

EL VÍNCULO | 2013 CRIANZA

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. Made from a thicker-skinned variety of Tempranillo indigenous to the La Mancha region, called *Cencibel*, the 2013 Crianza has savory spice and smoke accents, with notes of plum and violet in the nose. Containing rich notes of ripe plums, toasted wood, fresh tobacco, barbeque spice and vanilla liquor, this wine is earthy and deliciously unique. *100% Tempranillo (Cencibel)*

• **VINTAGE** • The 2013 vintage began with a very rainy and cold winter, which gradually gave rise to mild mid-spring temperatures during the month of April. The latter half of spring was drier than in previous vintages and led to a 'perfect' summer that was only interrupted by a few isolated storms, with relatively low humidity. Winemaker Eva Fernández describes wines produced from the highlands of La Mancha in 2013 as being 'complex and full of acidity, with intense flavors that give way to cool sensations under the tongue.' With a well-defined tannin structure and potent flavor profile, the 2013 El Vínculo contains a unique intensity that persists in the mouth long after it first stimulates the palate.

• **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 the 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 takes place between 6-10 days at an average temperature of 20-25°C. The El Vínculo Crianza is aged for 18 months in fine grain, 225- and 300-liter neutral American oak barrels with a light-to-medium toast. Barrels are racked four times during the first twelve months of aging and an additional 2-3 times before bottling. With the Fernández family dedicated to natural winemaking, all wines produced by the Fernández family are neither filtered nor fined before bottling and some sediment may be found in each bottle, which does not affect the quality of the wine. Upon completion of barrel aging, the El Vínculo Crianza is aged for a minimum of six months in bottle before it is released.

Wine analysis: 4.97 g/l (0.50%) total acidity; 3.84 pH, 14.5% 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.