

# 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 Priorat, 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 Mencia—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 Mencia never left Alvaro, and his experience in Priorat—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 interned 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 single-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.

Up to seven wines are made, depending on the year. The first, **Pétalos del Bierzo**, is assembled from old hillside and hilltop vines across from 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 winemaking.

The estate also produces up to four extraordinary single-vineyard wines: **San Martin, Moncerbal, Las Lamas and La Faraona**. Each is a distinctive expression of a remarkable and compelling *terroir*.



*An extraordinary terroir*