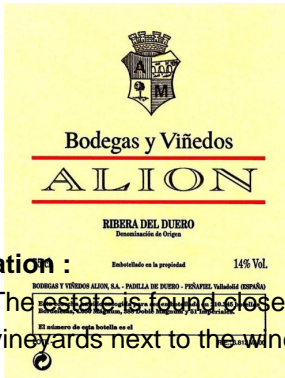


**RIBERA DEL DUERO****BODEGAS ALION****Owner :**

The Alvarez family, owners of Bodegas Vega Sicilia

Products :

Ribera del Duero, Reserva

Location :

The estate is found close to Penafiel, in the heart of the Ribera de Duero DO. Grapes come from vineyards next to the winery, and from Vega Sicilia's own vineyards at Valbuena.

Size of the Vineyards :

85 hectares in total, comprising 35 hectares around the winery, and a further 50 hectares dedicated to Alion within the historic Vega Sicilia vineyards.

Soil :

The bedrock is the same water-retaining schist that is found in the best Port vineyards, further down the Duero (Douro) river. The topsoil is chalk-dominated, and rich in minerals.

Grape varieties :

100% Tinto Fino (Tempranillo)

Average age of the vine :

20 years old

Average production :

Around 300 000 bottles per year

Vinification and ageing :

Unlike Vega Sicilia, where vinification is a hybrid of traditional and modern techniques, Alion is made in the modern Bordeaux cru classé style, using state-of-the-art equipment and lots of new oak.

Fermentation and Malolactic take place in stainless steel vats.

In January following the vintage, the wine is transferred into new French oak barrels from the Nevers forest, where it is aged for a further 12 to 14 months.

After bottling, the wine is given one more years ageing at the property before release onto the market.

Marketing :

Alion has strong distribution in Spain as well as several export markets. The most important of these are the USA and Japan. The demand for Alion is so strong that even if production were to





double, quantities would still be insufficient. Being already a delight to drink upon release, Alion is particularly popular with restaurants.

Tasting notes :

A bright deep red colour with streaks of violet. Full and elegant on the nose, with a wide range of aromas, such as vanilla, ripe fruits, compote and syrups. The palate is opulent and elegant with harmonious tannins providing a subtle backbone to the wine; great aromatic persistence in the mouth. Designed to drink well on release, the tannins will nevertheless support at least 10 years further ageing.

Notes on the property :

Pablo Alvarez, managing director of Vega Sicilia, calls Alion "a wine somewhere between a Ribera del Duero and a Medoc in style".

Like Pesquera, the wine is 100% Tempranillo, called locally Tinto Fino, and thus identifiably Spanish in flavour and richness. But modern winemaking by Vega's own highly-talented winemaker, Javier Ausas, combined with the use of top-quality new French oak gives Alion an international interpretation that is difficult to resist.

When this wine was first created, in 1991, the purists were worried that the intrinsic 'Spanishness' of Vega Sicilia was being sacrificed to appease those drinkers who prefer oak to the authentic flavour of terroir. They need not have worried. As Mike Lynch wrote in Wine & Spirits Magazine: "While I usually deplore the homogenisation of regional wines, I must admit that I was stunned by the beauty and finesse of Alion. I thought of the super-Tuscans, with their finely-etched flavours and pure, racy bouquets. It occurred to me that Alion, with its extraordinary elegance and breed, might become the blueprint for many others in the Ribera region". The phenomenal success of Alion in the few years since the first release leaves little doubt that this prophecy has been fulfilled. Definitely a new classic.

