

OTHER ACTS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Publication of a communication of approval of a standard amendment to a product specification for a name in the wine sector as referred to in Article 17(2) and (3) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/33

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COMMUNICATING THE APPROVAL OF A STANDARD AMENDMENT

'BIERZO'**Reference number: PDO-ES-A0615-AM02****Date of communication: 31 January 2020**

DESCRIPTION OF AND REASONS FOR THE APPROVED AMENDMENT

1. Amendment to the physical and chemical characteristics by type of wine*Description and reasons*

This amendment concerns point (2a) of the specification and point 4 of the Single Document.

The new specification aims to amend certain analytical characteristics of wines with the 'Bierzo' Designation of Origin so as to adapt them to market tastes. These include fresher wines with greater acidity and a lower sugar and sulphur content. Also, because of advances in technology (wineries are increasingly using wooden tanks capable of holding more than 600 litres) and changes in climatic conditions, more mature wines are being produced. These amendments concern:

Alcoholic strength: increase the strength of white, rosé and red wines by 0,5 % vol., as it is considered that the alcohol content of good-quality white wines must not be lower than 11,5 % vol., and must not be lower than 12 % vol. for good-quality red and rosé wines. The aim of this is to encourage a longer ripening period for the grapes, thus ensuring fuller wines and avoiding excessive yields which would produce lower-quality wines.

Glucose and fructose content: the aim is to reduce the concentration of sugars in the white and rosé wines from 7 g/l of glucose and fructose to 5 g/l, since the wines traditionally produced in the area have a low sugar content and by reducing the sugar we will maintain the identity of El Bierzo wines and increase quality by avoiding using an excess of sugar to mask any shortcomings.

Total acidity: in order to improve quality, the aim is to increase the total minimum acidity of white and rosé wines from 4 g/l in tartaric acid to 4,5 g/l, resulting in fresher-tasting wines. This will make it possible to steer producers towards more balanced white and rosé wines, since the years with higher levels of sunshine can produce excessively warm and muted wines that are not very representative of the area.

Volatile acidity: increase the tartaric acid to 0,8 g/l for first-year wines. For second-year and subsequent wines, the volatile acidity may not exceed 1 g/l. Owing to the method of preparing and ageing the wines, it is now the case that some wines will remain in wooden tanks with a capacity exceeding 600 litres, the authorised limit, for the ageing process. When the capacity exceeds this limit, the product is not considered barrel-aged. The wines that remain in these containers usually have a higher volatile acidity, similar to if they had remained in a barrel, but this does not negatively affect the taste and therefore the aim is to align this parameter with the current ageing and preparation trends. The volatile acidity of second-year and subsequent wines should not exceed 1 g/l of acetic acid. All of this will favour less interventionist preparations and fermentation with native leavenings, thus producing more distinctive wines.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 9, 11.1.2019, p. 2.

Total sulphur dioxide: reduce the content of this substance in white and rosé wines from 190 g/l to 150 g/l and from 140 g/l to 130 g/l in red wines, since a suitable dose of sulphur produces less-oxidised wines with better colour and aroma, less volatile acidity and a higher quality. The clear intention is to produce more natural wines by using this preservative more rationally.

TYPE OF AMENDMENT(S) NORMAL (amendment concerns the Single Document).

As the amendment to these physical and chemical characteristics does not imply a substantial change, since the wines maintain the distinctive characteristics typical of the 'Bierzo' PDO specification, it does not affect the category (Part II of Annex VII to Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013), invalidate the link or constitute a trade restriction.

2. Amendment to the organoleptic characteristics:

Description and reasons

This amendment concerns point (2b) of the specification and point 4 of the Single Document.

The organoleptic characteristics of the wines covered have been revised and amended so that these characteristics can be linked to assessable descriptors using a tasting panel meeting the criteria laid down in the UNE-EN-ISO 17025 standard.

TYPE OF AMENDMENT(S) NORMAL (amendment concerns the Single Document).

