



LUIS XIV Fondillón 'Edad superior a 50 años' 50cl

alicante | solera aged | monastrell

Fondillones have the distinction of great longevity, capable of extended ageing in solera, protected by a naturally higher level of alcohol, achieved through overripening the grapes on the vine and are never fortified.

The 50 year old is from a single barrel solera 'Saboners' aged in 19th century American oak. A 'saca' was taken from the cask and it has since been topped with another Fondillón, of at least 25 years old, and will be left for a minimum of 10 years before any further wine is extracted.

David Carbonell

Fondillón de Alicante DOP

Alto Vinalopó, Alicante, Spain

100% Monastrell

Bottled: December 2019

Production: 435 bottles 50cl *individual wooden case*

Closure: beech wood head cap, natural ('extra flor') cork

Serving temp/tip: serve at cellar temperature - 12 – 14 °C

Technical Analysis: 16% Alcohol RS 34g/l VA 1.35g/l

Ageing: 19th century oak 805 litre '70 cántaros valencianos' barrel (*named after an old-fashioned measure jug or pitcher of 11.5 litres - 70 x 11.5 litres*

are equal to 805L...) The flavour of the Fondillón is always associated with the 'ancestral' characteristics passed on through solera ageing, in these extraordinary old barrels, from their size, their ancient, seasoned wood and from the accumulated lees, traditionally never removed. The age of the **Colección de Toneles Centenarios** barrels was researched through tracing the barrel cooperage markings and using carbon 14 dating on the wood. The wine was then certified for the approved labelling by the Alicante Consejo Regulador as having been aged for a minimum of 50 years.

Black tea | carob | off dry

Mahogany colour and orange tile rim, with medium layer and great density. On the nose, it has a very deep aroma of old wood, black tea and carob. In the mouth, it has a sweet entry balanced by a very high acidity. Its aromas are long, almost eternal and very intense. It tastes like old mahogany, a very old barrel and bygone times.

The '**Luis XIV**' Fondillón wines and Vermut are the product of an exciting partnership created by David Carbonell founder of Vins del Comtat and the current descendants of two, old winemaking families:

Ferrero Valdés and Ballester, located in Cañana, in the Alto Vinalopó region of Alicante.

The **Colección de Toneles Centenarios (CTC)** is a unique and fascinating story originating from a surprise discovery of an extraordinary treasure: "a Fondillón barrel room, asleep for 60 years" which contained 25 barrels of Fondillón dating from the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries.

The CTC partnership came to fruition based on a mutual philosophy to preserve these 'fondillones' as an important part of their regional heritage and to breathe new life into the historic tradition of Fondillón wines and winemaking of this Mediterranean region.

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Location: Cañada, Alto Vinalópo, Alicante, Spain

Vineyards: The **Colección de Toneles Centenarios (CTC)** project also has 6 hectares of Monastrell vines in Alto Vinalopó at between 550 – 580 metres above sea level.

Vines: These are old bush vines of around 100 years old

Soils: The soils are typical of the area a sandy loam and limestone.

Climate: The Mediterranean climate has long summers and low humidity, tempered by a marine influence from easterly winds. The terrain gets drier and much more mountainous as you move inland. The hot days can be tempered by cool nights which help preserve the natural acidity levels in the wines, alongside the higher sugar levels.

Cultivation: A vintage 'apto para Fondillón' (suitable for making Fondillón) requires very specific harvest conditions. The Monastrell is noted for its late ripening, smaller berries, thicker skin and capacity to reach high ripeness and potential alcohol levels. The grapes need to be left on the vine to continue to dry out and further intensify their potential alcohol levels. This requires a long, dry autumn with enough sunshine to ensure there is no rot. Producers are looking for a raisin character in the grapes, but not botrytis. The bunches need to be 'clean' and are selected on numerous passes through the vineyard. The regional climate conditions tend to support healthy conditions for the grapes.

Harvesting: The 2020 harvest, the first 'apto de Fondillón' for the continuation of the CTC project, was on 4th November, with the grapes having a potential alcohol of 17.5%.

Yields: the old vines and poor, sandy loam soils give very low yields c.2.5/4kg per vine, reduced by a further 20% through dehydration during the extended ripening

Winemaking & Cellar Management: Starting from the 2020 vintage, the CTC were offered the use of 'El Pinaret' – a small, old, family winery in Cañada, in Alto Vinalópo, belonging to Regino Ballester.

Pre-fermentation: The grapes were foot trodden on planks over the traditional style, concrete lined lagar. **Yeast:** indigenous, none added **Fermentation:** The concrete helps to regulate the temperature and maintain the slow, very extended fermentation, thanks to its high thermal inertia. This allows the yeast to survive long enough for the wine to reach the minimum 16% alcohol required and not be overwhelmed by the remaining sugar and rising alcohol content. The cap is regularly punched down during fermentation. There is no fortification allowed and a maximum of 45g/l residual sugar for certification as Fondillón. Fermentation may last many months. **Malo:** yes **Maturation:** the wine is aged in large hundred-year-old barrels. Unlike the solera ageing carried out in other areas such as Sherry, the movement between barrels tends to be minimised due to the delicate nature of a wine without added alcohol and that maintains a slow and gradual oxidation. **Ageing before release:** new wines must have a minimum of 10 years ageing in old barrels before they can be classified as Fondillón although all the wines from the **Colección de Toneles Centenarios**, plus those used for topping up the soleras, well exceed these minimums. There is **no fining or filtration** before bottling.



There are many historical references to 'Alicante' as a favourite wine of the rich, royals and elite, most famously that of Louis de Rouvroy, Duc de Saint Simon, official chronicler of the court of Louis XIV. He recorded in the 'Journal de la maladie du Roi' in 1715, that Louis XIV on his deathbed would only countenance cakes soaked in Fondillón wine.

Further information is available on:

www.fondillonluisxiv.com and www.dreyfus-ashby.co.uk/luis-xiv-fondillon

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