


# Vega Sicilia

A masterclass in balance and sophistication, Valbuena 5º 2019 offers a radiant, multi-layered expression of Ribera del Duero's finest Tempranillo.

VEGA-SICILIA

97
James Suckling




## Valbuena 2019

Ribera del Duero, Spain

### Region and Vineyards

Valbuena 5º is produced exclusively from grapes grown at **Finca Vega Sicilia**, a 210-hectare estate nestled along the **Duero River** in the heart of the **Ribera del Duero DO** . Located at elevations between **700 and 900 metres**, the vineyards benefit from significant **diurnal temperature variation**, which enhances the concentration and freshness of the fruit.

The vines, averaging **35 years of age**, are planted at a density of **2,222 plants per hectare** and cultivated under strict, low-yielding conditions—just **21.7 hectolitres per hectare**—ensuring remarkable **intensity and aromatic precision**. The 2019 growing season was marked by **below-average rainfall**, yet ideal end-of-season conditions allowed for slow ripening and **excellent skin maturation**, contributing to the wine's refined tannic profile and depth of flavour.

### Winemaking

Valbuena 5º 2019 is composed of **97% Tinto Fino (Tempranillo)** and **3% Merlot**, showcasing a subtle complexity shaped by **precision viticulture and meticulous élevage**. The harvest, entirely manual and carried out in 12 kg crates, took place between **26 September and 11 October**, ensuring optimal ripeness.

Fermentation focused on **gentle extraction** to avoid over-concentration, preserving fruit purity and freshness. The ageing process spanned **five years**, including **two years in oak**—with a marked reduction in American oak in favour of **French oak** (lightly toasted)—followed by an extended period in bottle. The first year of maturation in oak vats enhanced **tension and energy**, while the second year in wooden vats refined **texture and complexity**, culminating in a wine of elegance, suppleness, and profound expression.

Alcohol :13,50 %

Composition: 97% Tempranillo, 3% Merlot

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## Tasting Notes

- **Color**: Deep garnet with violet hues, dense and luminous.
- **Aroma**: Aromatically complex with layers of redcurrant, ripe cherry, and blackberry, mingled with notes of liquorice, graphite, crushed herbs, subtle cedar, and a touch of vanilla bean.
- **Palate**: Full-bodied, muscular, yet impeccably balanced. The attack is succulent, with vibrant acidity and a precise tannic structure. Mid-palate shows textural richness and sapidity, evolving into a long, resonant finish with mineral tension and savoury nuance.

## Did you know?

The name **Valbuena 5º** refers to the **five years of ageing** the wine undergoes before release—a distinguishing feature that highlights the estate's commitment to crafting long-lived, structured wines. While **Único** remains Vega Sicilia's flagship, Valbuena has steadily earned recognition as a benchmark for Tempranillo expression with **earlier accessibility**, yet with the depth and longevity expected from one of Spain's most revered estates.

## Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Lamb shoulder confit**: The wine's structured tannins and earthy complexity pair beautifully with the rich, slow-cooked texture and umami depth of the lamb.
- **Beef Wellington**: A harmonious interplay between the wine's ripe red fruit, spice, and the savoury mushroom duxelles and puff pastry.
- **Venison with juniper and blackberry reduction**: Echoes the wine's wild berry notes and enhances its gamey, herbal profile.
- **Aged Comté or Mahón**: These cheeses complement the Valbuena's creamy texture and nuanced oak character.

97 James Suckling

**James Suckling (JS) : 97 Points (2019)**

*Extremely perfumed with violets and a bouquet of flowers. Then there's blue fruits such as blueberries and raspberries. Medium-bodied with beautifully crafted tannins that give a superb mouthfeel and finesse. Refinement with depth and focus. So wonderful to drink now but it will be even better in four or five years.*

96 WineEnthusiast

**Wine Enthusiast (WE) : 96 Points (2019)**

*The scent of cherry preserves and violet wafts from the glass. A cloak of elegant tannins is wrapped around Mission fig, cherry preserve, mocha, fennel pollen and rose petal flavors that evaporate into a satisfying and long-lasting finish. (MD)*

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**Robert Parker (RP) : 95 Points (2019)**

*The obsession in 2019 was to avoid excess ripeness and to keep the freshness, so they did a softer vinification, used larger vats for the élevage and used less American wood. The 2019 Valbuena was produced with a blend of Tinto Fino with 3% Merlot. It has 14.5% alcohol, a pH of 3.88 and 4.6 grams of acidity. I love the nose; it is perfumed and subtle. And the wine is beautifully textured; the tannins are very fine, silky even, quite different from the tannins from the other 2019s from the group that I tasted next to this, Macán and Pintia. A triumph over the conditions of the year, it's a more elegant Valbuena than I anticipated. (LG)*