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MAGAZINE

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Chef Gordon Ramsay
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Q&A WITH ANTONIO BANDERAS, Actor and Spanish Winemaker

The multi-talented international thespian discusses his passion for wine and his recent partnership with Bodegas Anta Banderas in Ribera del Duero.

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ntonio Banderas is known to millions as a star of stage and screen, but few people know that he is now a partner in Ribera del Duero's Bodegas Anta Banderas. *Wine Enthusiast* recently caught up with him just after shooting wrapped on Woody Allen's latest movie in London.

Wine Enthusiast: When did you decide to make wine?

Antonio Banderas: I became interested in making wine years ago. I had been looking for years for a winery that was passionate about making wine. Creating art is important to me. Making wine is creating art. I get enormous pleasure watching grapes grow and mature. I have a passion for growing grapes and making wine. It is hard to explain in words—but I can say this—it is a feeling that I have in my heart.

WE: Why did you choose the region of Ribera del Duero to make wine?

AB: Ribera del Duero has good winemakers. They have always had good winemakers. They have romantic ideas about wine. This is very important to me.

WE: How did you become involved with Bodegas Anta Banderas?

AB: I was introduced to Bodegas Anta and the Ortega family by a relative. When I tasted the wines that Bodegas Anta had been making for 12 years and met Teodoro Ortega, I knew that I had found the right match for my project. We have been working together for just

about 10 months now and have recently changed the name to Bodegas Anta Banderas.

WE: How many bottles are you making per year?

AB: Currently we are producing 600,000 bottles per year and it is our goal to increase production to 2 million bottles per year within the next 3 years. We will be able to increase production without losing quality. This is very important to us.

WE: How would you describe the landscape of Ribera del Duero?

AB: Ribera del Duero is so different than where I grew up, in Andalusia, where the mountains come right to the sea, and the architecture is Moorish. In Ribera, the city of Burgos is Medieval, with a beautiful Gothic cathedral. Yes, there are mountains to the north, but this area is a vast plain that is lavish with water. Everywhere you look you see green crisscrossed by rivers. This is truly the heart of Spain.

WE: And could you also describe the perfect wine from Ribera?

AB: It has a feeling of velvet in the mouth, with hidden tannins, tremendous depth and complexity, and the taste and smell of bacon and meat. I don't like very aggressive wines, wines that go *tat-tat-tat-tat* in your mouth. Ours is fruity, it is only in oak for four months, and that to me is a good example of how a wine should taste. It is mostly Tempranillo, with a small amount of Cabernet Sauvignon. I like a wine which has great depth but doesn't come on too strong.

WE: If you were to spend tonight drinking wine while watching a movie, what would the wine be, and what would the movie be?

AB: Oh, that is very easy. The movie would be the classic Italian-American film *The Godfather*, and the wine would be a Vega Sicilia. It is a little play on words—Vega Sicilia is one of the great wines of Ribera del Duero and all of Spain, but the "Sicilia" part ties it into *The Godfather* and Sicily.

WE: What's next for Antonio Banderas?

AB: This is down the road, but I would like to produce a sweet wine from Moscatel grapes in Malaga or Competa. It is important to me to make a wine from "mi tierra"—my land.

—MIKE DESIMONE AND
JEFF JENSEN



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IS IMPORTANT
TO ME.
MAKING WINE
IS CREATING ART.
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PLEASURE
WATCHING GRAPES
GROW AND MATURE.