

El Coto,

‘875m Finca Carbonera` Rioja Chardonnay 2024

Rioja, Spain



## PRODUCER

El Coto was founded in 1970 in Rioja Alavesa and has grown from modest beginnings into one of the best known Rioja producers. Today El Coto has over 730 hectares of vineyard in production across the three Rioja DOCa sub-zones of Rioja Alta, Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Oriental. They also source grapes from all three areas, but mostly from Rioja Alavesa. Head winemaker César Fernandez oversees production, starting with hand picking into 35 kilogram crates to ensure the grapes arrive at the winery in pristine condition. Modern and intelligently designed, the emphasis in the winery is on temperature control and gentle handling of the grapes.

## VINEYARDS

The grapes for this Chardonnay are sourced from El Coto's Finca Carbonera estate, at 875 metres above sea level, making it the highest vineyard in Rioja and ideal for the new white grape varieties approved by the Rioja Regulatory Board. A wide diurnal range aids the slow, steady ripening of the grapes, ensuring they retain fresh acidity and perfumes. The vineyard sits on a glacis – a sloping bank beneath an old fortress – with stony top soils that provide good drainage and aid in the health and maturation of the grapes.

## VINTAGE

The 2024 vintage in Rioja marked a return to cooler and damper conditions after several years of extreme heat. Heavy downpours in March and May caused challenges with flowering and fruit set, particularly affecting Garnacha yields, while only one heat wave at the start of August saw temperatures rise above 35°C. The region experienced significantly more rainfall than in recent years, with heavy September downpours forcing producers to bring forward picking dates to avoid rot in swollen grapes. Despite these challenges and yields down around 30% from 2023, winemakers reported exceptional grape quality, making this one of the smallest but highest-quality vintages in a generation.

## VINIFICATION

The grapes were destemmed, cold macerated and gently pressed at the winery. Fermentation took place at 16°C in 100% new, untoasted French oak barriques for 30 days. After fermentation, the wine remained on the lees for a period of time, with stirring carried out in order to increase complexity and texture. It was then aged for approximately 2 months in oak before bottling.

## TASTING NOTES

The ‘875m Finca Carbonera` Chardonnay opens with vibrant fruity and floral aromas alongside notes of toast and vanilla. There is a marked smoothness on the palate with tropical and stone fruit flavours that are supported by hints of smoke and hazelnut from oak ageing.