



La Rioja Alta

A benchmark traditional Rioja, La Rioja Alta Gran Reserva 904 2016 combines mature finesse with vivid fruit, offering a beautifully poised expression of red berries, spice, cedar and long, polished elegance.



La Rioja Alta, S.A.



Alcohol :14,00 %

Composition: 90% Tempranillo,
10% Graciano

Gran Reserva 904 2016

Rioja, Spain

Region and Vineyards

La Rioja Alta Gran Reserva 904 2016 comes from **Rioja DOCa**, with fruit drawn principally from Rioja Alta vineyards in Villalba, Briñas and Rodezno, plus 10% Graciano from Montecillo in Fuenmayor. This part of Rioja is prized for wines that combine ripeness with freshness, and the producer describes 2016 as an outstanding vintage in both quality and quantity, helped by moderate, well-distributed rainfall that tempered summer heat and supported balanced ripening.

The blend reflects a classic regional logic. Tempranillo gives the wine its red-fruited core, silkiness and structure, while Graciano contributes aromatic lift, backbone and spice. Rioja itself is shaped by varied soils, notably clay-limestone, ferrous-clay and alluvial formations, as well as altitude and Atlantic influence, all of which help preserve acidity and aromatic definition in the best sites. La Rioja Alta also farms with a strong environmental focus, including limited treatments, water reuse and measures to encourage vineyard biodiversity.

Winemaking

The 2016 is a blend of **90% Tempranillo** and **10% Graciano**, hand-harvested in small crates and rigorously sorted, first in the vineyard and then on an optical sorting table at the winery. Fermentation took place with indigenous yeasts, with alcoholic fermentation lasting 21 days, followed by malolactic conversion. This careful selection and traditional vinification are central to the house style, which aims for aromatic complexity, silky tannins and long ageing potential.

Ageing is the defining signature here. The wine spent **four years in American oak barrels** with an average age of 4.5 years, undergoing traditional manual racking by candlelight every six months before bottling in May 2021 and then further bottle ageing prior to release. That long élevage gives 904 its unmistakable classical Rioja profile: cedar, tobacco, vanilla, spice and balsamic depth, yet with freshness and precision preserved in the 2016 vintage.



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Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Deep garnet red with a bright, lively ruby rim.
- **Aroma:** Expressive and layered, opening on wild strawberry, red cherry, black cherry and plum, then unfolding into tobacco, tea leaves, coffee, mocha, cedar, vanilla, cinnamon, balsamic herbs and a subtle earthy savouriness.
- **Palate:** Silky, refined and persistent, with polished tannins, fresh acidity and a graceful core of red and dark berry fruit wrapped in cedar, spice and savoury oak notes. The finish is long, harmonious and quietly powerful rather than heavy.

Did you know?

One of the most distinctive details behind this wine is that La Rioja Alta still performs its traditional barrel rackings **by hand and by candlelight** every six months. It also makes its own American oak barrels in-house, a rare and highly individual practice that helps define the estate's signature style.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Roast lamb with rosemary:** The wine's freshness and silky tannins balance the richness of lamb, while its tobacco, cedar and spice notes echo the savoury herbs.
- **Iberian pork secreto:** The succulent texture of the meat works beautifully with the wine's polished structure and sweet-spice, balsamic complexity.
- **Duck breast with cherry reduction:** The cherry-fruited core of the wine mirrors the sauce, while its acidity keeps the pairing lifted and precise.
- **Mushroom and truffle risotto:** Earthy umami flavours draw out the wine's tea leaf, forest-floor and mature oak nuances without overwhelming its finesse.

Vinous (Antonio Galloni) (VN) : 97 Points (2016)



The 2016 Gran Reserva 904 from Rioja Alta is composed of 90% Tempranillo and 10% Graciano. It aged for four years in American oak barrels, 20% of which were new. This has a slightly sun-kissed profile, opening with pronounced oaky aromas followed by classic tertiary notes of clove, licorice, vanilla and caramel, alongside hints of tobacco leaf and bay. This is complex in its maturity, offering good volume, creamy texture and a seamless flow across the palate. A touch of camphor appears at the finish, adding energy to the approachable character. The extended aging in oak defines the long, composed finale.

James Suckling (JS) : 97 Points (2016)



Such a deep and complex gran reserva with richness and depth. Genuinely intense and harmonious, with cigar box, pine cones, black mushrooms and high-grade wood and vanilla. Juicy, flavorful and really long. Goes on for a minute, if not more. Such a hedonistic Rioja that delivers sheer pleasure. 90% tempranillo and 10% graciano. Drink or hold.



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Robert Parker (RP) : 96 Points (2016)

I find the 2016 Gran Reserva 904 to be spectacular and a textbook example of the grand traditional style. It was produced with 90% Tempranillo and 10% Graciano from a selection of vineyards in search of balanced wines with silky tannins, good acidity, character, length and aging potential. The élevage is long, four years in used barrels averaging 4.5 years of age, during which time the wine is manually racked every six months. It's ripe with 14.5% alcohol, a pH of 3.61 and 5.4 grams of acidity, but the wine is super fresh and complex, with aromas of cigar box, balsamic, dry tea leaves, aromatic herbs, camphor, antiques, furniture and tobacco. It's elegant and intense, with pungent flavors and very good freshness, and it's silky, textured and nicely structured, with volume, clean, intense and long. This is a very complete year for 904. It's ready, but it should last.



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