



BITOQUE

NEGRA CRIOLLA TINAJA 2022

ORIGIN

Cinti Valley, Bolivia.

VARIETIES

100% Negra Criolla (aka Listán Prieto or País).

VINEYARD

From 100-200-year-old untrained, ungrafted vines that climb up the sides of native trees. The soils are clay and sand and the vineyard is at 2300-2400m.

VINIFICATION METHOD

Grapes were harvested by hand in March, then destemmed and fermented in ancient clay tinajas without temperature control for 21 days on the skins with gentle punchdowns twice daily. After fermentation, the wine was moved to rest in a 500L steel tank and bottled without fining, filtering, or sulfur addition 4 months later.

PROPERTIES

Alcohol: 11.6%.

pH: 3.64.

Total Sulfur: 0 added.

Bottles Made: 672.

PRODUCER PROFILE

Bitoque began as a collaborative effort between Alejandro Medina and his late father Herland Medina, a Bolivian native, who searched for ancient vineyards that met Alejandro's specifications. After searching for vines that met their requirements, they discovered that there was a bounty of old vines to work with in the Cinti Valley, in the Andean region in the southwest of Bolivia at 2400 meters above sea level. It is partly due to this difficult terrain that Bolivia's wine production has yet to catch up to other countries in South America, and mostly that conventional wineries choose to grow and produce international varietals that are not indigenous to the land. When the Spanish colonized Bolivia, they left behind vines of Negra Criolla and Moscatel de Alejandria. Today, these ancient ungrafted vines are farmed by local farmers. The vines climb up the abundant Pink Peppercorn (*Schinus molle*) trees, whose canopies protect them from the intense, high altitude sun. The dry climate and the age of the hardy, well-adapted vines make chemical treatments and heavy pruning unnecessary. In the cellar, the wines are made simply and without machines; macerations are short, alcohol levels are low, and no additives are employed.

VINTAGE REPORT

2022 featured extreme rainfall in this part of Bolivia. The tree-trained vines keep the clusters high off the ground and allowed for a productive harvest with very high quality fruit, but the young vines close to the river were pretty much a total loss.