

Gaintza Aitako



Tucked away on the banks of the Cantabrian Sea just west of San Sebastián sits the small yet fierce Getariako Txakolina DO. The area's sandy beaches attract surfers and tourists, while the Basque region's abundance of Michelin-starred restaurants draws millions of destination diners each year. It is also here that the Lazkano family has been farming their small vineyard plots around their rural stone house and cellar—known as a caserío—for a century.

The Gaintza estate and winery was founded by Andrés Lazkano in 1923, for the purpose of making wine for home and selling the small amount leftover directly from his farmhouse to neighboring villages. The winery has expanded since then, now home to a boutique guesthouse and tasting room offering classically warm Basque hospitality. The winery is run by its 4th generation, brothers Joseba and Urtzi Lazkano. Joseba and his mother handle the winemaking (and the many visitors!) while Urtzi manages the family's 23 ha of sustainably farmed, pergola-trained vineyards. Intensely focused on their small but fierce region and its potential for its native varietals, the Lazkano family name is respected for being fine wine pioneers in a region largely known for inexpensive, fizzy white wine. Surname aside, members of the family are usually referred to simply as "Gaintza," in the local custom of swapping in farm or fishing boat names.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: From 100+ year old vines, and 12 months on the lees, Gaintza Aitako is a much more serious, weighty expression of Txakolina. Aitako means "from the father" in Euskera, the local language, and the wine pays homage to the first generation of family winemaking.

RATING HISTORY: 2020 90D; 2019 91D; 2018 92 WA

GRAPE: 90% Hondarrabi Zuri, 10% Chardonnay. Sustainably farmed vines planted in the 1920s to clay and limestone soils, 1,500 ft. from the ocean.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: Aitako's bright acidity and intense maritime character make this a wonderful pair with seafood, particularly fried preparations like smelts or calamari. Also lovely with anchovies and olives – anything with a strong umami component.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: The wine spends 12 months on its lees in stainless steel tank, with an additional 6 months in bottle before release. Unlike some wine from DO Getariako Txakolina, the wine is bottled completely dry, with almost none of the effervescence found. The result is a singularly terroir-driven Txakoli that reflects a bright future for Bodegas Gaintza, as well as a heralded past.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: The 3 ha of vineyards that provide Aitako Blanco are the oldest in the estate, and this "family reserve" bottling comes from vines planted nearly 1,500 feet from the ocean, perched on the bluffs overlooking the water and town of Getaria; Gaintza means "on top of" in Euskera. The soils here are clay with limestone, and the climate is mild but wet.

TASTING NOTES Bright green-yellow. On the nose, high toned aromas of lemon, quince, green apple and white flowers are comingled with citrus peel and mineral. On the palate, weighty yet austere, with beautiful balance between the effervescent acidity and the weighty intensity. Finishes bone dry and full of minerality, with impressive length.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 12%

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