

Toro vineyards and grape varieties

As of 2019 there were 5,642 hectares (13,942 acres) of registered vineyards. Around 1,200ha of these are old bush vines of at least 50 years of age. White grapes only account for just 350ha (865 acres).

In terms of grape varieties, Tinta de Toro is by far the dominant grape variety in Toro. The DO authorities describe Tempranillo and Tinta de Toro as genotypes, sharing genetic code. However they are not regarded as phenotypes, as they show distinct physical forms.

Tinta da Toro has a longer vegetative cycle, which helps it cope with the warm conditions. The leaf is more idented, berry skins are thicker and there are more veins in the flesh. Phenolics are higher in the Toro variant, producing wines which are deeper colored and more tannic than Rioja and most Ribera del Duero wines.

A tiny amount of Garnacha is also grown (127ha in 2019). It has been used mostly in Toro Rosado (the region's rosé wine), but interest seems to be increasing.

Equally tiny quantities of Malvasia Blanca and Verdejo have been grown for use in the rare bottles of white Toro white wine (but not rosé). Albillo Real and Moscatel de Grano Menudo were added to the DO permitted varieties in 2021. This duo already have some tradition in the area but now can be used for whites and also rosé wines.

Toro's climate on the Castilian plateau is decidedly continental. The same can be said for neighboring Rueda, Cigales and Ribera del Duero. This means dry, hot summers followed by cold, harsh winters. Although the vast expanses of the Atlantic Ocean lie both to the north and west, Toro's vineyards are deprived of any significant maritime influence by the Cordillera Cantábrica, the mountain range that separates Castilla y Leon from Spain's north coast.

Temperatures range from -11°C to 36°C (12°F to 97°F) and annual rainfall averages just 350mm (14in). The Duero River provides a much-needed source of water, and vineyards stray very little from its path.

Altitude plays an important role in Toro's terroir. The region lies at the very heart of Castilla y Leon, on the vast, high plateau that separates the Cordillera Cantábrica and Sistema Central mountain ranges. Most Toro vineyards sit at altitudes between 600 and 800 meters (2000 – 2800ft) above sea level, which helps to cool the climate slightly; air temperature drops about $0.6^{\circ}\text{C}/1.1^{\circ}\text{F}$ with every 100m/330ft of altitude.

High daytime temperatures, low rainfall and abundant sunshine combine to create powerful, high-alcohol wines. If left unchecked, Tinta de Toro grapes would ripen with very high potential alcohol. Wines of up to 16 percent alcohol by volume would be possible.

Local wine laws (as administered by the Consejo Regulador de Toro) impose an upper limit of 15 percent abv. However in practice most producers try to keep alcohol levels below 13.5 percent in order to keep the wines approachable and balanced.

Wine Club-February 2023

Coletto
Paco & Lola Alberino 2021 Sains Valley, Rais Baixas, Galicia 12.5% Cooperativa Vitivinícola Arousana (Sainsbury's £14, £12, £8.5) Fruit-forward aromas of ripe peach and pear continue on the smooth, juicy, palate which has zippy citrus acidity and a long stony finish. Aged on lees for three months minimum Fruit-forward aromas of ripe peach and pear continue on the smooth, juicy, palate which has zippy citrus acidity and a long stony finish. Paco & Lola, Albariño, ...

Marqués de Riscal Verdejo 2021 Rueda 13% (Majestic £7.99)

Since it was founded in 1858, Marqués de Riscal has been one of Spain's most inventive wineries. They were the first to create fresh, fruity Verdejo in the Rueda region. They also make it from older vines (30 years old) than many of the other estates. As older vines nourish the tastiest grapes, you can rest assured that you're in for a real treat. This is smooth, fresh and aromatic with notes of tropical fruits, verbena and fresh-cut grass. Try it with shellfish.

Matsu "El Picaro" 2021 Toro, Castilla y Leon 14.5% (Majestic £ 8.99) Tinta de Toro The region's vineyards strive to survive the fiercely hot, dry climate. In the right hands, hard-working vines create complex and intensely flavoured wines. El Picaro translates as 'the rogue', which perfectly sums up this vibrant, charming wine. With just two months ageing in concrete vats, you can taste its youthful freshness – there's notes of juicy blackberry and blueberry, liquorice and sweet spice. The perfect choice for cuts of roast beef. El Picaro is a young red wine from Toro made with Tinta de Toro (Tempranillo) grapes from vines between 50 and 70 years old.

