

Marqués de Griñón

History

Carlos Falcó y Fernandez de Cordova is considered one of the great visionaries of the wine industry in 20th Century Spain. This fame rests with his innovations on his family's estate outside of Toledo. During his studies at UC Davis, he became convinced that this location could produce world-class wine under proper circumstances, in spite of the fact that the area traditionally produced olives and grain instead of wine, since it is a very dry region.

Other than the lack of water there are many characteristics of this microclimate that recommend it for wine production. One factor is height - it is much higher elevation (and therefore much cooler) than many Spanish wine regions. Another is the soil. The area of the vineyard has a thin layer of topsoil over almost pure limestone – similar to Burgundy.

The innovations that made the Dominio de Valdepusa famous include its use of drip irrigation in the '70s and partial rootzone drying techniques in the '90s, as well as the adoption of Smart-Dyson style canopy management techniques in the '90s.

The adoption of irrigation, in particular, was controversial – it was illegal at the time, and remained so for many years afterward. Although this has recently changed, the fact that Sr. Falcó had the courage (and the resources) to challenge the system was instrumental in bringing these groundbreaking wines to the attention of a wider public.

Vineyards

The estate is known as the Dominio de Valdepusa, since it is located in the valley of the Pusa river in the Toledo province of Spain, between Toledo and Madrid, the ancestral home of the Marqués de Griñón.

The original 14 hectares (ha) of Cabernet were planted in 1974, and have since been expanded with plantings of Syrah (in '91), Petit Verdot (in '92), and Graciano (in '00). The vines have been trained using lyre and Smart-Dyson canopies under the direction of vineyard consultant Dr Richard Smart.

Winemaking is now done by winemaker Julio López Mourelle with the expert consultation of Michel Rolland, who was the successor to Dr. Emile Peynaud, the original consultant to the estate. M. Rolland's contributions include later harvesting of the grapes, the introduction of a gravity fed tanks, the use of hand destemming, and the abandonment of fining and filtration.

The El Rincón estate south-west of Madrid was planted in 2000 with 9 ha of vines (90% Syrah and 10% Grenache) in granite soils.

Vino de Pago

In July of 2003, Spain reformed its wine law by passing the Vineyard and Wine act. One provision of this law established a new category of *Denominación de Origen* (DO) called *Vinos de Pago* (vineyard-designate wines – pago means vineyard). With the passing of this law, this category became the highest level in the Spanish wine hierarchy.

Wines obtaining this level of classification comply with the stringent requirements for the associated DO and exceed them in a number of ways. In addition, they are produced and bottled on the estate in question. The very first of these Vinos de Pago was the Dominio de Valdepusa, since it was the lobbying of D. Carlos Falcó that was instrumental in the creation of this new category.