As the amendment to these physical and chemical characteristics does not imply a substantial change, since the wines maintain the distinctive characteristics typical of the 'Bierzo' PDO specification, it does not affect the category (Part II of Annex VII to Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013), invalidate the link or constitute a trade restriction.

3. Growing practices limitation on irrigation

Description and reasons

This amendment concerns point (3a) of the specification and point 5.a of the Single Document.

This limitation is due to the fact that the area in question has a clear Atlantic influence, with high annual rainfall which averages over 700 mm per year. Irrigation is therefore only permitted for crop establishment during the first two years of life provided that the summer is dry, as otherwise the plants could die. It is not permitted in subsequent years as rainfall is deemed to be sufficient. Furthermore, irrigation directly alters the characteristics of the grape, meaning that the vintage factor does not apply and the characteristics of the wines are similar every year. This causes the wines to lose part of their identity since dry years produce warmer wines while cooler years with heavy rainfall produce fresher wines.

TYPE OF AMENDMENT(S) NORMAL (amendment concerns the Single Document).

This amendment is not included in the categories provided for in Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) 2019/33.

4. Wine production conditions: amendment to the minimum likely alcoholic strength of certain grape varieties and inclusion of 'clarete'.

Description and reasons

The amendment to the strength concerns point 3b1 of the specification and point 5.a of the Single Document.

The likely alcoholic strength of red and white varieties will increase by 0,5 % vol. in respect of the previous specification, with the exception of the Godello variety, which will increase by 1 % vol. This change is mainly due to the changing climatic conditions which are producing grapes with a higher likely alcoholic strength. In this way the quality of the wines will be maintained as grapes will be harvested at an optimal stage of ripeness, avoiding excess yields and poor wine-making practices that cause incomplete ripening and poor-quality wines.

The inclusion of 'clarete' concerns points 2a, 2b and 3c of the specification and points 4 and 5.a of the Single Document.

El Bierzo is an area that has traditionally produced 'clarete' wines. In fact, in almost all old plantations varieties were mixed in the vineyard and were produced together to make the 'clarete'. The Regulatory Board is currently aiming to foster the production of these traditional wines that have always been produced in the area. The introduction of this type of wine does not mean the inclusion of a new category since it is a category I wine, like those already included in the specification.

TYPE OF AMENDMENT(S) NORMAL (amendment concerns the Single Document).

This amendment is not included in either of the categories provided for in Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) 2019/33.

5. **Restrictions on making the wines: amendment to the minimum percentages of varieties in the composition of the wines**

Description and reasons

This amendment concerns point 3c of the specification and point 5.a of the Single Document.

Red wines have to have at least 85 % of authorised red varieties and a maximum 15 % of white varieties, if desired in order to improve the total acidity of the wine naturally and to give a fresh taste while maintaining the identity of the wines from the area. This is a traditional practice in some parts of El Bierzo, as evidenced by the existence of parcels with a mix of red and white grapes.

TYPE OF AMENDMENT(S) NORMAL (amendment concerns the Single Document).

This amendment does not imply a substantial change to the protected product and is therefore not included in the categories provided for in Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) 2019/33.

6. **Extension of the demarcated geographical area**

Description and reasons

This amendment concerns point 4 of the specification and point 6 of the Single Document.

El Bierzo is an administrative district comprising 38 municipalities, formed in 1991 by Law No 1/1994 of 14 March 1994 creating and regulating the district of El Bierzo from the geographical region of the same name situated to the west of the province of Leon, in the Autonomous Community of Castile-Leon.

The historic territory of El Bierzo includes the basin of the Sil river, excluding Laciana and part of lower La Cabrera. The following municipalities have formed part of the district of El Bierzo since it was founded in 1991: Arganza, Balboa, Barjas, Bembibre, Benuza, Berlanga del Bierzo, Borrenes, Cabañas Raras, Cacabelos, Camponaraya, Candín, Carracedelo, Carucedo, Castropodame, Congosto, Corullón, Cubillos del Sil, Fabero, Folgoso de la Ribera, Igüña, Molinaseca, Noceda del Bierzo, Oencia, Páramo del Sil, Peranzanes, Ponferrada, Priaranza del Bierzo, Puente de Domingo Flórez, Sancedo, Sobrado, Toreno, Torre del Bierzo, Trabadelo, Vega de Espinareda, Vega de Valcarce, Toral de los Vados-Villadecanes and Villafranca del Bierzo; the municipality of Palacios del Sil requested to be included in 2005.

