



# ARTADI

## 2019 VINTAGE, EN PRIMEUR

What makes Artadi special? Here are three opening gambits: ‘small’, ‘single vineyard’ and ‘forward looking’. What’s so special about that, you say?

Well, ‘small’ is unusual in Rioja, where volumes produced can be vast. We like small. ‘Single vineyard’ is not only rare but essentially forbidden (I’ll explain that one below). Finally, ‘forward looking’ – you may say that any producer worth their salt would claim to be this, but in a region where tradition not only prevails but can rather dominate, it takes guts to major on fruit purity and *terroir*, and to turn your back on the region’s beloved American oak.

Most importantly though, the wines are stunning. This is Rioja as you’ve never (or rarely) seen it before – soaringly perfumed, crystalline fruited and ephemeral.

Based in Álava, Laguardia, in Rioja Alavesa, Artadi is at the cutting edge of the search for *terroir* in the region.

**Guy Seddon**  
**January 2021**

## HISTORY

Artadi was established as a cooperative in 1985, by a group of 13 local vine growers. In those days, just one wine was produced, from one vat, using the method of carbonic maceration, as historically practised in Beaujolais. A long way from today's wines of presence and ageing potential.

The social element remains however, long after Juan Carlos López de Lacalle bought out the other cooperative members. Despite appearing to be something of a rebel, at least where the local regulator is concerned, Artadi has great respect for the region's traditions.

## 2015 AND ALL THAT: THE RIOJA D.O.

Rioja produces a lot of wine and its labelling rules do not recognise single vineyards. Wines must fall into the traditional pigeon-holes of Crianza, Reserva, Gran Reserva etc in order to qualify for the name Rioja.

Even if your wine comes from one plot of land, you cannot include that plot's name on the label alongside Rioja. It's a system that values blends and, by extension, the large producers which have dominated the region for so long.

Juan Carlos López de Lacalle therefore chose to leave the Rioja appellation, at the end of December 2015. He did it without fanfare and certainly without any desire to pick a fight, but because it was the only way to further his quest for wines of *terroir* from Rioja.

## THE VINEYARDS

Artadi's Rioja vineyards are planted with old bush vines, although the majority are trellised rather than free-standing. No synthetic chemicals are used and viticulture is informed by organics.

The six single vineyard wines are Valdeginés and La Poza de Ballesteros – which face each other across the steep San Ginés Valley – Quintanilla, San Lazaro, El Carretil and, the original and still the pinnacle, El Pisón.

Juan Carlos' father planted El Pisón in 1945. It is deservedly seen as one of the great wines of Spain. The first commercial release was in 1991.

## THE CELLAR

Oak barrels are used for gentle oxygenation rather than for oak flavour. For this reason, French oak is used in place of Rioja's traditional, and more flavoursome, American oak.

Multiple sorting tables are employed in the winery, to make absolutely sure that only first rate fruit makes the grade. Fermentation takes place in a mixture of open top wooden vats and bespoke inverted conical stainless steel tanks. Stems are used as deemed fit, according to vintage conditions. Grapes are 100% Tempranillo.

## THE 2019 VINTAGE

*"2019 is... why not say it – an excellent vintage."*

**JUAN CARLOS LÓPEZ DE LACALLE, JUNE 2020**

As Juan Carlos points out, the three main factors that shape every growing season are temperatures, rainfall and pests & diseases. In 2019, rainfall in Laguardia was lower than average, at 462 litres per m<sup>2</sup> (versus an average of 510 litres per m<sup>2</sup>). Most of this rain fell in the 2018-19 winter, charging the soil water reserves. The driest season was autumn, followed by summer and then spring.

Artadi's vineyards to the south of Laguardia were hit by a hailstorm on 25<sup>th</sup> August, making for big losses in the affected plots.

As for temperatures, winter was mild, other than the last days of December and early January, a period when the minimum was -4.8°C. By contrast, and similar to what we have heard from our growers over the border in France, February was much warmer, reaching 22°C. Spring was roughly normal, although May finished warmer than usual, over 29°C.

Aside from a cool first fortnight of June, the summer was warm, with July being the hottest month, with a peak of 36°C. Temperatures finally cooled down in the third week of August, giving a temperate run-in to harvest. Picking started on 20<sup>th</sup> September with the white grapes, finishing on 10<sup>th</sup> October with the Tempranillo.

2019 was, happily, a vintage of healthy vines, aided by the relatively low rainfall and high summer temperatures. The flip side of this, in combination with tricky flowering and fruit-set and the above-mentioned hailstorm, was lower yields – the crop was 35% smaller than in 2018.

Juan Carlos describes the wines as "fresh, with ripe fruit flavours, great depth and density on the palate... undoubtedly a high-quality vintage."

