June 2021

The Rioja 2021 Special Report confirms DOCa Rioja as the Spanish wine region with the highest number of wines above 95 points, and a Rioja white reaches the highest ranking in the report, scoring 100 points.
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The Rioja Wine Region

No adventure in Spain would be complete without a visit to Spain's oldest and best known wine region, considered the "benchmark" of Spanish winemaking. The Rioja is a stunningly beautiful and ancient land inhabited since the Neolithic era where you’ll find atmospheric fortress towns sitting on a hill, some with their medieval walls still intact and filled with Noble homes displaying heraldic shields. There are enormous Gothic churches, each with its own amazing, ornately gilded Baroque altarpiece, but seldom seen, because these churches are kept tightly shut other than for mass. Ancient burial markers (dólmenes), scattered about the fields and vineyards, intermix with the wineries; traditional, boutique and the larger, industrial wineries. Here is where you’ll also find a number of
charming family run country inns, along with superb Riojan and Basque cuisine.

Proposed for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage Listing in 2013, it’s three distinct sub-zones make up the wine-producing region of Spain’s oldest DO - the Rioja Alta, whose capital is Haro, the Rioja Alavesa, that section of the Rioja in the southern portion of the province of Álava, the Basque Country, the smallest of the three sub-zones, and the Rioja Oriental (formally known as the Rioja Baja), the majority of which lies in the dryer and much hotter southeastern portion of the Rioja, and is the largest sub-zone. A section of southern Navarra also belongs to the Rioja Denomination de Origen, as does a small area of Castile y Leon, on the western edge of the Rioja Alta.

There are 144 municipalities in the DOCa Rioja; La Rioja, Navarra and País Vasco (Basque Country), with 16,686 winegrowers in the Rioja DOCa, Spain’s largest, with some 65,726 hectares of vineyards currently under harvest. It used to be that the Rioja Alavesa, with 13,000 hectares of vineyards under production and nearly 400 wineries, and the Rioja Alta, covering the western portion of the Rioja, with most of the vineyards of its 580 wineries lying south of the Ebro River, held the most interest for wine tourism, as they produce some of the area’s most expensive and venerable wines, boasting the most prestigious wineries in the region, but that has now changed somewhat with the introduction of some new wineries in the Rioja Oriental, an area that accounts for 40% of the wine production in the Rioja.
Picturesque Villages Of The Rioja

Some of the most picturesque villages can be found following the route of the wine from Haro to Logroño, a journey of some 50 kilometers. There are fewer villages along the road from Logroño to Alfaro, depending on which route you follow; the shorter 75 km route through Calahorra, or the slightly longer route on the north side of the Ebro River, in La Ribera Navarra, that will take you through Lodosa, known for its famous piquillo peppers, and San Adrián, with its ancient monastery dedicated to San Adrián y la Virgen de la Palma.

If you follow the route from Haro to Logroño, we recommend visiting the following historic towns along the way; Briñas, noted for its many mansions formerly inhabited by Haro’s wine nobility. Labastida, the historic Basque village and impressive fortress town, which celebrates the
traditional 17th-century dances to the Christ Child during Christmas. Briones, one of the most atmospheric and unspoiled villages in the Rioja sits adjacent to the impressive Dinastía Vivanco wine museum, and just across the Ebro River from its former enemy, San Vicente de la Sonsierra, which celebrates Holy Week with a fascinating Maundy Thursday celebration followed by the Good Friday procession of “Los Picaos”, one of the best known and most important Holy Week processions in all of Spain. In San Vicente be sure to drive up to the top of the village to the Santa María la Mayor church for wonderful views of the area and of the castle of Davalillo lying just to the north of the small village of San Asencio. We also recommend visiting the sleepy and tiny wine villages of Ábalos, home to a dozen small wineries and Samaniego, another wine-making hamlet filled with mansions of warm, golden stone.

Back in the Rioja Alavesa, there is Villabuena de Alava, home to an astonishing 33 wineries, including two of our favorites, Bodega de la Marquesa (Valserrano) and Bodegas Luis Cañas, and the architecturally cutting-edge, 4-star Hotel Viura. Our very favorite village in Álava remains Laguardia, the fortified bastide town and capital of the Rioja Alavesa. And finally there is Elciego, where the Frank Gehry-designed hotel complex for Marqués de Riscal, the Ciudad del Vino, was inaugurated in September, 2006, which put the region firmly on the international wine tourism map.

You can pick up a brochure of the ‘Rioja Alavesa Wine Route’ at the tourist office in Laguardia at Calle Mayor, 52. The office opens daily at 10:00 am, 10:45 am on Sundays. It will provide you with an excellent driving tour of these villages. Or if you begin your visit to the region from Logroño, be sure to pick up the available brochures and booklets at the
Tourist Office of La Rioja, Calle Portales, 50, open weekdays at 9:00 am and at 10:00 am on weekends.

Some of the historic towns along the way from Logroño to Alfaro, in the Rioja Oriental, include: Agoncillo, with its medieval castle Aguas Mansas, Cornago, in the Alcarama Mountains, with its 12th-century castillo de Cornago, the mountain village of Quel, with its birthplace of Bretón de los Herreros, one of the most important and prolific comic playwrights of the 19th-century. There is also a 15th-century castle, currently under reconstruction. The Bread and Cheese Festival in Quel, a 541 year tradition, runs every year from August 4-10. Arnedo, a 20-minute drive southwest of Calahorra, is one of the most prosperous towns in the Rioja. It has a defensive fortification dating from the time of the Moors, and celebrates a one-week long festival in late September, Las Fiestas de San Cosme y San Damián, that you shouldn’t miss if you’re in the area.

The Michelin Regional Map #573; Basque Country-Navarra-La Rioja, is very detailed and extremely helpful when planning your route to and from the three sections of the Rioja. Some maps of the Rioja Alta do not include the Basque villages, just as maps of the Alavesa region sometimes forget their Rioja region cousins, which can be a bit confusing to the first time visitor.
Planning Your Visit

When to come? Although the Rioja can be a year round destination, for the best weather and the most scenic beauty, you should plan your visit from either early April through May or from September through late October. The vibrant fall colors will be at their most spectacular following the harvest, usually around the first or second week of October. Most wineries in the Rioja now offer guided tours, and all but a few require you to schedule a visit in advance. Most tours are conducted in Spanish, a few in French, and some offer at least one, if not two tours a day, in English, particularly those wineries in and around Haro, Laguardia and Logroño, which has been thoroughly discovered by English speaking visitors. Be sure to request a tour in a language you are most comfortable with. Visiting hours are normally restricted; some are open in the morning only, and nearly all will be closed during lunch (1:30 to 4:00 pm). Many
wineries now have an online booking request detailing visiting hours and available languages. Trying to do a “on-the-fly”, à la California’s Napa Valley, the “Wine Ghetto” in Lompoc, or hitting the Urban Wine Trail in Santa Barbara, is all but impossible.

For several years the area was slowly changing, adapting its mind set with the opening of flamboyant "designer" wineries designed by world class architects or “starchitects” to attract larger scale wine tourism such as Santiago Calatrava's striking pavilion designed for Bodegas Ysios, the over-the-top Frank Gehry designed Marqués de Riscal City of Wine, Bodegas Baigorri by Basque architect Iñaki Aspiazu Iza, and the dramatic and enormous Bodegas Campo Viejo by Ignacio Quemada which sits in the hills outside Logroño. But most wineries in the Rioja remain strictly no-nonsense business operations, not set up for massive wine tourism like many their counterparts in the sherry region of Jerez de la Frontera, or the cava growing region of northeast Spain, the Penedès in Catalunya.

At one time it was difficult, but not impossible, to visit three wineries on your own on any given day. All you needed to do was to make the first reservation as early as 9:30 or 10:00 am, the second between noon and 1:00 pm, then scheduling the last visit after 4:00 pm, making sure that the three wineries are in close proximity of each other as most tours and tastings take at least 90 minutes. But now, with the advent of Wine Bars, you can reasonably visit as many as four bodegas in one day, and have a relaxing lunch if you plan your day carefully. Just note that here still remains a language issue in areas outside of Haro, Laguardia, Logroño and Alfaro.
If this is your first time in the Rioja, we recommend doing a private tour and tasting, scheduling two tours per day, one for mid to late morning and one around noon. You can then add a stop at one of the new wine bars where you can do a tasting without a tour of the cellar and/or vineyard, before enjoying a leisurely lunch Riojan style. And remember, most shops will be shut down until after lunch. And if possible, we also recommend using a car and driver service as you will be tasting several different wines at each bodega, as many as five in one tour, sometimes more, depending on who is giving the tour.

There are some small guided group tours you can join that take no more than 5 or 6 people. Or, if you are a larger group of 8 or 10, then they can arrange a special tour for you. Please note that because of the pandemic, wineries have reduced the number of people they will allow for a tour and tasting, and some have stopped allowing visitors altogether. If you are planning on doing most of the touring and tasting on your own, and will be in the Rioja for a few days or more, then you should consider going with a small group for at least one day during your stay, preferably the first day.

Three days in either the Rioja Alavesa, Alta, or the Rioja Oriental, will give you time to visit several wineries in the area but we think five days in either the Alavesa, Alta or Oriental is optimum, allowing you to alternate winery visits with cultural tours and enjoy this uniquely beautiful wine region.

Hotels can arrange some tours but don’t rely entirely on your hotel staff to do this for you is you have something special in mind, and particularly if you plan on traveling in or around harvest time or during the very busy
summer season. And please note that during the hectic harvest season some of the small, family-owned wineries may not open for visits at all, although the “major players”, such as Marqués de Riscal, Bilbaínas, Muga, CVNE, López de Heredia, Ysios, Finca Valpiedra and LAN will continue to provide tours. Some wineries will even allow you to join the harvest for a few hours.

We have put together a profile of the 286 bodegas in 66 villages in the Rioja Alavesa, Alta, Oriental and Navarre Rioja Alta, plus 13 more in 6 villages in the Ribera Baja de Navarra that we consider interesting and worth visiting. We haven’t been to all of them ourselves as yet, but have visited a large number over the last twenty years. Not all of the bodegas are open to the public, but you will be able to visit the vast majority listed on the following pages, each unique in their own way.

Very few wineries offer a complimentary visit. The cost of a standard tour and tasting can be as low as 8€ to 10€, or as high as 30€, while premium tours and tasting can be well in excess of 100€.

If you don’t have the time or desire to plan your own tour, to do the needed preparation, then you can put yourself in the hands of Iberian Traveler, as we are superbly well-equipped to help arrange your entire visit to the Rioja and provide you with an excellent, informative English-speaking local guide.
The view looking south across the vineyards near Ábalos, La Rioja

Getting To The Rioja

Arriving by car from Madrid

The drive from Madrid to Logroño normally takes about 4 hours without stops if you are taking the A1/E5 north past Burgos. It’s a few minutes shorter if you take the E-90/N-111 through Soria and the Cameros, which is more scenic. If you are driving to the Rioja on the A1/E5 from the Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport after an a long international flight, we recommend stopping overnight in Burgos or at the Parador de Lerma. If you are taking the E-90/N-111 from the airport, then you can stay overnight at the Parador de Soria.

The drive from Madrid to Alfaro in the Rioja Oriental usually takes less than 4 hours, but if you are driving from the Adolfo Suárez Madrid-
Barajas Airport after an international flight, you should consider overnighting at the Parador in Soria, or take a slight detour and spend your first night in Spain in Sigüenza, at the Castle of the Bishops, the Parador de Sigüenza.

**Arriving by car from Barcelona**

If driving from Barcelona, the quickest route would be to take the AP-68, which will take you directly into Logroño. Since the drive is a little over 5 hours without stops, we recommend you take a lunch break before reaching Alfaro in the Rioja Oriental, either in Tudela (Navarra) at Restaurante Treintaitrés or Trinquete Restaurante. If you want to take a short detour to Cintruénigo, then you can have lunch at Restaurante Maher. In Alfaro, we recommend Graccurris, Morro Tango or San Roque Asador.

When driving from Barcelona, we normally spend the night at the AC Hotel Ciudad de Tudela so we can explore the city, see what’s new. The Hotel Aire de Bardenas, located outside of the city, is also a good option, especially if you have a couple of days and want to explore the Bardenas Reales.

**Arriving by car from San Sebastián-Donostia**

If you’re staying in sophisticated, stately San Sebastián, you can follow the highway to Bilbao, turning south toward Haro as you reach the city, or head toward Pamplona on the A-15, and south on the A-12. Following either route will take about 2-1/2 hours, but the route through Navarra will take you to Logroño and then Laguardia, after passing through Navarra’s major wine producing region, starting just south of Pamplona.
Arriving by car from Bilbao

The Basque Country’s vibrant city on the coast is just over a one hour drive from the Haro, in the Rioja Alta wine producing region, and about 1-1/2 hours from either Logroño, capital of the Rioja Alta, or Laguardia, capital of the Rioja Alavesa, the Basque Country. Haro makes for a easy one-day self-guided tour, or you can take a guided tour from Bilbao with our friend Mikel of Tours by Basque if you don’t want to drink and drive.

Arriving By Bus

The Alsa Bus runs from Madrid at Avenida de América, or from the Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport, Terminal T4 to Logroño. Tickets are 24,76€ one-way. The trip takes 4 hr 15 min from the airport or or 4 hr 5 min from Avenida de América with three stops. There are two departures/day, Monday-Saturday, at 8:00 am and 3:00 pm.

Bus service between Bilbao (Termibus) and Haro or Logroño is offered by CuadraBus with at least 4 departures/day. The trip takes a little over one hour to Haro and 1 hr 45 min to Logroño. The cost is between 6€ and 10€, one-way. The bus also stops in Labastida, Ábalos, Samaniego and Laguardia.

Arriving By Train

Most visitors to the Rioja arrive by car but there is currently a train departing Madrid daily at 12:30 pm, arriving in Logroño at 4:35 pm and one in the afternoon departing at 6:15 pm, putting you in Logroño at 9:42 pm. There is also a daily departure from Barcelona Sans Station at noon that will get you into Logroño at 4:35 pm, with a second train departing at
3:30 pm, getting you to Logroño at 7:36 pm. See Renfe or Petrabax (USA/Canada) to book your tickets.

**Flying to the Rioja**

The closest international airport to the Rioja Alavesa and Alta is Bilbao (BIO). The smaller regional Logroño-Agoncillo airport in Logroño, the capital of La Rioja, only handles Air Nostrum and Iberia flights to and from Madrid and Barcelona, plus private aircraft. Taxi service is available at the airport; Radiotaxi (+34) 941 222 122. There is a supplement of 0.49€/bag if carried in the trunk.

The Zaragoza (ZAZ) is the closest international airport to Alfaro, a little over a one-hour drive. The airport is serviced by Air Europa, Binter Canarias, Iberia, Ryanair, Volotea, Vueling, Wizz Air. Taxi service is available at the airport; Radio Taxi Aragón (+34) 976 383 838, Radio Taxi Cooperativa (+34) 976 757 575 and Radio Taxi Zaragoza (+34) 976 424 242.
Where To Base Your Stay

While the temptation exists to choose a base in a city, and the provincial capital of Logroño does have many charms, if you come to the region by car, we strongly suggest that you base yourself in the countryside in one of the charming medieval stone villages, some of which are surrounded by vineyards, so you can experience the real flavor of this enchanting land. There are several options to choose from depending on the type of accommodation you’re looking for. They range from a 5-star luxury property to a more modest Casa Rural.

If you need to rely on public transportation, then Logroño is your only practical choice. Although the city itself doesn’t exude the feel of a wine
town, that all changes during the Festival of San Mateo on September 21 when the wine harvest festival begins and the city bursts with merriment. You can join in the fun of daily parades, outdoor lunches of grilled baby lamb chops, bullfights, concerts and fireworks, but be sure to book your hotel far in advance of the festival.

If you must have easy access to large scale shopping and some nightlife, yes, then choose Logroño. But if you can do without dance clubs, tapas bars at your beck and call and you enjoy communing with nature, driving through vineyards, then you will be happier staying outside the city and do as we do; spend the early evening in Logroño’s historic quarter, especially along the famous Calle Laurel dining on tapas, then return to the country for a restful night’s sleep. Remember, this is farming country, so it tends to be rather quiet after 10:00 pm except during fiesta.
Rioja Wine Classifications

- **Joven** - Is fresh, young table wine, designed to be consumed today.
- **Crianza** - Wine aged a minimum of one year in an oak cask and up to 12 months in the bottle. They are quality wines meant for every day drinking.
- **Reserva** - Spends at least one year in oak casks and is aged a minimum of two years in the bottle.
- **Gran Reserva** - An exceptional vintage having spent two years in oak casks followed by at least two years of aging in the bottle.
- **Espumosos de Calidad de Rioja** - Is the new sparkling wine designation.
New Zonal Classifications

Like the wines of other Spanish regions, Rioja wines have long been categorized based strictly on their aging times, which has made sense given the wonderfully long and vibrant shelf-lives of many of this region’s famous Reserva and Gran Reserva wines. However, for the past couple of years, DOCa Rioja has encouraged a shift in its classification system, placing new emphasis on the specific terroir and geographical origins of a given wine, a move that highlights the diversity that can be found in a single region due to different soils, microclimates and vineyard location, among other factors.