The 'Bierzo' Designation of Origin was recognised in 1989. The Regulation of its Regulatory Council was approved and published in the Official State Gazette on 12 December 1989. The municipalities covered by this Regulation are: Arganza, Bembibre, Borrenes, Cabañas Raras, Cacabelos, Camponaraya, Carracedelo, Carucedo, Castropodame, Congosto, Corullón, Cubillos del Sil, Fresnedo, Carucedo, Castropodame, Congosto, Corullón, Cubillos del Sil, Fresnedo, Molinaseca, Noceda, Ponferrada, Priaranza, Puente Domingo Flórez, Sancedo, Vega de Espinareda, Villadecanes-Toral de los Vados and Villafranca del Bierzo.

Of the 38 municipalities that make up the district of El Bierzo, only 22 were included, with the particularity that Fresnedo is no longer a municipality and its land became part of the municipalities of Cubillos del Sil and Toreno, which until then did not form part of the 'Bierzo' Designation of Origin.

As well as the wine production of the 22 municipalities initially covered, there was also wine production in 10 other municipalities in the district that were not covered by the geographical scope of the 'Bierzo' Designation of Origin; these are: Benuza, Berlanga del Bierzo, Fabero, Folgoso de la Ribera, Igüña, Oencia, Sobrado, Toreno, Torre del Bierzo and Trabadelo. Extending the area to include these 10 municipalities does not alter the link, since these are municipalities within the district of El Bierzo which, at the time the Designation of Origin was established, did not show any interest in forming part of this project because the main industry was mining, which was booming at that time, and the vines were used to make wine for own consumption. However, if we take into account the climate, soil and terrain conditions we can see that in neighbouring areas between the municipalities included and not included, cultivation follows a logical continuity that is only separated by administrative boundaries. The vines are very old since the vineyards in these areas have barely ever renewed the longstanding varieties, rootstocks, planting patterns or cultivation systems, and the natural and human factors are the same in all of the municipalities, including those that we are proposing to include.

The aim of including these municipalities is to try to prevent the vineyards in these areas from being abandoned because grapes coming from these vineyards cannot be produced under the 'Bierzo' Designation of Origin, they are hard to sell, or are used to produce wines for own consumption by elderly winemakers who are gradually ceasing to prepare the grapes in their homes, often leading to the abandonment of very old vineyards that produce high-quality grapes, and to the loss of the genetic variability of these old vineyards.

TYPE OF AMENDMENT(S) NORMAL (amendment concerns the Single Document).

The area extension does not invalidate the link since there is still a causal link created by the fact that there are the same natural and human factors as in the initially demarcated area.

7. Amendment of the maximum yields

Description and reasons

This amendment concerns point 5 of the specification and point 5.b of the Single Document.

The maximum yield per hectare for the Garnacha Tinorera variety will be reduced because the 12 000 kg/ha currently permitted makes it impossible to obtain grapes with the alcoholic strength necessary to produce quality wines. Therefore, the maximum yield will be reduced to 12 000 kg per hectare for the Garnacha Tinorera variety.

The maximum production per hectare permitted for the production of wines with recognition of the smaller geographical units will be 20 % lower than the maximum permitted for 'Vino de Villa', 25 % lower for 'Vino de Paraje', and within the 'Vinos de Paraje' 30 % lower for the 'Viña Clasificada' wine and 35 % lower than the maximum permitted amount for 'Gran Viña Clasificada'. The aim of limiting production is to achieve balance and limited vigour, favouring the ripening, health and characteristics of the grapes with the fundamental aim of increasing the quality.

TYPE OF AMENDMENT(S) NORMAL (amendment concerns the Single Document).

The aim of this amendment is to achieve quality; it does not affect the essential characteristics of the product and it is therefore not included in the types of amendments laid down in Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) 2019/33.

