

ALVARO PALACIOS

‘One of the most passionate and legendary winemakers in Spain today.’ -James Suckling

‘The Spanish explorer ventured into Priorat and Bierzo, bringing forgotten regions and grape varieties to new heights.’ -Wine Spectator

Year Founded: 1988

Region: Priorat, Spain

Winemaker / Owner: Alvaro Palacios

Known for: 60-100-year-old vines

Fun Fact: If anyone embodies the promise and spirit of “The New Spain,” it’s Alvaro Palacios. His L’Ermita is widely considered—along with Peter Sisseck’s Dominio de Pingus — to be the most important Spanish wine of the modern era.

-Sustainable, Organic, Biodynamic-

One of nine children born to the owners of Rioja's respected Palacios Remondo, Alvaro studied enology in Bordeaux, while working under Jean-Pierre Moueix at Chateau Pétrus. He credits his tenure at Pétrus for much of his winemaking philosophy and for showing him “the importance of great wines.” Alvaro could have returned to the security of his family’s domaine, but in the 1980s, he was drawn to the largely abandoned, ancient vineyards of



Priorat. Located 60 miles from Barcelona, Priorat had been one of Spain's important pre-phylloxera wine regions, and with its unique terroir of steep hills and terraces, Alvaro believed he could make wines that rivaled the best of Europe. He acquired his first vineyard, Finca Dofí, in 1990. Then, in 1993, he located what is now regarded as the crown jewel property in Priorat, a precipitous, northeast-facing Garnacha vineyard on well-drained schist that had been planted between 1900 and 1940. Alvaro named it for a small chapel, or hermitage, that sits atop the hill. In 1995, the flow of critical praise for Alvaro's L'Ermita began, and it hasn't stopped. But Alvaro remained haunted by another remote area of great

potential: Bierzo, in far northwestern Spain. Bierzo, too, had all the ingredients to make great wine: incredibly steep hillside vineyards, distinctive terroirs and, most importantly, ancient vineyards of Mencía, a unique red grape believed brought by French pilgrims during the Middle Ages. So in 1998, Alvaro and his nephew, Ricardo Perez, created a tiny jewel of a domaine in the town of Corullón, on Bierzo's western border.

2022 Alvaro Palacios ‘Camins del Priorat’

Alvaro had never wanted to be known solely for expensive “trophy” wines, and with Camins, he found the opportunity to create something special. Drawing on his wealth of vineyard sources, Alvaro is aiming to produce a wine that is affordably priced, but which also stays true to his vision of Priorat—powerful but elegant, approachable but restrained. 40% Garnacha, 30% Samsó, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 10% Syrah on schist soil. A combination of estate vineyards and carefully sourced grapes. The grapes are destemmed and softly crushed. 30-day maceration. Fermentation is in stainless steel, cement, and large open top wooden vats. 4-6 months in barrels and wooden vats. Camins is the winery's softer, entry level Priorat.

91 Points – James Suckling – *“Hints of stewed herbs to the nicely baked cherries, strawberries and some hibiscus and dark spices. Fruity, medium-bodied on the palate with fine-grained tannins and a fresh, medium-long finish.”*



2020/2021 Alvaro Palacios 'Finca Dofi'



'Top 100 Spanish Wines' - James Suckling 2017 & 2023

Garnacha 87%, Cariñena 12%, Whites 1%. The original Clos Dofi now called Finca Dofi. This is a single vineyard with an average vine age of 20 years. One of the first 5 great "clos" that catapulted the Priorat to fame. 25 day maceration. Fermentation in oak vats with punch down. Malolactic fermentation in barrel. Aged in large oak (foudres and bocoyes) for 14 months.

96 Points – '21 James Suckling – *“Scented, delineated nose but has depth, too. It effuses wet-stone minerality that gives a thin overlay to the red and blue berries. Some spices, briar and hibiscus, too. Juicy and medium- to full-bodied on the palate, which is a little more vertical and powerful than many of Palacios’ reds, highlighted by real tension and tautness here.”*

96-98 Points – '21 Robert Parker

95 Points – '20 James Suckling

94 Points – '20 Wine Spectator

2019/2021 Alvaro Palacios Terrasses



2019: The regional 2019 Les Terrasses Velles Vinyes was produced with a blend of grapes from 80 plots in eight villages from Priorat, 82% Garnacha with 17% Cariñena and 1% white grapes, a year unusually high in Garnacha and unusually low in Cariñena that suffered a lot from the heat. The destemmed and lightly crushed grapes fermented in concrete and oak vats with indigenous yeasts, and the wine matured in French oak barrels for 12 months. What happened here is that Cariñena was burned by a heat spike of 43 degrees Celsius on the 28th of June, and there was a wildfire in Montsant that perhaps could have warmed things up even more. I think there might be a change toward more Garnacha and elegance in the wines from Álvaro Palacios in Priorat, as this is brighter and less rustic than this wine used to be, more polished, perfumed and fine. The year of heat and drought.