The official changes to the DOCa Rioja wine classification system took effect on January 1, 2019 giving both producers and consumers more tools with which to define and differentiate their favorite Rioja wines—long considered some of the world’s finest.

• **Vino de Zona** - grapes grown in the zone, vinified and aged at the winery in the zone.
• **Vino de Municipio** - grapes grown in municipality.
• **Viñedo Singular** - wines long established single estate vineyards with the wine made and bottled on the estate.
Wine Touring in the Rioja Alta & Alavesa

We usually start our wine touring in Haro when in the western end of the Rioja. Haro, the wine capital of the Rioja Alta, is an agricultural town of just under 12,000 inhabitants and has the largest concentration of centuries-old wineries in the world; CVNE, Gómez Cruzado, Bodegas Bilbainas, López de Heredia-Viña Tondonia, Martinez Lacuesta, and Carlos Serres. Many of the notable wineries are located to the north, below the main part of the town in the Barrio de la Estación, also known as the Barrio de las Bodegas, near the railway station, where free parking is available. A few other wineries are located south and to the west of the center of Haro and also provide parking. Note, parking in Haro, especially around the old quarter, can be difficult.
Ayuntamiento de Haro, city hall, in the Plaza de la Paz

Haro

We usually start our wine touring in Haro when in the western end of the Rioja. Haro, the wine capital of the Rioja Alta, is an agricultural town of just under 12,000 inhabitants and has the largest concentration of centuries-old wineries in the world; CVNE, Gómez Cruzado, Bodegas Bilbaínas, López de Heredia-Viña Tondonia, Martinez Lacuesta, and Carlos Serres. Many of the notable wineries are located to the north, below the main part of the town in the Barrio de la Estación, also known as the Barrio de las Bodegas, near the railway station, where free parking is available. A few other wineries are located south and to the west of the center of Haro and also provide parking. Note, parking in Haro, especially around the old quarter, can be difficult.
Other than visiting the wineries, there are some importance monuments you might be interesting in seeing, such as the late Gothic-style Parroquia de Santo Tomás, the Church of Saint Thomas, located in the old quarter at Plaza de la Iglesia, 7. It’s also known as the “Watchtower” as the tower is the highest point in the city. The 18th-century Basilica de La Virgen de la Vega and the Museo Virgen de la Vega, which opened in 2002, face the Plaza Marqués de Francos and the Vega Gardens. El Museo del Torreón, the 15th-century Tower of Prisoners, which now houses the Museum of Contemporary Art (closed on Mondays) is on Calle at the entrance to the Plaza de la Paz. The Museo al Aire Libre is a series of sculptures of traditional, artisan and artistic trades you’ll find while walking around the city. The Palacio de Bendaña, a great example of the Plateresque style architecture, ornate decorative facades covered with floral designs, dates from the 16th and 17th centuries, is part of the old city wall, and where you will find the tourist office, facing the Plaza de la Paz. The 18th-century baroque-style Palacio de las Bezaras, built of ashlar stone, also know as the Stork Palace, is at Calle Virgen de la Vega, 16, a couple of minutes walk from the Plaza de la Paz. The Palacio de los Condes de Haro is a 15th-century palace, an interesting mix of Renaissance and Baroque styles, sits next to Parroquia de Santo Tomás at Plaza de la Iglesia, 3. Haro’s Bretón Theater is named for Manuel Bretón de los Herreros, poet and one of the Spain’s most important and prolific comic playwrights of 19th-century. He was born in the village of Quel, in the Rioja Oriental, in 1796. Market days are Tuesdays and Saturdays.

The Rioja Wine Interpretation Center at Bretón de los Herreros, 4, has been expanded, modernized and re-named La Estación Enológica de Haro, and merits a visit. It’s housed on three floors, and the tour starts on
the second floor, where the entire process of wine cultivation is explained. On the first floor the main features of the wine making process can be seen. The ground floor illustrates the character and characteristics of the Riojan villages and its people and their close relationship to the world of wine.

The two-day Carnaval del Vino, the Haro Wine Carnival, is celebrated between late February and late March every year (you’ll have to check the date depending on the year). Tickets will be available at both the Haro and Logroño tourist offices. The annual Batalla del vino, the Battle of Wine, takes place on June 29 during the festivals of San Juan, San Felices and San Pedro. La Cata del Barrio de la Estación, the Haro Station Wine Experience, was scheduled to take place on June 19, 2021 beginning at 11:00 am, but has been delayed until 2022. You will need to purchase your tickets online.

Haro at lunchtime

Save for festival days, Haro can be a rather sleepy place after the sun goes down with the exception of the area of La Herradura, the horseshoe-shaped tapas circuit, where you’ll find some of the town’s popular tapas bars; Bar Beethoven at Calle Santo Tomás, 3, Talia at Calle de Santo Tomás, 21, los Berones at Calle Santo Tomás, 28. Bar el Pasadizo is at Plaza de la Iglesia, 1, los Caños is at Plaza San Martín, 5 and El Risqueño at Plaza San Martín, 3. Bar El Remolino is at Calle San Martín, 2, and Bar Beethoven III is at Plaza de la Iglesia, 8.

Located in a recently renovated space next to Café Suizo at Juan García Gato, 2, at the entrance to the Plaza de la Paz, Alboroque de Haro is the new addition to the fine gourmet dining scene in Haro by chef Raúl Muñiz
and his wife Laura. Around the plaza you will also find El Rinconcito de Cai and Bar Benigno. The legendary asador Casa Terete can be found at Lucrecia Arana, 17, one block up from the Plaza de la Paja. Gastrobar Señorío de Haro has opened in a new space at Calle Lucrecia Arana, 4, across the street from Casa Terete. For a decent GinTonic, Teorema is just down the street at Calle Ventilla, 1. It’s been around since 1981.

Staying In Haro
There are a few good options for staying in the area beginning with the 18th-century, 4-star Eurostars Los Agustinos, a building with 600 years of history. The 19th-century palace, the 3-star Hotel Arrope, was commissioned by the Duke of Moctezuma de Tultengo, a descendant of the Aztec Emperor Moctezuma II is located at Calle Virgen de la Vega, 31. The 16 room Hotel Plaza de la Paz, in the Plaza de la Paz, is also a good option for those staying in Haro.

Haro Wineries Of Interest
• Ramón Bilbao
• Carlos Serres
• Bodegas Manzanos Haro
• Bodegas Martinez Lacuesta

Ramón Bilbao
Ramón Bilbao Murga from Etxebarri opened his bodega in 1924, today his winery has 265 hectares of its own vineyards; 60 hectares in Rueda and manages another 900 hectares around the villages of Villalba, Ábalos, Valpierre, Cuzcurrita and Tudelilla. Owned since 1999 by the Zamora Company, a third-generation family business, the winery is under the direction of noted Oenologist Rodolfo Bastida. In March 2019 Ramón
Bilbao was named one of the world’s 50 most admired brands by Drinks International.

In a new project lead by winemaker Rosana Lisa, they launched Lalomba, their new single vineyard collection, in 2020, using concrete tanks and 500 liter French oak barrels; Lalomba Finca Valhonta 2017, Lalomba Finca Ladero 2016, 80% Tempranillo, 20% Garnacha, and Finca Valhonta, 100% Tempranillo from bush vines planted in 2000 on a 2.8 hectare plot on the 650 meter high terraces of Finca Villalba de Rioja.

Visits are available and you can do everything from the standard visit, a tasting course, or a special vineyard tour and tasting. Call (+34) 941 310 316, or email visitanos@zamoracompany.com for more information.

Carlos Serres
Charles Serres was a Frenchman who came to Haro from Bordeaux in the late 19th-century after phylloxera had devastated the wine industry in the Médoc. Opening his original bodega in the Barrio de la Estación in 1896, he established the Rioja Wine Exporters Syndicate in 1907, becoming one of the region’s first exporters. The winery, which remains family-owned and operated, was moved to its current location in the mid 20th-century to accommodate it’s growth. The main vineyard, Finca El Estanque, covers 60 hectares of land in south-eastern Haro where the Tempranillo, Graciano, Mazuelo, Maturana Tinta and Viura grapes thrive at an altitude of 500 meters.

Their Onomástica wines are those from only the best years and remain in oak barrels for 24 months and bottled for 18 months before being released to be enjoyed at their prime. The Carlos Serres Gran Reserva spends 36 months in American and French oak and 36 in the bottle before release.
The 2012 Carlos Serres Gran Reserva, 2017 Onomástica Blanco Reserva and 2016 Onomástica Rosado Reserva all received 92 points from Robert Parkers Wine Advocate in 2020. The 2011 Carlos Serres Rioja Reserva was awarded 93 points from James Suckling.

You can email info@carlosserres.com or call (+34) 941 310 294 for additional information or to request a visit.

**Bodegas Manzanos Haro**

The Fernández de Manzanos family, 5th generation winemakers, owns three premium wineries, one in Haro, the château style winery in Azagra (Navarra), across the Ebro river in the “Rioja del Reyno”, which opened in 2007, and in Campanas, south of Pamplona, the oldest winery in Navarra (1864). The Haro winery, orginally Bodegas Berceo, is the oldest winery in Haro (1801), will be undergoing renovation over the next two years and is expected to be a showcase when it reopens.

**Bodegas Martinez Lacuesta**

Founded in 1895 by winemaker, lawyer, politician and promoter Félix Martínez Lacuesta, it’s one of the Centenarian Wineries of La Rioja. With vineyards covering a total of 14+ hectares on the right bank of the Ebro river, the winery is still run by the 3rd-generation of the family. The breathtaking aging room in the new winery holds some 8000 barrels of American (90%) and French (10%) oak. Opened in 2011, it sits beneath a 3.7 hectare vineyard to help control the temperature during the warm summers and cold winters typical of the area.

Their 2015 Ventilla 71, Tempranillo 100%, fermented in French oak, received 91 points from Tim Atkins in his Special 2020 Rioja Report.
The winery reopens in March and will be available for visits except on Sundays. The wine bar is open from noon to 2:00 pm. The wine shop, which displays the entire range of wines, vermouths and olive oil, is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, but closed on weekends, June 24-30, September 7-12, December 24-26 and from December 31 to January 7. There are also two dining rooms available for groups, maximum of 6, as well as a private dining-room for Friends of the Bodega members. Call (+34) 941 310 050, or email reservas@martinezlacuesta.com to request a tour and tasting.
Bodegas Roda cellar

Haro’s Barrio de la Estación

The Tudela-Bilbao railway was inaugurated in 1863, giving birth to the Barrio de la Estación in the late 19th-century resulting in wineries being built around a central point, the golden mile of Rioja wine.

“The Barrio is the soul of Rioja and a bridge between the past and the future; a gorgeous place which is still missing the worldwide recognition it deserves”, Tim Atkin, 2015.

Architecture buffs will may want to make C.V.N.E. and Viña Tondonia their top priorities in Haro. Bodegas López de Heredia, which D. Rafael López de Heredia y Landeta began building in the late 1800’s, is still unfinished, evolving generation after generation. C.V.N.E.’s architectural showpiece is its barrel nave. It was created between 1890 and 1909 by the
famous French civil engineer and architect Gustave Eiffel. Instead of using conventional columns, metallic trusses were extended from wall to wall, allowing for a great diaphanous space for easier racking and maintenance. This structure is used for aging the famed C.V.N.E. Imperial label.

Note: La Cata del Barrio de la Estación, the Haro Wine Experience, was scheduled for 19 June this year but has been rescheduled for 2022. You can purchase your tickets (84€) online. It includes a tasting of 12 wines and 7 tapas made with Rioja products.

Barrio de la Estación Wineries Of Interest

• López de Heredia
• Bodegas Roda
• Bodegas C.V.N.E.
• Bodegas Bilbaínas

• Bodegas Muga
• Bodegas La Rioja Alta
• Bodegas Gómez Cruzado

López de Heredia

The most spectacular and oldest winery in Haro was one of the first three bodegas in the Rioja. The López de Heredia family owns a total of 163 hectares of vineyards in the area surrounding Haro, with the Viña Tondonia vineyard measuring 100 hectares. It as planted between 1913 and 1914 on the right bank of the Ebro River. Their other vineyards in the Rioja Alta are Viña Cubillo (24 ha), Viña Bosconia (15 ha) and Viña Gravonia (24 ha). Today the winery houses 72 large oak fermenting vats. Temperature during fermentation is controlled through the use of natural ventilation. The wines age in 15,000 French oak barrels that were produced by and are constantly repaired by the winery’s team of three
coopers. It is one of a few wineries in the Rioja to have its own tonelería, a barrel making shop.

The dimly lit spider-web covered vaulted underground corridors of the original winery run for up to 200 meters in length, the dark walls covered with a natural penicillin mold. It’s an amazing walk as through as you are stepping back in time.

Their Viña Tondonia Rosado Gran Reserva 2010 was named as the overall Rosé of the Year in the Tim Atkin 2020 Rioja Special Report. It also received 96 points from Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate and 95 point from James Suckling. The Viña Tondonia Tinto Gran Reserva 2008, the latest release, has yet to be rated, but the 1995 vintage received 97 points from both Robert Parker and Guía Peñín.

The famous decanter-shaped glass tasting pavilion and wine shop was designed by internationally acclaimed Pritzker prize winning Iraqi-born British architect Zaha Hadid to celebrate this classic winery’s 125th anniversary, but today, celebrating 144 years of history during a pandemic can be difficult. The winery is currently only open to professionals, but hopefully that will change by the summer.

The winery is open for sales to the public Monday-Saturday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm by appointment. You can call (+34) 941 310 244 or email bodega@lopezdeheredia.com for additional information.

Bodegas Roda

Established in 1987 by Mario Rotllant and his wife Carmen Daurella, this relatively “young” winery, opened its doors in 2001 in the Barrio de la Estación, lying slightly north of Viña Tondonia at the very north end of
town, sitting atop a small hill, and produces some of the region’s most exciting wines in its ultra modern installations. All of their wines are aged in French oak and the harvest, by a team of 40 people, is done manually. The winery owns 70 hectares of vineyards and manage another 50, which range in elevation from 380 to 650 meters above sea level in the Obarenes Mountains, where the Atlantic, Continental and Mediterranean influences meet.

Experts consider these to be some of the best wines in the world. James Suckling awarded the 2016 Roda 95 points in 2020, the 2015 Roda 1 received 95 points from Decanter and 94 points from Tim Atkin, James Suckling, Wine & Spirits and Wine Advocate, while the 2017 Cirsion received 97 points from Decanter and Tim Atkins, and 96 points from James Suckling. Their 2016 Roda 1 received 96 points in the Rioja 2021 Special Report.

We were very impressed the first time we visited the winery in 2003. Visits during the pandemic are available in English, French and Spanish at 10:00 am and 12:00 noon (90-minute duration), Monday-Saturday and are priced at 20€/person, with a maximum of 6 people. A two-hour private tour is available for 50€/person with a minimum of 2, maximum of 4, with a tasting of 4 premium wines, or 55€/person with a tasting of their excellent EVOO’s, L’Amo and Aubocassa. A tasting of their historic wines is 80€/person. Have a visit with lunch in the vineyard for 85€/person, or take a buggy ride through the vineyard for 50€/person, available from May to October, depending on the weather. You can email visitas@roda.es or call (+34) 669 776 564 or (+34) 941 312 187 to arrange a visit.
The wine bar in the shop is open Monday-Friday from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. Call (+34) 941 312 187 or email winebar@roda.es to reserve.

**Bodegas C.V.N.E.**

Located just south of the train tracks, C.V.N.E., *Compañía Vinícola del Norte de España*, was founded in 1879, and controls some 545 hectares of vineyards in the Rioja Alta and Rioja Alavesa, with most of the wines coming from the Rioja Alta. In 1940 it was a pioneer in the construction of the first concrete fermentation warehouse in Spain. You will often find works of art displayed at the winery such as Anthony Caro (2016), one of Britain's most important sculptors of the 20th-century, Spanish sculptor Cristina Iglesias (2015) and Basque sculptor Eduardo Chillida (2014).

The *Cune Crianza 2016* received 90 points from Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate, Wine Spectator and Wine Enthusiast in 2020, with the *2015 Cune Reserva* receiving 93 points from James Suckling, 92 points from Wine Enthusiast, 91 points from Tim Atkin and 90 points from Parker’s Wine Advocate and the Wine Spectator in 2020. The *2017 Imperial Reserva* was awarded 95 points, the *2015 Imperial Gran Reserva*, 96 points, the *2018 Real de Asua*, 95 points, *2018 Contino Vina del Olivo*, 95 points, *Cune Blanco Reserva* 93 points and the *Monopole Clásico Gran Reserva*, 94 points in the Tim Atkin Rioja 2021 Special Report.