8. Incorporation of the Merenzao and Estaladiña varieties

Description and reasons

This amendment concerns point 6 of the specification and point 7 of the Single Document.

One of the main characteristics of the 'Bierzo' Designation of Origin is the age of our vineyards, which on average are around 75 years old. The main variety in these plantations is Mencía but there are other minority varieties scattered about and mixed with others, which were planted at one time in the area. Many are likely to have evolved after centuries of mutations of old genotypes that arrived from elsewhere and as a result of probable cross-pollination between wild and cultivated populations, forming the varieties that exist today on our vines, which are often in danger of extinction.

The Regulatory Board aims to preserve these varieties threatened with extinction by preventing the loss of the area's winegrowing heritage and conserving local varieties well adapted to the environment and of oenological interest, including Estaladiña and Merenzao within the varieties authorised in the specification, since wines have been made with these varieties and it has been demonstrated that they are of sufficient quality to be considered authorised varieties to be used in the production of wines with the 'Bierzo' Designation of Origin.

TYPE OF AMENDMENT(S) NORMAL (amendment concerns the Single Document).

The inclusion of these two varieties, precisely because of their minority status, does not affect the essential characteristics of the product and it is therefore not included in the types of amendments laid down in Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) 2019/33.

9. Update of the link

Description and reasons

This amendment concerns point 7 of the specification and point 8 of the Single Document.

The wording of the link has been updated but the causal link is maintained because both the natural and human factors and the characteristics of the product remain. A better explanation for the causal link has been given, but it remains the same. The amendment is therefore considered to be NORMAL.

TYPE OF AMENDMENT(S) NORMAL (amendment concerns the Single Document).

This amendment does not fall into any of the categories provided for in Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) 2019/33.

10. **Justification for bottling at the place of origin**

Description and reasons

This amendment concerns point 8.b.2.1) of the specification and point 9 of the Single Document.

The wording of Section 8(b)(2) of the Product Specification on why packaging (bottling) must take place in the demarcated area has been changed in accordance with Article 4(2) of the new Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/33.

TYPE OF AMENDMENT(S) NORMAL (amendment concerns the Single Document).

This practice was already mandatory and therefore this amendment does not entail any additional restrictions on trade. It is simply a change in wording to ensure compliance with the legislation in force. Therefore this amendment is not considered to be either of the types set out in Article 14.1 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/33.

11. **Packaging and labelling provisions: Smaller geographical units**

Description and reasons

This amendment concerns points 8.B.2.2 and 8.b.3 of the specification and point 9 of the Single Document.

Consumers are increasingly interested in knowing more about the origin of the wines they will drink, and producers want to make this additional information available on the label in order to highlight the importance of the villages and places with a long tradition of producing quality grapes, and so that the consumer has access to accurate information on the label, meaning that it is necessary to regulate the conditions of use of these names.

In the case of El Bierzo, the wines produced from certain smaller geographical units are given the following names: 'Vino de Villa', 'Vino de Paraje' and within the latter we have the wines 'Viña Clasificada' and 'Gran Viña Clasificada'. The aim is to reinforce and supplement the current categories by providing valuable information on the origin of the wines, which will make them more attractive to consumers.

The wines included in these categories must be of a high quality and have obligatory traceability, ensuring that they come from the geographical unit indicated. This will enhance the range of wines on offer under the 'Bierzo' Designation of Origin, thereby reinforcing its image in the eyes of experts and consumers.

TYPE OF AMENDMENT(S) NORMAL (amendment concerns the Single Document).

The proposed changes to this paragraph do not entail any change in the name to be protected nor any new restrictions on marketing.

12. **Verification of compliance with the Tender Specifications**

Description and reasons

This amendment concerns point 9 of the specification and does not concern the Single Document.

Alignment with the provisions of Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 and Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/34 of 17 October 2018, in particular Article 19 of the latter, which establishes how the annual verification is to be carried out by the competent authority or control body for the purpose of checking compliance with the product specification.

TYPE OF AMENDMENT(S) NORMAL (amendment does not concern the Single Document).

