

WINE ENTHUSIAST

Wine & Ratings

Meet Victor de la Serna, Journalist and Winery Owner

The co-founder of El Mundo in Madrid is one of Spain's foremost wine writers and the force behind Finca Sandoval. By Michael Schachner

A self-described "U.N. brat," Victor de la Serna spent much of his youth in Geneva and New York City, where his wine-loving father, a journalist and diplomatic attaché at the time, introduced him to the best of Burgundy and some early California trendsetters.

"When I was about 13, Dad took me to Burgundy and showed me a vineyard, saying, 'This is La Romanée-Conti, the best in the world,' " says de la Serna. "My response was, 'It looks just like the one next door.' To which he said, 'No, that's La Tâche, and it's not as good.' "

A few years after realizing that great wines come from a particular place, de la Serna tasted his first drops of [BV Georges de Latour](#), one of Napa's original top-flight Cabernets. From that point on, the Madrileño's love for wine became a passion. De la Serna earned a degree in journalism from Columbia University, after which he stayed in the Big Apple to work as a foreign correspondent. Returning to his native Spain in 1975, he became a reporter/writer known for working wine into his articles.

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In 1981, [El País](#) offered de la Serna a job writing about food and wine. He stayed there until 1988, then helped create [El Mundo](#), a Madrid daily, eventually rising to deputy editor. He retired in 2012, but still writes a wine column for the paper.

De la Serna, 69, is also a winery owner. In 1998, when El Mundo was sold to an Italian publishing company, de la Serna cashed in his shares in the paper. With that money, he and his wife bought property in Manchuela that had been owned by his father-in-law. To honor his wife's family surname, [Finca Sandoval](#) was created. Today, this small winery located near Cuenca produces 3,500 cases of wine per year. Under the guidance of Winemaker Rafael Orozco, Finca Sandoval makes Mediterranean-style blended reds from [Syrah](#), Touriga Nacional, [Garnacha](#), - Monastrell, Alicante Bouschet and the local Bobal grape.

"Manchuela is part of the Levante, but with elevations rising to 3,500 feet," he says. "Our vineyards are planted on limestone. We get cool summer nights and Mediterranean breezes, which give us bold aromas and acidity. Our goal was to give our small region an identity, and I think we have."

(<http://www.winemag.com/2016/06/15/meet-victor-de-la-serna-journalist-and-winery-owner/>)