

BODEGAS SANTALBA

After working in the industry for 33 years, Santiago Ijalba Garcia established Bodegas Santalba in 1998, in the Rioja town of Gimileo. Obtaining his degree in oenology in 1974, Santiago was later joined by his son, Roberto, in 1997, after he'd finished studying at UC Davis in 1996. "This is a father/son team," says Jorge Perez, our South American Portfolio Director. "They do everything hand-in-hand...These two winemakers represent two different generations.



They have traditional style wines, Emirta; and Abando, which is the son taking over, introducing modern techniques." Making wines under eight labels, including Santiago Ijalba Ogga, Vina Hermosa and Bodegas Santalba Abando, the Ijalba family has 20ha under vine, all of which is certified organic. The remaining fruit, they purchase from other growers..."My dad's 63 years old," says Roberto, "he's been in the business for 46 years...he knows a lot of people, very good producers [from which we buy our fruit]...35-40% of which are practicing organic."

Santiago Ijalba is in charge of their label Ermita, which produces rosé, white, Crianza, and Reserva. And while Santiago produces other wines, these are not available on the U.S. market. Abando and Ogga are produced by Roberto. "The Ogga plantings are 90+ year old certified organic," says Jorge. "They come from one contiguous vineyard, which is very unusual in Rioja. It makes Ogga quite a statement. It [the wine] is pretty stellar."

In speaking of how he and his father work together, Roberto says, "Both of us look for the Rioja style. We believe that Rioja has a great name and quality. It has its own style. The difference [between father and son]? Maybe he's more focused on balance and elegance, [while] I'm looking for an expression of the grape, Tempranillo. Not to make an international wine, but a more concentrated Rioja...not heavy. I studied at UC Davis, so my style is a little different."

In the winery, both father and son employ spontaneous fermentations. They use indigenous yeast from the vineyard, and never add artificial yeasts.

ERMITA RESERVA



Varietal/Blend: 100% Tempranillo

Farming: practicing organic

Soil: chalky - clay

Vine Age: 35 years old

Yeast: indigenous

Fermentation: stainless steel

Aging: 18 months American oak

Alcohol: 13.5%

Fined: none

Filtered: light

Country: Spain

Region: Rioja

Sub Region: Rioja Alta

Vineyard: Vistalebro - Calvario

Vineyard Size: 20 hectare (4 vineyards)

Ermita Reserva is produced exclusively in the best vintages with the most famous grape from Rioja "Tempranillo" and harvested by hand. The altitude of this area is around 550 meters above sea level and it is influenced by Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea. The wine has 11 days skin maceration. After Malolactic fermentation is complete, the wine is kept for 18 months in American oak barrels and later bottled and kept in the cellar for a minimum of 24 months.