This amendment does not fall into any of the categories provided for in Article 14(1) of Regulation (EU) 2019/33.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

1. Name of the product

Bierzo

2. Geographical indication type

PDO – Protected Designation of Origin

3. Categories of grapevine product

1. Wine

4. Description of the wine(s)*White wines*

Appearance: Clean, pale yellow to golden-yellow in colour.

Aroma: Bold wines of medium to high intensity with fruity aromas (white fruit, stone fruit, citrus fruit) and/or floral notes (white flowers, yellow flowers). In addition to the above, white wines fermented or aged in barrels will also have aromas characteristic of the fermentation or ageing process, such as nutty, toasted, vanilla or pastry-scented aromas.

Taste: Fresh wines with medium to full body and medium to long finish.

Any analytical limits not covered will comply with existing EU legislation.

General analytical characteristics

Maximum total alcoholic strength (in % volume)	
Minimum actual alcoholic strength (in % volume)	11,5
Minimum total acidity	4,5 grams per litre expressed as tartaric acid
Maximum volatile acidity (in milliequivalents per litre)	0,8
Maximum total sulphur dioxide (in milligrams per litre)	150

Rosé wines

Appearance: Clean, ranging from light pink to ruby red in colour, with possible salmon tones. The robe may vary from very pale to medium.

Aroma: Bold, with a medium to high aromatic intensity with fruity aromas (red fruit, black fruit, citrus fruit) and/or floral notes (white flowers, violets).

Taste: Fresh taste with medium to full body and medium to long finish.

Any analytical limits not covered will comply with existing EU legislation.

General analytical characteristics

Maximum total alcoholic strength (in % volume)	
Minimum actual alcoholic strength (in % volume)	12
Minimum total acidity	4,5 grams per litre expressed as tartaric acid
Maximum volatile acidity (in milliequivalents per litre)	0,8
Maximum total sulphur dioxide (in milligrams per litre)	150

Clarete wines

Appearance: Clean, ranging from pale pink to ruby red in colour, with a robe that may vary from very pale to medium.

Aroma: Bold, with medium to high intensity and aromas of red and/or black fruits and/or violets.

Taste: Fresh, with a medium to long finish and a medium to full body.

Any analytical limits not covered will comply with existing EU legislation.

General analytical characteristics	
Maximum total alcoholic strength (in % volume)	
Minimum actual alcoholic strength (in % volume)	12
Minimum total acidity	4,5 grams per litre expressed as tartaric acid
Maximum volatile acidity (in milliequivalents per litre)	0,8
Maximum total sulphur dioxide (in milligrams per litre)	150

Red wines

Appearance: Clean, with a medium to very strong robe, ranging in colour from purple to red.

Aroma: Bold, with medium to high intensity and aromas of red and/or black fruits and/or violets.

Taste: Fresh, with structure, finish and body.

For second-year and subsequent wines the volatile acidity may not exceed 1 g/l of acetic acid.

Any analytical limits not covered will comply with existing EU legislation.

General analytical characteristics	
Maximum total alcoholic strength (in % volume)	
Minimum actual alcoholic strength (in % volume)	12
Minimum total acidity	4 grams per litre expressed as tartaric acid
Maximum volatile acidity (in milliequivalents per litre)	0,8
Maximum total sulphur dioxide (in milligrams per litre)	130

Aged red wines

Appearance: Clean, with a suitable colour for its category. The colour of oaked red and 'Crianza' red wines ranges from purple to red, and from red to brick-red for 'Reserva' and 'Gran Reserva', with a medium to strong robe.

Aroma: Bold, medium to high intensity, with fruity aromas (red fruit, black fruit, ripe fruit) and/or floral notes (violets), and tertiary aromas typical of the barrel ageing process, such as vanilla, coconut, toasted aromas, balsamic and spices.

Taste: Fresh, full-bodied with structure and lasting finish.

For second-year and subsequent wines the volatile acidity may not exceed 1 g/l of acetic acid.

Any analytical limits not covered will comply with existing EU legislation.

