

Astrales 2006



Winery: Bodegas Los Astrales

Region: Ribera del Duero D.O.

Grapes: 100% Tinto Fino

Winery: Bodega Los Astrales began work at the end of 2000 by the hands of the Romera de la Cruz family – a family with 3 generations of wine growers – who were grape suppliers for other wineries but now they bottle their own production with Eduardo Garcia as Technical Director. Eduardo studied winemaking in Bordeaux, trained at Cos D'Estournel (Bordeaux), with Hubert Lignier (Burgundy) and worked at Ridge vineyards (Santa Cruz California). Astrales' vineyards are located in the village of Anguix (120 inhabitants) which is cooler than much of Ribera del Duero leading to increased minerality in the wines. The focus of the winery is to extract all of the character of old vine, head pruned, organically farmed Tinto Fino. The clay soils and cooler than average microclimate are key to producing wines with excellent balance, length, aromatic complexity and fresh

acidity. The Romero de la Cruz family has fifteen hectares planted, only ten of which are used to form the backbone of the wine: vines of tinto fino grafted with their own clones by means of mass selection, which are between 25 and 80 years old. These 10 hectare comprise 7 different vineyards. Vines are grown in vaso form with shorter trunks than in most of Ribera del Duero helping to shield the vines from the wind which contributes to the accumulation of polyphenols and sugars. No chemicals are used in the vineyard beyond sulphur and that only if absolutely necessary.

Wine: Grapes for this 2006 harvest saw a rainy and cool spring with a good burst of heat at the end of summer. Harvest was early, between September 20 and October 1. Yields were around 1.5 tons/acre. Native yeast, relatively short macerations, and pumping over as opposed to punch downs, are key in maintaining all the fruit character and getting the highest bouquet intensity. Movement of the grapes proceeds by gravity throughout the winery with the goal of avoiding a rough extraction of tannins. The wine was aged 17 months in 80% French oak barrels and 20% American, 30% of which were new.

Reviews:

“Astrales has really nailed it the past couple of years, and while the '06 isn't quite as good as 2005, it's still an excellent wine. Blackberry, tobacco and cocoa aromas lead into a stacked flavor profile of boysenberry and plum. And on the finish it expands and brings vanilla and fudge into play. Drink now and over the next six years.”

92 points *Wine Enthusiast* August '09

“It offers an enticing bouquet of wood smoke, cedar, pencil lead, incense, and black cherry. This leads to a concentrated, well-balanced, structured wine with plenty of savory, spicy fruit and a lengthy finish. It will benefit from 4-6 years of cellaring and will offer prime drinking from 2013 to 2026.”

92 points *Wine Advocate* issue 183, June '09



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