

CELLAR MASTER WINE CLUB

March 2020

2007 López de Heredia Viña Tondonia Reserva Rioja, Spain



It all started in the middle of the nineteenth century when French negociants visited the Rioja region to find alternative sources of quality grapes to transform into wine, since the phylloxera epidemic had decimated their vineyards. Founder Don Rafael López de Heredia y Landeta was a knowledgeable and enthusiastic student in the art of wine making and he followed closely in their footsteps.

Don Rafael fell in love with the region and especially the area around Haro, the mythical capital of the Rioja Alta region. He observed that there was a magical combination of soil and climate that would offer the perfect environment for producing wine that would eventually become world famous. Around 1877 he began the design and construction of the complex that is today known as the López de Heredia bodega (winery), the oldest in Haro and one of the first three bodegas in the Rioja region. Bodegas López de Heredia stands out as one of the few family-run bodegas regulated by the Denominación de Origen Calificada Rioja – DOC (Appellation region).

To consistently produce high quality wines it is necessary to own vineyards, where constant care can ensure a consistent quality of grapes – something which cannot be guaranteed when buying from other growers. For this reason, Don Rafael López de Heredia y Landeta founded Viña Tondonia in the years 1913-14. Tondonia was to become the bodega's most famous vineyard and product. Viña Tondonia is a beautiful vineyard of over 100 hectares, situated on the right bank of the river Ebro, where the most typical Rioja wines are grown.

The Tondonia vineyard has to be the most spectacular in Haro. Situated in a shell-like depression next to the River Ebro which serves as a border with Rioja Alavesa (the part of the Rioja appellation region belonging to the Basque Country), it is characterized by poplar trees. The soil is alluvial clay with a high proportion of limestone. The vineyards, cared for with enthusiasm and love, cover a total area of 170 hectares and produce an average annual yield of some 800,000 kg of grapes. Grapes from Viña Tondonia are always used in making the highest quality wines.

Notes from www.lopezdeheredia.com

"Following the appreciation of the 2007 vintage from María José López de Heredia, the red 2007 Viña Tondonia Reserva is showing great, revealing unusual finesse and elegance. The nose is a little reticent but nuanced and complex, a little shy rather than explosive. The palate is medium-bodied, and the tannins are very refined. This has to be one of the finest vintages of Viña Tondonia Reserva of recent years. 200,000 bottles produced. It was bottled in November 2015." **Wine Advocate 96 points.**

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2011 Paloma Spring Mountain Merlot Napa Valley, California

In 1980, Jim and Barbara Richards were living in Midland, Texas, and began thinking about a place to retire. They decided to start looking for a small property in the Napa Valley where they could build a home and plant a small vineyard. This dream was realized in 1983 when a friend of theirs, Dan Duckhorn, called and told them about the property now known as Paloma Vineyard.

The property is located five miles northwest of St. Helena at the top of Spring Mountain. In the last half of the 19th century it was a vineyard, but it was allowed to return to forest around the turn of the century. The purchase of this raw land was the beginning of an odyssey that is ongoing, ever changing, but with one goal—to grow the best grapes possible and make a wine that reflects the terroir of Paloma Vineyard, Spring Mountain and Napa. They were rewarded for strength and determination, receiving the Wine Spectator's 2003 TOP PICK over 15,000 other wines from around the world.

Sadly, Jim passed away in May of 2009. He is missed greatly by friends, neighbors and the wine community. He will always be remembered for the great vintage of 2001, but also for achieving the Wine Spectator's TOP 100 three times in six years—2003, 2004 and 2008!

The elevation of Paloma Vineyard is 2060 feet above sea level at the bottom of the property and 2240 at the top; exposure is generally east with many variations; and the soils are derived from the Sonoma volcanics and from Franciscan sandstone. The vineyard is a total of 17 acres with 15 acres planted in Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.

Spring Mountain District AVA was officially established as an American Viticulture Area in 1993. Given the small crop yields on hillsides, the region represents less than 2% of Napa Valley wine. Currently the region has just over 30 winegrowers.

A typical summer afternoon on Spring Mountain is cool, sometimes with “waterfalls” of fog tumbling over the western ridge and down through the canyons of the district. Into the evening, the cool air settles to the valley floor creating a cover of fog and warm air is lifted to the higher elevations. Nighttime temperature rise from this effect. Mornings warm more quickly on Spring Mountain than on the valley floor as most of the district lies above the morning fog line. The overall effect of this is moderately warm peak daily temperatures and moderately warm nighttime temperatures keeps the sugar accumulation in the berry in pace with flavor development.

