

Elias Mora Crianza 2019 (Red Wine)



This Bodega, situated in the famous village of San Roman de Hornija, was founded in 2000 by winemaker Victoria Benavides. The winery is named after the former owner of the vineyard, Elias Mora. The winery owns 16 hectares of vineyards and controls farming and harvest in a total of 70 hectares. Each of the dozens of plots are meticulously managed accounting for soil variation and vine age. The vines are planted in clay and limestone rich soils with abundant, large, surface stones. The arid, warm climate naturally limits production and produces concentrated grapes. Vines are trained in the traditional vaso or goblet shape, which yields ideal results but requires extra work, by hand, for harvest and pruning. Some of their best grapes are grown in the Senda de Lobo area which has 80+ year old vines. The philosophy of the winery revolves around combining a respect for tradition and modern technology. Victoria focuses exclusively on Tinta de Toro the native clone of Tempranillo which has been grown locally, with no exposure to phylloxera, for over 2000 years. The wines are only ever in contact with natural products, oak, glass, natural cork. Finally, she seeks to respect vintage conditions knowing that each year will offer different qualities in the finished wine.

Appellation	Toro D.O.
Grapes	100% Tinta de Toro (Tempranillo), from 50-year-old, own-rooted, bush vines
Altitude / Soil	700 meters / clay over limestone with sand and pebbles on the surface
Farming Methods	Practicing Organic
Harvest	Hand harvested into small boxes at the end of September
Production	Whole berries undergo a 3-day cold soak, fermentation and malo-lactic conversion in stainless steel tanks
Aging	Aged for 12 months in 50% French and 50% American oak barrels, all second fill

Reviews:

“Deep violet in the glass, this wine has a bouquet of brambly fruits of the wood, dark chocolate and espresso. Bold cherry and blackberry flavors are joined by notes of mocha, orange zest and ground black pepper. Burly tannins assert their dominance on the palate shortly after the first sip.”

93 points Wine Enthusiast; Mike DeSimone - Issue May 2023

“The 2019 ‘Crianza’ comes from estate vines planted to Tinta de Toro that are set at 800 meters. The wine shows a beautiful bouquet of dark raspberry and dark chocolate shavings alongside tar and underbrush notes. The palate is soft and refined with silky tannins and a big sense of weight. Finishing long, this is a marvelous effort that is already impossible to resist. Drink 2023-2035-”

93 points OwenBargreen.com; Owen Bargreen - October, 2023

This offering seemed surprisingly tart and acidic when the cork was first pulled, but opened up and broadened out in just a few minutes without any aeration or decanting. Still, rather astringent tannins in the wine’s finish suggest that this needs more time in bottle to achieve a fully coherent profile. One way to test that is to try the wine again a day later, which is exactly what I did with this wine and all the others reviewed below. When re-tasted, the tannins had rounded out somewhat, but there was still clear room for improvement with aging, as the wine’s acidity was quite bright and a bit awkward in relation to the ripe sweetness of the fruit. To be clear, I would be disappointed in a \$40 wine that did not show a capacity for improvement from cellaring, so this is not a knock on this wine — just advice for how to treat it. One more thing: \$40 would seem like an insane price for Crianza if this were from Rioja, as that’s become a largely woeful category populated mostly by \$15 wines that taste more like the inside of a barrel than like “wine.” This is from 50-year-old, own-rooted bush vines, and is an utterly different animal. It deserves cellaring, and if you don’t have the patience or space to do that, lean toward the 2018 “Descarte” from this house.

92 points Wine Review Online; Michael Franz - Issue June 6, 2023

“A graceful red that deftly marries a dense core of fine tannins with a fresh and appealing range of ripe black plum, cassis, licorice string, toast and cigar box notes—a flavor profile that expands on the palate. Tempranillo. Drink now through 2027. 3,750 cases made, 700 cases imported.” **91 points Wine Spectator; Oct.15, 2022**

