dazzling patchwork of red, brown and white soils (marl, clay, limestone, ironstones, chalk), field blend vineyards with 360 degrees of different orientation in a crazy orography. Olives grow in parts with a Mediterranean orientation, while slopes facing the Atlantic bear *Encina* (Holm Oak). Almonds are everywhere and in summer rashes of *Amapola* cover the hills with red poppy flowers.

'Lanzaga', the brand name, is an invention of Telmo's – a homonym which points to 'Lantziego' without actually naming it on the label. Until 2017, this was as close as the law allowed 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. Lavender, Rosemary and Thyme get a red dirt buzz and become the code of the Lanzaga wines.

The vineyards, too, are mixed. Most are ancient field blends, planted to various Tempranillos, with significant portions of Graciano and Garnacha, plus some white Viura and Moscatel giving natural light and shade - inherent complexity. These vineyards are a million miles from industrial monoculture and the stultifying contemporary closure around high and even ripening regimes. There is no dull regularity here. Bodega Lanzaga works with 6 cultivars of hill-specific Tempranillo, 3 local Garnachas and 2 families of Graciano, all evolved in situ on el Monte.

For a long while, el Monte was interpreted as a 3-tier hierarchy: unwooded LZ and sensitively aged Lanzaga providing the stylistic yin-and-yang of representing Lantziego, atop which was a selection wine - Altos Lanzaga, blending the very best parcels. Since the 2014 harvest, Altos has been discontinued, replaced by two individual *parcela* releases: the Mediterranean El Velado and Atlantic la 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, the wines were made and aged in rented winery facilities (as Telmo and Pablo still do in other regions). However, their commitment to Rioja demanded that they build their own joint. After great effort, time and expense, a new winery made and aged its first Riojas from the 2008 harvest. Telmo and Pablo wanted a working bodega, not a showy place, and the Lantziego winery is stunning in its practicality - inherent and, appropriate. Set on the Atalaya - the high place of the region - among '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. Each handles 6500-8500kg of hand-picked bush-vine fruit from 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.

A simple, modest project, si? At a glance, yes, but also revolutionary: without bodega artefact, and freed from the corporations and the Consejo Regulador, it is an archeological find: the true taste of village Rioja revealed. As an exercise in resurrecting history, Corriente speculates at how lovely 'regular' Rioja may have been in the late 19th century (perhaps even until the 1960s), and demonstrates how far things had slid by 2000. It signals a future Rioja whose everyday wines will be more real than factory Crianzas ...

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'Corriente' Tempranillo-Graciano-Garnacha

Telmo Rodriguez 'Rioja Corriente'



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 Lantziego's 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 and satisfying.

BODEGA LANZAGA 'LZ'

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: half the wine matures in relatively neutral 1500-2000 litre wood; the rest in a mix of 225 and 600 litre barrels (at most 10% new oak). A natural wine of the earth and mountain air.

BODEGA LANZAGA 'Lanzaga'

A lively herbs-in-mountain-air, wafting red thyme, sage, lavender, wild-skinky-pippy juniper and sloe (all are prolific on el Monte). Through these, staccato jolts of licorice, anise, electric red dirt, black pepper.

It's deep and mineral with lots of bosky woodsy aromatics.

The palate is open and richly expressive to start, and gathers tannin, acid and spice to a long, gathered, relaxed finish. Excellent vertical energy as well as structural line makes for a wine of great life, which journeys gravelly-silken.

Licorice, dark mineral, red thyme.

Anise drops on a cherry skin, the cherry's on a rock.

Sky above.

Red dirt below.

... strong space.

BODEGA LANZAGA 'La Estrada Alta' and 'el Velado' Viñedos Singulares

In 2014 Telmo and Pablo finally felt the time was right to release two individual parcels as special Fincas of Lantziego. Estrada and Velado are two of the highest vineyard sites in all of Rioja, at 600+ metres altitude on the 'Atalaya' or high plateau above the village of Lantziego. Estrada and Velado face each other from a kilometre or two apart, over a small valley between their respective hilltops. They are diametrically opposite neighbours in every sense. Estrada is a cool east-facing, Atlantic-Tempranillo site, while the much more Mediterranean Velado faces west and is based on Garnacha.

