

Viña Mein

Mein- San Clodio
VIÑA MEIN
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Owner: Javier Alen

Oenologist: Emilio Vidal

Agronomist: Ricardo Vazquez

Area: 12 ha.

Production: varying annually between 25,000 and 93,000 bottles

Type: 97% white
3% red



Javier Alen



The area around Viña Mein is the origin of all Ribeiro's vines.

The lawyer becomes a wine farmer

The appellation of Ribeiro is the oldest appellation of Galicia. This green province that is situated in the far northwest of Spain has a long history of wine growing. The wines of Ribeiro were well-known throughout Spain as far back as the 12th century, and they were also the first to be exported abroad. At that time the best-known wines were mainly white wines. The Treixadura grape was (and still is) mainly responsible for this. This grape was known as the 'gran dama blanca' – the great white lady – also referred to as the queen of the white grape, and was recorded as being the most complex and the most exuberant of all. This grape is unique in Spain and is not found anywhere else. Its origin is not clear and although the grape used to have a good name, it has enjoyed very little interest during this century. We have had to wait for Javier Alen to bring it into the limelight once more. The Treixadura grape was without doubt Javier's very first solid food that he ate as a baby. He has carried the memory of it with him all his life. When he was six he moved to Madrid with his parents, but memories of the region where he was born came to life during the summer months when the family would move to their ancestral home in Leiro for three months. Javier spent the rest of his youth in Madrid. He became a lawyer and worked as a partner for more than 15 years for the well-known American office of Baker & Mc Kenzie in Madrid. Nevertheless, his busy life filled him with memories of his youth and far-off Galicia. It was for this reason that Javier gave up his lawyer's office and started a bookshop in Madrid that was specialised in travel literature from all over the world. He then decided to return to his beloved Leiro and become a wine farmer there. The village of Leiro is situated in the province of Orense which lies in the river valleys of the Amoya, the Avia and the Mino. The whole appellation area is located in this province and extends over a wine area of 3000 ha. The vineyards are usually situated in the hills that slope down to one of the three rivers. This geographical feature is also referred to in the name of the appellation: 'Ribeiro' is Gallego for 'riverbank'. The surface is therefore mostly alluvial sand containing lots of fine granite – 'sabrego' in Gallego – in view of the fact that the substratum in this area consists wholly of granite.

with nature.

Without doubt, this is one of the most charmingly romantic wine domains in Spain.



The area surrounding the domain of Vina Mein has a rich history. Immediately in front of this small domain lies the now fully renovated San Clodio monastery. This monastery was founded in the 11th century by Benedictine monks. As in other regions in Spain, these monks brought with them holy water as well as wine and vineyards. The red vines that were imported have a very clear origin. Indeed, in the Mencía grape we find characteristics that are very similar to those of the Cabernet Franc: a fair amount of rain with an average temperature that is not too high, although it can get very hot here in the summer. The area around Vina Mein is where all the vines in Ribeiro originally come from. It was here that the first vines were planted by the Benedictine monks. The wine was distributed by pilgrims travelling to Santiago de Compostela.

Together with a few friends, Javier Alen bought the Vina Mein domain in 1987. It lay right in front of Alen's ancestral home which is situated a little higher, and overlooks the domain. The house had already been an important 'finca agrícola' in the 17th century, and is supported by a huge block of granite against which it is quite literally built. The domain had always been one of the most important rural domains in the region, as the rest consisted mainly of country cottages surrounded by a bit of land. Until the early thirties there had

been a small village around the domain consisting of about 12 houses each with their own bit of land. Indeed, the land in Galicia has been very fragmented since time immemorial. During the 20th century the domain was owned by the Fabrega family, an important pharmaceutical family from Orense. Wine was made on the domain until the beginning of the seventies, after which it was abandoned and consequently became dilapidated. When Javier bought the domain it needed a lot of work: unfortunately nothing could be done to save the vines as these had been almost completely neglected for 20 years. However, hard work and a certain amount of financial investment turned the house into a beautiful whole. The house was completely renovated: former rooms were turned into guest-rooms furnished in the typically rural style of Galicia. A small modern bodega was built in addition to this. The architect successfully and very elegantly managed to integrate the modern elements with the rural surroundings of the domain, forming a whole that is perfectly lovely. Cuves inox were installed in the bodega as well as all the modern machinery that is needed to produce a high quality white wine.

Because the vines could not be recovered after having grown wild for so many years, he started planting anew; the grape was Treixadura, a grape which Javier believed in and wanted to

The monastery was recently fully renovated to become a 'Parador'.



