

Sinodo Vitivinícola

Gorka Etxebarria, Juanan (Juan Antonio) Blanco y Roberto Monforte

- Uruñuela (Raposeras vineyard)
- Villamediana de Iregua (Los Tollos)

SINODO is from old Greek meaning to work together.

The 3 friends who are partners in this tiny project work variously as teaching academics (each are graduates of University of la Rioja) and viticulturalists for larger concerns around Rioja. On the side, they collude to work two special small patches together (owned by their families). Sinodo Vitivinícola was founded in 2014.



Añada 2014

After a rainy and mild winter, spring brought an early and homogenous sprouting. Summer came with warmth in June giving a good start before storms in July and August. 2014 was a high production vintage with some botrytis in the more compact bunches. In Raposeras, the secondary shoots and the biggest and most compact bunches were removed. All fruit was de-stemmed by hand to eliminate possible problems. Harvest was late September.

Añada 2015

The winter of 2015 was rainy, with some snow. Spring was mild and even. Summer came early with May very warm and dry. June and July were very hot, but finished with storms. August was fresh and September mild during the day and cold at the night. Earliest ever harvest! Both in Raposeras and Los Tollos we decided to remove some bunches to improve maturation and balance sugar with the maturity of the skins and seeds. The harvest was 12th September in Raposeras and 13th September in Los Tollos. Raposeras was aged in French oak barriques, 1 and 2 years old. Los Tollos was aged in a combination of a single new French oak barrique and a porous 2600 litre tank.



Añada 2016 was marked by three important factors:

- 1: the high expected production, and the large size of the clusters in all varieties.
 - 2: Unusually high temperatures from mid-August until mid-September.
 - 3: Drought during the summer, no rain from early July until the end of August.
- Until August, effective accumulated temperatures in our vineyards were similar to



the year 2015. From the middle of that month, temperatures rose considerably. Together with a very dry summer, it provoked a severe drought in many of the vineyards of la Rioja. Both in Los Tollos and Raposeras we decided to do a green harvest at the beginning of the ripening, leaving the shoulders of the clusters and removing the tips. We reduced production and the size of clusters to achieve proper maturation. In the vineyards, with production controlled in time, resultant quality was exceptional.



Sinodo 'Los Tollos': 2015, 598 bottles; 2016, 894 bottles

Sinodo 'Raposeras': 2014, 609 bottles; 2015, 794 bottles; 2016, 624 bottles

RAPOSERAS VINEYARD

Uruñuela (La Rioja). 0.16 ha of 100-year-old vines at 525 m.

In Spanish, uno Raposo is a fox, so this vineyard is the 'place of foxes'. Raposeras is a landscape of smooth hills located between Uruñuela and Cenicero. Wine grapes have been grown here for centuries: historically, productive soils close to water were kept for food cultivars and vineyards were planted in the poorer slopes.



A north-facing vineyard, 30km west of Logroño at the northern reach of Najerilla valley. Raposeras is organically-grown bush-vines planted in the 'marco real' pattern (1.7x1.7m), cropped at 4 t/ha. The vines are Tempranillo with a little Garnacha. The top layer of soil is 80 cm of free-draining sand. Under this, the soil contains 40% calcium and 15% limestone. Raposeras has been in Juanan's family for 100 years, (planted in 1916). First vintage, 2014.

Vinification: hand-picked, sorted, and de-stemmed. Alcoholic fermentation with whole berries. Malolactic in 1 and 2yo French oak barriques. Aged 11 months with batonnage twice weekly.



Tasting note: Deep and brilliant red cherry. Cranberries, sweet spice and gunpowder. The mouth is full-bodied, long and smooth.

2014: deep, rich red and blue (tasting bottle 541/609), with soft little violet flowers and oriental spice. Lots of stoney 'mineral' character which feels like the 'flesh' of stones. Full at entry, but with good movement through to an agile finish.

2015: pebbly, briary, cereal and balsam Rioja. De-pipped mulberry with a purple basil lift, smoky briars, angelica and a whiff of leather, electric red earthen minerality and a delicate spice hit of fenugreek. Very gentle tannin, deep, soft and round it cups and releases, an earthen carpet unfolding.

2016: fine, inky-anisey, a dark blue-smelling wine- a bit like smelling a whole blackberry bush when in flower, there's a dense small blue flower lilt followed by a sparkle of minerals. Delicate and radiating from fine oak with a touch of spice. Open and round, delicately threaded. No sense of extraction so much as just 'being', no heft or stick anywhere. Fine and pretty without sweetness. Sneaky-long.

LOS TOLLOS VINEYARD

Villamediana de Iregua, 0.24 ha, 35yo vineyard at 430 m.

Owned by Gorka's family, this south-facing vineyard is located in Villamediana de Iregua, 6km south of Logroño, exposed to sun and wind. The well-drained soil is poor in organic matter, sandy limestone, with clay and alluvial stones. Planted in 1982, Los Tollos had been abandoned for a couple of years before purchase by the Etxebarrias, and is planted to Tempranillo with a little Mazuelo and a few vines of Rojal (Malvasia Riojana). 'Tollos' are geographic depressions (see right). Vinification: hand-picked, sorted, and destemmed. Fermentation in 700l stainless with whole berries. Malolactic 50% in tank, 50% in new barriques. Aged 11 months with batonnage. Halfway through, the components were swapped between tank and barrique-ageing.



2015: purple cola with wild rice cereal character, crushed rock and baked clay, a wine of great depth without heft, poised and easily structured.

2016: a plush and attractive version of 4 square. Deep, brilliant red cherry. The nose is a complex mix of wild red berries, mineral, smoky flavours and cocoa. The mouth is fresh and structured with natural concentration and reminiscences of the terroir.