

Descendientes de José Palacios

A New Page in Spain's Wine History

During the late 1980's, Alvaro Palacios travelled his native Spain selling French barriques to winemakers. But his journeys had a second purpose: to find the best place to achieve his goal of making Spain's greatest wine.

He ultimately decided, in 1990, on Priorato, where he would achieve worldwide fame with "L'Ermita" and "Finca Dofi." But there had been a close contender: Bierzo. It had all the ingredients that Alvaro wanted—incredibly steep hillside vineyards, distinctive terroirs and, most importantly, ancient vineyards of Mencía—a unique red grape believed brought by French pilgrims during the Middle Ages.

In Pursuit of the Dream

The idea of making great wine from old-vine Mencía never left Alvaro, and his experience in Priorato—particularly with L'Ermita—convinced him of Bierzo's enormous potential. Meanwhile, his nephew Ricardo Perez had finished enological studies in Bordeaux and was travelling across France—absorbing everything he could about great wines. He worked the harvest at Château Margaux, and did internships at other Bordelais firms like Moueix (Pétrus, Trotanoy, etc.). He also visited Alvaro frequently and came to share a belief in Bierzo's potential. In 1998, the two decided on a joint venture and set out in search of the region's finest old vineyards.

Assembling the Pieces

Alvaro and Ricardo found promising sites in a number of villages but shortly came to believe that the greatest potential lay in a little town on Bierzo's western border named Corullón. Old vineyards lined the precipitous hillsides

there, and the local soils were extremely poor—composed mostly of schist—but with incredible diversity. The minute variations in soils and exposures across this zone immediately reminded the two of Burgundy's Côte d'Or, or Piedmont's Langhe hills.

In Corullón, Alvaro and Ricardo believe they have found a unique combination of soils, old vines, and a distinctive variety

that will yield their own *grands crus*. Beginning with 2001, the estate began to make their case with individual vineyard bottlings.

The winery is dedicated to Alvaro's father, and Ricardo's grandfather, who passed away in early 2000. The wines are a worthy tribute to the man who inspired them.

Seven wines are made. The first, **Pétalos del Bierzo**, is assembled from old hillside and hill-top vines from across Bierzo's western edge. The wine is vinified for immediate appeal, but it retains the estate's signature finesse and restraint.

Corullón is an assemblage from old-vine parcels in and around this town. Its combination of generosity and precision makes a case not only for Corullón's special status, but also the superiority of Alvaro's and Ricardo's wine-making. The 1999 & 2000 vintages each received 93-point ratings from *The Wine Spectator*, while Robert Parker, Jr. said Corullón "may be the finest wine of the appellation."

There are, in addition, five extraordinary single-vineyard wines made: **San Martin, Fontelas, Moncerbal, Las Lamas** and **La Faraona**. Each is a distinctive expression of a remarkable and compelling *terroir*.



An extraordinary terroir.

DESCENDIENTES DE JOSE PALACIOS

Bierzo, Spain

OVERVIEW

Established: 1998 (First Vintage: 1999)
Proprietors & Winemakers: Ricardo Perez and Alvaro Palacios

Bierzo is located in northwestern Spain, in a relatively cool region of Spain. The best vineyards, located around the town of Corullon, possess all the attributes Alvaro looks for – steep hillside vineyards, old vines, and distinctive *terroirs*.

In 1998, Alvaro teamed with his nephew Ricardo Perez, and launched this estate.

VINEYARD INFORMATION

Soils: Friable Schist on steep slopes (30°-50°)
Appellation: Bierzo
Vines: 100% Mencia, generally 60 to 100 years old. The estate owns 15 hA in 65+ parcels in the town of Corullon.
Elevation: 250 to 900 meters above sea level
Harvest: by hand
Yields: Less than 25 hL/hA
Climate: Intermediary between coastal Galicia and continental Castilla Y León
Oak Aging: French barrique (80% new for Corullon / 100% new for single-vineyards)

VINTAGE NOTES

2008 – Nearly a repeat of 2007, this is the third successive great “classic” vintage in Bierzo.
2007 – A classic vintage in the appellation. The wines have rich fruit, fresh personalities, and show great structure.
2006 – Similar to 2007, this is a great vintage that reflect a very “Bierzo” character.

ADDITIONAL WINEMAKING NOTES

No filtration or fining
All harvesting and destemming by hand
Maceration: 25 days
Fermentation in oak vats with punching down
Biodynamic viticulture.
Vineyards worked by hand and mule.

THE WINES

Petalos del Bierzo

Fruit Source: Rented vineyards from schist-covered vineyards in Corullon and surrounding towns.

Vine age: 40-90 years.

Oak Aging: Few weeks in new French barrique + 6-10 months in 2nd & 3rd passage barrels.

Production: 25,000 cases

Bierzo “Corullon”

Fruit Source: Parcels in the town of Corullon, from 400-900M elevation. All on schist.

Production: 1,500 cases (2006)

THE “PARCELS”

Limited-production cuvees from sites of extraordinary *terroir*, vine age and low yields.

Bierzo “San Martin”

Fruit Source: SW facing locale in Corullon. Schist w/some chalk. 400-550M elevation.

Production: 175 cases (2006)

Bierzo “Fontelas”

Fruit Source: Tenderloin section of San Martin. 400-450M elevation.

Production: NA

Bierzo “Moncerbal”

Fruit Source: Extremely steep vineyard. 80% SW facing / 20% NE. 600-750M elevation.

Production: 145 cases (2006)

Bierzo “Las Lamas”

Fruit Source: Extremely steep vineyard. Schist w/clay. South facing. 730M elevation.

Bierzo “La Faraona”

Fruit Source: Highest vineyard in Corullon (855 M). Schist w/sandstone SE facing.

Production: 65 (2006)