

# Imperial Gran Reserva 2017

*Imperial is one of the great names in Spanish winemaking. A true Rioja Classic, it was first produced in the 1920s. It is only made in vintages that the company classifies as Excellent.*



- **Type of wine:** Gran Reserva
- **Region of production:** Rioja
- **Year:** 2017
- **CVNE vintage rating:** Excellent
- **Grape varieties:** 85% Tempranillo, 10% Graciano, 5% Mazuelo
- **Bottle type:** Bordeaux
- **Bottle size:** 75cl., 1.5l.
- **Bottling date:** July 2020
- **Aging and barrel type:** 24 months in French (70%) and American (30%) oak barrels (new and from 1 wine)

## *Analytical data*

- **Alcoholic volume:** 14%
- **Total acidity:** 5.92
- **pH:** 3.6
- **Suitable for vegans**
- **Volatile acidity:** 0.71
- **SO<sub>2</sub> Free/Total:** 30.4/84
- **Total Polyphenols Index:** 80

## *The vineyard*

Our best vineyards in Rioja Alta are set aside for the production of Imperial Gran Reserva. In 2017 we selected the small plots Remedio and Encinas, located in Villalba between 550 and 650 m of altitude, very close to the Sierra de Toloño and with a climate of Atlantic and continental influence. These plots represent a total of 12-hectares amongst the 42 that CVNE owns in this town. The plots of Barbarroja and Antoñanzas were also chosen in 2017, situated in Torremontalbo and where the low yielding vines are 40 years old. The vines are bush trained, dry farmed and the plots are small. The soils are clay with areas of river pebbles, are low in organic matter and are situated on gentle south facing slopes. The climate is moderate continental.

## *Winemaking*

Manual harvest in crates of selected vineyards, with a double selection of grapes, both in the vineyard as in the winery. Cold refrigeration of whole bunches in order to improve fruit extraction and color stability.

The crushed grapes were transported by gravity to small oak vats for maceration with cold temperature for a few hours. Followed by fermentation with indigenous yeasts at controlled temperature between 28 and 29°C.

Punching and delestage are carried out daily during fermentation, as well as tastings to determine the perfect moment for draining the vat. After completing the malolactic fermentation in concrete vats, the wine is aged for two years in French and American oak barrels, new and from one wine, with rackings every 8 months, followed by aging in bottle in our century-old cellars until the wine is released to the market.

## *Vintage / Harvest description*

The 2017 harvest in the Imperial vineyards began on the 18th September and ended on the 3rd October. The year began with warmer temperatures than usual which brought forward the growing season, including bud burst. The new growth then succumbed heavily to the severe frost at the end of April reducing even further a yield which had already been diminished by drought.

At the end of July, isolated storms helped to restore vegetative balance in the vines, so raising hopes for improved production yields.

Rioja Alta's usual continental climate with cool summer nights contributed to avoiding excessive ripening in the grapes and assisted in producing a high quality vintage. In addition, regular checks in the vineyard were critical in deciding the optimum timing for the harvest and safeguarding the characteristic freshness of wines from the region.

## *Tasting notes*

Intense layer of bright garnet colour.

On the nose we discover the licorice very typical of the tempranillo grape, the fruits of the forest and the aromas of cloves, roasted coffee, cigar leaf, chocolate, caramel and certain balsamic notes, which naturally come from the aging in barrel. Perfect balance.

The entry into the mouth is fine and elegant, with a deep and fatty mid palate that envelops it. The friendly tannin and the finish with a little acidity provide us with a long and complex aftertaste.

Perfect for pairing with red meat, fatty fish game, cured cheeses... and to be enjoyed on its own.