Two-hour guided tours (30€/person) with a tasting of the Imperial Reserva and Gran Reserva wines during this time are available Friday-Sunday at noon, with other times possible. Visits to the vineyards will be available during the harvest. Lunch in the cellar is also possible. The wine bar is currently closed, but the shop is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 am...
You'll find this bodega in the same area of the lower town, just behind C.V.N.E., on the southern side of the railroad tracks at Calle La Estación, 3. It is a fascinating and immense 162-year old winery with 3,400 meters of underground cellars. Bodegas Bilbaínas produces the highly regarded *La Vicalanda* and *Viña Pomal* wines, the winery’s flagship brand. Their vineyards cover 250 hectares in the Rioja Alta, making it one of the largest in the region. Viña Pomal, who’s roots go back to 1859, when Savignon Frères & Cie fled France from the ravages of phylloxera, was the creation of Don Santiago de Ugarte from Bilbao, one of the founders of Bodegas Bilbaínas. He purchased the winery in 1901, producing the first Viña Pomal vintage in 1904. Bilbaínas was one of the last producers to adapt to modern times, no updating until it was taken over by Codorniu (1997), the Catalán bubbly makers, renewing the old facades and historical buildings, and building new production and aging facilities.

Open for tours Tuesday-Friday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, Saturdays from 11:00 am to 2:30 pm. The wine bar is open Tuesday-Friday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and on Saturdays until 2:30 pm. You can join the winter pruning (limited space) on Saturdays in January and February. Call (+34) 941 310 147, or email *reservas@bodegasbilbainas.com* to reserve a tour.

**Bodegas Muga**

Also located in the Barrio de las Bodegas below Haro, Muga, founded in 1932 by Isaac Muga and Aurora Caño, is another highly traditional winery that clings to age-old methods, producing spectacular wines, and like
Viña Tondonia, it too has its own cooperage for making its vats and casks. The combination of Mediterranean, Atlantic and Continental climates effect the vineyards, which are located on a plateau, at the highest altitude in La Rioja, a few kilometers west of Haro.

Wine Enthusiast awarded 96 points to the 2011 Prado Enea Gran Reserva and named it one of the 10 best red wines in October 2020. In September the 2019 Muga Rosado was named one of the 20 best wines for the summer by The Guardian, and received 95 points from La Vanguardia in March. Tim Atkin awarded 96 points to the Muga Selección Especial 2016, naming it “Wine of the Year” in the Special Rioja Report 2021.

Bodegas Muga offers a standard 60-90 minute tour with a tasting of two wines from Monday-Saturday for 15€/person, and a tour of the vineyards for 40€/person. There is no minimum group size for the tour, but the maximum is 16. A Segway tour (95€/person) is available from mid-March to mid-November, depending on the weather. Other tours and events are also possible. The reservation system is down, so you will have to call (+34) 941 306 060 for arrange a visit.

**Bodegas La Rioja Alta**

It was in 1890 that five Riojan and Basque families came together, creating ‘Sociedad Vinícola de La Rioja Alta’ to produce their first wine, the Reserva 1890. And it wasn’t until 1941 that they changed the name to La Rioja Alta, S.A., as it is today. Located across the street from López de Heredia at Avenida de Vizcaya, 8, this traditional winery, like Muga and López de Heredia, maintains its own cooperage, and have about 30,000 barrels of American oak. The barrels are racked every 6 months by candlelight to preserve the quality of the wine. For sustainability they have set aside 16
hectares of their 425 hectares of vineyards for 100% organic viticulture and have installed a solar farm at the wine cellar they built in 1996, a few minutes away in the village of Labastida (Alavesa). The group also owns three other wineries; Torre de Oña (Rioja Alavesa), Lagar de Cervera (Rias Baixas) and Áster (Ribera del Duero).

In 2019 Wine Spectator selected the Gran Reserva 890 as the 4th best wine in the world. Vina Alberdi 2012 was chosen as the best Spanish red wine of 2020 by Decanter, receiving 94 points from Sarah Jane Evans, and the Vina Alberdi Reserva 2015, 100% Tempranillo, was named one of the best red wines to drink in 2021 by Departures Magazine.

Guided tours and tasting of four wines are back, available Monday-Friday at 10:00 am in English and 11:30 am in Spanish, at a cost of 30€ for adults, 10€ for children (min. age 9), free for Club de Cosecheros members. The private dining rooms, for from 2 to 30 people, are open Monday-Friday with a 47€ menu. The wine bar and shop will be open for tasting by the glass Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, and Saturdays from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. Book your tour online or call (+34) 902 123 904 to arrange a tour and tasting.

**Bodegas Gómez Cruzado**

Situated between Bodegas Rioja Alta and Muga, this small and very pretty family-owned and run centenarian winery, founded in 1886 by the Duke of Moctezuma de Tultengo, is one our clients always enjoy and is one of our must stops when in the Rioja. A boutique winey with a team of young wine-makers, their vineyards are located in three different microclimates; the foothills of the Sierra de Cantabria at up to 750 meters altitude, the Bajo Najerilla at an average of 500 meters, and the Alto Najerilla near the
Sierra de la Demanda, with vines over 80 years old growing at an altitude of 750 meters above sea level, allowing for a strong fruit and marked acidity.

Their delicious 2017 Pancrudo, 100% Garnacha from the vineyard in Badarán (650 meters), was awarded 94 points by the Wine Advocate and 92 points by James Suckling for 2020, while Tim Atkin’s Rioja 2020 Special Report rated all eight of their wines over 90 points, then followed up in the Rioja 2021 Special Report by awarding 96 points to the 2018 Pancrudo and 2018 Cerro Las Cuevas. The 2016 Montes Obarenes received 93. Guía Peñín 2021 has rated the 2018 Pancrudo, 2016 Honorable and 2016 Montes Obarenes 93 points and the Cerro Las Cuevas 94 points.

The Wine Bar is now open daily from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. A Flight Tasting of 5 wines is 18€/person and is available daily at 11:00 am and 12:30 pm with a maximum of 6 people in a group. Special tours on weekends are possible, as is a 90-minute guided tour and tasting is 25€/person, or a private tasting of their exclusive wines in the upstairs tasting room for 50€/person. Book your tour online, call (+34) 941 312 502, or email Mikel Ruiz or Casilda at visitas@gomezcruzado.com to arrange a tour and tasting.
In the vineyards of Briñas

**Briñas**

This small picturesque village in the shadow of the Toloño Mountains, in the great horseshoe-shaped meander of the Ebro known as Dondón or Dondone-Tondón, is the first village you reach when driving through Conchas de Haro pass on the N-124. Considered one of the loveliest villages in the Rioja, this gateway to the Rioja has been continuously inhabited since the Iron Age. The area between Briñas and Haro, where the Roman colony of Deobriga was located was once only inhabited by noblemen and was a major Jewish center until their expulsion from Tondón, and Spain, in 1492.

Briñas offers some beautiful walks as it is on the River Ebro Nature Trail, GR-99, *Stage 12.1* and *Stage 13*, as well as on the Camino de Santiago.
Nearby, across the 13th-century Puente De Briñás, on the right bank of the Ebro River, you will find the 2500 year-old Celtic Sanctuary of Jarrero atop a tumulus, a small burial mound in the center of the vineyard.

On 15 May Briñás celebrates the festival of San Isidro Labrador. On August 15 it’s the fiesta of la Virgen de Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, followed on the 16th by the fiesta of San Roque. On September 16 they celebrate the patron saints of San Cornelio and San Cipriano.

**Briñás At Lunchtime**

If you’re going to be in Briñás for lunch, then Restaurante Tondón is the top option, recommended in the Repsol Guide, but is currently only open for lunch on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 to 3:00 pm. Mesón Chomin and Bodegón de Ayala are small family restaurants for casual dining. Or you can head to Haro for lunch at Alboroque de Haro in the Plaza de la Paz.

**Staying In Briñás**

Located just 4 kms from Haro, the village, Briñás is an excellent option for staying outside of Haro. The avant-garde 4-star Palacio Tondón, a 16th-century palace overlooking the Ebro River with it’s own gastronomic restaurant and wine bar, offers a perfect retreat after a long day of touring and wine tasting. The 18-century, 9-room Torre de Briñás, a private resort-B&B, surrounded by vineyards, and with an outdoors swimming pool, is another interesting option, especially for families and small groups. The 18th-century palace Hospedería Señorío de Briñás was one of the first rural hotels to open in the Rioja and offers an unforgettable experience. The 16th-century Casa de Legarda, with 5-rooms, is another option.
Briñas Wineries Of Interest

- Tobelos Bodegas Y Viñedos
- Bodegas Ramón de Ayala

Tobelos Bodegas Y Viñedos

The modern minimalist style winery was born during the last decade of the 20th-century. A creation of Ricardo Reinoso, it opened in 2002 and is located on a small hill surrounded by 3 hectares of vineyards, offering breathtaking views of the countryside. With the Ebro River on three sides, it sits in a unique microclimate a few minutes drive from Haro, and is the first bodega you encounter driving in from the north on the N-124. Their vineyard Los Quiñones was recently recognized as a singular vineyard. They control another 15 hectares belonging to their partners. The cellar holds 800 barrels of French oak, replaced every four years.

Four of the wines by winemaker Adriana Laucirica were awarded more than 90 points in the Tim Atkin Special Rioja Report 2021; Tobelos Rosado, 75% Viura and 25% Tempranillo (91 points), Los Quiñoes, 100% Viura, and Garnacha (93 points) and Leukade, 95% Tempranillo and 5% Graciano, 15 months in French oak (94 points).

One-hour visits to the winery are available during the week between 9:00 am and 3:00 pm, with a tasting of a red and white wine. Two-hour visits include a visit to the vineyards. A visit to the Medieval Perdigón Necropolis located in the Los Quiñones vineyard is available for 25€/person and includes a tasting of 3 wines. You can reserve online, email tobelos@tobelos.com, or call (+34) 941 305 630 to arrange a tour and tasting.
Bodegas Ramón de Ayala

The Ayala family has been in Briñas since 1853 since the great-grandfather Tomas acquired a large stone house with a courtyard, a barn and a winery, and was one of the first winemakers to obtain the Denomination of Origin Rioja. In 1970 they converted the stone house into a rustic restaurant, Restaurante Bodegón de Ayala. The original winey was then renovated and enlarged in 1985 and boasts an impressive underground cellar which holds 500 oak barrels and about 150,000 bottles of wine. The old bodega is now used for aging homemade Cava. Their 30 hectares of vineyards are located in Briñas, Haro, Ollauri and Rodezno in the Alta, and Labastida in the Alavesa. Today the winery is run by Gonzalo and his oenologist uncle Ramon.

Their 2015 Vina Santurnia Reserva, aged in American (80%) and French oak (20%) for 24 months, was awarded 90 points in 2020 by Tim Atkin. And in 2019, he awarded 90 points to the 2015 Ramon Ayala Lete E Hijos Deobriga Coleccion Privada, aged 14 months in American (70%) and French oak (30%).

Not generally open to the public, you can contact them online, call (+34) 635 729 591 / 941 310 575, or email bodegas@rayalaehijos.com for additional information or to arrange a tour and tasting.
Wine Tasting at Hacienda El Ternero

Wine Touring In Tirón Valley

West of Haro you will find several villages, some with castles and all with a long history of wine making; Anguciana, Ternero (Castile-León) Sajazarra, Fonzaleche, Cuzcurrita de Río Tirón and Tirgo. And if you head south from Haro, driving along the Río Oja, the Rioja’s namesake, you’ll come to the village of Castañares de Rioja, which dates from the time of the Romans.

The Río Tirón joins the Río Oja near Cihuri, before flowing into the Ebro River near Haro. The Río Oja Valley, one of the seven valleys of the Rioja, is where the vineyards are at the highest elevation in the Rioja Alta, with the Tirón being the westernmost valley, and where the grapes take longest to mature. As every vineyard in the Rioja is either in the Ebro
River Valley or in one of its seven tributaries, the result in biodiversity in the terroirs helps considerably to shape the flavor and style of the wines of this unique region.

For those up for a walk or bike ride, there is a 27 km long Río Oja Greenway that runs from Casalarreina to Ezcaray, which then connects to the GR 93 hiking trail from Ezcaray to the monastery of San Millán de la Cogolla, GR 93 - Etapa 1: Ezcaray - San Millán, 17,15 km.

Wineries Of Interest In The Oja and Tirón River Valley

- Bodega Akutain
- Bodegas Olabarri
- Hacienda El Ternero
- Bodegas Señorío de Líbano
- Bodega Alegre Valgañon
- Bodegas Puente Del Ea
- Bodega Castillo de Cuzcurrita
- Bodegas Urbina
- Pretium Bodega
- Bodegas Tobía
- Bodegas Bohedal
- Bodegas Tarón
- Finca La Emperatriz
- La Bodega del Tesoro

**Anguciana**

The attractive little village with a historic 14th-century castle, the Salcedo Tower or Torre Fuerte (strong tower), a Gothic fortification built near the 18-century Tirón bridge, and 16th-century Iglesia de San Martín church, straddles the banks of the Tirón River a few minutes west of Haro on the LR-202. The historic quarter has been restored. On April 29 they celebrate the martyr San Pedro de Verona.

**Bodega Akutain**

You’ll find this small family winery opened by Juan Peñagarikano Akutain, which has been making wines from their own 6.5 hectares of vineyards for 40 years, in what was once a long abandoned horse stable, on the
Camino “la Manzanera”, across Río Ea from Anguciana. Today his son Jon oversees the production of their artisanal wines that are produced old “château style”, in small quantities.

Their Akutain Crianza 2014, aged a total of 33 months, received 90 points in 2017 and a silver medal from Decanter in 2018.

You can contact them online, email info@bodegaakutain.com, or call (+34) 941 302 651 to arrange a tour and tasting of their excellent small-batch wines which compare to such Haro traditionalists as López de Heredia, CUVÉ, and La Rioja Alta.

**Bodegas Olabarri**

Located just outside Haro on the LR-202 in the direction of Anguciana, the winery was founded by Pablo Olabarri Bikandi in 1985 in an old bodega on Calle las Bodegas in Anguciana, he decided to open a much larger, modern facility on the road to Haro in 1989. The new winery holds 4,000 barrels and up to 800,000 bottles, while the original 19-century bodega only has a capacity of 600 barrels. The family owns or controls up to 115 hectares of vineyards in La Puebla, Cenicero (50-year old bush vines), El Campillar, Assa and Haro (40-year old bush vines). The winery is in the hands of his son, Luis Olabarri.

Guía Peñín awarded the 2018 Vina Olabarri Bikandi Crianza, 100% Tempranillo, with up to 5 years in French oak, 88 points in June 2020 and 88 points for the 2018 Vina Olabarri Blanco in June 2019. Both good values. Tim Atkin recently awarded 90 points in the Rioja Special Report 2021 to their Viña Olabarri Gran Reserva 2014, a blend of Tempranillo, Graciano and Mazuelo, aged 36 months in American and French oak and another 36 months resting in a bottle.
Guided tours are available Monday-Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm in English or Spanish. 90-minute private visits with a tasting of two wines and tapas for up to 10 people. Private tours with lunch are also available for a minimum of 8 people. You can contact Luis online, by calling (+34) 941 310 937 or by email at info@bodegasolabarri.com.

**Ternero**

Not a village, but a wine-estate located in a small section of Castile-León in the western limits of the Rioja that was once a Cistercian monastery.

**Hacienda El Ternero**

This unique winery-estate dating from the late 11th-century when it was part of the Cistercian monastery of *Santa María de Herrera*, lies along the route of Saint James, a short 20-minute drive west of the Barrio de la Estación in Haro. Although officially part of the Castile-León province, it’s location, a unique microclimate in the foothills of the Obarenes Mountains, places it on the western edge of the Rioja DOa. Tempranillo grapes for their *Picea 650*, hand picked from the 60 hectares of vineyards located at the highest elevation of the estate, 650 meters, one of the highest vineyards in the Rioja Alta, are fermented in new French Oak.

The 2017 *Hacienda El Ternero Crianza Selección*, 100% Tempranillo, aged 14 months in French oak, was awarded 90 points by Guía Peñín in June 2020, with Tim Atkin giving the 2015 vintage 90 points in January 2020, and 90 points to the *Torno Crianza* and the *Barrel Fermented Blanco* in the Special Rioja Report 2021.

We were delighted when we visited the estate as it is a unique setting in the Rioja. Tours and tastings, including a visit to the vineyards, are
available Saturdays and Sundays by appointment only. You can contact them online, by emailing info@elternero.com, or call (+34) 941 320 021 to arrange a tour of the estate and a tasting of their premium wines. The restaurant is available for a minimum group of 10.

**Sajazarra**

This tiny medieval farming hamlet, “Lake of Flowers” in Arabic, sitting on the banks of the Ea River, with its 14th-century castle, one of the best preserved in the Rioja, and narrow, cobblestone streets, is one of the most beautiful in the Rioja. Surrounded by vineyards, it was one of the five villages founded by the Brotherhood of Álava. The 12th-century Church of La Asunción sits next to the castle, while the restored 19th-century inn, **Posada de Sajazarra**, is located in the village square, behind a grand old oak door. The festival of San Marcos, the patron saint, is celebrated on April 25 and the festival of the Virgen de Cillas at the end of August.