La Estrada is wild cherry-and-thyme-scented with fine minerality and licorice (wild fennel). A wine of the utmost mountain purity, it has a lovely delta-round palate with a soft tannin rim giving gentle closure.

El Velado is darker, with fuller tannin, spicy and redolent of heartwood. The palate is more vertical with lovely seed ripeness and a spacious perfumey end ... like wandering in the air.

BODEGA LANZAGA ‘La Estrada Alta’ viñedo singular

Organic and biodynamic, Estrada is a parcel of just 0.64 hectares at 610 metres altitude. She has very shallow soil of chalky clay, facing a 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. The wine was fermented with natural yeast in a large open oak cask, then aged around 15 months in foudre. Just over 1,000 bottles made.



BODEGA LANZAGA ‘La Estrada’ Finca de Lantziego



Herbal, classical and refined, red fruited with touches of anise, fennel and pepper. Great elegance, incredibly fine tannin and pure Rioja-ness. Sweet-sour herb-saturated red cherry fruit is beautifully round and delicate, almost capering in the mouth with tingling electric sweet-water acidity. The tannins are sweet and the wine is delicate, briary, round and energetic, tangy, savoury and joyously un-strict.

BODEGA LANZAGA ‘el Velado’ viñedo singular

Velado typifies the unique meeting of Atlantic and Mediterranean at el Monte above Lantziego, and was the vineyard which started Telmo and Pablo’s love of and commitment to this pueblo of 600 villagers. Velado is an old, beautiful vineyard: it faces south-west, and while a very cool mountain site, has a relatively warm exposure compared to Estrada, and is a Garnacha-predominant field blend (40-50%) with Tempranillo and other ancient local varieties, including whites. Planted in the 1930s at 620 metres, on infertile soils with very little moisture retention, it’s a vineyard of 0.92 hectares. A natural yeast fermentation took place in an open oak cask and the wine matured 16 months in large oak.



BODEGA LANZAGA ‘el Velado’ Finca de Lantziego



Utterly brilliant electric garnet to look at. The aromas swirl and flow - spicy purple lashed with pine, the air in a mountain forest, cool earth-scented. The mouthfeel is incredible, delicate, fluid, pure, unfettered. It slows like a river on a back palate beach of horizontal tannin, fans out in a delta, slows but never stops, releases. Perfume recirculates from tannin held in cheeks, on tongue, and radiates to the roof of mouth. It’s not warm, nor garnacha-ey as such, but you can feel the quiet tug of the Mediterranean. All the while, 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’

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

5 km north of Haro, on the cold flank of Sierra de Toloño, 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. Beatas and Tabuérniga face each other across a ridge, with pretty much opposite aspects (Beatas faces north-west, directly into the cold of the mountains, while Tabuérniga faces south-and-east towards the Mediterranean). As you travel east along the Sierra de Toloño, passing behind Labastida, you move from Las Beatas to el Tabuérniga and then arrive at Remelluri.



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

Telmo Rodriguez 'Las Beatas' Sierra de Toloño 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 a 7th century place, unaltered through centuries - a historical field blend and the real taste of (a) Rioja. Telmo and Pablo see it 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 have reinstated an antidote to the easy virtues of modern industrial plantings lower down by the river. In las Beatas, they set out to attempt a vineyard Grand Cru – a significant, emotional wine of place. According to the Consejo Regulador at the launch of the first Beatas, this is an "illegal", "experimental" vineyard. It's also the history of Rioja.



Las Beatas is close to the hamlet of Briñas, although its village designation is Labastida, and the vineyard is in the Paraje of 'Vinas Viejas'. Beatas sits beneath the beginning of Sierra de Toloño with the rock of Toloño looming above it to the east (beneath which is Tabuérniga, further east along the sierra).

