

# **The role and potential of red Garnacha in Aragón wine region.**

## **ATTACHMENT TO THE WEINAKADEMIKER THESIS PROPOSAL FORM**

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### **Motivation for choosing this topic**

Spain is a country with a long tradition, culture and history related to both wine consumption and wine production. Due to this long wine history, wine is produced throughout all the country, including its islands. I live in Spain and I currently work at a winery in Aragón, an autonomous community located in the north-east of Spain. The wine region of Aragón has a multifaceted nature, as it has a wide variety of soils, altitudes and climates. Aragón has several native grape varieties which I first heard about while harvesting them at the winery where I work. However, Garnacha is the main grape variety of the region. My motivation for choosing this topic comes from my deep interest in the Garnacha grape variety and the wines which can be produced with it. I find Garnacha a very versatile grape variety which can adapt to many different conditions, as all of those found in Aragón region. I believe Garnacha as a grape variety has a characteristic uniqueness which I want to analyse in this research.

### **Problem/objective**

The objective of this thesis is to explain the importance of Aragón as a wine region, its viticulture history and the relevance of the Garnacha grape variety within it. Aragón has a long history when talking about wine, but I mainly focus the research on the evolution of the wine industry in the last decades. This evolution is partially marked by a better regional understanding of the grape variety. I detail the potential of this grape variety in this region which is leading to an increasing recognition and demand of the Garnacha wines from Aragón. The research also investigates several problems to take into account which directly affect the production of Garnacha wines in Aragón. Some of these problems are climate change and the unceasing depopulation in some rural areas where relevant number of vineyards are found. I offer some recommendations to these problems so their negative impact affecting the wine industry can be reduced.

### **Methodology**

The first step taken not only to define the thesis, but also its structure, has been a profound reading of the topic in order to achieve a deeper understanding of both the grape variety and the region. As I directly work with Garnacha and in Aragón, I had to first decide the focus I wanted to carry out in this research and search for the missing information and data I needed to develop the topic. I have found many interesting and relevant reading sources on the internet: such as technical data on the webpage of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food; many interesting articles from well-known wine writers or history books dating the first written records of Garnacha in Aragón.

In addition to all the reading sources and material I found and read, I decided to complement all that information with some interviews about the winemaking history

and tradition of Aragón. I interviewed very different profiles related to the Garnacha grape variety to be able to understand better the past, the present and the future of Aragón and its potential as a wine producing region. The interviewed people are a retired man who devoted his life to his vineyards and was finally forced to abandon all of his vines, a second-generation family oenologist and a Master of Wine who sought some of the oldest vines of the region in order to create some of the best Garnacha wines in the region.

## **Content**

The thesis is structured in the following 5 sections:

- 1- The research starts with a detailed picture of Aragón as a wine region and its diversity in terms of soils, altitudes and climates. These concepts are directly related to the four principal wine regions in Aragón, but with especial attention to those wine regions along the Ebro Valley, which are Cariñena DO, Campo de Borja DO and Calatayud DO.
- 2- The second section outlines the origin of the Garnacha grape variety, as nowadays it can be found in many different wine regions all over the world. This origin of Garnacha is detailed with texts from a book written by D. Ignacio Jordán de Asso in 1798. A further analysis of the Garnacha from Aragón is provided with ampelographic evidence and Garnacha mutations planted in this wine region, such as Garnacha Peluda, Garnacha Blanca or Garnacha Gris.
- 3- The next section examines the evolution over the last decades of the Garnacha wine styles produced in Aragón. Some key historical and demographical reasons are given to understand better this evolution in style, as well as a better comprehension of the grape variety.
- 4- The fourth section identifies the potential of the Garnacha wines from Aragón and its increasing demand in the market. This is detailed with information reflecting the growth of exportation, wine tourism and recognition.
- 5- The fifth and last section defines the different challenges and problems that Garnacha wines from Aragón can face, such as the climate change or the depopulation in the region. Some recommendations are given to reduce the impact of these challenges.

## **Conclusion**

Aragón wine region and Garnacha grape variety are two terms that live together since long time. This is observed not only in the wine history and tradition from this region, but also in the different Garnacha mutations found in Aragón. The growing demand of Garnacha wine from Aragón shows the potential of this wine. However, all the future possible challenges affecting the wine industry must be considered and dealt.