

**1991 Lopez de Heredia Vina
Tondonia Blanco Gran Reserva**

The 1991 Vina Tondonia Blanco Gran Reserva offers shaved almond, lemon rind, honeysuckle and dandelion on the well-defined nose that demands coaxing. The palate is crisp on the entry with dried honey, dried mango and citrus peel on the entry, fanning out towards a complex, resinous finish with a hint of rosewater on the aftertaste. Drink now-2020+

I have adored, indeed occasionally worshiped, the wines of Lopez de Heredia for many years, so I am not ashamed to admit that visiting both their vineyard and their winery was a pilgrimage. Founded by Rafael Lopez de Heredia y Landeta in 1877, it has withstood the tide of corporatization and homogeneity, and epitomizes timeless, artisan winemaking in their own individual, almost solipsistic manner. Technology is noticeable by its absence here. For example, to quote her sister Maria-Jose at a tasting that I subsequently attended in London: "Indigenous yeasts have adapted to high temperatures. To control the temperature during fermentation, we open doors and windows" and "malolactic is the invention of modern winemakers." I had to check whether this was 2012 or 1912. If you were to award points for charisma, then this producer would be in a league of its own. That would count for noth...

- Neal Martin (August, 2012)

**1994 Lopez de Heredia Vina
Tondonia Gran Reserva**

The 1994 Vina Tondonia Gran Reserva has an elegant bouquet with light red cherries, orange blossom, mahogany bureau and burnt buttered toast. The palate has a meaty, savory entry with crisp tannins and racy acidity. It displays superb structure towards the finish where one finds notes of bitter lemon, orange peel and sage. Delicious! Drink now-2030+

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**2006 Lopez de Heredia Vina
Cubillo Tinto Crianza**

The 2006 Vina Cubillo Tinto Crianza is a blend of 65% Tempranillo, 15% Garnacho (some wineries, like Lopez de Heredia, Muga or Telmo Rodriguez use the masculine name of Garnacha) and the rest Mazuelo and Graciano. It is aged for three years in used 225-liter American oak barrels (the only ones they use), racked twice per year, fined with egg whites and bottled unfiltered. It has a dark ruby color with an orange-brownish rim and a nose of red fruit, citric notes of candied orange skin and fresh blood orange, white pepper, balsamic herbs and some raw meat aromas. The palate is very polished, with balsamic flavors, sweet tannins and good acidity. A good traditional Rioja. Drink now-2021.

Lopez de Heredia has a problem many wineries would like to have; they are selling their wines very fast, they don't have enough stock to cover market demand and some of the wines are highly allocated. I'm not talking about their historical vintages here – which are also available on the price list – I'm only talking about the current releases. Everything is aggravated by the fact that some of the top wines are only produced in exceptional years: for example, the next Vina Tondonia Gran Reserva will be 1995 and won't be released until 2015. For...

- Luis Gutierrez (December, 2013)

**2004 Lopez de Heredia Vina
Gravonia Blanco**

The 2004 Vina Gravonia Blanco is pure Viura from a vineyard named after the white wines from Graves in Bordeaux, which Don Rafael Lopez de Heredia y Landeta, founder of the winery, admired. It is aged for four years in used barrels, racked every six months and bottled after being fined with egg whites. 40,000 bottles were produced in the great 2004 vintage. It has a bright, shiny (almost fluorescent!) yellow color and a fresh nose of citric fruit (pink grapefruit), fennel, dried flowers, chamomile, beeswax and hints of mushrooms. The palate has superb acidity, which gives it incredible freshness with great delineation and purity of flavors finishing very dry with a mineral, almost saline note. It invites you to have another bottle! This wine is labeled Crianza, but the aging times (and the quality) greatly exceed the requirements for the category. It's sold almost a decade after the vintage year, so I still consider it a real bargain. Delicious now, but it should age with style. Drink new-2024.

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**2002 Lopez de Heredia Vina
Tondonia Reserva**

The 2002 Vina Tondonia Reserva is a blend of 75% Tempranillo, 15% Garnacho and 10% between Mazuelo and Graciano sourced from their Tondonia vineyard located in a large meander of the Ebro River on the outskirts of Haro. It is aged for six years in used barrels, racked twice per year during its upbringing and fined with egg whites before being bottled unfiltered. It has a slightly reduced nose that benefits from air contact, with shy aromas of cherries in liqueur, tea leaves, fine leather, game, blood, spice box and cigar ash, showing some evolution. The light to medium-bodied palate is balanced, with high acidity, but perhaps a little fragile, showing the difficulties of the vintage, as 2002 was a very difficult year in Rioja. 250,000 bottles were produced. Drink 2014-2019.

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**1999 Lopez de Heredia Vina
Tondonia Blanco Reserva**

The 1999 Vina Tondonia Blanco Reserva from their flagship Tondonia vineyard, whose name is as known and almost interchangeable with that of the winery, is the white Reserva bottling. The current vintage for white Gran Reserva (which is easily identifiable as it is sealed with thick red-orange wax) is 1991 and the next one will be 1996, which won't be sold until 2016. The white Tondonia Reserva, a blend of 90% Viura and 10% Malvasia, spent six years aging in used barriques during which time it was racked every six months and fined with egg whites before bottling unfiltered. It has a bright yellow color and a serious nose full of old waxed furniture, incense, pollen, dried flowers, mushrooms and a chalky, mineral note. The palate has intense, almost pungent flavors, great complexity and balance. It shows incredibly young for its age. A unique white Rioja and a unique white wine. Drink now-2020.

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