Las Beatas has extremely cold sandy soil facing north-west. There are eleven grape varieties grown on eight terrace levels, predominantly Tempranillo with 30% Garnacha, some Viura and traces of other rare, unidentified cultivars. The vines are densely planted and hand-worked. Purchased as an abandoned place in 1998, Las Beatas has 0.8 hectares of very old field blend material. 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. Each year since, increasing proportions of young vines bearing the genetic heritage of las Beatas are included in the finished wine. Las Beatas is made and aged in 1200 litre French foudre. One day, this will be known as the Glory of Rioja.

Telmo Rodriguez 'las Beatas' finca de Labastida



Juniper, sage, black thyme and piney-fennel balsam run through bright, clear, fluid tiny red cherries with a licorice fleck. Herbal 'dark' tones are delicate touches, and the caress of cold white dirt gives gentle edge grip. Juicy, spicy and fine with heaps of space, it's a wine of utmost delicacy. A touch of sweet-and-sour interplay expresses through a 'click' of fantastic fruit tannin running low in the mouth, inseparable from an ultra-fine, long thread of natural acid. With a lovely grip-release movement through the palate, it uses all of the mouth without cramming anywhere. Wonderful.

Telmo Rodriguez 'el Tabuérniga', Sierra de Toloño viñedo singular

Telmo and Pablo purchased Tabuérniga vineyard in 2010, and its first vintage was made in the Ollauri cellar from the 2014 harvest. However, they were watching and hoping to purchase this special site ever since working at nearby Remelluri in the late 1980s. Directly beneath Sierra Toloño, south-east facing at around 600 metres, Tabuérniga is situated east over a blind from las Beatas. It's a 4.1 hectare place, with several 'lugares' occupying different terraces and varying aspects. These places are: San Cristobal, Chifla, Canal and Tabuérniga.



Tabuérniga is planted to Tempranillo, plenty of Graciano, some 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. 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. The wines of this tightly terraced little concave valley are sober, austere, deep and elegant.

Thicker in tannin profile, presenting a drier, more level feel than the delicate, ovoid lift of las Beatas, Tabuérniga is very much a wine of the field. There are wirey sour herbs, black lavender, nicely vegetal touches from the Graciano, traces of olive and cinnamon bark. First released from 2014.

