



Country

España

Appellation

D.O. Ribera del Duero

Domain

Vega Sicilia

Winemaker

*Gonzalo Iturriaga + Begoña
Jovellar*

Varietal

Tinto Fino + Merlot

BIO | BIODYNAMISCH

No

Vegan

No

This wine is as prestigious as its big brother Unico, although its blend is slightly different. It is named after the village where the estate lies. The vines are at least 20 years old.

Trial analysis:

All Vega Sicilia wines combine concentration and elegance, intensity and typicity of the grape; complexity and length. Valbuena is a little bit more open and accessible than Unico and Reserva Especial, which are almost esoteric. It is a powerful wine, well structured, well balanced and complete; a fine touch of acidity - typical of Tempranillo - gives it a fresh backbone. Give it some years to ripen.

Winemaking and élevage:

The grapes are harvested by night and quickly put in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks. The wine follows the same ageing process as the Unico, first in vats and then in French and American oak barrels for one year, then in vats again, then in bottles for one or two years. The Valbuena is released only after 5 years.

Save:

Drink as from : 2023 Best moment : 2031-2036 Until : 2042

Serve:

Serve at 18°C after decanting (at least during the first 7 years after bottling).

Reviews:

R. Parker: 96/100
Guía Peñin: 96/100

Beschrijving domein:

The estate was founded in 1864 by Eloy Lecanda. Although it changed hands many times in its history, it could always keep its identity and a touch of class. Everything really started in 1848 when Toribio Lecanda, a Basque, bought the 2,000 hectare estate (!) from the Marques de Valbuena. But it was Toribio's son, Eloy, who decided to make wine there, in 1864. So he went to Bordeaux and brought back some 18,000 plants of vine - Cabernet Sauvignon, Carménère, Malbec, Merlot and even Pinot Noir. When he planted them on the estate, people thought it was a folly; at that time, the estate's income came essentially from cattle, orchards and ceramics. Soon the Lacanda family found itself in dire straits; and a new investor stepped in: the Herrero family. 15 years later, Antonio Herrero Velázquez came into possession of the whole estate. In 1905, Txomin Garramiola took over the management. This Basque was employed by the Bodega Cosme Palacio, in Rioja. Palacio could not supply enough wine to its customers in Bilbao (the most important wine market of those times), because of the phylloxera; so to ensure new supplies,

he asked Vega Sicilia if they would be willing to lease the estate for 10 years; a contract was signed with Antonio Herrero's sons, who had been managing the estate since 1901. Palacio appointed Txomin as trustee and entrusted him with the winemaking. The wine had to be in line with those Palacio's clients were accustomed to – a Rioja style, thus, with a long ageing and bottled when the orders were placed, not before. The wine estate takes the name of "Bodegas de Lecanda". At the end of the lease, in 1915, when the estate got back into the firm "Hijos de Antonio Herrero", the three Herrero brothers convinced Txomin to stay at the head of the winery. For them, the prestige of the property demanded that it would continue to produce wine. From then on, Txomin began to make wine the way he wanted, not only wine to compensate for the shortage of Rioja. This is how the Vega Sicilia Unico and the Valbuena were born. The Herreros belonged to the upper circles of the Spanish aristocracy and industry. The bodega was losing a lot of money, but the other activities of the farm could offset the losses. Vega Sicilia was not meant as a commercial wine. It was not for sale, it was part of the family prestige. You could not acquire it with money, only with friendship. If you were not intimate with the Herreros and wanted to buy a bottle, the price they would ask was unaffordable. So the myth of Spain's most expensive wine was born. It was a great success in the 1920's, all over Europe. In 1933, Txomin died. In 1953, the estate was sold to Prodes, a seed company. The enthusiasm of the Herrero area was soon forgotten. Until the arrival of Jesús Anadón, who managed the estate until it was sold again to the current owners, the Alvarez Family, in 1982. This was the best thing that could ever happen to Vega Sicilia. The Alvarez family owns the Eulen group, one of Spain's largest companies, active in cleaning and surveillance, amongst others. When they bought the estate, it was a mere investment, a diversification. They never regretted it – they even went on investing heavily in the wine sector. At the head of the Vega Sicilia group is Pablo Alvarez. Since 1998, its technical manager has been oenologist Xavier Ausas. Vega Sicilia has never been more alive!