



OLIVIER RIVIÈRE

Gabaxo Rioja

With about 25 hectares of rented and owned vineyards in Rioja Alta, Rioja Baja, Rioja Alavesa and in up and coming DO of Arlanza, and splitting his time between his own wines and consulting with other producers, it would be a gross understatement to say that Olivier Rivière is a very busy man. Originally lured to Spain in 2004 by Telmo Rodriguez to convert his vineyards to biodynamics, Olivier came to appreciate the rich history of Rioja, and the diversity of its soils and grape varieties. In 2006 he started his own project and owing to the high cost of land in Rioja he traded his farming talents for access to grapes from the best sites he could locate.

Olivier was born and raised south of Bordeaux in Cognac. He later studied enology in Montagne St-Emilion focusing on biodynamic farming, followed by practical experience there, and later in Burgundy. The list of estates where he has worked is impressive by any standards from the most dedicated fans of natural wines (Elian da Ros & Domaine de Chassorney) to ultra-traditionalists (Domaine Leroy.) When his plans to set up a domaine in Fitou fell through, Olivier decided to spend a few years consulting in Spain, and he's never left.

Coming from France, Olivier has an innate sense of terroir. Unlike many of his peers in Rioja, he bases his cuvées not on political boundaries or the length of barrel aging but on terroir. He believes in a quality hierarchy inspired by Burgundy with generic Appellation and Village wines at the base and Premier and Grand cru wines at the top. Gabaxo is Olivier's only wine that blends fruit from a range of sites within Rioja. The Tempranillo is from Rioja Alavesa, planted on a rocky, clay limestone soil at an elevation of 500 meters above sea level, and the Garnacha is from a site near Cárdenas in Rioja Alta on red clay at 600 meters. Gabaxo is a not completely flattering term for a French border jumper – a nickname that Olivier embraces with pride. Along with Jequitiba, Olivier considers Gabaxo to be his Côte de Nuits version of Rioja.

ORIGIN

Spain

APPELLATION

Rioja

SOIL

Clay limestone, red clay, sand

AGE OF VINES

20–65

ELEVATION

500–650 meters

VARIETIES

Garnacha, Tempranillo

FARMING

Organic with biodynamic practices

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, whole cluster natural yeast fermentation in concrete vats

AGING

12 months in foudre and 500L French oak demi-muids

ACCOLADES

92 – 2016 Gabaxo – Vinous Media

92 – 2016 Gabaxo – Wine Advocate

91 – 2014 Gabaxo – Wine Advocate

