

Senda del Oro



Juan Carlos Vizcarra is a man of intensity, passion, and incredible ambition. Though his family has grown grapes in northern DO Ribera del Duero for more than four generations, he was the first to make estate-bottled wine from this fruit starting in 1991. The story goes that when he was a boy, he noticed that the historic estates of Vega Sicilia and Pesquera would come to his family in bad vintages to buy fruit. Realizing that his family must have truly special vineyards of the highest quality, Juan Carlos took it upon himself to begin producing wines to express this blessed terroir and heritage. Like all the wines at the tiny Bodegas Vizcarra, the Senda del Oro is made using gravity-fed winemaking to preserve the freshness and elegance intrinsic to the limestone plots found in northern Burgos. The name refers to the “golden mile,” a local road stretching between the famed estates in the appellation. Meticulous in everything he does, Juan Carlos applies his detail-oriented approach to every facet of the winemaking process. With painstaking attention paid to every detail from vineyard to bottle, Juan Carlos is able to express the elegance and freshness intrinsic to this special land he farms by hand, without the use of chemicals. Oak is used as a framer of the fruit in a supporting role, and the result is a confluence of power and freshness that positions his wines among the greats of the appellation. While Senda del Oro is Vizcarra’s entry-level wine, the exacting nature of the regimen is the same as his flagship wines, and exhibits world class Ribera del Duero quality.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: A pure, elegant expression of Ribera del Duero. Derived from gravity-fed winemaking and meticulous attention to detail, Senda del Oro showcases the freshness and minerality that is so often obscured with over-extraction in Ribera.

RATING HISTORY: 2022 93W&S, 91TA; 2021 93WE, 91TA; 2019 90WA; 2018 90+WA, 90W&S; 2017 90WA

GRAPE: 100% Tinto Fino (Tempranillo). Vines planted in 1950-1998. Tended in limestone and sandy soil at 849 m (2,785 ft) elevation.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: Grilled pork and lamb are natural pairs for the generous fruit and acidity of Ribera del Duero, particularly flavored with woody herbs like rosemary and thyme.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: After careful selection, the grapes are destemmed and crushed. Maceration lasts 14 days. Fermentation is carried out in stainless steel tanks and malolactic takes place in barrels. The wine is aged for 7 months in French and American oak barrels that are 2 years old. Relatively short aging in used barrels allows the wine to oxygenate and become softer and rounder without the added wood tannins of barrels. This method lets the wine retain its fresh, youthful fruit characters.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: The vineyards are located in the town of Mambrilla, at 849 meters (2,785 ft.) elevation. This town is in the northern central Ribera del Duero DO, within Burgos in Castilla y León. For soils, out of the 11 parcels farmed, they are predominantly sand, clay, limestone and gravel. The vines in these parcels were planted in 1987. Juan Carlos reduces yields by thinning grape clusters from 20 to 8 per vine, and by allowing other foliage to flourish around the vines to absorb the excessive water and nutrients from the soil. An extreme Continental climate, with cool nights and hot days with moderately low rainfall, provides a longer ripening period, and results in wines with greater complexity and more expressive, intense aromas. Harvest usually begins the first week of October and ends by mid-month.

TASTING NOTES Ruby-red. Mineral-tinged raspberry, incense and floral pastille scents pick up a spicy accent with air. Juicy, sweet and seamless in texture, offering concentrated red fruit and spicecake flavors that put on weight as the wine opens up. The spice and floral notes carry through a long, energetic, focused finish shaped by silky, even tannins.-- Josh Reynolds.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 14.5%

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