



ALEGRE VALGAÑÓN

Year Founded: 2010

Region: Rioja

Winemaker / Owner:
Oscar Alegre & Eva Valgañón

Known For: Turning out head-spinning reds and whites that capture the best of their beloved land's 1,000+ year history.

**-Sustainable
Transitioning to Organic-**

- Leader in the grower “vigneron” movement in Rioja focused on low intervention wines from specific villages.
- The focus here is the “Obarenes” zone in the shadow of those mountains in the heart of Rioja Alta’s best vineyard zones.
- Oscar has worked with greats such as Alvaro Palacios and Telmo Rodriguez – he is also an expert on Rioja wine history.
- Eva comes from a family with deep roots in this zone as top grape growers. Her family has supplied all the great historic brands with fruit over the years.

While Oscar and Eva have only been producing wine since the 2014 vintage, their ideas developed over a period of years. They met while studying enology in Italy, and they eventually married. After returning to Spain, Eva found work as a winemaker and Oscar worked in export for some of Spain’s most famous producers. Both families own prime vineyards, and the young couple always held the dream of crafting their own wine from them.



In his export roles, Oscar traveled throughout Europe, and was exposed to many of its ancient wine traditions. A particularly eye-opening 2007 trip to the Rhône and Piedmont brought visits to luminaries like Allemand, Rostaing, Giuseppe Rinaldi, both Mascarellos, and Giacomo Conterno. That trip reframed for Oscar how he might approach own wines ... someday. He saw how dedicated winemakers could reinvigorate their region’s traditions in the face of “modern” or “international” winemaking. The basis of any great wine estate is, of course, its vineyards. And many of Oscar and Eva’s family vineyards lie just to the west of Haro, in the shadow of the Obarenes Mountains. This area has long been revered by producers for the freshness and persistence they provided in blends. In fact, one old-timer claimed that the esteemed early Viña Reals were usually a blend of 75% Obarenes Tempranillo, with up to 25% Garnacha from Cárdenas. Having vineyards in both villages, Oscar and Eva’s are able to work with similar proportions for their signature tinto. To get the most of their families’ vineyards, they worked to institute better farming, and by 2013 they were committed to sustainable agriculture. Oscar had seen how the inclusion of ripe stems during fermentation gave Rhône Valley wines greater purity and expressiveness. His research showed that earlier generations in Rioja had also used stems

in their musts, and this too became part of their concept. Because Oscar and Eva’s quest was to develop a wine that’s a product of their land, they chose to minimize the effect of wood. To this end, they started their project with a mix of used French barriques and demi-muids. Because French wood loses its flavoring ability much faster than does American oak, they’ve been able to minimize the flavor impact of the wood. And as the project develops, they hope to adopt longer aging and even bigger neutral barrels. The humility and long, painstaking gestation of the project may too explain why we believe that Oscar’s and Eva’s project ranks among the most exciting in Rioja today.



2022 Alegre Valgañón Rioja Blanco

Very old Viura (90%) and young Garnacha (10%) from a vineyard in Galbárruri. Grapes are slow-pressed with their stems and fermented in stainless before transfer to wood. Aged 10 months in used French demi muids.

94 Points – James Suckling - *“The aromas are attractively minerally, but more like wet stones. There is skin contact, with some spices, apricots and pomelo. Supple, composed and quite calm, with a creamy mouthfeel on the medium-bodied palate. Fresh and fleshy, with a lengthy finish. Lots of minerals at the end. So irresistible now.”*



2021 Alegre Valgañón Rioja Tinto

Tempranillo (80%) from the Obarenes zone and Garnacha (20%) from Cárdenas. The Garnacha from Cardenas is the "secret" to the elegance and fame of Vina Real. 35 day maceration/fermentation with wild yeasts and stems. 12-18 months in a mix of various sizes of used French oak barrels.

93+ Points – Robert Parker – *“Medium to full-bodied palate with very fine tannins and a clean, long and tasty, almost salty finish. It's a wine that transcends its price.”*

93 Points - John Gilman - *“Offers up a complex and nicely red fruity bouquet of raspberries, cherries, clove-like spice tones, a fine base of soil elements, cigar smoke, cedar and a nice touch of spiced meats from the Garnacha in the blend. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and tangy, with excellent depth at the core, fine-grained tannins, lovely balance and a long, complex and very promising finish. This is an outstanding bottle.”*