

SPAIN

Pago de los Capellanes

Excellence in Two Terroirs

Pago de los Capellanes was founded in 1996, a period of peak investment in the Ribera del Duero region. However, owner Francisco Rodero's family has grown grapes in Pedrosa de Duero for generations. Cordero left home to seek his fortune in Barcelona. When he inherited a vineyard in 1980, he returned with the aim of building a bodega.

Rodero and his wife, Conchita Villa, began with a small plot but large goals. They have accumulated more than 250 acres of vines around the town and built a striking and functional winery. Winemaker Paco Casas has been with the bodega since the beginning. Good results came quickly: Of 47 wines reviewed by *Wine Spectator*, 37 have scored 90 points or better.

Pago de los Capellanes, named for a medieval chapel that once stood on the property, makes five red wines. All are produced from estate-grown fruit, dominated by Tempranillo.

The approach is solidly modern. The vines are grown in trellises (rather than the traditional bush training). The bodega uses contemporary tools: cold pre-fermentation maceration, fermentation in stainless-steel tanks and maturation in French oak.

The wine style is modern, too. Deep color, plush texture and well-integrated tannins support ripe fruit flavors framed by toasty oak. But lively acidity gives balance, and the wines show intriguing floral and mineral notes that add distinctive character and freshness.

In 2014, Rodero and Villa expanded to Valdeorras in neighboring Galicia to make white wines from the indigenous Godello variety. That vintage, produced from purchased grapes, gave impressive results. Since then, the couple has purchased 30 acres of vineyards. They finished refurbishing a winery in 2016.

Pago de los Capellanes makes wines in an international style, but they still express the grape types, climate and terroir of their origin.

—Thomas Matthews



Francisco Rodero and Conchita Villa of Pago de los Capellanes

Pago de los Capellanes Ribera del Duero Parcela El Picon 2010 | 96 | \$240 | 200 cases made

The top cuvée is made from the 5-acre El Picon vineyard. Aged in French oak for 26 months, this is rich and generous, lively and expressive.

Pago de los Capellanes Ribera del Duero Reserva 2010 | 95 | \$52 | 4,000 cases made

This is a selection from several vineyard plots of older vines. It matures for 18 months in French oak. The style is savory and harmonious.

Pago de los Capellanes Ribera del Duero Parcela El Nogal 2011 | 93 | \$75 | 1,800 cases made

This comes from a 15-acre vineyard whose vines were grafted from El Picon. Its 22 months in French oak add smoke and cola flavors to the black fruit and floral notes.

Pago de los Capellanes Ribera del Duero Crianza 2012 | 92 | \$34 | 37,000 cases made

The basic cuvée (I do not review the entry-level *joven* bottling) spends 12 months in French oak, one-third new. It is polished and graceful, with black cherry, licorice and mineral character.

Pago de los Capellanes Ribera del Duero Godello Valdeorras O Luar do Sil Fermentado en Barrica 2014 | 91 | \$49 | 580 cases made

Barrel-fermentation in French oak adds beeswax and vanilla notes to the pear and coconut flavors. It's fleshy, but shows firm acidity and even light tannins.

Pago de los Capellanes Ribera del Duero Godello Valdeorras O Luar do Sil Sobre Lias 2015 | 90 | \$34 | 3,330 cases made

Lees-aging imparts savory notes of ginger and fresh herb to the fresh pear and melon fruit flavors. Generous in texture, this remains vibrant.

Raúl Pérez

A Rebel With Roots

Raúl Pérez has one foot in the past and one in the future of Galicia, the rapidly evolving wine region in the northwest of Spain.

Pérez grew up in the Bierzo region, in a family that has grown grapes since the 18th century. By 1998, the family bodega, Castro Ventosa, was estate-bottling its entire production. Pérez's path seemed set.

Then Álvaro Palacios, the pioneer of Priorat, walked into the Pérez bodega looking for a place to make a new wine from Bierzo. The encounter changed Pérez's life, fueling his desire to explore and grow. In 1999, he began consulting for wineries



Raúl Pérez