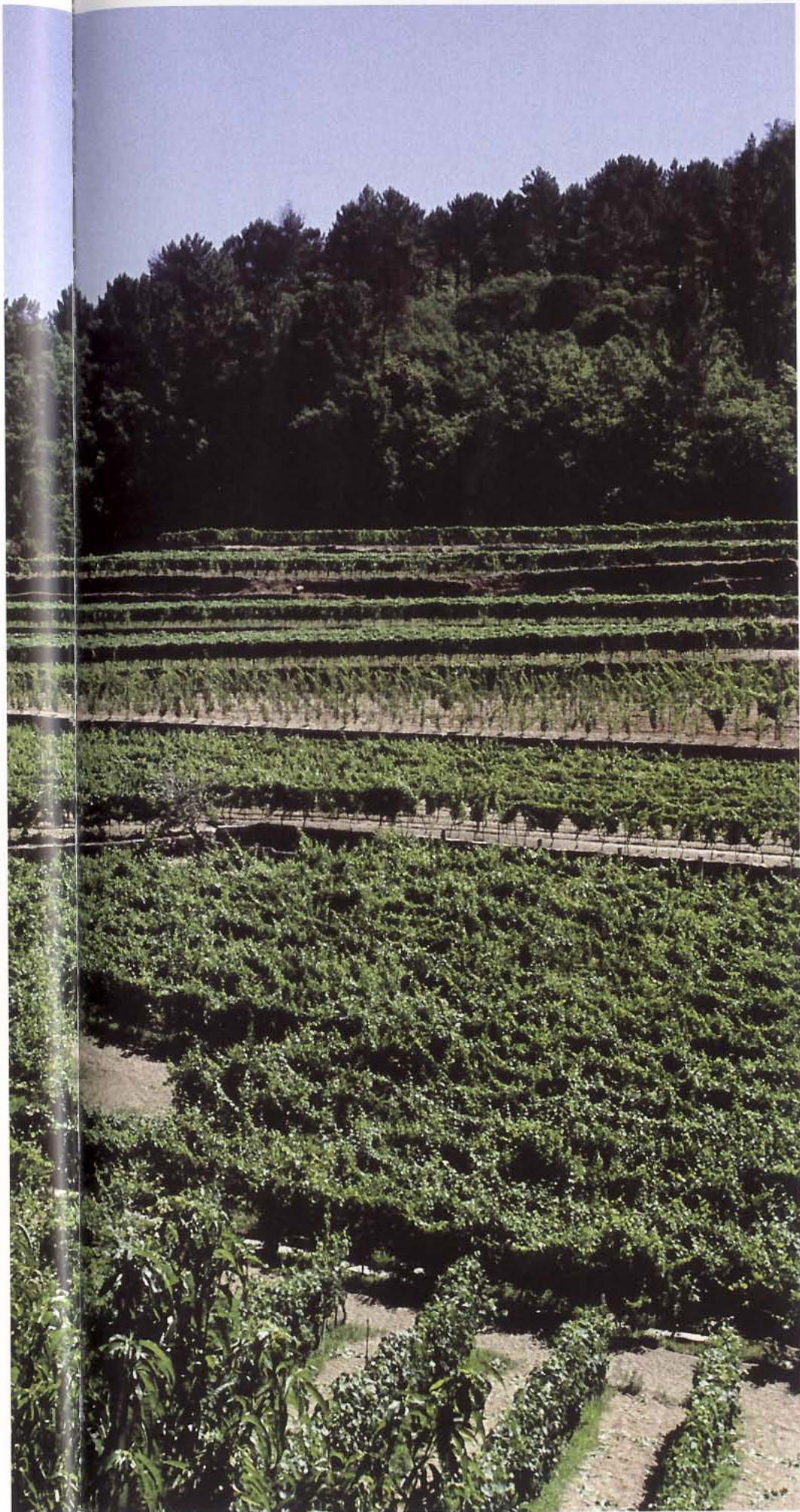
help it recover its earlier fame. Loureira, Godello, Torrontès, Albarino, Albilla and Lado were also used, but to a lesser extent. Javier firmly believed in blending his Treixadura with a minor amount of other types of grapes. He managed to partly recover the red vines: indeed, still growing on the domain is a certain amount of Caino Longo which is a species of grape that has now become rare in the rest of Galicia. Javier's red wine is the only wine to have this type of grape in the assemblage.

In 1994 with the aid of Emilio Vidal – a well-known oenologist in Ribeiro – he managed to vinify his first white wine, 'Casal del Mein', which did not pass unnoticed in Spain. The first red wine was vinified in 1996, the Tinto Clásico: a blend of

Mencia and Caino Longo. Finally he made an orujo of Treixadura, which is a very high quality distillation with a high level of complexity.

The white wines proved to have an enormous fraîcheur and concentration, but were only made in limited quantities during the first vintages. During the first 5 vintages production consistently amounted to between 15 to 20 thousand bottles. It was only in 1999 that Javier achieved the agreed number of 9,000 bottles. By now the wine had acquired a name abroad, but it was mainly in Spain that it became an established name and regarded as the quality wine of Ribeiro. It was also this wine that ensured that the Treixadura once more acquired a special place on the wine list. Moreover, this wine goes very well together with the typical Galician specialities of crustaceans and shellfish. The concentration of fruit and minerals in the terroir form an excellent combination.

Javier now had even more plans for the future: in 2000 a 100% Treixadura was made for the first time, and one that was even more highly concentrated with a fermentation in its own large 3000 litre vat. With this he returned to tradition. Indeed, in the past vinification in Galicia was only done in large wooden vats. The result is a modern wine that is linked to the age-old Galician tradition. Through Javier Alen Ribeiro can once more be proud of its ancient wine legacy. Because of him the Treixadura has been restored to its former glory.



Range

1 white wine

Viña Mein, Casal de Mein

70% Treixadura, 15% Godello, 8% Loureira, 3% Torrontès, 2% Albariño,
2% Albilla and Lado

Clear, pale yellow in colour, A complex nose with citrus, plenty of minerals (terroir!), grapefruit and zest. In addition to this, the typical character of the Treixadura gives it a fine spicy flavour. In the mouth an onset with plenty of fraîcheur. Concentration and minerals in the midriff. Spicy aftertaste with a lovely and subtle ending.

1 red wine

Viña Mein Tinto Clásico

50% Mencía, 50% Caiño longo
maturing on French oak

Clear red colour. Lovely, original nose, green paprika, wood undertone, red fruit, pepper, a hint of leather and minerals. A lot of fraîcheur in the mouth and beautifully structured with the presence of tannins and fruit. Slightly drier towards the finale, with a slight bitterness that is typical of the terroir. Wine for connoisseurs.

Export

15% of the production, mainly Belgium, Germany and the USA.

