

BODEGAS BHILAR

RIOJA 'PHINCA LALI'

ORIGIN

El Villar, Rioja Alavesa, Spain

WINE TYPE & VARIETIES

Still dry red, 90% Tempranillo and 10% Viura

VINEYARD

North facing 'Tajo'

SOIL

Clay and limestone

AGE OF VINES

Planted 1910

VITICULTURE

Biodynamic certified

VINIFICATION

Manual harvest in 10kg cases, 70% of the grapes destemmed, native yeast, foot crushed, spontaneous fermentation in open top 500L oak barrel, 36 months aging in oak barrels

Founding proprietors David Sampedro Gil (born and raised in Elvillar) and Melanie Hickman (from Ohio in the US) are a spirited and dynamic husband and wife team. They set out on this journey in 1999 with the creation of Bodegas Bhilar (Bhilar is Elvillar in Basque). It all started with one hectare of vines that David got from his mother. The goal here is "to make terroir-driven wines with soul, respect the land, work only with indigenous grapes, and to share unique wines with good people with positive energy".

David's career took off after he completed his master in oenology. When working for some larger wineries in Rioja he realized that great wine can only come out of great vineyards. This realisation made David focus on the vineyards and led to the philosophy of making wine that speak of a place through sustainable agriculture and minimal intervention in the winery. David is considered to be one out of handful producers leading the way for the New Rioja, crafting wines built on elegance, freshness and purity of fruit. David, although educated as an oenologist, first and foremost considers himself being a vine grower, this sets the foundation for the philosophy here - its all about the vineyards and how they grow. Since 2006 all 9,5 hectares have organically grown with biodynamic practices, David owning 6 and Melanie 3,5. The majority of vineyards are based on limestone and being in the Alavesa sub-region the microclimate is cool thanks to the high altitude. The way of working is greatly inspired by old traditions from David's grandfather, when all things were less manipulated and more natural. Hence all work is manual, carried out by human or horse, and the new winery is solar-powered (until 2016 this was a sort of garage-project). Wines are loosely divided under the labels of "Bodegas Bhilar", "David Sampedro Gil" and "Melanie Hickman/Struggling Vines".

Yields are way below appellation standards. The production lies in majority red wine but some small volumes of white is also produced. Depending on what wine, grapes are partially de-stemmed or completely whole bunch fermented. If destemming occurs this happens above the



VIN EST. 2012

fermentation vessel in order to avoid pumping. The winery has concrete tanks and use open top barrels (225 and 500 l) for fermentation. The single vineyard wines are made in tiny volumes of around 1000 bottles, hence old opened barrels is the only vessel small enough... no yeast or other oenological product is used, only small amounts of sulphur. For ageing French oak barrels of 225, 500 and foudres of 600 liters are used. 12-36 months.