General analytical characteristics	
Maximum total alcoholic strength (in % volume)	
Minimum actual alcoholic strength (in % volume)	12
Minimum total acidity	4 grams per litre expressed as tartaric acid
Maximum volatile acidity (in milliequivalents per litre)	0,8
Maximum total sulphur dioxide (in milligrams per litre)	130

5. Wine-making practices

a. Essential oenological practices

Cultivation method

The use of irrigation in the cultivation of vines used to produce wines with the 'Bierzo' Designation of Origin is prohibited. Irrigation is only permitted during the first two years of life of new plants in order to encourage crop establishment.

Specific oenological practice

- Minimum likely alcoholic strength of the grapes: 12 % vol. for red varieties (except Garnacha Tintorera: 11 % vol.) and 11 % vol. for white varieties (except Godello: 12 % vol.)
- Extraction yield not exceeding 74 l per 100 kg of grapes.

Relevant restriction on making the wines

- Red wine is prepared with at least 85 % of the Mencía, Garnacha Tintorera, Estaladiña and/or Merenzao varieties. The rest is made up of any authorised varieties.
- Rosé wine is prepared with the varieties authorised in paragraph 6 of this document, with at least 70 % of grapes from the red varieties.
- White wine is prepared using: Godello, Doña Blanca, Malvasía and Palomino.
- Clarete wine will be made in accordance with the traditional method of producing this type of wine in El Bierzo and therefore the percentage of authorised red grapes used must be between 40 % and 60 %, while the rest must be white grapes from any of the authorised varieties. The product will then be pressed directly or undergo pre-fermentation maceration prior to pressing. During the alcoholic fermentation of the must, skins removed from white or red grapes must make up between 5 % and 10 % of the total volume of the must.

b. Maximum yields

Palomino variety

12 000 kilograms of grapes per hectare

Palomino variety

88,80 hectolitres per hectare

Other varieties

11 000 kilograms of grapes per hectare

Other varieties

81,40 hectolitres per hectare

6. Demarcated geographical area

The production area covers the following municipalities, all of which belong to the province of Leon: Arganza, Bembibre, Benuza, Berlanga del Bierzo, Borrenes, Cabañas Raras, Cacabelos, Camponaraya, Carracedelo, Carucedo, Castropodame, Congosto, Corullón, Cubillos del Sil, Fresnedo, Fabero, Folgoso de la Ribera, Igueña, Molinaseca, Noceda, Oencia, Ponferrada, Priaranza, Puente de Domingo Flórez, Sancedo, Sobrado, Toreno, Torre del Bierzo, Trabadelo, Vega de Espinareda, Villadecanes-Toral de los Vados and Villafranca del Bierzo, as well as their corresponding districts.

7. Main wine grape variety(ies)

PALOMINO

GARNACHA TINTORERA

MENCÍA

GODELLO

ALARIJE – MALVASÍA RIOJANA

ESTALADIÑA

DOÑA BLANCA – MALVASÍA CASTELLANA

MERENZAIO

8. Description of the link(s)

The distinctiveness of the wines from the area covered is essentially due to the geographical environment: the soil, geological and climate characteristics of our district make it an exceptional area for vine growing. All of the municipalities, both those initially included in the production area and those that were included recently, have similar characteristics and therefore the latter can be considered suitable for the production of quality wines. Furthermore, through human endeavour the varieties most appropriate and best suited to the environment in which they grow have been selected since these are indigenous varieties that can be found in all the municipalities forming part of the Denomination of Origin. The growing method most suitable for obtaining a unique and different product has also been selected, as what we have are vineyard parcels planted since the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, with the same varieties, rootstocks and planting patterns, and similar production systems.

