

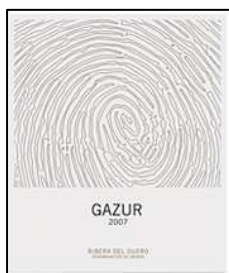
Telmo Rodriguez

Tinto Finos of DO Ribera del Duero

The vogue region for Tempranillo at present, DO Ribera del Duero is a couple of hours north of Madrid. It's a warm-by-day, very cool-at-night high altitude river valley system which flows west into Portugal and is re-badged at the border as the Douro (as in Douro Valley, where Port is grown). As you drive east into the valley from the region's central city, Valladolid, the terroir lays out clearly for all to see. Either side of the river stretch perhaps a kilometre of sandy flats, planted to very withered old dry-grown bush vines of Tempranillo. Away from the river, the flats give rise to low, stony hills, through which you drive north to Rioja and Basque country. Ribera del Duero is home to supple, fleshy earth-perfumed wine with an eerie resemblance to Burgundy; and also to some steroidal monsters tricked up with Cabernet and very toasty new American oak barriques. The Tinto Fino grape from here is darker, juicier, earthier, meatier than the Tempranillo of Rioja.



Telmo Rodriguez 'Gazur'



As with Rioja, Toro and Cigales, Telmo and Pablo showcase Ribera del Duero via an unwooded wine, balanced on natural fruit tannin and acid, and meant to function as a vintage-region snapshot, or summary. We have shipped this wine on-and-off depending on its tannin ripeness from vintage-to-vintage: at 13% a/v Riberas have green tannin, needing to be 13.5 or preferably 14 to be elegant and correct. Since 2012, however, Gazur is entirely made from new vineyards planted by Telmo and Pablo, predominantly on the cold chalk soils of the high paramo in the centre of the region. These soils have quite delicate tannin structure and a pretty, fresh and fragrant.

Plum-cola, tobacco and some dark, earthy minerality in a nose that speaks softly but clearly that it's a Ribera. The cold metal minerality threads all the way through a bright purply-briary palate, juice thickened with plush-dry fruit tannin, it's all velvety and studded with spice.

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'M2 de Matallana' Tinto Fino



Literally, the second wine of Matallana, Telmo makes M2 in a deliberately 'feminine' style, for ease of early access, but also as a style preference for better representation of Tinto Fino's (Ribera's native family of Tempranillo) more subtle side. Basically, Telmo's position is that it is a delicate grape variety, and that big, extracted blockbusters are not the most sympathetic or appropriate style. Really wonderful fruit such as that used in Matallana and Pingus can handle new barriques and still end up as subtle, perfumed wines, but most often Tinto Fino requires rather more subtle handling. For M2, this means new and one-year old oak, but based on 600 litre and

larger formats, for subtle impregnation with, rather than domination by oak. Resultantly, M2 shows Tempranillo's naturally juicy, velvety fruit and cloud of heady back-palate perfume to great advantage.

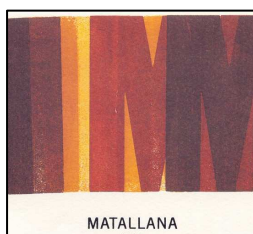
TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'M2 de Matallana' Tinto Fino 2011

2011 is a particularly fine, open and easy M2, which glides along effortlessly. Big tannins are soft and lovely, rolling out the tobacco-buzzed blue-cherry Tempranillo fruit juice, carrying along spice, earth and releasing into a glorious, perfumed afterworld (Ribera's great potential once over-ripening and over-making are avoided).

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'Matallana' Tinto Fino

Matallana is a deluxe summation of Ribera del Dueros four distinct terroirs:

- In the north, calcareous clays give perfumed rounded and full bodied wines
- Around the river, alluvial soils with big pebbles on brown clay give wines of fruit and finesse
- in the south of Ribera, quartz-laded very red soils yield fruit rung through with mountain herbs
- On the Paramo in the centre, a plateau at 900m, alternating v.cold/v.hot, thick-skinned grapes grown on pale chalk are fresh and have light, delicate tannins



This affordable masterpiece is entirely handmade, biologically grown and matured for 18 months in new French barriques. Although beautifully made, with great finesse and integration, it begs for at least 3 years' cellaring to allow regional perfume, earth, and all the many layers of complexity to really express. Matallana is not actually a 'Cru' (single site wine), for in Ribera Telmo and Pablo choose to blend the soils for balance. Powerful iron and stone-dense soils in the south, perfumed chalky-limestone sands in the centre, and rich clays in the north all find resonance in this genuinely great wine. A central 'cup' of soft fragrant tobacco-cherry blue fruits has lift and wander in all directions ... All aspects of Ribera and its family of Tempranillo are present, nothing dominates. A cherry-perfume-earth-iron-tannin-mineral masterpiece.

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'Matallana' 2009

Tobacco and caponta-fleshy vegetal aromas, with rhubarb and sarsaparilla, gentian violet and a dark cherry black-purple-red fruit presence; the palate is long and full with no pronounced fat or round aspects, just a deep, wide, long tube of utterly gentle tannin fullness carrying fine oak and delicately choc-cherry-tobacco fruit going along and on ...

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'Matallana' 2007

Ohmigosh! Yum! ... etcetera. I was hoping for 'good' from '07, but this is great. Leather, tobacco, anise, gravel, blue-flowers, dense and deft - even in youth it has perfume, not smell. Wow! The palate's savoury-leathery with immaculate fruit tannin holding whatever oak (very fine, cedary, tight-grained) very close ... there's a lashing of fine minerals, saturated blue fruits and exuberant blue-note perfume down back. Everything emerges. Savoury-yet-fruited, super.

TELMO RODRIGUEZ 'Matallana' 2006

Nose is open, fruity-and-mineral with allspice, cola, licorice, blue flowers ... the whole panoply of Ribera's Tinta del Pais variant of Tempranillo. Has lovely gliding structure, with liquid spiced plums flowing downstream through fields of mineral and flower, and on and on and out.