If you find yourself in Sajazarra around lunch time, then you can try **Asador Ochavo** in the center of the village. It has two dining rooms, a terrace, and a 20€ Menú Riojano.

**Bodegas Señorío de Líbano**

You'll find the impressive 14th-century **Castillo de Sajazarra** in the small historic fortified village of Sajazarra (150 population), where the Aguanal and Ea Rivers meet. Obtained by the Líbano family, they restored the castle damaged in the battles between the medieval kingdoms. And while restoring the castle, acquired some vineyards on the slopes of the Obarenses Mountains at 700 meters, one of the highest points in the Rioja, producing their first wines in 1973. The aging cellar holds 2500
casks of American and French oak, while the winery is surrounded by 48 hectares of vineyards.

The 2014 Solar de Libano Reserva, 18 months in French and American oak, was awarded 87 points by Tim Atkins in 2019, and their kosher wine from Herenza, 100% Tempranillo from the vineyard "Los Majuelos", was awarded 90 points by Guía Peñín in June 2020 for the 2017 vintage.

The DIGMA experience in the medieval underground cellar is 55€/person with a minimum group of 4, maximum of 8, is available daily at 11:00 am. The premium tour and tasting of the Castillo de Sajazarra wine is 30€/person. A gourmet tour and tasting is 57€/person, minimum of 2, can be arranged Monday-Friday at 11:00 am, Saturdays at 11:30 am. A Ballon Ride Experience is also available, depending on the weather. You can email info@senoriodelibano.com, call (+34) 941 320 066, or request a reservation online.

**Bodega Alegre Valgañon**

Most of the 15 hectares of vineyards of Alegre-Valgañón family lie along the slopes of Los Montes Obarenes, the Obarenes Mountains, to the west of Haro, with most of the plots centered around Fonzaleche, a small village on the LR-302, just off the road from Miranda de Ebro. Both oenologist, Eva Valgañón and Oscar Alegre opened their own winery in 2010 after nine years of producing wines with Mikel Zeberio; winemaker, sommelier, food and wine writer, and other friends. Following the lead of their ancestors, they include stems during fermentation, allowing wines of greater purity and expressiveness. Producing their first vintage in the traditional method in 2014, they offered something unique in today’s Rioja.
Their 2012 Bahierra was awarded 95 points, the 2018 Valganon 92 points and the 2018 Valganon Blanco, 90% Viura and 10% Garnacha, from a plot in the tiny hamlet of Galbárruli at the base of the Obarenes Mountains, 92 points in the Tim Atkin Special Rioja Report 2020. The 2012 Bahierra also received 94 points from Wine Advocate.

Although generally not open to the public, you can call (+34) 609 886 652, or email info@alegrevalganon.es for additional information.

**Bodegas Puente Del Ea**

Located along the Ea river a few minutes south of Sajazarra on the Camino de Aguachal, 10 km from Haro, the French Château style winery was founded in 2001 and is surrounded by 4 hectares of Tempranillo vineyards. Directed by Rodrigo Madrid since 2006, along with winemaker Julien Viaud, they produce both a more classic and modern wines.

Guía Peñín rated the 2018 Puente del Ea Blanco Fermentado en Barrica 89 points in 2020.

The winery is open for visits Monday-Friday and Saturday mornings with a tour and tasting or tour and Riojan lunch by appointment only. You can call (+34) 941 320 405 or email administracion@puentedelea.com to check availability and cost.

**Fonzaleche**

This picturesque farming community of less than 180 inhabitants sits atop a knoll a few minutes to the west of Sajazarra on the LR-302, near where two Roman roads once crossed. It is the last village on western edge of La Rioja. The 11th-century parish church, Iglesia de San Martín, is one of the oldest in the area and where, on November 11, they celebrate San Martín.
The pilgrimage to the Virgin of Junquera hermitage is on the Saturday following the feast of the Ascension of the Lord. The village festival is the third weekend in September.

**Bodega San Martin de Ábalos**

Founded in the rolling foothills of the Obarenes mountains, one of the northernmost areas of La Rioja, in 1998 by the Gutiérrez Ábalos family, this small modern winery’s 10 hectares of vineyards, inherited from their grandparents, are harvested by hand in September and October when the nights are cold and the days mild. Aging takes place in 225 liter French and American oak for a minimum of one year and 6 months in a bottle. Reservas spend a total of 3 years aging in oak and the bottle before release.

Their 2018 *Viña Vereda del Río Tinto* and the 2015 *Crianza* both received silver medals in the International Wine Awards 2019.

The winery is open for visits by reservation, including organizing tailor-made events. Email info@bodegasanmartindeabalos.com, call (+34) 941 300 423 / 686 942 800, or contact them online to arrange a visit.

**Cuzcurrita de Río Tirón**

This was another important walled village during the Middle Ages when it belonged to the Kingdom of Navarra. Considered one of the most charming villages in the Rioja Alta, its picturesque streets are lined with glorious mansions from the period, including the unique 17th-century 12-room *Hotel Teatrisso*, an Rusticae property, that was used as an Inn in the 18th-century and then served as a cinema during the 1920s and 1930s.
In addition to its spectacular 14th-century castle, **Castillo de Cuzcurrita**, there is a medieval bridge crossing the Tirón River. It’s 18th-century Baroque church of San Miguel, a national monument since 1978, is an Italian-inspired beauty. The village celebrates its festival of San Miguel on 29 September. It’s also an area known for its fine reds with good levels of acidity.

If you’re hungry while in the area, you can check out **Bodega Guillermo**, in the village at Calle Campillo, 9, serving traditional Riojan cuisine. There is no menu - the owner chooses what you eat. Or try **Restaurante Aker**, a traditional asador in a rustic setting, a former bodega renovated in 2000. It’s located on a pedestrian street, Calle Asador Aker, which faces the river.

**Bodega Castillo de Cuzcurrita**

The winery is located inside the walled enclosure of this 14th-century castle in the village of Cuzcurrita de Río Tirón, about a 15-minute drive west of Haro. The fortress, erected by the Suárez Figeroa family between the 14th and 15th centuries, remained in the hands of the Velasco-Rojas family until the last century. Restored in 1999 by the new owner Bergé, its first production of its new **Castillo de Cuzcurrita** wines, by winemaker Ana Martín, was in 2000. The 7.5 hectares of Burgundy clos-like vineyard located within the castle walls are part of a total of 25 hectares owned or managed by the estate. A new winery was built next to the castle in 2005.

The Tim Atkin Special 2021 Rioja Report awarded 97 points to the **Tilo 2016**, 95 points to the **Cerrado del Castillo 2016**, 94 points to the **Blanca del Castillo 2018** and 92 points to the **Señorio de Cuzcurrita 2016**, making for a good start to the year.

info@iberiantraveler.com  Maribel’s Guides ©
Tours are available from Monday to Saturday in Spanish, English and French. 90-minute tours (15€/person) are available Monday-Saturday at 10:00, 12:30 pm and 5:00 pm, and on Sundays at 10:00 am and 12:30 pm during the summer, and daily at 10:00 am and 12:30 pm during the winter months. You can call (+34) 941 328 022 or email your request for a tour and tasting to enoturismo@castillogodecuzcurrita.com.

**Bodegas Urbina**
This is another family winery with more than 150 years of making wine from their own vineyards located in the village of Cuzcurrita de Río Tirón. They launched their first sparkling wine, *Valle del Ángel* in May of 2020 (11,500 bottles).

Tim Atkin has rated seven of their wines 90 points or more in the Rioja 2021 Special Report; 96 points for the *Urbina Gran Reserva 2004* and *Reserva Especial 2006*, 94 points for the *Urbina Reserva Especial 1998*, 92 points for the *Urbina Selección 2000* and *Urbina 2012*. The 2017 *Valle del Ángel Brut* received 90 points.

Visits to the winery are available daily from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm and include a tasting course, where between 8 and 10 Urbina wines are tested. Email urbina@fer.es or call (+34) 941 224 272 to request a visit.

**Pretium Bodega**
This ancient winery along the Río Tirón at the foot of Mount El Bolo was restored by Berta Valgañón García and her father Alfredo, and traces its history back at least four generations, marking more than 100 years of quality wine production from their vineyards in Villaseca and Fonzaleche.
The Pretium Garnacha 2018, harvested from the “La Hontanilla” vineyard, a five hectare plot planted by her great-grandparents in 1901, and limited to only 270 bottles, has received 90 points from Tim Atkins, while the Pretium Viñedos Centenarios 2017, from the “El Carasol” vineyard, and with a limited production of only 2000 bottles, received 92 points in 2020. Her signature wine, Berta Valgañón Tempranillo, has received 92 points in the Tim Atkin Special Rioja Report 2021.

Private tours with winemaker Berta Valgañón of the medieval cave-cellar and vineyards and a tasting of wines are available by calling (+34) 630 591 159, emailing info@pretiumbodega.com. Or you can request a visit online.

Bodegas Tobía

Coming from a family of Riojan winemakers from San Asensio, where the first winery was located, Oscar Tobía and Ana Castelló opened the new winery in 2010 just outside of the village of Cuzcurrita de Río Tirón.

The Guía Vinos Gourmets 2021 has awarded 96 points to the Oscar Tobía Blanco Reserva 2016 and 95 points to Tobía Selección de Autor 2017. In October Wine Spectator awarded 94 points to Tobía Selección de Autor Tinto 2017, 91 points to the Óscar Tobía Blanco Reserva 2016 and 90 points to Tobía Blanco Chardonnay-Tempranillo Blanco 2018.

One-hour long tours exploring the cellar with the wine maker are available for 15€/person, or try a tasting of four wines specially selected by the sommelier and paired with a selection of gourmet tapas for 35€/person. You can request a visit reservation online.
Bodegas Bohedal

This boutique family winery, which began in 1917 with "grandfather Pepe", is located 10 km from Haro, just to the north of the village of Cuzcurrita de Río Tirón. Now in its fourth generation, it is in the hands of the three Bohedal women; Fe Bezares, Blanca Baños and Leire Tejada.

In 2019 James Suckling awarded three of their wines above 90 points; *Gran Bohedal Crianza 2016* (92 points), *Hebabe Garnacha 2017* and *Gran Bohedal Blanco 2018* (90 points each).

The two-hour tour with a tasting of three wines and three gourmet pinchos is priced at 25€/person. A two-hour visit to the vineyards where you can enjoy a picnic lunch and tasting of two wines, is 30€/person. Other tours and tastings are available. Email them at info@bohedal.com or call (+34) 941 328 064 to arrange a tour and tasting.

La Bodega del Tesoro

If you want to try some limited-edition wines, this restored winery, an old abandoned cellar from 1881 located at Calle Cuevas, 45, in the historic Bodegas Quarter, is a family wine tourism project by Yosune and José Ramón. They offer a 90-minute tour of the wine cellar with a tasting of 2 wines, 2 oils and *picoteo* (aperitivo) is 30€/person. The 2-1/2 hour tour with lunch or dinner is 60€/person. The wine bar is also available July-September from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm. Call (+34) 607 214 989, email labodegadeltesoro@gmail.com, or book your experience online.

Tirgo

This is another small farming community of around 300 habitants sitting along the banks of the Rio Tirón, with a Romanesque treasure, the 12th-
century parish church Iglesia de El Salvador. You’ll also find a few mansions from the 17th and 18th centuries when you take a walk through the village. On August 6 they celebrate the festival of El Salvador, when ancient Autrigones dances (Celtic) are performed. Autrigones were one of the pre-Roman tribes that settled in the area.

If you would like to stay in this small hamlet, then we can recommend Solar de Febrer, a 18th-century restored mansion with built of local stone sitting at the river’s edge that was turned into a small country inn with 10 rooms by noted Riojan architect/wine maker, Javier Arizcuren. The best rooms, especially room 204 in the tower, face a small park. The owners also have a traditional grill restaurant, Asador Bodega Casa Pimiento.

Or, if you happen to be in the area around lunch time, there is another popular asador with a terrace, Bar del Río, located on your left just before crossing the bridge, on the street of the bodegas.

**Bodegas Tarón**

Located across the bridge west of Tirgo on the road from Miranda de Ebro, the LR-209, is where you will find one of the northernmost wineries in the DOCa Rioja. The cooperative, growers from the four surrounding villages; Cuzcurrita de Rio Tirón, Sajazarra, Villaseca and Tirgo, has more than 700 hectares of high altitude vineyards spread out over more than 1000 small plots, averaging more than 50 years of age.

The cooperative’s Pantocrátor 2005, from bush trained vines more than 70 years old, received the Gold Medal for the best Riojan Reserve Wine in the International Wine Challenge 2019. Their Cepas Centenarias 2015 received 90 points, with the Tarón Blanco Fermentado en Barrica 2019 being awarded 91 points in the Rioja Special Report 2021 by Tim Atkin.
Visits are available Tuesday-Saturday at 12 noon at the winery for 10€/person with a tasting of 3 wines, or take a tour of the vineyards. You can also take a guided tour of the Romanesque village churches followed by a tasting of 3 wines and tapas for lunch for 30€/person at 11:00 am. The wine bar is open from 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm, Tuesday-Saturday. Call (+34) 941 301 650 / 672 268 354, or email enoturismo@bodegastaron.com to arrange your tour and tasting.

Castañares de Rioja
Sitting on the east bank of the Oja River a few minutes from Casalarreina, on the road to Santo Domingo de la Calzada, the village dates from the time of the Romans, early in the 1st-century AD. Here you will find the remains of the Via Romana Aureliana, the Roman road which crossed the plain of Valpierre and the Oja River. If you take a walk along Calle Mayor you’ll come across old mansions made of ashlar stone with coffered shields, and the 17th-century Church of the Nativity. The Fiestas de Castañares de Rioja are held the first Sunday in May and the 7-day festival in early September, the villages main festival, with giants, chupinazo (rockets), dancers in traditional costumes and music.

For lunch in the area you might try Restaurante Lumbre, formally known as the “Cueva de Doña Isabela”, in nearby Casalarreina. Chef Sergio Hernando Diez offers a 48€ and 80€ menu.

Finca La Emperatriz
The wine-estate has a total of 101 hectares of vineyards with just over 30 hectares of 'Singular Vineyard', making it the largest in the Rioja under the new designation. The 30 hectares were first planted by Eugenia de Montijo, wife of Napoleon III, the original owner of the estate and for
whom the estate was named. The Hernáiz family of Cenicero purchased the estate in 1996, which now run by the brothers Eduardo and Víctor Hernáiz.

Their top wine, *Finca la Emperatriz Gran Vino Blanco 2017*, was awarded 95 points, with the *Gran Vino Tinto 2017* receiving 94 points by Tim Atkin in the Rioja Special Report 2021. Guía Peñín awarded the *Gran Vino Tinto 2017* 97 points in 2020.

A guided tour and tasting of 4 wines is available at 11:00 am for 15€/person. Or do a tasting with tapas at 1:00 pm. The tasting with brunch is available Friday-Sunday for 55€. The wine bar and shop are also open. You can reserve your visit online, call (+34) 941 300 705 / 620 207 971, or email visitas@hermanoshernaiz.com for more information.

The winery also has three air-conditioned villas on the property, Villas *Finca La Emperatriz*, you can use for your get-away in La Rioja.
Ollauri

If you’re leaving Haro heading in the direction of Logroño, turn south at the intersection of the N-124 and N-232, taking the LR-207 turnoff, following it into this quiet farming village with a population of around 300 and a long history of wine making along the Zamacas river. The ancient cellars in the village’s ‘barrio de bodegas’ date back twenty generations, spanning 500 years of wine culture. You’ll also find a few stately mansions and palaces from the 16th and 17th centuries, like the 17th-century Palacio de los Marqueses de Terán, with two heraldic coats of arms in the Plaza de la Paz. The 16th-century Renaissance Palace of the Counts of Rodezno overlooks the Bodegas Paternina and the Berberana, and is now a full-house rental for small groups.
The village normally has a small harvest festival, a one-day *Mercado de la Vendimia*, the last Sunday in September and celebrates Santa Eulalia on 10 December with mass on the 11th. The 7-day *Semana del Vino en Ollauri*, Ollauri Wine Week, sponsored by the *Asociación de Amigos de Ollauri* has not yet been scheduled for 2021.

There is a small restaurant in the village, *La Taberna de Ollauri*, Calle Huertas, 2, a couple of minutes walk from Conde de los Andes, or for more options, you can check out Briones, Casalarreina, Rodezno, San Vicente de la Sonsierra or Haro.

