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'Rioja Paired' Hooks 5 Million U.S. Viewers

Marti Buckley and director Sean Blixseth bring Rioja’s rich heritage to U.S. audiences

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The Rioja Qualified Designation of Origin (DOCa Rioja) has captivated the American audience with "Rioja Paired," a series that has reached over five million viewers in the United States within its first month. Comprising four episodes of approximately 20

minutes each, the production highlights wine and gastronomy as central elements to showcase the cultural and winemaking richness of the Rioja region. The series is freely available on the platform www.RiojaPaired.com and YouTube, forming part of a promotional strategy by the DOCa Rioja Regulatory Council aimed at the U.S. market.

Led by Alabama-born journalist and chef Marti Buckley, the series presents a personal and approachable perspective on Rioja. Buckley's background as a culinary author and gastronomy expert brings a narrative that connects viewers with the traditions, landscapes, and flavors of the region. Across the episodes, she explores Rioja's three subzones—Alta, Alavesa, and Oriental—visiting more than 30 wineries, 10 restaurants, and various iconic sites. The series delves into the history and gastronomic culture of the region, illustrating how the interplay between wine and cuisine shapes Rioja's identity.

"Rioja Paired" adopts the format of a "destination show," blending the natural scenery, architecture, and lifestyle of Rioja with wine and culinary experiences. Directed by Sean Blixseth, known for his work on the documentary "The Heart of Harvest" about Rioja's wine harvest, the series seeks to guide viewers through generations of tradition and passion. Blixseth noted that the series aims not only to showcase food and wine pairings but also to immerse viewers in the cultural and emotional backdrop that defines each bottle of Rioja wine.

An additional episode focusing on "celebrations" is set to premiere on December 9, complementing the first season. The strong reception of the series has sparked discussions about a potential second season, according to Buckley.

The project also includes an integrated digital platform, www.RiojaPaired.com, which serves as a resource for American consumers. The website offers information about the DOCa Rioja designation, helps users locate Rioja wines available in the U.S., and provides recipes discovered during filming. These recipes are specifically designed to pair with Rioja wines. The wines featured in the series can also be purchased through www.ShopRioja.com, which offers an exclusive collection for wine enthusiasts.

Since its debut, "Rioja Paired" has generated over 18 million impressions and is projected to reach eight million viewers by mid-2025. This success underscores Rioja's position as one of Spain's premier winemaking regions and a benchmark in the international market. By combining cultural and commercial promotion, the initiative strengthens interest in Rioja wines, emphasizing their quality and their deep connection to a lifestyle that harmonizes tradition, innovation, and authenticity.