Juan Carlos Sancha

A Viñedo Singular from vines planted in 1906 at 700 m, it channels Rioja Alta's cool Atlantic edge into a powerful yet finely detailed expression of Garnacha.

Cerro La Isa Vinedo Singular Garnacha 2019

Rioja, Spain

Alcohol :13,60 %

Composition: 100% Grenache

Region and Vineyards

Cerro La Isa sits above Baños de Río Tobía in Rioja Alta's **Alto Najerilla** subzone, one of the appellation's cooler corners with marked Atlantic influence. Cold winters, temperate summers and long, gentle autumns encourage slow ripening and vivid aromatics, aided by pronounced day-night swings at elevation. The result is Garnacha with energy and aromatic definition rather than simple ripeness.

The **Viñedo Singular** is a steep, bush-trained parcel planted in **1906** on poor, shallow **clay-limestone** soils rich in iron, facing **south** at **700 m**. Among Rioja's steepest sites, it yields just **2,500 kg/ha**, concentrating flavor while preserving acidity. This high-altitude terroir, together with organic farming, delivers fruit of exceptional intensity and balance.

Winemaking

The wine is **100% Garnacha** from the historic Cerro La Isa parcel. Grapes are **hand-harvested** in small crates during the last week of October and **manually destemmed**. Fermentation takes place in **500 L French Tronçais oak** barrels, where the wine also ages **18 months on its fermentation lees**, building texture and complexity without overt oakiness. Production for 2020 was **4,000 bottles**.

Analytical profile underscores its power and precision: **15.53 % vol.**, pH **3.47**, total acidity **6.9 g/L (as tartaric)**, volatile acidity **0.44 g/L**, residual sugar **2.1 g/L**, and total SO□**< 20 mg/L**. The vintage was rated "**Muy Buena**" in Rioja; in Alto Najerilla, low winter rain and wet spring increased fungal pressure, reducing yields yet enhancing concentration.

Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Deep purple-crimson of very high intensity, youthful rim.
- **Aroma:** Black raspberry, red cherry and wild herbs with licorice, iodine, sweet spice and a stony undertow.
- **Palate:** Full-bodied and voluminous yet poised; silky, elegant tannins frame ripe red-black fruit, balsamic hints and mineral drive. Bright acidity carries a long, persistent finish.

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Did you know?

Viñedo Singular is Rioja's highest single-vineyard designation, reserved for rigorously delimited, traceable sites with strict yield caps and sensory approval; as of 2020, roughly **1%** of DOCa Rioja's vineyards (≈186 ha) held the status. Juan Carlos Sancha is a key advocate of old vines and site expression in Rioja.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Rack of lamb with rosemary & garlic:** Herb aromatics echo the wine's wild-herb and balsamic notes; ample structure meets roasted proteins.
- **Rioja-style mushrooms with egg yolk:** Earth and umami resonate with Garnacha's savory iodine/licorice nuances while acidity lifts richness.
- **Smoked paprika beef stew:** Sweet spice and concentrated fruit complement paprika warmth; tannins cut through gelatinous textures.
- **Aged Manchego:** Salty, nutty intensity flatters the wine's depth and long finish.

Robert Parker (RP) : 94 Points (2018)

There is a very young and at this moment quite oaky red from the same vineyard that produced a white from a mix of grapes. For the 2018 Cerro La Isa Viñedo Singular Garnacha, Sancha used the red Garnacha grown on the steep slopes at 700 meters in altitude and fermented the grapes destemmed in new oak barrels with indigenous yeasts. I don't really think new oak is the best for Garnacha, despite which, this is rather aromatic and elegant, but it will take time to digest the 18 months in those new 500-liter French oak barrels. I can only dream of what would have been if this wine's élevage had been in a more neutral vessel, as this is terribly aromatic and captivating already. The tannins in the palate will need a couple of years in bottle. 1,200 bottles were filled in July 2020.