**Ollauri Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodegas Valenciso
- Marqués de Terán
- Bodegas Beroña
- Conde de los Andes
- Bodegas Martínez Palacios
- Bodegas Concejo de Ollauri

**Bodegas Valenciso**

This excellent award winning winery, a member of the *Asociación de Bodegas Por La Calidad* and now a *Grandes Pagos de España*, can be found on your right at km 4 on the road to Nájera, the LR-313, which takes you through the village of Ollauri. Launched in 1998 by local winemakers, Luis Valentín and Carmen Enciso, they produce a high quality Reserva, 100% Tempranillo, from old vineyards with low yields, aged for 17 months in new French oak, and simply labeled *Valenciso*. Their 27 hectares of vineyards, harvest by hand, are located in Ollauri, plus Briones, Haro, Rodezno, Gimileo, Zarratón and Villalba, at between 480 and 610 meters above sea level, allowing for the acidity and finesse of the northern Tempranillo.
Their *Valenciso White*, made from Viura and white Garnacha grapes, is fermented for 9 months in oak barrels from the Caucasus. There is also a limited red, bottled ten years after its harvest, *10 Años Después*, and a Rosé produced from 100% Tempranillo. Three of their premium wines have been awarded more than 90 points in Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate 2020 report; *2014 Valenciso Reserva* (93 points), *2018 Valenciso Blanco* (94 points) and the *10 Años Después 2010* (95 points).

Two tour and tastings are offered; the Discover Valenciso Group visit for 20€/person and a private Great Valenciso visit for 50€/person, in Spanish, English or French. Tours are available Monday-Friday at noon and Saturdays at 11:30 am. You can email valenciso@valencisco.com, or call Luis, Carmen or Ana Ruiz at (+34) 941 304 724 to arrange a private tour and tasting. This is another one of our favorites and one our clients really enjoy.

The wine bar on the terrace will be open in the summer from 12 noon to 3:00 pm and from 5:00 to 10:00 pm so you can enjoy a glass of wine facing the vineyard.

**Marqués de Terán**

Located across the road to Nájera, the winery, inaugurated in 2006 by the great grandsons of the founders of the acclaimed Bodegas AGE in Fuenmayor, has been a spectacular addition to the architectural scene in the Rioja Alta. A unique creation of Riojan architect Javier Arizcuren, it allows the building to be almost entirely camouflaged by the landscape, with 80% of the winery buried in the hillside, and like Bodegas Baigorri, utilizes the principle of gravity for the reception and transport of the
grapes. It was formally known as Bodegas Regalia de Ollauri. Very striking, especially at night.

The winery integrates tradition with an innovative wine making process, one of the most advanced in the world - “criomaceration”- a cold maceration process, or the use of dry ice to add carbon dioxide. Their 2015 Reserva, 100% Tempranillo 100%, with 15 months in American oak and 3 months in French oak, received 93 points, the hard to find 2017 Versum, 92 points and the 2017 Selección Especial and 2015 Limited Edition Reserva, 91 points, in the Tim Atkin Special Rioja Report 2021.

Open for tours Monday-Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, the 1-hour visit, with one tasting, is 10€, or 15€ for a 2-hour tour with a tasting, accompanied by a Riojan almuerzo, or snack of sausages and cheese. You can also book a visit followed by lunch, with a minimum group of 10. Book your visit online, or call (+34) 941 338 373.

**Bodegas Beroña**

The classic Riojan wine estate, surrounded by 25 hectares of its own vineyards, was founded in 1973 by a group of friends from a gastronomic society in San Sebastián-Donostia, Beroña Txoko, who had a passion for fine food and high quality wine. The Reserva and Gran Reserva wines have been listed in the Wine Spectator Top 100 for a number of years, and they are now part of the González Byass group of wineries. The cellar contains nearly 30,000 barrels of aging wine, which are racked every four months, and soothed by Gregorian chants recorded at a local monastery. The cellar also holds historic Gran Reservas vintages from ’75, ’78, ’81, ’82, ’85, ’98, ’01 and 2004, just waiting for the right time to awaken.
Twelve of their wines were awarded 90 points or more in the Tim Atkin Special Rioja Report 2020. Mundus Vini, Germany's most prestigious wine competition, recently named Beronia Reserva “Best of Show Rioja Reserva” in 2021, awarding a gold medal to five of their wines. This, right after the Tim Atkin Rioja Report 2021 awarded 92 points to the Mazuelo Reserva 2016, 91 points to the Crianza Limited Edition 2016 and 90 points to their Crianza 2017, Tempranillo Elaboración Especial 2019 and Graciano 2017.

There is a typical 60-minute visit for 10€/person, a 90-minute visit to the vineyard with a tasting of three wines for 20€, a 90-minute premium tour with a tasting of three of their premium wines with a traditional Riojan appetizer for 30€. There is also a two-hour wine tasting course with the tasting of five different wines for 25€. A special VIP tour is available upon request. You can reserve online, call (+34) 941 338 000, or email them at consultas@beronia.es.

**Bodegas Ollauri-Conde de los Andes**

Founded in 1896 as Bodegas Paternina, which along with López de Heredia and Muga, remains one of the most traditional wineries in the region, while at the same time keeping up with the times through constant renovation of its facilities, and winning a prestigious award in 2005 for the restoration of its ancient aging cellars, the oldest of which dates from the 16th-century. The original cellars,"Calados", were carved by hand out of the sheer rock to a depth of 18 and 40 meters and extend over one kilometer in length, holding more than 450,000 bottles, of which 40,000 are vintages earlier than 1970. Owned by Muriel Wines (Elciego) since 2014, the treasure of these cellars is the special corner
where you can find historic vintages from 1892, with whites dating from as far back as 1918. All are in perfect condition!

Their “Viñas de Briñas” vineyards, 22 hectares divided into more than 50 small plots, are in the wildest area, one of the northernmost vineyards, surrounded by the rocky cliffs of Peña Las Heces, is one of the most secluded in the Rioja.

This has been a Mecca for wine lovers and over the years has received visits from such notables as Hemingway and the legendary matador Antonio Ordóñez. Wine Enthusiast rated the 2015 Conde de los Andes 92 points in September 2019, with Guía Peñín awarded in 90 points. Sam Kim of Wine Orbit (New Zealand), awarded it 95 points and 5 stars for its outstanding quality.

Two-hour tours with a wine tasting in the cellars and a tasting of two additional wines at the Vinoteca are by appointment only. Call (+34) 941 338 380, email them at enoturismo@paternina.com, or request a tour online.

**Bodegas Martínez Palacios**

Located at the northern end of the village at Calle Real, 48, is a small winery founded by two brothers in 1999, Miguel and Julio, with the concept of producing one of the finest wines in the Rioja. The family first started making wine when their great-grandfather Miguel Martínez Berberana founded Bodegas Berberana, one of the oldest wineries in La Rioja. The cellar holds 500 oak casks, mainly American and French oak, which are replaced every 6 years.
Their 2010 Bodegas Martinez Palacios Reserva was awarded 90 points by Guía Peñín in June 2018, with the 2015 Palacios Crianza receiving 89 points in June 2019. They have recently opened an olive mill where they produce their own EVOO, Almazara El Alberque.

The winery is available for visits Monday-Friday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and in the afternoons from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. Open Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. You can request a visit online, by emailing bodega@bodegasmartinezpalacios.com, or call (+34) 941 338 023.

**Bodegas Concejo de Ollauri**

The Ruiz Castillo family winery, with 4 hectares of vineyards and more than 150 years of history, can be found at Calle San Juan, 10, at the southern end of the village. The family built a new winery of stone atop the ruins of the original cellar dating from the 19th-century in 2004. The 12 meter deep cellar contains 90 barrels of French and American oak, with the wine being racked every 6 months.

Their classic Reserva Achalde, 85% Tempranillo, and the Honderas Crianza, spends 24 months in a barrel, with another 12 months in the bottle before release.

If you are a professional and would like to arrange a visit, you can contact them online, by email at bco@bodegasconcejodeollauri.com, or call (+34) 976 455 115.
Gimileo

You’ll be passing this small hamlet of 120 inhabitants with its 16th-century parish church, *Iglesia de San Martín*, when you take the N-232 from Haro to Briones. The main entrance to the village, if arriving from Briones, is just before the turnoff to Ollauri. Originally settled in the 11th-century, it was part of the province of Burgos until the early 19th-century. On the closest weekend to 11 November the villagers celebrate the festival of San Martín as they have done since 1630, with a bonfire on Saturday.

The village is on the *Caminos naturales del Ebro*, Ebro Nature Trail, stage 13.1, which will take you from Haro to San Vicente de la Sonsierra across the medieval bridge. The 14.3 km walk should take around 2-1/2 hours.
Gimileo Wineries Of Interest

- Bodegas Santalba
- Casa Pagola

**Bodegas Santalba**
The winery was founded in 1998 by Santiago Ijalba after spending 33 years in the wine industry. The family, Roberto and Laura Ijalba Pérez, continue the tradition of ecological grape growing on their 20 hectares of vineyards, all of which are certified organic. Their OGGA wine, one of eight labels, is from grapes grown in Gimileo and Haro, is made only in years classified as excellent, spending 17 months new French oak, plus 3 months in American oak.

Tim Atkin awarded the *Santalba Cotas Altas*, 60% Garnacha & 40% Tempranillo, *Santalba Nabot* single vineyard, 92 points, and *Santalba Amaro* 91 points, in the Special Rioja Report 2021. The *Santalba Crianza 2017* was recently reviewed by Iñigo Galatas and the sommelier Mariano Rodríguez from the Arzak in *Más Gastronomía* in El Diario Vasco.

This beautiful wine-estate is open daily for visits by reservations only. Call (+34) 941 304 231 or email santalba@santalba.com to arrange a tour and tasting.

**Casa Pagola**
The name of this small winery comes from the name of the families grocery store in the Basque city of Eibar in Gipuzkoa (País Vasco) that opened in 1935, closing in 1980. Nearly thirty-three years after its closing, in 2013, the great-grandchildren of Carlos Pagola and Jesusa Gonzalez de Mendivil resurrected the name, thus began Bodegas Pagola. Today,
winemaker Carlos Pagola, the great grandson, and his wife Susana, oversee this unique Artisan “micro-winery" in this small village near the bend in the Ebro river, a few minutes walk from the Mirador de Ebro.

If you want to spend the day in the vineyards enjoying their signature wines, you can request a visit online, email tienda@bodegaspagola.com, or call (+34) 659 256 661 (Carlos) / 616 959 887 (Susana).
Briones

After visits to the Barrio de la Estación (Haro) and Ollauri, my next suggested stop on the wine trail comes a few minutes down the N-124 / N-232 highway pass the Ollauri turnoff. The walled hilltop medieval village of Briones, along with the neighboring San Vicente de la Sonsierra, are the two of the more interesting of the four villages belonging to the sub zone known as La Sonsierra Riojana, composed of Abalos, Briñas, San Vicente and Briones. A sleepy village most of the year, Briones’s most important monument, facing the Plaza de España, is its imposing parish church, the 16th-century Renaissance Iglesia de Santa María de la Asunción, whose sacristy houses a beautiful sculpture of the Assumption of the Virgin. A new sightseeing addition to the village has been opened in the Palacio del Marqués de San Nicolás, also in Plaza de España; La Casa
Encantada, an ethnographic museum, and an extension of the Museo de la Rioja en Logroño. It consists of a reconstruction of a typical Riojan dwelling from the 18th-century spread over three floors. Visitors can view the vestibule, go down to the subterranean wine cellar, to the stables, then up to the top three floors to visit the dining room, living room, kitchen, pantry, bedrooms and sewing room, all decorated with original period furnishings. Visits are free.

Adjacent to the main town square is an attractive wine and accessories store, Date un Capricho, which sells Rioja wines and local cuisine including cheese, honey, chocolates, pates, and olive oils. And if you happen to be in Briones in the middle of June you may find yourself in the middle of their Medieval Days Celebration, when many of its inhabitants dress in medieval costumes, carry out mock Inquisitions, have a jousting tournament, and dance, and share the local cuisine and wines. This year the festival was suspended because of COVID-19.

If you will be in the village at lunchtime, your options are the Los Calaos de Briones, located in a 17th-century stone calao (wine cellar) in the upper village, which our clients have enjoyed. They also have a small, 8-room hotel that very comfortable. Los 4 Arcos is a traditional Riojan family restaurant located at Calle Cerca de las Cuarenta, 2, close to the new upscale Hotel Santa María Briones, which should be opening this year after a two-year long renovation of the original 16th-century military mansion. You can also have lunch at Dinastía Vivanco after your tour and tasting.
Briones Wineries Of Interest

- Bodega Miguel Merino
- Bodegas Betolaza
- Dinastía Vivanco
- Finca Allende

**Bodega Miguel Merino**

We are always delighted when we visit this small, outstanding, father-son winery located below the hill town of Briones. Miguel speaks very good English as he spent his high school years in North Carolina (his son studied in New England) and will be sure to take you aside to give you a translation of his explanations. He loves to talk to visiting Americans. This has been one of our favorite wineries to take guests for years as the visit is so personal.

Four of Miguel’s wines were recently named among the top wines of the year for 2021 by Tim Atkin, awarding the 2018 Miguel Merino La Loma 98 points, the 2018 La Quinta Cruz 96 points, the 2017 La Quinta Cruz and 2018 Blanco 95 points each. Being named a winemaking legend isn’t a bad way to start the year.

This is a small family operation, so you must arrange your visit in advance. The best way to reserve is to email visitas@miguelmerino.com, or call Erika at (+34) 689 384 566.

**Bodegas Betolaza**

Located below the upper village at Calle Cuesta Dulce, 12, the family has been making wine for three generations from the 8 hectares of vineyards located around the village and it was only in 2006 that they introduced their first Betolaza Crianza, "following grandfather's recipe", to the market, the same year they opened the modern winery.
The *Calitrancos 2015*, 100% Tempranillo, received 92 points from Guía Peñín in 2019, while the Wine Advocate has awarded 90 points to the *2016 Reserva* for 2020.

1.5 hour guided visits are 10€/person, with a tasting of 3 wines and an *aperitivo*. The two-hour long visits to the vineyards are 20€/person. Call (+34) 650 862 104 / 663 473 444 for more information, or reserve one of their experiences online. Or email Francisco betolaza@betolaza.es to arrange your visit. Please note that parking is limited near the winery.

**Dinastía Vivanco**

One of Europe’s finest and largest wine museums in the world, the *Museo Vivanco de la Cultura del Vino*, is just off the N-232 and is a must-see destination of any visit to the Rioja. Opened in April 2004 by King Juan Carlos, it is this most impressive and very engaging museum of wine culture, with more than 6000 pieces on display. There are fascinating interactive exhibits explaining the role of wine in religion, how wine spread from its origins in the Caucasus, the fermentation process, how wine was transported, how wine barrels and corks are made and a chance to sample various wine aromas. In the botanical garden devoted to wine you’ll find 200 different grape varieties from all over the world.

For the second year in a row, Vivanco was been named one of the *Top 50 of World's Best Vineyards* in 2020, one of only 4 Spanish wineries.

Guided visits to the museum and winery are available from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. The restaurant is also open during normal visiting hours. Closed Monday and Tuesday. Reserve your visit online or call (+34) 941 322 323 / 941 322 323.
Finca Allende

Miguel Ángel de Gregorio, who coined the term ‘Rioja, la tierra de los mil vinos,’ ‘Rioja, land of a thousand wines’, was only 25 when he was placed in charge of a bodega in Logroño. An entrepreneur, oenologists and viticulturist, he broke away from the classical standards, and was one of the first Spanish winemakers to export wines abroad. He opened his Allende space in the Ibarra Palace, a 17th-century mansion, in 1995. The estate now boasts 74 hectares of vineyards in the countryside surrounding Briones, with 14 hectares only cultivated by mules.


You can contact Miguel Ángel at info@finca-allende.com, or call (+34) 941 322 301 to request a visit with a tour and tasting.
Castillo de Davalillo

Before leaving the Briones area you might want to take a detour to visit the 13th-century Castillo de Davalillo sitting atop a hill in a bend in the Ebro River in the middle of the vineyards. The castle offers expansive views of the fortress towns of Briones and San Vicente de la Sonsierra. Follow the N-232 for a few minutes in the direction of Logroño, to a turnoff across from the winery/restaurant Bodegas San Chicón that leads north through the vineyards to the remains of the former 12th-century village of Davalillo. If you are up for a short walk from Briones, there is a 4.63 km route that leads you from the Ermita del Santo Cristo in Briones through the vineyards and across the Valpierre stream to the castle. The walk should take about 1-1/2 hours.
San Asensio

You’ll find this village of 1200 inhabitants and 19 bodegas a few minutes drive from Briones on the N-232 in the direction of Logroño. Follow the road south at the turnoff to Monasterio Estrella. Lying between the Ebro and Najerilla river basins, the earliest records of the village, known as the "the cradle of claret”, dates from 1056. The village’s historic quarter, where you will find several manor houses with their coats of arms, is one of the best preserved in La Rioja. On a hill in the upper village called “Cerrillo Verballe”, you will find some 350 caves excavated by hand by the village farmers to store their wines.

The Monasterio Estrella, whose origins can be traced back to the ancient hermitage of King Sancho García of Pamplona in 1060, is worth a stop. In
the center of the village, the *iglesia de La Ascensión del Señor*, was built in two sections beginning in 1520. The interior is decorated with paintings and sculptures from the 17th and 18th centuries. There are six beautiful stained glass windows that decorate the church and show the story of the village. They were replaced in 2010 by the village’s largest Brotherhood.