Telmo Rodriguez 'el Tabuérniga' finca de Labastida 2014

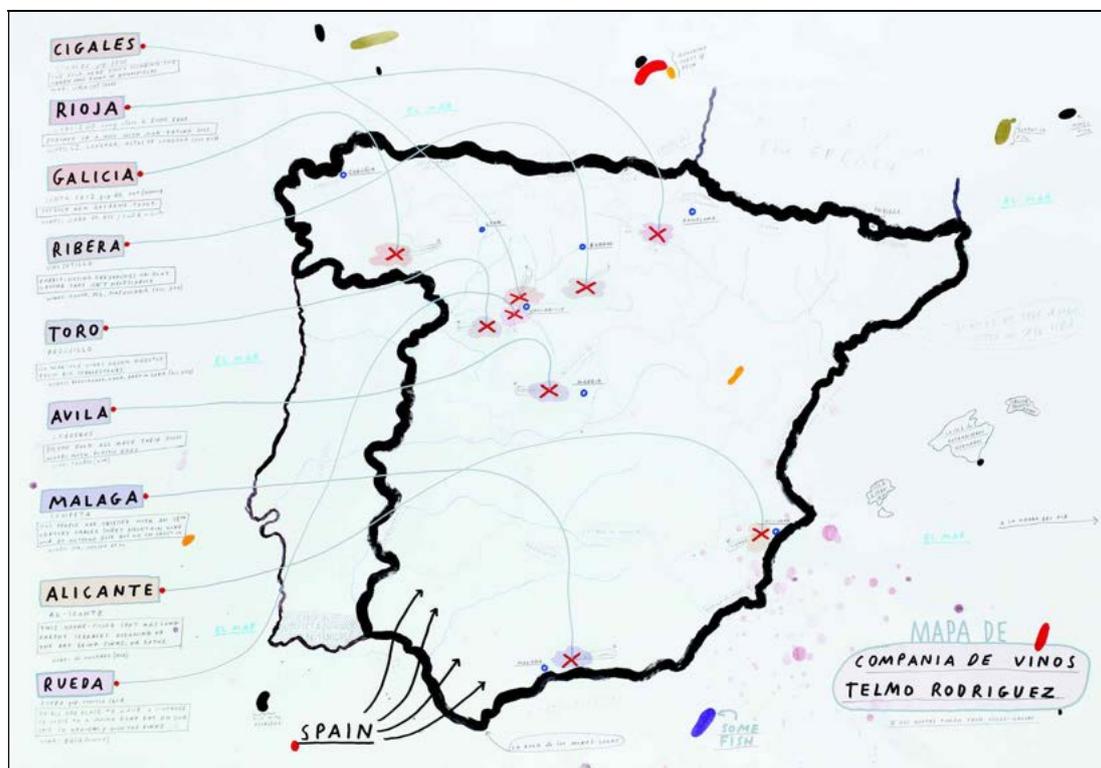


A nose of incredible depth: quintessentially Rioja, it draws you in and down, vortex-like. Wild raspberries, and the raspberry bush, clay, black lavender and a host of herbs waft up in an incredible depth of smell. Imperial in register, without puff-chested self-awareness. Soft, delta-reach fruit slows on a shore of deep fine tannin prickled with extremely flavoursome, herbed and spiced countryside acidity.

The winery at Ollauri (where “the future is the past”)

In 1999, Telmo and Pablo bought a cool, dark 17th century bodega in Ollauri, a tiny village 7km south of Haro. The Ollauri cellar is a tiny twin-chamber affair which holds just a few vats and barrels at a constant 11 degrees. Backed into the hill above the village, it is fresh and clean-smelling (carpeted with neutral black mould), perfectly ventilated. Here, Telmo and Pablo have attempted to “re-understand how Rioja was made” pre-phylloxera, pre-chemicals, pre-machines. The original Rioja yeast strains live on here and are employed to make wines by hand – gravity-fed, using 3 large old open oak vats, and taking 12 months to go through malo. This cellar is seen by Pablo and Telmo as a historical machine, and conveys pre-mercantile lessons about shape, size and restfulness in handling Rioja. Finished wines age untouched at low temperature in 1200 litre oak foudre.

Ollauri was home to Altos Lanzaga until the 2014 harvest, but is now dedicated to the special vineyard projects ‘el Tabuérniga’ and ‘Las Beatas’, which grow nearby.



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 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 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 'Lanzaga' 2014

That thyme red lavender thing, blueberry, finest red clay dirt, nice restraint.

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.

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 Ollauri, a few kilometres from Haro. From the 2014 harvest, Altos Lanzaga was broken down into a pair of single vineyard wines, matured in the Lantziego cellar.

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'Altos Lanzaga' Tempranillo

Altos Lanzaga is pregnant with licorice, local thyme and field herbs, studded with orange peel and cardamom and radiates lovely deep blue florals. Especially mature, 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.

BODEGA LANZAGA 'Altos de Lanzaga' 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.

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'Altos Lanzaga' 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' 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' 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' 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 2015

Earthy, with bluebells and violet and lots of briar, shrubby herbs and deep pure tannin smells ... sometimes wines are simply too good for words, and this is one such. The brilliant, luminous red berry fruit is almost pomegranate tangy and energetic, but yields inevitably to the shrubbery and herb hedge, with xmas spice under, delicate papery tannins. This is a wine of astonishingly good natural structure, and for all its greatness, calm and approachable, which I guess is what makes it truly great and not a bit pretentious.

Telmo Rodriguez 'las Beatas' Rioja 2013

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!

Telmo Rodriguez 'las Beatas' Rioja 2012

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.