

Atalayas de Golban

An Astonishing Value-Priced Wine from the Makers of Atauta

Among Spain's newest viticultural projects, few can claim to be as profound as Dominio de Atauta, a collection of very old Tempranillo vines—many pre-phyloxera and ungrafted—from around the once-forgotten Ribera del Duero village of Atauta.

Since its first harvest in 2000, Atauta has stunned the world with wines that marry the richness of Ribera del Duero with the nuances of a unique *terroir*. And while the brilliance of the wines has owed much to the viticulture and winemaking of the gifted young Frenchman, Bertrand Sourdis, the project itself is the vision of a Madrid wine merchant, Miguel Sanchez.

A Stunning Turnaround

When Miguel began buying vineyards in Atauta in 1999, few could have expected him to produce great wines so soon. Many of the vines were neglected or simply abandoned, and there was no local tradition of making fine wines on this remote eastern edge of the appellation.

But in less than a year, thousands of the ancient vines were revitalized. And when the debut 2000 vintage was released in 2002, it sent shock waves throughout Spain. Within weeks, vineyard speculators began appearing in the town.

Fortunately, Miguel had already acquired virtually all of the town's oldest and best vineyards and had begun buying similar sites in neighboring villages. The only question was whether to widen Dominio de Atauta's geographic scope, or to create a second project.

Atalayas

Miguel chose to create a second project—**Atalayas de Golban**—with his children Emma and Miguel Angel as partners. The project is named for a nearby *Atalaya*—a watchtower dating from the time of the Moors—and the *Golban* river that carved the Atauta valley.



Thanks to Miguel's foresight, Atalayas is endowed with an incredible 170 acres of priceless old Tempranillo vineyards. And for the future, Atalayas will be blessed with a new 48-acre Tempranillo vineyard, planted in 2002, which Miguel and Bertrand believe could one day yield the valley's greatest wines.

Natural Gifts

Though conceived from the start to sell at a market-beating price, Atalayas' vineyards share many of the characteristics that make Atauta and its single-vineyard *cuvées* so coveted.

Elevations here are 400 to 500 meters higher than in the heart of Ribera del Duero. The soils are also much sandier and temperatures significantly cooler. Harvest can be two to three weeks later—producing wines with a freshness, structure, and delineation unlike anything else in Ribera.

But while expressing the extraordinary qualities of the zone's *terroir*, Atalayas is made in a more forward style than the powerful Dominio de Atauta. To achieve this, the grapes are harvested by hand and carefully sorted. After fermentation in temperature-controlled stainless tanks, the wine spends one year in French barriques, 80% of which are second and third passage barrels from Château Haut Brion.

Ribera's Great Bargain

The result is a wine that is a riveting expression of Tempranillo: like a blend of Rioja Alavesa's elegance and purity, with the power and concentration of classic Ribera del Duero. Black fruits predominate, and the finish is strong and complex.

In the debut 2004 vintage, nearly 14,000 cases were produced of this astonishing value.



Dozens of 13th-century wine cellars are a vestige of the valley's ancient wine culture.

ATALAYAS DE GOLBAN

Ribera del Duero, Spain

OVERVIEW

Established: 2004

First Vintage: 2004

Proprietor: Emma & Miguel Angel Sanchez

Winemaker: Bertrand Sourdais

Atalayas de Golban is located in the province of Soria, in perhaps the coolest microclimate of the Ribera del Duero appellation. Soils differ dramatically from the main zone of Ribera, almost 100 km downriver.

Emma and Miguel Angel (children of Dominio de Atauta owner, Miguel Sanchez) worked with Atauta's winemaker, Bertrand Sourdais, develop this wine. Their aim is to make an affordable, but ageworthy, wine that captures the unique personality provided by the district.

VINEYARD INFORMATION

Soils: Calcareous rock, clay, and sand.

Vines: 100% Tinto Fino. Atalayas owns or leases many of the best old-vine parcels from the region surrounding Atauta, and also owns a 7-year-old vineyard planted on one of the region's best sites.

Elevation: 950 m

Appellation: Ribera del Duero

Harvest: by hand and machine

VINTAGE NOTES

2005 – Yet another drought year, but relatively cool. Small crop provided wines with serious intensity and structure.

2004 – A drought year, though not as hot as 2003. The wines have great concentration and pure aromatics.

The Wines

Ribera del Duero

Fruit Source: Estate and purchased grapes, most farmed organically.

Yields: <30 hl/hA

Oak Aging: 14 months in 20% new and 80% 2nd passage Haut Brion barrels.

Production: 17,000 cases (2005)