

Alvaro Palacios

Crafted by Álvaro Palacios, the visionary of the "New Spain," 2022 L'Ermita expresses place with precision: supple texture, lifted aromatics, and a finish that fans out like silk over slate.

L'Ermita 2023

Priorat, Spain



Region and Vineyards

L'Ermita sits on precipitous **llicorella** (laminar schist) above Gratallops in the heart of Priorat, at 350-430 metres with north and east exposures that temper Mediterranean sun. The 4.7-hectare Grand Cru-equivalent Gran Vinya Classificada parcel is organically farmed, mulched and worked by mule, preserving fragile slate soils rich in magnesium and iron. In 2022, just **2.28 hectares** were selected for L'Ermita, maintaining a stringent focus on purity and finesse. Rainfall was a scant **359 mm**, underscoring the site's low-yield, high-character profile.

Vines here include centenarian Garnacha and Cariñena with scattered old white vines. Planted in 1909, 1939 and 1996, and trained as bush vines, they give minute crops (around **17 hl/ha**) of intensely flavoured berries. The parcel's diagonal vein of micro-conglomerates and the amphitheatre's exposure contribute the wine's signature saline line and cool, stone-etched finish—hallmarks that place L'Ermita among Spain's most expressive single vineyards.

Winemaking

The 2022 blend is **92% Garnacha, 7% Cariñena and 1% field-blended white varieties** (Garnacha Blanca, Macabeo, Pedro Ximénez). Harvested **1 October 2022**, grapes were partly destemmed and partly fermented as whole clusters with native yeasts in wooden vats, followed by **23 days'** maceration with gentle punch-downs. Malolactic occurred spontaneously in wood.

Élevage was **14 months in oval French-oak foudres**; the wine was **neither fined nor filtered**. Bottled at **14.5% vol.**, total production was approximately **4,707 bottles** (plus large formats). The precision of selection—only a portion of the 4.7-ha vineyard—helps explain the wine's remarkable delicacy and definition in a warm, dry year.

Alcohol :14,50 %

Composition: 92% Grenache, 7% Cariñena

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Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Deep ruby with a shimmering, violet hue; limpid yet saturated at the core.
- **Aroma:** Red cherry, mulberry and wild strawberry layered with rose, thyme and bay; graphite dust, blood orange peel and a cool, ferrous slate note rising with air.
- **Palate:** Silken entry, medium-plus body and ultra-fine, chalk-slate tannins; a seam of **saline** minerality threads red and dark fruits, cacao nib and garrigue. Long, aerial finish with lingering florals and crushed rock.

Did you know?

L'Ermita is classified **Gran Vinya Classificada**—Priorat's top tier—and is widely cited alongside Pingus as a defining icon of modern Spanish wine. The vineyard expanded to **4.7 ha** after a land swap with René Barbier, yet each year only a fraction is chosen for L'Ermita to preserve its filigreed style. First vintage: **1993**.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Milk-fed lamb chops a la brasa:** Sweet Garnacha fruit and fine tannins mirror lamb's delicacy; smoky char links to slate-borne mineral savour.
- **Wild mushroom and truffle risotto:** Umami depth and creamy texture resonate with the wine's silken mid-palate and subtle cocoa-herb tones.
- **Duck breast with cherry glaze:** Bright red-fruit core complements cherry notes; acidity cuts richness while spice nuances echo the glaze.
- **Aged Manchego with membrillo:** Nutty salinity amplifies the wine's mineral profile; quince paste plays to Garnacha's red-fruit register.

99 Decanter

Decanter (DCT) : 99 Points (2022)

L'Ermita is the second of Alvaro Palacios' top wines to gain the Gran Vinya Classificada category. The vineyard now measures 4.7ha; it increased when Palacios and René Barbier swapped land. Work has been done to graft red varieties onto white vines. The result of the labours – including the permissions required from the Archbishop of Zaragoza for this holy hermitage – is a delight. Gloriously aromatic nose, introducing a wonderfully complex palate of cherries integrated with savoury notes, a shaft of minerality, wild herbs, and dark fruit conserve. Well-deserving of its reputation as one of Spain's great wines. Gran Vinya Classificada. 4,930 bottles produced.

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Robert Parker (RP) : 98 Points (2022)

The 2022 L'Ermita wasn't bottled when I tasted it in January 2024. They selected the grapes from 2.28 hectares out of the total 4.7 hectares planted in 1909, 1939 and 1996 to produce this red classified as Gran Vinya Classificada, the top of the quality hierarchy in the Priorat appellation. It was produced with a blend of 92% Garnacha, 7% Cariñena and 1% of the local whites, Garnacha Blanca, Macabeo and Pedro Ximénez fermented with part of full clusters and indigenous yeasts in oak vats with a maceration of 23 days followed by an élevage in French oak oval foudres that is expected to last 14 months. The parameters are 14.5% alcohol, pH of 3.49 and 4.87 grams of acidity. This is always the more complete wine here; it feels reticent, a little closed and shy, insinuating, nuanced and subtle. It has a seamless and solid palate with very fine tannins and a balanced mouthfeel. They expect to fill some 5,000 bottles in March 2024.

James Suckling (JS) : 98 Points (2022)

This wine comes from a warm, dry vintage, but it doesn't retain the heat. On the contrary, it is delicate, agile and elegant, as are the rest of Palacios' wines this year from Priorat. Only the tannin texture, which is slightly firmer and more present this year, shows the vintage character. Immense purity from its raspberry, pomegranate, mineral and white pepper notes, with touches of grilled herbs and lard. Not quite full-bodied, but the mineral tension gives it elasticity and weight. This is still closer to the more delicate and refined 2021 than to the richer and more concentrated 2020 in style, despite its vintage warmth. Stony in the finish. Drink or hold.