2021: 60% Garnacha, 40% Carinena. In 2007, Alvaro changed the sources of fruit for the Les Terrasses cuvee to only old vines or Velles Vinyes in Catalan. In doing so, he reduced the production of this wine by almost a 3rd and increased the quality a great deal. The wine comes from mostly estate vineyards with some purchased fruit from select lots of old vine Garnacha. Vineyard yields are low at 25 hL/hA. 100% slate called Llicorella in Catalan. The grapes are destemmed and softly crushed. 30 day maceration. Fermentation is in stainless steel, cement and large wooden vats. Remontages and punching down. 10 months in French oak all of which was used to age previous vintages or Camins. 80% of the oak is one, two and three years old.

94-96 Points - '21 Robert Parker - *“A lively and vibrant Priorat with lower alcohol and higher acidity and more freshness, pointing at a great vintage in the making. This could very well be the finest vintage of Terrasses, a wine that Álvaro Palacios defined as a year of concentration and class. The wine is clean and pure, with great precision.”*

94 Points - '19 Robert Parker

DESCENDIENTES DE J. PALACIOS

‘One of the best examples of Mencía. Descendientes de J. Palacios is the most coherent, moving, thrilling and consistent wine project in Spain. Period.’ -Robert Parker

Year Founded: 1998

Region: Corullón, Spain

Winemaker / Owner: Ricardo Perez & Alvaro Palacios

Fun fact: The winery is dedicated to Alvaro's father, and Ricardo's grandfather, who passed away in early 2000. The wines are a worthy tribute to the man who inspired them.

-Sustainable, Organic, Biodynamic-

Descendientes de J. Palacios— named for Alvaro's father— produces as many as seven different wines, depending on the year. And since the first vintage in 1999, Descendientes has proven that it is Spain's closest kin to the great domaines of Burgundy's Côte d'Or. The idea of making great wine from old-vine Mencía never left Alvaro, and his experience in Priorat—particularly with L'Ermita—convinced him of Bierzo's enormous potential. Meanwhile, his nephew Ricardo Perez had finished enological studies in Bordeaux and was travelling across France—absorbing everything he could about great wines. He worked the harvest at Château Margaux, and did internships at other Bordelais firms like Moueix (Pétrus, Trotanoy, etc.). He also visited Alvaro frequently and came to share a belief in Bierzo's potential. In 1998, the two decided on a joint venture and set out in search of the region's finest old vineyards. Alvaro and Ricardo found promising sites in a number of villages but shortly came to believe that the greatest potential



lay in a little town on Bierzo's western border named Corullón. Old vineyards lined the precipitous hillsides there, and the local soils were extremely poor—composed mostly of schist—but with incredible diversity. The minute variations in soils and exposures across this zone immediately reminded the two of Burgundy's Côte d'Or, or Piedmont's Langhe hills. In Corullón, Alvaro and Ricardo believe they have found a unique combination of soils, old vines, and a distinctive variety that will yield their own grands crus. Beginning with 2001, the estate began to make their case with individual vineyard bottlings. The winery is dedicated to Alvaro's father, and Ricardo's grandfather, who passed away in early 2000. The wines are a worthy tribute to the man who inspired them.

2021 Descendientes de J. Palacios 'Petalos'



'Top 100 Wines' - Wine Spectator

'Spain's most exciting wine.' - Decanter

'In an ideal world, this should be the first wine people drink from Bierzo.'
- Robert Parker

Assembled from old hillside and hilltop vines from across Bierzo's western edge. Vinified for immediate appeal, but it retains the estate's signature finesse and restraint. The vineyards used in Petalos include estate vineyards and rented vineyards in and around the village of Corullón. Mostly schist sites mixed with about 30% from clay. Harvesting is all done by hand. Fermented in large oak fermenters with punch down. Maceration for about 25 days. No fining. Petalos ages for a few weeks in new French oak barriques followed by 6-10 months in 2nd and 3rd passage barrels.

93+ Points – '21 Robert Parker

93 Points – '21 James Suckling – *“Tangy notes of white pepper, wild herbs and red berries. Hints of agave, too. Elegant and delineated on the palate with a medium body, where you find a fine wrap of chalky tannins to the nimble, elegant red berry fruit.”*