The village celebrates the festivals of San Esteban and Virgen de Davalillo the first Saturday of September, and like the more famous wine battle in Haro, the Clarete Wine Battle of San Asensio takes place over three days in late July. The *Fiesta del Pisado de la Uva*, the stomping of the grapes, happens in late October (the date varies depending on the harvest) at the *Bodegas Lecea*, who’s cellars date from the 16th-century.

If you are in need of lunch, you’ll find the traditional **Restaurante La Bodega** along the N-232 just before the turnoff to the LR-208, which will take you into the village. The family also owns **Bodegas Santo Sodupe**, located in the village.

**San Asensio Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodegas Lecea
- Bodega El Arca de Noé
- Bodega Señorío de La Estrella
- Bodegas Perica
- Señorío de Villarica
- Bodegas Alfonso García Hernando
- Bodega Fran Corres
- Bodega San Cebrin
- Bodegas Gonzalez-Puras
- Bodegas Ruiz Gómez

**Bodegas Lecea**

Although the family had been producing wines for more than four generations, it wasn’t until the 1980s that they began to bottle their wine under their own label. The winery is located in the historic neighborhood
of Barrio de Las Cuevas, in the Cerrillo Verballe de San Asensio, where there is a network of underground caves that date back more than 500 years.

Tim Atkin awarded their 2000 Lecea Gran Reserva 93 points, the 2017 Cuevas de Lecea 92 points and the 2014 Lecea Reserva 91 points in the Rioja Special Report 2021. And this year they are releasing a new wine, Cuevas de Lecea 2017, with a limited edition of only 2700 bottles.

The standard 1-1/2 hour long wine tour is available Monday-Friday at 10:30 am for 25€/person, while the 3 hour tour, which includes a tour of the caves, is priced at 50€/person. There is also the possibility of taking a horse carriage ride through the vineyards. Reserve your tour online or by calling (+34) 685 010 400. And of course, you can join in on the grape stomping, a full weekend event that has been going on since 2011.

Bodega El Arca de Noé
Noah's Ark, the oldest cooperative winery in La Rioja (1953), today has 274 partners spanning four generations of wine growers producing hand cultivated wines from their combined 780 hectares of vineyards in the Rioja Alta. The original winery, La Bodega Carcedo, is located in the village in the historic Barrio de las Cuevas neighborhood.

Their 2018 Bodega Arca de Noe Tinto, a simple table wine of 100% Tempranillo, was rated 85 points by Tim Atkin in Jan. 2020.

A guided visit to the winery, finishing with a tasting of wine at the Wine Bar, takes about one hour and can be reserved online, by emailing info@bodegaelarcadenoe.com, or by calling (+34) 941 457 231.
**Bodega Señorío de La Estrella**

A group of San Asensio wine growers banded together in 1987 to open their own bodega, which sits next to the monastery of La Estrella just off the N-232, surrounded by vineyards, and facing the Castillo de Davalillo, in the cradle of claret. Currently there are 160 partners with vineyards in San Asensio, Briones, Hormilleja, Hormilla and Nájera.

The *Domino de la Salle Reserva*, selected from among the best grapes of the harvest, is aged for 36 months in American oak in a cellar that holds more than 500 barrels. The limited production *Aricheta* is aged in a combination of American and French oak.

Tours of the vineyards, winery and tastings are available Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm and in the afternoon from 3:30 to 7:00 pm, and on weekends at 10:00 am and 1:30 pm. You can call (+34) 941 457 133, contact them online or email bodegas@senoriodelaestrella.es to arrange your visit.

**Bodegas Perica**

A family winery with 140 hectares, it was established in 1912 by Don Juan García and named *Perica*, the nickname of his son Don David, and is now in the hands of the third generation. Their main vineyard, *Olagosa*, is in San Asensio. The fermentation vats are traditional concrete and the main cellar, *Gallery Olagosa*, holds 30,000 bottles, while *Gallery Zaco*, guarded by the goddess of wine, Eno, holds the oldest wines. There is a variety of fine wines to choose from including their *Barón de Bermont*, a brut Cava that spends a minimum of 12 months in new French Allier oak.

Their *Perica Oro 2010* received 90 points in the Guía Peñín 2019 edition, and 92 Points from James Suckling, as did the *Perica Reserva 2010*. Tim
Atkins has awarded 5 of their wines more than 90 points in the Special Rioja Report 2021, with the Perica Oro Reserva Especial 2011 receiving 93 points.

Guided visits are available including a tasting with winemaker Rafael García and a visit to the vineyards with the possibility of lunch in the vineyard. Call (+34) 941 457 152, or email visitas@bodegasperica.com to request a tour and tasting.

Señorío de Villarica
This is another family with a long history of making wine for their own consumption and selling in the surrounding villages, dating as far back as 1860. Their original bodega, founded in 1940, is located in San Asensio at Camino Santo Domingo, 27, and still produces the young wines, while the Crianzas, Reservas and special wines are all produced in the beautiful modern winery and family estate located in the tiny hamlet of Hervías, south of Haro off the N-120 toward Nájera.

The special wines, crianzas and reservas are picked by hand from the Finca La Plata vineyard, which covers 40 hectares. The rest of their 110 hectares of vineyards are located in San Asensio, Briones, Haro, Anguciana, Sajazarra and Bañares. Wine & Spirits magazine awarded 91 points to the 2017 Señorío de Villarrica Crianza, 100% Tempranillo, and Wine Enthusiast awarded 93 points to the Señorío de Villarrica Reserva Selección Especial for 2021.

The winery is open for tours and tastings Monday-Friday at noon and 5:00 pm, and on Saturday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm by appointment only. Call (+34) 941 457 172, or email the bodega bodega@billarrica.es to arrange a visit.
**Bodegas Alfonso García Hernando**

This traditional style winery at Calle Víctor Cardenal, 64, in the historic Barrio de las Bodegas de San Asensio neighborhood was a dream of viticulturist Alfonso García, who follows in the footsteps of his father and grandfather. All of their wines are produced from vineyards in the shadow of Castillo de Davalillo, and aged in the 200 French and American oak barrels. Like others in the village, they produce a traditional clarete, their *Cortecillas "Cuna del Claretete"* is made from 50% Viura 50% and 50% Garnacha.

Visits to the winery are available Monday-Sunday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and Monday-Saturday afternoons from 4:00 to 8:00 pm. You can call (+34) 607 990 895 / 941 457 257, or email info@bodegasalfonsogarciahernando.es to request a visit. Or contact them online for more information.

**Bodega Fran Corres**

This family winey began in 1940 when Santiago Corres and his wife Petra Orive, who already owned some small vineyards in the area and grew cereals, acquired a small winery in order to produce their own wines. In 1991, the family purchased another bodegas dating from 1881 at Calle Pecho de las Cuevas, 24, and set about to renovate it. Today the winery is in the hands of Francisco Corres García, the third generation, who currently produces four wines, one white and three reds, from the families 40 hectares of vineyards. In 2013 Francisco began to age the wines in barrels and *bocoyes*, large oak vats.

The *Tinto Fran Corres Finca Réndime*, 100% Tempranillo, ferments for 11 months in new bocoyes, for a total of 15 months aging before bottling. It,
and his signature *Crianza Fran Corres 2016*, both won Silver Medals in the 2019 International Wine Challenge.

If you’d like to visit the winery for a tour and tasting, you can email info@bodegafancorres.com, contact them online, or call Francisco at (+34) 941 457 226 / 639 754 952.

**Bodega San Cebrin**

It was back in 1998 that a group of local wine-growers came together with the aim of producing the highest quality wines, thus the co-operative began and now has vineyards, with 85 members, covers about 500 acres spread out over the areas of San Asensio, Hormilleja and Briones.

In 2020, Tim Atkin called their *De Boca en Boca* the "Best Value Rosé of the Year".

Visits to the winery can be arranged Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm and in the afternoon from 3:00 to 6:30 pm. Open Saturday and Sunday from 9:30 am to 2:30 pm. Email info@sancebrin.com or call (+34) 941 457 640 / 672 708 808 to arrange a visit.

**Bodegas Gonzalez-Puras**

The original bodega was opened by Julian Puras Lopez in 1950 when he began making wines to sell to neighbors in the surrounding villages. In the 90s his son-in-law Esteban Gonzalez Diaz-Maroto joined the business and they decided to build a new winery on the ruins of a 16th-century winery, where the stone caves were dug by hand, in the *Barrio de las Cuevas de San Asensio*, at Calle Las Cuevas, 238. The winery is now run by Esteban and his wife Elena Puras, making an array of young wines; white, red and claret, as well as aged crianzas and reservas.
You can visit the winery, the ancient cellar and enjoy a tasting of three wines accompanied by an aperitivo. And if there is time, take a walk through the vineyard. The 1-hour tour and tasting is 9€/person. Add a traditional Riojana lunch for 40€/person with a minimum of group of 6. You can call (+34) 687 936 272, or email info@bodegasgonzalezpuras.com to request a visit.

**Bodegas Ruiz Gómez**

This 4th-generation small family winery, located in the village at Calle Las Cuevas, s/n, manages 30 hectares of vineyards with an average age of 25 years, all within 15 kms of the winery, from which they produce their Cabezalgo wines.

The *Cabezalgo Reserva*, from hand picked grapes, 90% Tempranillo, 5% Mazuelo, 5% Graciano, spends 20 months in American and French oak, 50/50, before being bottled for a minimum of 18 months of rest in the cellar.

The winery is open Monday-Saturday. Call Fermin at (+34) 941 457 129 / 629 533 550 or email bodegasruizgomez@gmail.com for additional information or to arrange a visit to the bodega.
Wine Touring In The Najerilla Valley

From San Asensio... The Najerilla river flows from the mountains of the Sierra de la Demanda to the Ebro River, making this a special corner of La Rioja, with a unique style of wine, the lower part of the valley yielding the region's most balanced wines. The valley, considered by many to be central to La Rioja vineyards, is one of the Seven Valleys of the Rioja, has the greatest number of acres dedicated to wine growing in the Rioja Alta, with some of the oldest terraces carved out of the hillsides higher up in the valley. And here is where you will find Najera, the ancient capital of the kingdom of Navarra.

If you divide the valley in half, the middle of the valley, with the highest terrain, home to the Garnacha grape, is where the classic Riojan "claretes"
are made, rivaling those from Cordovin, San Asensio and Badaran. The lower part of the valley, which is more open, could be considered the Ebro Valley itself rather than just its tributary. It is one of the most densely planted areas, with a penchant for Tempranillo. The lower end of the valley also includes two Iron Age hilltop settlements, Castillo Antiguo, and Cerro Molino, which is near the village of Hormilleja, and known locally as "El Risco”. They belong to the Celtiberian period, fourth to the second centuries BC.

For more information, see: A valley in La Rioja: The Najerilla Project.

**Najerilla Valley Wineries To Visit**

- Bodegas Ayagar
- Zinio Bodegas
- Bodegas Viña Berneda SL
- Bodegas Martinez Corta
- Bodegas Leza Garcia
- Bodegas Cuna de Reyes
- Bodegas JER
- Bodegas Pedro Martinez Allegiance
- Bodegas David Moreno
- Bodegas César del Río
- Bodegas Trodos Quattro
- Bodegas Florentino Martínez
- Bodegas Hnos. Lozano
- Bodegas Najerilla
- Bodegas Fin de Siglo
- Bodegas Real de Nájera
- Bodegas Horola
- Bodegas Juan Carlos Sancha

**Hormilleja**

This small farming village of 180 inhabitants, where the Najerilla and Tuerto Rivers meet, can be found just off the LR-208, a couple of minutes north of the A-12. On Jueves Lardero, Fat Thursday, the traditional Christian feast marking the last Thursday before lent, the children of the village go from house to house singing and to collect eggs. 50 days following Easter, coinciding with Pentecost Sunday, they celebrate the Virgin of the Rosary with a pilgrimage, *La Media Legua*, the 2 1/2 km walk.
(half a League) enlivened by the sound of bagpipes and dulzainas, a Spanish double reed instrument, accompanied by traditional dances.

**Bodegas Ayagar**
Located just outside of the historic village of Hormilleja, on the Camino Valpierre, surrounded by vineyards with the snowy mountains of Valdezcaray, the Riojan Valley and the Basque mountains as a backdrop. The family winery began in 2004 and today they make four wines, two reds, a rosé of 75% Viura and 25% Tempranillo, and a white of 100% Viura.

The winey is open daily for visits beginning at 10:30 am, with the 90-minute tours and tastings are 10€/person. You can also visit the ancient cave. Their restaurant/asador, with a terrace, can be booked on The Fork, and is open for small groups by reservation only. Call Victoria Garrobo at (+34) 660 693 330 or email correo@bodegasayagar.es to arrange a tour and tasting, or a group lunch.

**Uruñuela**
Located across the Yalde river valley from Hormilleja, the village, founded in the 10th-century by Najerino García Sánchez, king of Pamplona during the repopulation of La Rioja, is centered around the production of wine, with more than 800 hectares of vineyards under cultivation. The village begins the year with a two-day celebration of San Ignacio de Antioquia and Las Candelas (candles), with the Procession of Light, beginning February 1. On the 1st Sunday in May it’s time to celebrate La Virgen de las Espinas, and on 15 May, San Isidro, the patron saint of farmers. On the 3rd Sunday in August they celebrate La Virgen del Patrocinio with a feast.
**Zinio Bodegas**

This modern winery in Uruñuela, surrounded by more than 450 hectares of vineyards at an elevation of between 450 and 590 meters above sea level at the north end of the Najerilla Valley, is the result of 200 wine growing families getting together in 1985 to begin producing their own wines. The first harvest for Bodegas Patrocinio was in 1986, the first bottling came in 1993. It has an ideal climate as it is bordered on the north by the Sierra Cantabria and to the south by the Sierra de la Demanda.

Their *2017 Sancho Garcés Crianza* has been named the ‘Best Value Red of the Year 2021’ by Tim Atkin.

Visits with a tasting of three wines and an aperitivo are available Tuesday-Saturday at 11:30 am and 4:30 pm for 15€/person, and children 9-17 for 6€. There is the possibility of having lunch in the bodega. The gastrobar, open Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, offers two set menus, 35€ and 50€. A 2-1/2 hour long visit of the vineyards and winery, with a tasting of five exceptional wines, is also available Tuesday-Saturday for 30€/person, children 9-17 for 10€. You can also do a bicycle tour through the vineyards. A private tasting with Ana María Martín are 80€. Call (+ 34) 941 37 13 19, or email enoturismo@ziniobodegas.com to reserve your tour and tasting.

**Bodegas Viña Berneda SL**

Opened in 1981 in Uruñuela by Jesús Amor Artacho as a family project, it wasn’t until ten years later that the "Viña Berneda” brand wine was born. The vineyards, located in Cenicero and Uruñuela, average 30 years of age, but the most select wines are from vineyards over 100 years old.
The Berneda Reserva, 100% Tempranillo, spends 18 months aging in American oak, while the Berneda Crianza Vendimia Seleccionada spends 12 months in American oak.

The guided 2-hour tour of the winery, with a minimum group of 5, includes a tasting of two wines accompanied by an aperitif. You can call (+34) 941 371 304 / 699 468 661, email berneda@vinaberneda.com or contact them online to arrange a visit.

Bodegas Martinez Corta
Opened in 2005, this is a 21st-century winery, located to the northeast of Uruñuela, just off the LR-113, has deep roots built up over four generations (since the 1960s), when their first vines where planted along the slopes of the Najerilla river, below Torremontalbo. The family winery is part of Bornos Bodegas group of wineries which cover six of Spain’s major wine regions. The Martinez Corta vineyards cover 80 hectares from the upper zone of Cenicero to the banks of the Najerilla river.

The Cepas Antiguas Tempranillo 2016 won the Gold Medal at the International Wine Challenge 2020 with the Cepas Antiguas Crianza winning a Silver Medal. The 2016 Martinez Corta Crianza was awarded 89 points by Guía Peñín in 2020, while Tim Atkin gave the 2018 Martinez Corta Crianza 86 points.

For additional information or to arrange a visit, call (+34) 941 898 889, or email them at info@bornosbodegas.com.

Bodegas Leza García
Juan Leza Arenzana started the family winery in the early 20th-century, opening the winery at Calle San Ignacio, 26, in Uruñuela, making
excellent wines at affordable prices, including their *Valdepalacios Crianza*, 85% Tempranillo, 10% Red Grenache and 5% Mazuelo, is aged for 12 months in American and French oak, with 6 months in a bottle before being released. All of their vineyards are all located in the Najerilla Valley.

The *2015 LG de Leza García*, 100% Tempranillo, received 92 points in the Rioja 2019 Special Report and a Gold Medal in Wine 100 Challenge 2019. The *2018 Nube de Leza Garcia Sauvignon Blanc* was rated 88 points by Tim Atkin in January 2020. The *2018 Nube Tempranillo Blanco* was also rated 88 points by Wine Enthusiast in 2021.