The main factors that bear out this link are summarised below:

- The clay-loam soils, with higher or lower quantities of coarse fragments such as slate and quartzite, will lend the wines elegance and finesse, making them easily distinguishable from wines from other areas.
- The microclimate of the district is different from that of the surrounding areas located outside the mountain chain because we have a strong Atlantic influence which gives us abundant rainfall and a mild annual average temperature, as well as certain continental features owing to the major fluctuations in temperature which helps the grapes to ripen.
- The vineyards are located on slopes of varying steepness and altitude, with some vines growing at an altitude of more than 1 000 m above sea level, resulting in fresh and lively wines.
- The varieties existing in El Bierzo are perfectly adapted to the environment. The main varieties are the Mencía and Godello, but we also have all other authorised varieties, albeit to a lesser extent. Our red wines are intensely fruity, fresh and well suited to barrel-ageing. The white wines are fresh, flavourful and with a fullness that makes them instantly recognisable.
- The traditionally used planting patterns are narrow which, together with the soil characteristics, means that grape yields are not very high, leading to high-quality, well-ripened grapes with balanced analytical parameters.
- The wines from this area have an added value because they come from vineyards that average around 75 years of age. These old vineyards account for 85 % of the surface area of the vines. It should be borne in mind that the grapes grown on these old vines are of a very high quality since over the years a balance has been struck between the vine production methods and the harvesting of the grapes, ensuring optimal ripening. The deep and powerful root system is able to explore a larger expanse of land, ensuring mineral nutrition and a greater supply of water. Because of this the plants are less sensitive to yearly climate variations, ensuring a steady maturation over the years. Furthermore, the high volume of old wood creates greater reserves which, when directed towards the grape bunches, help to maintain the quality over successive harvests. Furthermore, the old plants have extensive scarring caused by pruning wounds which hinders the circulation of sap through the vessels resulting in a lower number of bunches, which will be smaller. Because of these circulatory difficulties, sugars and other quality compounds tend to accumulate in the grapes.
- In summary, the area's different microclimate which varies between an Atlantic and a continental climate, together with the soil, the predominance of old vineyards and the high planting density, will give low yields of well-ripened grapes, producing fruity, balanced wines with good acidity.

9. Essential further conditions (packaging, labelling, other requirements)

Legal framework:

In national legislation

Type of further condition:

Packaging within the demarcated geographical area

Description of the condition:

The wine-making process includes bottling and subsequent ageing of the wines. Thus, the organoleptic and physical and chemical characteristics described in this specification can only be guaranteed if all of the wine-handling operations take place in the area of production. The bottling of wines covered by the 'Bierzo' PDO is one of the factors critical to attaining the characteristics. As a consequence, and with a view to ensuring quality and providing a guarantee as to origin and control, bottling will take place in wineries located in bottling plants in the production area.

Legal framework:

In national legislation

Type of further condition:

Additional provisions relating to labelling

Description of the condition:

The name 'Bierzo' and the traditional term 'Denominación de Origen' (Designation of Origin), which replaces 'Denominación de Origen Protegida' (Protected Designation of Origin), must appear prominently.

It will be obligatory to state the year of vintage, even if the wine has not been aged.

Optional particulars are:

Traditional terms 'crianza', 'reserva' and 'gran reserva'.

The mentions 'fermentado en bodega' (fermented in barrels), 'criado en bodega' (barrel-matured), or 'envejecido en bodega' (barrel-aged).

Name of a smaller geographical unit and the following mentions:

'Vino de Villa' followed by the name of a municipality or rural district included in the demarcated geographical area, provided that 100 % of the grapes come from that place and comply with the established yield restriction.

'Vino de Paraje' followed by the name of a rural district identified in the demarcated geographical area, provided that 100 % of the grapes come from there and comply with the established yield restriction. Each rural district is marked on the maps in SIGPAC (<http://www.crdobierzo.es>). This mention may be completed with the following information:

'Viña Clasificada', provided that 100 % of the grapes come from a parcel or several neighbouring parcels, the indication 'Vino de Paraje' has been used for at least five years, and it complies with the established yield limitation.

'Gran Viña Clasificada', provided that it complies with all of the above requirements, except that it must have used the indication 'Viña Clasificada' for at least five years.

Link to the product specification

<http://www.itacyl.es/documents/20143/342640/PCC+DO+BIERZO+modif.pdf/9c236c96-9b7f-1ffa-4020-306d4aaf42f9>
