

WINERY: SEI SOLO

Region: Ribera del Duero DO

Presenter: Javier Zaccagnini, proprietor/winemaker

As the former (and the first) director of the Consejo Regulador de la Ribera del Duero, Javier Zaccagnini, owner of Sei Solo, knows one of Spain's most prestigious winemaking regions very well. The winemaker also co-founded the ultra-successful Ribera del Duero-based winery Aalto Bodegas y Viñedos and served as its general manager, among other positions.

Most of his presentation was spent on a broad overview of the region that included its geological history: It started 30 million years ago as a vast lake covering Ribera del Duero and the surrounding area before it drained due to a change in climate 5 million years ago, leaving a variety of different soil profiles and rivers in its wake. Images of soil resembling dark brown sugar changed to one of chalky, rocky soil. "We have a tremendous mixture of soils even within one plot—every 200 meters we're changing soils. It's quite similar to Burgundy[, which has] the same tremendous variation," said Zaccagnini.



The area's climate, which he described as "very cold nights and not too warm days during the ripening period," provides daily temperature swings of 25–30 degrees Celsius. Along with the soils and the tendency of the area's Tempranillo to develop "smaller berries and thicker skin than elsewhere in Spain," said Zaccagnini, these diurnal swings contribute to what he called the "beauty" of the wines of Ribera del Duero: a higher concentration of color, polyphenols, and tannins.

The Spaniard's deep love for the area and experience within it led him to establish Sei Solo in 2007, sourcing fruit not

only from his own 3 hectares of vineyards but also from sites in La Horra. The name is a tribute to Zaccagnini's favorite composer, Johann Sebastian Bach, who used it as a title for a series of violin sonatas.

The winery's current release, Sei Solo 2018, is the result of a mild, dry winter and wet spring with a frost in April that did not damage the early-ripening grapes. The vintage comes from the Barroso and Acos vineyards in La Horra, both featuring vines 60–90 years of age. The grapes are separated by vineyard plot and fermented in small steel tanks before the wine is carefully pumped over and racked into two-year-old French barrels to go through malolactic fermentation over several months at low temperatures (around 14 degrees Celsius). The wine is then racked into 600-liter neutral French oak barrels and aged for 20 months, followed by several months of aging in bottle. Zaccagnini produces only 22,000 bottles annually.



Sei Solo 2018, Ribera del Duero, Spain

(\$108) Vines as old as 60–90 years are used for this vibrant 100% Tempranillo named for a series of six solos that Johann Sebastian Bach composed for the violin. Dynamic, rich, and muscular, with firm, graphite-laden tannins, it presents a chorus of black plum and blackberry with an authentic soil component that plays on our heartstrings. Highlighting the mineral qualities of the region, its music is illuminating, but its sense of place is down to earth. **96**
—Meridith May

PHOTOS COURTESY OF SEI SOLO

An old vine in the El Nogal Vineyard in La Horra.