

## Bodegas Aldonia, 100 **RIOJA**

Rioja is all but synonymous with Tempranillo. With just shy of 88% of the local vineyard, it's a region-to-grape variety bond that's every bit as strong as Malbec and Mendoza, or Burgundy and Pinot Noir. But it's not the only red grape in town. The majority of Riojas are blends of Tempranillo with small proportions of one or all of the colour-giving Mazuelo (aka Carignan); the perfume-and-structure-bringing Graciano; or the fleshy, red-fruit-juicy Garnacha. Each of those bit-part players has been given a starring role in their own varietal wines, but it's the last of the trio, Garnacha, that is arguably making the most striking wines of the bunch.

There's a certain irony in that. Whereas in parts of Aragón and Navarra, native Garnacha has been edged out by Tempranillo and international varieties, in Rioja, Garnacha is the relatively new kid on the block. It arrived in the region only in the wake of phylloxera in the early 20th century, prized, as elsewhere, for its

hardiness and vigour, rather than its qualitative potential. Today, it accounts for about 7% of the total Rioja vineyard, concentrated in the warm, dry eastern Rioja Oriental sub-region, home to Garnacha specialist Aldonia's vineyards. It's a fourth-generation family firm that used to sell its grapes to the local co-op until the current generation, brothers Mario and Iván Santos, built a winery to make their own elegant Garnacha-based wines from their 16ha of vineyards. The undoubted highlight of their efforts is a 100% Garnacha, Aldonia 100, based on 100-year-old vines planted at 800m altitude.

### **Aldonia, 100, Rioja 2016** 89

£17.20 Blanco & Gomez, Tanners, Top Selection

A very different take on Rioja, this 100% Garnacha is all about the pure and very pretty raspberry fruit presented with subtle herbal freshness, slick, polished tannins and easy charm. Organic. **Drink** 2020-2030 **Alc** 14% ➤



**Bodegas Aldonia  
winery at Navarrete,  
near Logroño**