You can call (+34) 941 371 142, or email bodegasleza@bodegasleza.com to request a visit.

**Nájera**

The noble town, the “King’s Court”, was the former capital of the Kingdom of Navarre during its age of splendor and is a major stop on the popular *Camino Francés* or French Way on the Camino de Santiago. The town’s historic monastery, the *Monastery of Santa María la Real* (1032), is a majestic landmark. The town was occupied by the Moors in the 8th-century, who called it *Naxara*, “the place between rocks”. The Alcazar, *El alcázar de Nájera* was built by the Arabs in 1020 at the same time as the Castillo de la Mota, which sits on the hill overlooking the town and was important during the struggles between the Moors and Christians for hundreds of years.

**Bodegas Cuna de Reyes**

This modern family winery called the “Birthplace of Kings” was founded in 1999 along the road from Nájera to Uruñuela. All of their wines,
overseen by winemaker Alfredo Ciria, are from their own vineyards, Finca Las Cabras, and from select vintners in the area. The Cuna de Reyes Crianza, 80% Tempranillo, 15% Garnacha, 5% Mazuelo, is aged for 12 months in American and French oak with two rackings.

The 2014 Cuna de Reyes Reserva received 85 points and the 2015 Cuna de Reyes Crianza 84 points from Tim Atkin in January 2020.

Guided tours are available by calling (+34) 941 360 280, or emailing Alfredo at bodegas@cunadereyes.es to arrange a visit.

**Bodegas JER**

Now in its third generation, this family winery dates to 1954 when Javier Cantera Cañas built his first winery in the village of Azofra, an important crossing point on the pilgrimage’s route. His son, Javier Cantera Corcuera, opened the modern winery in 2000 in nearby Huércanos and was joined by his daughter Eva Cantera in 2010. Their high altitude vineyards in Alto Najerilla, at 600 meters and between 40-60 years old, and produce a limited production of very high quality and complexity. Named the Rosé Winery of the Year in the Annual New York International Wine Competition 2019, when their Thaler de Plata Garnacha 2007, which sits “hidden in the cellar, in the dark, sleeping peacefully while life goes on”, received 92 points in the Tim Atkin Special Rioja report 2019. In addition, their Vermouth Cantera 2019 was awarded 91 points by Guía Peñín in 2019.

Call Eva at (+34) 635 955 448 or email info@bodegasjer.es for more information or to arrange a tour and tasting. Tours are available weekdays between 10:00 am and 1:00 pm.
**Badarán**

This small village of around 700 inhabitants was settled in the 10th-century, but there are remains of several Roman settlements in the area and evidence that the area has been populated since prehistoric times. The village holds a gastronomic festival the first Sunday in July to promote local products, and as a prelude to the festivities in honor of the Virgin de la Asunción and San Roque in mid-August. Bodegas David Moreno has a Harvest Day festival, a *Jornada de Vendimia*, in late September. There is a weekly market on Fridays at the Plaza Conde.

**Bodegas Pedro Martínez Alesanco**

The Martínez Alesanco Family has been harvesting the grapes in the red soil of Badarán near San Millán de la Cogolla, in the heart of Rioja Alta, for centuries. Goblet-trained Tempranillo grows on their Valle de San Millán vineyards. Viura is planted in the Ribamaría vineyard at an altitude of 600 meters. The Maturana Tinta grows at an altitude of 700 meters in the El Hombo vineyard in the heart of the San Millan Valley. Tempranillo is planted at the north-south facing El Campillo vineyards as well as in the centuries old Las del Rey vineyards. You’ll find more Tempranillo grapes on high trellises at the La Patada vineyard in Badarán and Red Garnacha at the Vallejo Las Suertes vineyard.

Eight of their wines received 90 points or more in the Tim Atkin Rioja 2021 Special Report, with the **2017 Martínez Alesanco Garnacha Tinta** awarded 94 points. The **2014 Nada Que Ver**, 100% Maturana Tinta, and **2014 Pedro Martínez Alesanco Selección**, 40% Maturana Tinta, 30% Tempranillo and 30% Garnacha, were awarded 93 points. Their **2016 Eco**,
a blend of Tempranillo and Garnacha Tinta, received the Gold Medal at the International Wine Challenge 2020.

The winery at Calle Jose García, 20, is now in the hands of Angela Martínez Alesanco and is open for guided tours Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm and in the afternoon 4:00 to 7:30 pm, and on Saturdays and Sundays starting at 10:00 am. You can request a tour online, by email at info@bodegasmartinezalesanco.com, or by calling (+34) 941 367 075.

**Bodegas David Moreno**

We first visited David during a tour with the Tourist Office of Spain in the spring of 2003. Once an engineer working in Barcelona, his winery began step by step in 1988 when he returned home, and in 1991, opened his first cellar, in the clay and stone called “Don Pociano”. The third cellar was finished in 2013. His daughters Gemma and Paula had become involved in the winery in the mid 90s. The winery controls 130 hectares of vines in the Alto Najerilla, all within 6 kilometers of the winery, which itself is only 8 kilometers from the monasteries of Yuso and Suso de San Millán de la Cogolla.

Both the 2019 *David Moreno Blanco Fermentado en Barrica*, fermented in new French oak, and 2015 *Vino de Autor Vobiscum*, aged 14 months in French oak, were awarded 91 points in the Rioja 2021 Special Report.

The bodega is open all year for visits; Monday-Friday at 11:30 am, Saturdays at 12:30, 5:00 and 6:00 pm, Sundays at 12:30 pm. The regular tour is 90 minutes and includes a tasting of two wines, a Crianza and a Reserva, for 10€/person. Premium visits are 15€ and a 2-hour visit to the bodega and vineyard is 20€/person. 4-hour Harvest Day visits are also available for 35€, plus lunch. You can also take 5 km walk along the Route
of the Guardaviñas through the vineyards. Call (+34) 941 367 338, or email reservas@davidmoreno.com to reserve your tour and tasting. You can also contact David online for additional information.

**Cordovín**

This tiny hamlet, in the extreme northwest of the San Millán Valley, was settled in the 10th-century and is known for its *Clarete*, a wine visually similar to rosé, but made in a similar way to red wine, making the maceration prior to the fermentation of the wine, with the skins, but with a good proportion of white grapes, so that a wine of pale bright pink, fresh and very fruity. There is a pilgrimage to the Hermitage of San Cristóbal with traditional dances the first Sunday in May. In mid-July they celebrate the parton saint, San Cristóbal, and on the third Sunday in September is the Fiesta de San Jerónimo Hermosilla, following up on Monday with a Brotherhood meal for the entire town.

**Bodega César del Río**

The family winery was opened in 1988 at Camino de San Martín, 57, in Cordovín, in the cradle of the traditional Riojan claret. César and his winemaker son Iván opened a new bodega a few minutes away Alesanco in the middle of the Ruta de los Monasterios of La Rioja Alta in 2015. Their top wine ‘*Yursun’*, alludes to the nearby Yuso monastery. The claret is fresh, bright and fruity, made from grapes harvested by hand from vineyards located in the Cordovín area with an average age of 30 years.

Paired tastings are available by appointment only at both wineries and tastings include a tour of the vineyards. Call (+34) 941 367 061 or email info@bodegascesarodelrio.com for additional information or to request a tour and tasting.
**Bodegas Trodos Quattro**

The winery at Camino San Martín, 1, in Cordovín, was created in 2003, born from the initiative of four friends (“Quattro”). Alberto Pérez, Alfredo Lozano, Ángel Olmos and Juan María Lecuona are passionate about the world of wine and a long-standing illusion of being able to make a great wine with its own personality and character, from their own vineyards, some now more than 100 years old. Their *TRODOS IV Vendimia Seleccionada 2015*, a limited edition (6000), 100% Tempranillo, is aged for 27 months in French and American oak in a centuries-old cellar.

Tim Atkins awarded the *2015 'Trodos IV' Vendimia Seleccionada* 89 points.

Visits to the winery are available by reservations only. Call (+34) 941 367 283 / 610 262 182 or email info@trodosquattro.com.

**Bodegas Florentino Martínez**

Florentino Martínez opened his new winery at Calle de la Ermita, 33, in 1992, combining several smaller centuries-old locations in Cordovín where the family sold their wines. All of their wines are from their own vineyards, including the limited production *Distercio*. They also produce a wine from the near-extinct red wine grape, *Tinto Maturana*, discovered by Riojan viticulturist Juan Carlos Sancha from Baños de Río Tobía. Both the *Distercio* and *Tinto Maturana* wines are aged in native Riojan oak barrels from the nearby mountains.

Private tours with the enologist are available at both the winery and vineyards. The winery is open Monday-Saturday from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm and Monday-Friday after lunch from 4:00 to 7:30 pm. Call (+34) 941 418 614, or email bodegas@florentinomartinez.com to arrange your visit.
Bodegas Hnos. Lozano

For more than five generations the Lozano family has been involved in making wines from the vineyards to the wooden press and concrete vats, which in 2000 gave way to modern stainless steel tanks and horizontal presses. The wine is still aging in oak barrels and the harvest done by hand.

You can email info@bodegaslozano.com, or call Alfredo Lozano at (+34) 941 367 283 / 941 367 351 / 677 847 458 for additional information or to arrange a visit to the winery at Calle de la Ermita, 51, (LR-207), in Cordovín.

Arenzana de Abajo

This small farming village dating from the year 1020 with less than 300 inhabitants has several large houses with coat of arms and the 16th-century Church of La Asunción. The 5-day festival of the Virgen del Carmen happens in mid-July. On September 8 they celebrate the Nuestra Señora de la Antigua, with the festival of the Pimiento y la Anchoa being held the Sunday before.

Bodegas Najerilla

Established in 1975 by 300 families from the villages of Alesón, Arenzana de Abajo, Arenzana de Arriba, Badarán, Baños de Río Tobía, Bezares, Bobadilla, Camprovín, Cárdenas, Manjarrés, Najera and Tricio. The modern winery sits along the LR-113, before the turnoff to Arenzana de Abajo, in the Bajo Najerilla valley, the high Rioja. The families have more than 1100 hectares of vineyards, who with care and patience, generation after generation, cultivate, harvest, make, breed and love their wine. The cellars currently hold 2,500 oak barrels.
Email najerilla@bodegasnajerilla.es or additional information, or call (+34) 941 362 783.

**Bodegas Fin de Siglo**
This beautiful winery-estate, created in 1999 by a small group of local families, vine growers for many generations, has been a part of the Peralada Castle's Wineries Group (Girona) since 2014. The winery has 45 hectares of their own vineyards with vines that are more than 100 years old and manage an additional 10 hectares between Nájera and Arenzana de Abajo.

Guía Peñín awarded the *2016 Fin de Siglo 'XIII Lunas’ Crianza*, 55% Garnacha, 45% Tempranillo, 12 months in American and French oak, 88 points in 2019.

You can call (+34) 941 410 042, email bfs@bodegasfindesiglo.com, or contact them online for additional information or to arrange a tour and tasting.

**Bodega Real de Nájera, SC**
Orginally founded in 1962 as ‘Bodega Interlocal Cooperativa’, a new winery was built in 2000 and the name changed. There are currently 190 members of the cooperative with 650 hectares of vineyards in and around the villages of Azofra, Nájera, Hormilla, Hormilleja and Arenzana de Abajo.

You can contact the winery online, call (+34) 941 36 02 45 or email them at administracion@bodegarealdenajera.es to request a tour and tasting. Parking is available and they have a picnic area.
Baños de Río Tobía-Bañuelos

This small village of around 1700 inhabitants in the Najerilla River basin at the foot of the Sierra de la Demanda is better known for its artisanal Duroc hams; Jamón Sobrón, Amando Loza, Martínez Somalo, Villoslada and el Riojano, then it is for its wine, but at the north end of the village you’ll find Bodegas Horola and Juan Carlos. It is believed that Santo Domingo de Silos was born in Bañuelos in the year 1000. The village has a long history of Pelota with several famous Pelotari, hand ball players. This year will mark the 48th Festival del Chorizo, which begins the Sunday before San Mateo. Last year’s festival was suspended due to the pandemic. Market day is Wednesdays.

Bodegas Horola

The Hornos family, with more than 100 years of history, stories and legends, owns a modest 7.5 hectares of vines between 30 and 110 years old in the Alto de San Antón (Yalde river basin). The 2015 Horola Garnacha, harvested in the first week of October at an altitude of 600 to 700 meters, was aged 11 months in 500-liter French Oak. The premium barrel fermented 2016 Horola MIL, 100% Tempranillo, was aged for 12 months in 225-liter French Oak and finished with 6 months in the bottle.

The 2016 Horola Tempranillo Vino de Autor and 2015 Horola Garnacha Vino de Autor both won Gold Medals at the CWWSC Spain 2020.

Tours of the winery at Plaza Mayor, 5, with a tasting of two wines, are available daily by appointment by calling (+34) 625 375 994, or Javier Hornos at (+34) 670 616 840. You can also contact them online for additional information.
Bodegas Juan Carlos Sancha

Juan Carlos, who started his project in 2008, is a professor of enology at the University of La Rioja. His small winery sits on 5 hectares of vineyards just to the north of the village, just off the LR-113, where he specializes in the production of artisan organic wines elaborated from the minority varieties of Tempranillo Blanco, Maturana Tinta and Maturana Blanca, varieties that he and his university colleague, Fernando Martinez de Toda, discovered, rescued from extinction, and developed.

The 2018 Ad Libitum Maturana Tinta was awarded 90 points by Guía Peñín and 91 points by Tim Atkin in 2020, with Tim Atkin awarding 93 points to the 2016 Ad Libitum Maturana Tinta in 2019.

You can contact Juan Carlos at (+34) +34 941 232 160 / 639 216 011, or email juancarlossancha@yahoo.es to arrange a tour and tasting.
Baños de Ebro-Mañueta

If you can’t visit San Asensio today, then take the LR-318 turnoff and head north for 3.5 km to this small village at a bend in the Ebro river, where you will find no less than 22 wineries and a Barrio de las Antiguas Bodegas, a neighborhood of the old wineries that is worth a visit. Dating from the time of the Romans, it was a main commerce route and known as Baños de Navarra during the middle ages. The village celebrates the festivals of San Cristóbal (July 10), San Bartolomé (August 24), and San Martín (November 10). They have also burned Judas on Good Friday since the beginning of the 20th-century. It’s main monuments are the Gothic La Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Antigua, 16th-18th centuries, and Ermita de San Cristóbal, which provide excellent views of the countryside.
The Walking Route of the Wine will take you from Baños de Ebro to Torremontalbo in the Rioja Alta, across the Najerilla river on the footbridge, then on to the village of Cenicero. The two-hour walk, covering a little over 8 km distance, leads you through the vineyards and along the River Ebro Nature Trail, GR-99, Stage 14.1, Baños de Ebro - Cenicero.

Baños de Ebro Wineries Of Interest

- Bodegas Altún
- Bodegas Amador García
- Bodegas Hermanos Pascual Miguel
- Bodegas Dominio Berzal
- Bodega Viña Artuke
- Clos Ibai

Bodegas Altún
José Antonio Martínez built his winery on land overlooking the village in 1989 with the dream of producing traditional high quality wines from their family vineyards in Baños de Ebro, Elciego, Laguardia and San Vicente de la Sonsierra. The hand picked grapes are elaborated in concrete tanks to obtain the full potential of the grape. The winery is now in the hands of his sons, winemaker Iker and Alberto.

Their popular small production high-end wine, Everest de Altún, 100% Tempranillo, spends 20 months in new French oak. Guía Peñín awarded the 2017 Everest de Altún vintage 92 points in June 2019, and it’s currently available at SpanaLife in Huntington Beach. Tim Atkin rated the 2016 Secreto de Altun 87 points in Jan. 2019, with Guía Peñín giving it 92 points in June 2018.

You can contact them online, by email everest@bodegasaltun.com, or call Iker at (+34) 945 609 317 for more information or to request a tour.
**Bodegas Amador García**

This traditional family winery surrounded by vineyards of Tempranillo, Garnacha, Graciano and Viura was originally founded in 1969. Renovated in 2015 by Inigo Garcia and his three siblings, they transformed it into a modern, unique and innovative space for wine tourism, where one can enjoy the essence of the wine.


Part of *ABRA International*, the winery is open for visits Monday-Friday at 11:00 am and 4:00 pm, Saturdays and Sundays at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm by reservations only. The guided tours visits to the vineyards and workshops, a visit to the winery and wine tasting. Call (+34) 945 290 385, or email Rosa or Pilar visits@bodegasamadorgarcia.com, to arrange a visit.

**Bodegas Hermanos Pascual Miguel**

Belonging to a long tradition of winemakers having been producing wine for over 80 years, the brothers Jesus and Luis, the fourth generation of the family, decided in 1990 to produce and market their own brand of wines. In 2000 they opened the new winery at the north end of the village, enlarging it in 2010 to meet the growing demand. The brothers were later joined by the youngest brother, Jesus Mari, the family oenologist, in 2012.

