

2021 Bela

The bread-and-butter wine here is the 2021 Bela, produced with Tempranillo from the village of Villalba de Duero (mentioned on the label), from sandy and clay rich soils on limestone mother rock that delivers powerful but not overripe wines with a short-ish élevage to achieve a fine-boned and fresh wine. The grapes were picked between October 1st and 25th, mostly Tempranillo but some 5% Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot too, and it matured in French oak barrels for nine months. The wine has 14.3% alcohol, a pH of 3.57 and close to five grams of acidity, textbook parameters from the zone and textbook profile of classical Ribera; it's ripe without excess, with very integrated oak and a velvety palate with silky tannins. It reminds me of the historical wines from the early 1990s, Valribeño and so on, with some rusticity but very honest and characterful. With time in the glass, it develops a precise note of licorice intermixed with berry fruit and some spices and herbs. They feel this is the wine they wanted to produce from the beginning; they consider it their best vintage to date irrespective of the style of the year, with 2019 more powerful, 2020 more elegant and this 2021 something in between. 85,000 bottles produced. It was bottled in July 2022.

- Luis Gutiérrez (January, 2023)

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