This wine is produced by Bodega Matsu and is a wine that does not interfere with natural processes, guided by biodynamic viticulture methods.

For its preparation, the harvest is done manually during the first half of October and is transported in boxes and small trailers.

Subsequently, fermentation takes place in concrete tanks of 15,000 kg, the temperature does not exceed 24°C to maintain freshness in the fruit that characterizes this wine.

Malolactic fermentation takes place in French oak barrels, once complete, it is neither filtered nor clarified, trying to preserve its natural features.

Finally El Picaro spends three months in wooden barrels.

MATSU "El Picaro" 2021 Toro, (Majestic, Morrisons £10) Much like Ribera Del Duero, the Tinta de Toro (Tempranillo) grape is king in the region of Toro. Since the area is not as well-known as its famous neighbour, you can find excellent wines at a lower price. The region's vineyards strive to survive the fiercely hot, dry climate. In the right hands, hard-working vines create complex and intensely flavoured wines. El Picaro translates as 'the rogue', which perfectly sums up this vibrant, charming wine. With just two months ageing in concrete vats, you can taste its youthful freshness – there's notes of juicy blackberry and blueberry, liquorice and sweet spice. The perfect choice for cuts of roast beef.

Business for its green credentials and awarded International Green Company of the Year. Vineyards This wine is made from grapes grown at 895 meters altitude on the single vineyard Pago del Cielo where Miguel Torres says the "vines touch the stars". Vinification After stainless steel fermentation and partial malolactic conversion, the wine is aged for 12 months in a combination of

Torres Celeste Crianza 2019, Pago del Cielo, Ribera del Duero 14.5% (Waitrose £9.99) The Torres family has been making wine in the ancient Catalan town of Vilafranca del Penedes, south-west of Barcelona, since the 17th Century. This wine is made from grapes grown at 895 meters altitude on the single vineyard Pago del Cielo where Miguel Torres says the "vines touch the stars". Vinification After stainless steel fermentation and partial malolactic conversion, the wine is aged for 12 months in a combination of French & American oak, of which 20% is new wood. Tasting Notes Luminous Morello cherry red colour with garnet highlights. Intense aromas of wild blackberries and blueberry jam with toasted and spicy notes (pink peppercorn) and exciting undertones of hot wax and exquisitely fine oak. Round, velvety and mature, it envelops the palate in its perfume. Great with any hearty meat dish.

Manchusa Garnacha, Carinena 2019, Jorge Nevascués 14.5% (The Wine Society £12.95) From 50 year old vineyards

Aragon

A deep, peppery and spicy wine. This mineral and slender Grenache juice carries the wine towards finesse, with a certain elegance!

A wine to enjoy enormously: I've bought it three times now and I'm waiting for a new vintage like water of May. Light and delicate, with nuances: very rich.

Very aromatic and fresh wine. A nose of red fruits for a wine that shows a welcome slight acidity. Aromatic but without excessive power, it masks the 14.5% claimed. A very pleasant wine that pleases.

A thrilling style of old Grenache du Priorat vines" R. Parker

This plot selection of old Grenache vines is aged in 500L casks for one year before being bottled. Mancuso Garnacha is a very fresh, crisp and pleasant juice. From the first nose, the Mediterranean fragrances perfume the room with thyme, rosemary and green olive. Fruit is also omnipresent with blackcurrant in particular. The palate is very slender with a subtle touch of finesse and freshness. The very fine tannins give way to a superb fruity and spicy persistence. This is a model of Grenache interpreted by the oenologist who has consulted some of the biggest maisons such as our favourite Vina Zorzal etc...: Jorge Navascues.

Food and wine matching

Deli meats, Red meat, White meat, Game meat, Barbecue, Cheese

Recommended with

Grilled chicken, Cheese

Wine Club-February-Spain

1. Paco & Lola Alberino 2021, Rais Baixas, Galicia-	£12.00
2. Marqués de Riscal Verdejo 2021, Rueda	7.99
3. Matsu "El Picaro" Toro. Castilla Y Leon	8.99
4. Torres Celeste Crianza 2019, Ribera del Duero	9.99
5. Manchusa Garnacha, Carinêna 2019, Jorge Nevascués	12.99
	Total £51.96
	X£ bottles £155.88