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Rioja Rates 2025 Harvest Excellent in Centenary Year

Council cites balance, structure and aging potential after reviewing 2,176 blind-tasted samples

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Rioja’s 2025 harvest has been officially rated “Excellent” after the region’s regulatory council reviewed 2,176 blind-tasted samples and concluded that the vintage, shaped by a difficult growing season and a strong finish to the cycle, produced wines with balance, structure and clear aging potential.

The decision was approved Friday morning by the plenary of the Consejo Regulador of the Denominación de Origen Calificada Rioja, which said the vintage would be remembered as the “Centenary vintage” in a year marking the appellation’s 100th

anniversary. The council said each sample was evaluated by five judges from a panel of 134 professionals, generating nearly 11,000 sensory assessments in a process it described as among the strictest in Spanish wine certification.

Officials said the 2025 season began under pressure from rainfall above normal levels during key stages of vine development, especially in spring and during flowering. That weather increased the risk of downy mildew and forced growers to intensify vineyard work. The council said producers' experience and technical skill helped contain the disease, though yields fell to historically low levels in some areas.

Conditions improved later in the season, allowing grapes to reach optimal ripeness under favorable weather. That led to a harvest carried out in stages, with careful selection in the vineyard and no rush to pick, according to the council's technical report. The result, it said, was fruit harvested in good sanitary condition.

The council said white and rosé wines from the vintage are clean, fresh, aromatic and floral, with balanced acidity and solid structure. It said the red wines are especially well balanced, more structured than in recent years and marked by high complexity, with strong aromas of red fruit and other positive notes. The report also cited elevated polyphenol levels and color intensity, which it said are typical of exceptional vintages.

"This centenary harvest reflects the denomination itself, because it shows a balance between difficulty and know-how that once again demonstrates the sector's ability to adapt to increasingly variable and unpredictable conditions," Alejandra Rubio, the council's technical director, said in a statement. She added that the young wines stand out for their freshness, quality and expression of Rioja's different territories, along with strong aging potential.

The plenary session also selected eight wines that will represent Rioja at institutional events throughout 2026. A total of 158 wines from 59 wineries took part in the blind tasting used to choose those bottles. The selected wines were chosen to reflect what the council called the denomination's broad viticultural diversity.

The institutional wines are Bodegas Valdemar's 2025 white wine from Oyón in Álava; Viñedos del Ternero's 2025 barrel-fermented white from Miranda de Ebro in Burgos; Bodegas y Viñedos Ilurce's 2025 rosé from Alfaro in La Rioja; Bodegas Campoameno's

2025 red from Alfaro; José Basoco Basoco’s 2023 crianza from Villabuena de Álava; Bodegas Ramírez de la Piscina’s 2022 reserva from San Vicente de la Sonsierra in La Rioja; Bodegas Faustino’s 2017 gran reserva from Oyón; and Viñedos de Aldeanueva’s 2021 sparkling reserva from Aldeanueva de Ebro in La Rioja.