

EL VÍNCULO | 2014 ALEJAIRÉN

D.O. La Mancha

• **WINEMAKER'S NOTES** • The Fernández family has been passionate about winemaking for over four decades, during which they have created four iconic wineries that comprise patriarch Alejandro Fernández's wine legacy: *Tinto Pesquera*, *Condado de Haza*, *Dehesa La Granja* and *El Vínculo*. The stunning wines produced at Alejandro's fourth winery, *El Vínculo*, are the result of a *compromiso fijo en la tierra de los gigantes*, meaning a "fixed commitment" with local growers in the region of Spain known as "the land of the giants." With a great dedication to quality control, Alejandro has made sure the wines he produces at *El Vínculo*, from the estate's founding in 1999, are unique gems of D.O. La Mancha, where quantity often overshadows quality. The only white wine made by the Fernández family, *Alejairén* draws its name from the combination of its creator Alejandro and its grape variety Airén. A wine unique in quality and class, the 2014 vintage has rich flavors of fresh apricot, vanilla bean, honey and crème brûlée in both the nose and on the palate. *100% Airén*

• **VINTAGE** • The 2014 vintage began as a warm and rainy year. January and February were warmer than usual and marked by frequent rainfall. Temperatures in March and April returned to their pleasant norms, with more rain falling towards the middle of spring than in previous vintages. Both May and June received sporadic showers, providing the vineyards an additional water reserve for the hot and dry Castilian summer that followed. In a vintage with an excellent harvest both in terms of quality and quantity, the 2014 *Alejairén* is a brilliant example of what exceptional old-vine Airén can produce when hand-crafted and barrel-aged.

• **VINEYARDS** • While on vacation to visit La Mancha's emblematic windmills that inspired Cervantes to write *Don Quixote*, Alejandro was surprised to discover 100-year-old, head-pruned Tempranillo (aka Cencibel) vines amidst a sea of white Airén grapes. Convinced he must undertake one last *bodega* in the historic village of Campo de Criptana in La Mancha, *El Vínculo* was born. By signing long-term leases with the town's three best grape growers, and carefully controlling both the yield (50% of fruit is dropped each year) and harvest time (his grapes are harvested two weeks on average after the rest), Alejandro ensured that both the Airén and Tempranillo grapes he had discovered in La Mancha could result in wines that achieve his standards of excellence.

• **FERMENTATION AND AGING** • Lying in the warmest region of the four Fernández estates, the grapes at *El Vínculo* are the first to be harvested. Each of the leased vineyard blocks are manually harvested towards the beginning of September and are vinified separately. Alcoholic fermentation of the white Airén grapes takes place between 6-10 days at an average temperature of 20-25°C. The finished *Alejairén* is then aged for 24 months in fine grain, 225- and 300-liter neutral American oak barrels with a light-to-medium toast. With the Fernández family dedicated to natural winemaking, all wines produced by Alejandro Fernández are neither filtered nor fined before bottling. Upon completion of barrel aging, the *Alejairén* is then aged for a minimum of twelve months in bottle before it is released to the market. *Wine analysis: 4.5 g/l (0.45%) total acidity; 14.0% alcohol by volume*

• **HISTORY** • The 1970's brought the realization of a lifetime dream for a young and determined Alejandro Fernández. Propelled by his conviction that wines of superb quality could once again be made in the place of his birth, he went against the movement of the time, when cereal and beetroot dominated the Ribera hillsides, and planted Tempranillo vineyards in his hometown of Pesquera. In 1982, this iconic winemaking pioneer, who came to be recognized as the "Master of Tempranillo," was the keystone in forming the now-famous D.O. Ribera del Duero, a designation that Alejandro helped to create with only a few other winemaking pioneers.