

Veronica Ortega, Bierzo Mencía VO Versión Original (2021)

Producer	Veronica Ortega
Distributor	Zev Rovine Selections
Supplier/Importer	Selections de la Viña
Category	Wine - Still - Red
Grape variety	Mencía
Region	Castilla y León, Spain
Appellation	Bierzo
Vintage	2021
Alcohol by volume	12.5%

Sizes

750 mL × 12 — SDIV-0073-21



Distributor's notes

V.O. (aka "Versión Original") comes from two very old plots of Mencía, located in Valtuille de Abajo in the areas of Villegas and El Castro. Wine with a marked personality, sophisticated, with a very seductive floral nose and length on the palate, with a firm and elegant structure, framed by an attractive and fresh tension.

Predominantly Mencía, with a bit of a blend - some Alicante Bouchet in the mix. Vines are well over 100 years old on sandy-clay soils. Hand harvested, 100% whole cluster and native yeast ferment. Worked manually during vinification, only some pigage, so that the fermentation goes slowly and also the extraction that takes place gently. Maceration of 12 days. Malolactic fermentation and 14 months aging in 2500L conical French oak barrels. Slight filtration for large particles. Production is 5,500 bottles.

About the producer

Born and raised in Cadiz, Veronica Ortega came of age surrounded by the pungent aromas of flor, evaporating sherry and the ocean. Her first foray into winemaking happened in the Priorat where she worked with both Alvaro Palacios and Daphne Glorian. After this initiation she set out on learning more at Burn Cottage in Central Otago, Niepoort in the Douro, Comte Armand and DRC in Burgundy and Domaine Combier in Crozes-Hermitage. Upon her return to Spain she worked several years along side Raul Perez in Bierzo.

In Bierzo she found a variety, Mencía, that bears many similarities to both Pinot and Syrah - refreshing acidity, bright fruit flavors and a affinity for expressing terroir. Bierzo has a unique climate that straddles the divide between cool maritime Galicia and the torrid central plateau of Spain and two distinctive soils types: granitic sand and calcareous clay. In the right hands, these are the necessary elements to make wines of balance and complexity. While working with Raul, Veronica decided to settle in Bierzo and launched her own project in 2010 before moving into her own cellar in 2014.

Veronica organically farms several small plots, totaling about 5 ha, of 80 year-old Mencía near the village of Valtuille de Abajo. As was the fashion at the time they were planted, these plots are not entirely Mencía, and on close inspection one can find small percentage of other indigenous varieties planted along side the Mencía - both red and white. Instead of letting these grapes go to waste they get co-fermented with the Mencía. In any given vintage there can be an inclusion of 8% of white varieties (Palomino Fino, Godello and Valenciana) and 5% red (Garnacha, Tintorera and Merenzao.) The limestone soil has a high proportion of sand which give her wines aromatic complexity and lively mineral acidity.

Veronica works these vineyards manually including harvesting. When the bunches arrive at the cellar she destems only a portion of the fruit depending on vintage so that most fermentations include 30-50% whole clusters. Spontaneous fermentations take place in large oak vats with occasional and gentle pigeage. After a 25 day

maceration the wine is pressed and malo occurs in second and third-fill 228L French oak barrels. Veronica Ortega makes two wines from her 80-year old vines, Quite which expresses a more floral and delicate side of Mencia and Roc which is more stern, structured and age-worthy. Quite spends 4 months in second and third-fill French oak while Roc spends a little over 6 months.