## TASTING NOTES

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### VALDEGINÉS

Valdeginés sits directly opposite La Poza de Ballesteros. Valdeginés (4.5ha) is over twice the size of La Poza and is planted partly on the slope – shallow soil over sandstone – and partly on the deeper-soiled, cooler clay-limestone terraces. East-facing, the slope gets the early morning sun, resulting in a cooler, fresh style of wine. Deep ruby colour in the glass, this has pure raspberry fruit on the nose, with sweet spice – vanilla pod – and cedar. The palate is firmly yet coolly red berried, ripe and all about the stunning fruit purity. With age, Valdeginés becomes more textured and giving but at this early stage the taut youthful vibrancy is thrilling.

**CORNEY & BARROW SCORE**  
**(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2023 - 2031)**

**17.5+**

**£165/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

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### QUINTANILLA

This is our third vintage release of Quintanilla and only the fourth vintage to have been produced. It comprises 1.13ha of clay-limestone over hard limestone and sandstone mother rock. Intricately perfumed on the nose, this exudes delicate violet and raspberry fruit aromas. The palate is pure and svelte on the attack, the fine fruit-coated tannins contributing a pliant shape. Sweetly fruited on the back-palate, it is a very complete wine which resonates with that trademark Artadi clarity of expression.

**CORNEY & BARROW SCORE**  
**(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2025 - 2033)**

**18**

**£175/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

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### SAN LÁZARO

This is the elder statesman amongst the single vineyards, in terms of vine age – planted in 1956. It is also a higher site, its 1.62ha lying at 650 meters elevation. The deep clay-limestone soil is well aerated – perfect for growing struggling vines. That struggle makes for greater complexity. This is very cool-fruited and precise, with a marked mineral tension, chalky and cohesive, coming to a fine point on the finish. The impressive depth of raspberry fruit on the mid-palate speaks of the vine age here, working seamlessly with the fresh acidity.

**CORNEY & BARROW SCORE**  
**(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2024 - 2033)**

**17.5 - 18**

**£300/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

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## **LA POZA DE BALLESTEROS**

La Poza, named after a pool-like hollow at the centre of the vineyard, is a west-facing 1.18ha site, planted in 1960. In contrast to Valdeginés, it sees the afternoon sun and is picked around four days earlier as a result. There is correspondingly greater intensity and firmer tannin. The soil is poor silty clay, dotted by limestone. This has a winning nose – deep, luxurious and cossetting, with violets, bramble and heady sweet spice. The palate is the most powerful so far, firm tannins taking charge of the mid-palate and channelling the dark berry fruit. Cedary spice, vanilla and clove linger on the driving finish.

**CORNEY & BARROW SCORE**  
**(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2025 - 2033)**

**18**

**£395/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

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## **EL CARRETIL**

This is a 3.64ha plot planted in 1930, 1975 and 1988, on a variety of soils at around 500m altitude. At the highest points there is clay-limestone over sandstone bedrock and in the deeper, cooler areas the topsoil covers a layer of silt and clay. Although mainly south-facing, El Carretil is further north and cooler. Markedly chalky-mineral on the nose, with sweet red berry fruit a veneer of cedary new oak. The palate is pleasingly cool-fruited and precise on the entry, fleshing out with blackberry, bramble and a little liquorice on the mid, with a driving, powerful finish. Once the fruit recedes a little, the mineral backbone will shine.

**CORNEY & BARROW SCORE**  
**(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2024 - 2034)**

**18+**

**£650/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

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## **EL PISÓN**

This 2.4ha walled vineyard is the heart of Artadi. Its gnarly bush vines, on deep clay-limestone soils, were planted by Juan Carlos' father in 1945. It is protected from the wind and enjoys optimal sun exposure. Finely perfumed violet, cassis, cedar and a lick of furniture polish. The palate is tightly wound on the attack, introverted and tautly muscular at this young stage, just showing glimpses of its potential. The mid-palate fills out with blueberry and raspberry compote, the fine, powerful tannins framing, without detracting from, a crystalline sweet-fruited expansiveness which powers through to a long finish. Fabulous wine.

**CORNEY & BARROW SCORE**  
**(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2025 – 2037+)**

**19**

**£1,175/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK**

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## UK ARRIVAL

The wines will arrive in the UK by Spring 2021

## TASTING GUIDE

Our tasting notes provide full details but, at your request, we have also introduced a clear and simple marking system. We hope these guidelines assist you in your selection.

Wines are scored out of 20. Customers seem to like it and it has the benefit of simplicity.

We will often use a range of scores (e.g. 16.5 to 17) to indicate the potential to achieve a higher mark. When a '+' is shown it adds further to that potential. Wines from lesser vintages will, inevitably, show a lower overall score.

Wines are judged, in a very broad sense, against their peers. Why? Well, you cannot easily compare a Ford with an Aston Martin, other than they are both cars and have wheels. It is not that different with wine.

A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes and, as always, speak to our sales team.

## TO ORDER

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### PLEASE CALL

<b>020 7265 2430</b>	<b>LONDON</b>
<b>01638 600 000</b>	<b>EAST ANGLIA</b>
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