Their limited edition signature wine, *Amici*, made from 100% Tempranillo and aged for 18 months in French oak, is from the oldest of their 40 hectares vineyards in Baños de Ebro.
Call (+34) 945 609 292, email info@bodegashpm.com, or contact them online for more information or to request a visit.

**Bodegas Dominio de Berzal**

The Berzal brothers, José Luis, Juan Mari and Iñigo, opened the new winery in 1999, at the start of the revolution of wine touring in the Rioja. Keeping the yields low, the Tempranillo (80%), Viura (10%) and Graciano (5%), and Mazuelo, Garnacha and Malvasía (5%) grapes, are collected from the 50 hectares of vineyards the family owns surrounding the village.

The *Parcelas*, 100% Viura, of which only 800 bottles are produced each year, has received 90 points from James Suckling and 94 points by Tim Atkin in 2020. The *7 Varietals*, with a limited production of 1,000 bottles, has also received 90 points from James Suckling and 93 points by Tim Atkin in 2020. Eight of their wines received from 90 to 95 points in the Rioja Special Report 2021, including the *Maceración Carbónica*, their most traditional wine, which was awarded 90 points.

You can contact them online, email info@dominioberzal.com or call (+34) 945 623 368 to arrange a tour and tasting, and entrarás en un mundo lleno de magia...

**Bodega Viña Artuke**

This is a small winery and is all about small scale. In 1991, Roberto de Miguel decided to move away from bulk wine and produce his own bottled wine. The twenty-two hectares of vineyards are spread out over thirty-two plots between the villages of Baños de Ebro and Ábalos. The family winery, dating back over a century, is now in the hands of Miguel Blanco’s two sons, Arturo and Kike Artuke, where the name 'Artuke' was
derived from. The aim of the brothers has been to create a thoroughly modern style of Rioja, light, not heavily wooded. They are part of the Rioja’n’Roll, founded in 2016, a group of young producers who are committed to making singular wines which reflect their origins and terroir.

The 2017 La Condenada received 98 points from Tim Atkin in 2020, and 98 points to the 2018 La Condenada vintage in the Special Rioja Report 2021, with the recommendation to drink it between now and 2035. Robert Parker awarded the 2017 La Condenada 96 points in 2019 and gave the 2018 vintage 97 points.

You can email the brothers at artuke@artuke.com or call (+34) 945 623 323 for additional information or to request a visit.

**Clos Ibai**

“This project will never be a large winery, nor will it put millions of bottles on the market”. The area around Baños de Ebro has an abundance of old vineyards, many are no longer worked, partly because the winegrowers are retiring due to age and their children do not want to work the land, and partly because the market does not pay for these grapes according to their quality or their potential. In 2014 Daniel and Xabier’s objective was to make terroir wines, micro vinifications with character and personality, for the ease of drinking and pleasure from plots they either bought or rented, when a purchase is not possible.

“Clos” from the French for a unique vineyard surrounded by a stone wall. “Ibai” means river in Basque.
With less than 10 hectares of vineyards; Laguna de Carralgorño and La Caseta (Laguardia), Otoño en Posadero (Elciego), Ladera de Rehoyos (Navaridas) and Encima del Soto and Ventanilla (Baños de Ebro), the yearly production is less than 25,000 bottles. They released their first vintage in 2015.

The 2017 Clos Ibai Garnacha Blanca, 100% Garnacha Blanca, from Baños de Ebro, and 2017 Clos Ibai Tinto, 85% Tempranillo, 15% Garnacha Blanca, Viura y Malvasía, from Baños de Ebro, were both awarded 91 points by Guía Peñín in 2020. The 2017 Clos Ibai Blanco, 90% Viura, from Baños de Ebro, was awarded 92 points by Tim Atkin in 2020.

You can contact Daniel Frías Ruiz at info@closibai.com or call (+34) 691 652 341 for additional information.
In the ancient cellars of Bodegas Amézola de la Mora

Torremontalbo

If you take a short 10-minute drive east of Briones on the N-232 towards Logroño you’ll come to the very small hamlet of Torremontalbo near the bend in the Najerilla River. With a population of only 17, it has a parish church, Santo Domingo de Silos and the medieval (1096) Fortress Tower of Los Zúñiga, the Torre de Torremontalbo, a privately owned property belonging to Íñigo Manso de Zúñiga Ugartechea of Condes de Hervías, who has the oldest pre-phyloxera vineyard in the Rioja.

From the tower you can see the line of defensive towers and fortifications that parallel the Sierra de Cantabria and the Ebro river. Including the Torre de Torremontalbo, they are the Castle of Sajazarra, Davalillo, Anguciana’s Salcedos Tower, Torre Fuerte, along the Tirón River Bridge,
the Castillo de Cuzcurrita, and to the east the mythical, 9th-century Castillo de Clavijo, where according to legend, the Apostle St James appeared on his white horse, to support the Christian troops during a battle with the Moors.

Torremontalbo Wineries Of Interest

- Bodegas Amézola de la Mora
- Condes de Hervías

Bodegas Amézola de la Mora

This is a beautiful sandstone French chateau-style winery, surrounded by 60 hectares of estate vineyards, who's ancestral subterranean cellars date from 1816. The phylloxera blight halted production from the late 1800s until 1987 when the great grandsons, Íñigo and Javier Amézola, restarted the winery. In 1999 the sisters, María and Cristina de Amézola Downes, assisted by winemaking consultant Georges Pauli, previously of Château Gruaud-Larose, took over, becoming the youngest winemakers in Spain at the time.

Their Íñigo Amézola 2017, 100% Tempranillo produced from a single vineyard called San Quiles, considered the estate’s best, made in the finest vintages. Only 2,800 bottles where produced. Tim Atkin awarded it 92 points, and 89 points for the 2017 'Vina Amézola' Crianza in in Jan. 2020.

The winery is open for tours daily. Call (+34) 941 454 532, or email them at info@bodegasamezola.es to arrange a visit. In January and February one can join in the pruning of the vines and have lunch with the winemaker,
or wait until September and October to join in the harvest for a few hours one day.

**Condes de Hervías**

Winemaker Íñigo Manso de Zúñiga, along with his wife Yolanda García Viadero, winemaker and co-owner of Bodegas Valduero (Ribera del Duero), run this unique winery where their focus is producing single-vineyard wines of the highest quality from historic vineyards. The centerpiece of their production is the oldest pre-phylloxera vineyard surrounding their home in Torremontalvo. Called *Las Arenillas*, it was planted in 1864 by Don Nicanor Manso de Zuñiga, Count of Hervías, and his brother Don Victor Cruz.

The *Torre del Conde de Hervías*, 90% Tempranillo and 10% Graciano, is the estate’s second label, from vines 80-140+ years, and is only make when the flagship *Conde de Hervías* is not produced. Their third label, *Trinidad del Conde de Hervias*, 100% Tempranillo, from the hand-picked grapes of three bush-trained vineyards planted with the original clone of tempranillo, is aged for 12 months in American and French oak. There is a fourth label, *Condesa de Hervías*, “a tribute to each of our best plants and the women who accompanied them throughout their lives”, is produced from 550 of the oldest Tempranillo clones, spending three years in extra-fine grain barrels before resting for a few months in a three-year oak barrel. Kind of a kind of “super reserve” wine, last produced in 2005. Production was limited to just 500 bottles.

You can call (+34) 609 254 802 or email inigo@mansodezuniga.es if you would like additional information, or to request a tour of their unique winery.
San Vicente de la Sonsierra

After a visit to Torremontalbo, head north crossing the bridge over the Ebro to another medieval fortress town that once belonged to the ancient Kingdom of Navarra and where you will find more than 20 wineries. It you get a chance, take a walk to the top of the village to visit the remains of the 12th-century castle. It’s a vigorous cardiovascular workout and a good excuse for a traditional Riojan lunch. The hermitage of San Juan de la Vera Cruz and the imposing parish church dating from the late Gothic period, Iglesia de Santa María la Mayor, where declared a National Monument in 1933. Chances are good, however, that it will be locked up tighter than a drum, as we’ve been frustrated many times in our attempts to visit the inside, to see its famed Renaissance altarpiece (1550-1560), which was restored in 1991. However, if you speak Spanish and have some
time to wait, call (+34) 941 334 004 to ask if the keeper of the keys can come up to open the church for you, or contact the parish priest at (+34) 686 387 526.

San Vicente is known throughout the Rioja, and the rest of Spain for that matter, as having the most morbidly curious of Holy Week processions. This village supports a Guild of the Flagellants; know as *Los Picaos*, whose headquarters is the little hermitage of the *Vera Cerca*, which is within the confines of the *Santa María la Mayor* church. This ritual takes place on Maundy Thursday during the procession of the Holy Supper, around 7:30 pm, then at 11:00 pm inside the church, and again on Good Friday during the procession of the Viacrucis, which begins around 11:30 in the morning, and during the Procession of the Holy Burial, which begins around 8:30 in the evening. The *Picaos* silently present themselves during the religious processions, men’s identities strictly unknown, their faces covered by hoods. They walk barefoot during the procession along with a non-hooded companion or aide at their side. After kneeling to pray in front of an image of the procession, the penitents then remove their brown capes, and their companion undoes a section of their tunic in the back, exposing the men’s bare flesh. The then *Picaos* begin to punish themselves, whipping their backs with a 2-pound *madeja* (a cotton skein), which is held in both hands, for around 20 minutes, delivering from 800 to 1,000 blows alternating from left to right until their backs redden and swell up.

At this point another member of the brotherhood appears with the *esponja*, a wax ball incrusted with six glass splinters, placed two by two, and he pricks these self-imposed bruises in twelve spots, symbolizing the Twelve Disciples, and the wounds begin to bleed. The Picao (watch the
video) then hits himself again 15 to 20 more times to allow the blood to run properly. Afterwards his companion covers the penitent’s back, returns his brown cape, and leads him to the hermitage where members of the brotherhood cleanse the wounds with a balm of rosemary water. This act of self-flagellation is completely voluntary, and the *picaos* motivations vary; some carry out this extreme act of penitence to connect with the suffering of Christ, others to ask for a special favor, others to give thanks.

The *picaos* also perform their penitence during the *Crucés de Mayo* celebration, the first or second Sunday in May at around 6:00 in the evening, and again on 14 September when it falls on a Sunday, or when it does not, the following Sunday.

If you’d like to stay in San Vicente de la Sonsierra, the 11-room *Casona del Boticario*, an 18-century manor house at Avenida de La Rioja, 1, has been a good option for years, and it’s air-conditioned. The 13-room *Hotel Villa Sonsierra*, at Calle de Zumalacárregui, 29, opened in 2008 in a completely renovated building, is a little more upscale, and another good option for staying in the village.

If you find yourself in San Vicente around lunch time, we highly recommend chef Jesús Saez’s *Casa Toni*, a *Bib Gourmand* at Calle de Zumalacárregui, 27, except on Mondays when it’s closed. It’s also recommend in the Repsol Guide. Bodegas Contador has a modern winebar they opened, *La Tercera Estación*, at Calle el Remedio, 12A, the main street running through the village. It’s open daily. *El Paseo Gastrobar* is just down the street at No.43.
San Vicente Wineries Of Interest

- Hacienda Lopez de Haro
- Bodegas Hermanos Peciña
- Sierra de Cantabria
- Bodegas Contador
- Bodega Carlos Moro
- Bodegas Castillo de Mendoza
- Bodegas Sonsierra
- Bodega Teodoro Ruiz Monge
- Bodegas Olmaza
- Bodegas Cupani

**Hacienda Lopez de Haro**

Located on the road leading to the cemetery, *Camino del Cementerio*, Bodega Classica is the first winery you’ll see when driving north from Briones. It’s one of the wineries belonging to Vintae, a group of seven wineries headquartered in Logroño, and whose vineyards, some of the best century-old Tempranillo vineyards in the area, are located in San Vicente and Baños de Ebro. The winery is under the direction of Raúl Acha, a native of Cárdenas, and oenologist Octavio Madurga, who oversees the production of their wines; Hacienda López de Haro, El Pacto and Grandes Añadas, using traditional methods. Pedro Balda, one of the new generation of winemakers in the Rioja, a native of San Vicente, the son and grandson of wine growers, is now in Vintae's R & D department.

The *Lopez de Haro 2017 Crianza* was awarded 90 points and named the 43rd best buy for 2020 by the Wine Enthusiast. The *2017 El Pacto* was awarded 91 points in the Special Rioja Report 2021 by Tim Atkin.

This classic winery is open Saturdays for visits in English or French at 10:00 am and in Spanish at noon. The 90-minute visit includes a tasting of three wines. Premium tastings and lunch in the vineyard are also possible. Book your visit online, email comunicacion@vintae.com, or call (+34) 941 271 217 to arrange a tour and tasting.
Bodegas Hermanos Peciña

This family owned winery with 50 hectares of vineyards was founded in 1992 in the center of San Vicente where only “cosechero” wine was elaborated. In 1997 they built a new bodega, which is located along the Vitoria-Logroño highway at the entrance to San Vicente de la Sonsierra. The three cellars hold 4500 American oak barrels and the aging rooms contain 500,000 bottles. In 2011 they constructed a new aging cellar for the “Chobeo de Peciña” wines and a social room for visitors.

The Wine Advocate awarded 94 points to their Gran Reserva 2009, which spent 48 months in American oak barrels and an additional 36 months in the bottle before being released. The 2017 Hermanos Pecina ‘Chobeo de Pecina’ received 90 points from Tim Atkin in 2019.

Wine maker Pedro Peciña Crespo keeps the doors open for free guided tours to the bodega during the regular opening hours. Tours include a tasting of their wines. You can email Pedro at (+34) 941 334 366, or email info@bodegashermanospecina.com to make a reservation. There is also a dining room that can accommodate groups of 10 to 30 for lunch.

Ramírez de la Piscina

The Julio Ramírez de la Piscina family had been growing grapes in the Rioja for several generations when in 1945 they began producing their own wines in the Sonsierra microclimate (Atlantic-Mediterranean), protected by the Sierra de Cantabria. The children who took over from their father Julio in 1980, created the new brand, Ramírez de la Piscina, in 1987 and opened the modern facilities in 2001.

The winery is open Monday-Friday mornings from 8:30 am to 1:30 pm and in the afternoon from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The bodega is open on weekends and holidays by prior arrangement. You can call (+34) 941 334 505, or email info@ramirezdelapiscina.com to reserve a tour and tasting.

**Bodega Teodoro Ruiz Monge**

Founded in 1870, the forth generation of the family remains committed to the vineyards set in the foothills of the Sierra de Cantabria where the cold winters and hot summers produce high quality grapes for their artisanal wines using the traditional carbonic maceration technique.

*La Pacha*, a blend of 5 grapes, is a very limited production from a small pre-phylloxera vineyard, produced in the original cellar with traditional methods in open concrete containers. The *Isabel Bañares*, 85% Tempranillo, is from the vineyards of San Vicente De La Sonsierra and aged in French oak. The *Desniete* is made from 100% Garnacha. *Zurbano* is aged for one year in a concrete tank and 20 months in French and American oak.

You can arrange a visit to the vineyards and tasting at the winery by emailing José Luis (Itu) at bodegateodororm@hotmail.com, or call Isabel at (+34) 941 334 221 / 669 136 144 to arrange a tour and tasting.

**Sierra de Cantabria**

The Eguren family, with a total of six wineries, each with their own individual style, has been producing premium wines for five generations.

The Peñín Guide 2021 has awarded wines from Viñedos y Bodegas Sierra Cantabria top scores, with six of their wines scoring above 95 points; *Sierra Cantabria Private Collection 2018* received 94 points, with Sierra
Cantabria Cuvée 2016 and Organza 2018 receiving 93 points. Their Murmurón 2019, Sierra Cantabria Rosado 2019, and Sierra Cantabria Blanco 2019 received 90 points each.

The bodega Señorío de San Vicente is located in the village at Calle Amorebieta, 3, and is open in the summer Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. The rest of the year you’ll find it open Monday-Thursday from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon and 3:00 to 6:00 pm. Call (+34) 902 304 080, or email info@sierracantabria.com to request a tour. Visits are free.

**Bodegas Contador**

The bodega started in 1995 when Benjamin Romeo, winemaker and vine-grower, acquired a centuries old cave hewn into the rock beneath the Castle of San Vicente de la Sonsierra. After Robert Parker awarded the maximum points (100) to the 2004 and 2005 vintages of Contador, Benjamin worked with the architect Hector Herrera to design the new winery, which finally opened in June 2008. The wine is aged in new French oak barrels from 18 to 20 months.

Benjamin Romeo was named winemaker of the year in the Tim Akin 2020 Rioja Report, and the overall white wine of the year is their 2017 Contador Colección No. 5 Parcela El Sauco.

The winery is open for visits lasting from 1-1/2 hours to all day, for the most discerning enthusiasts. You can call (+34) 941 334 228, or email visitas@bodegacontador.com to request a tour and tasting.

**Bodega Carlos Moro**

Carlos Moro, viticulturist and a wine-producer, who’s family’s vineyards in Olivares and Valbuena de Duero, in the heart of the Milla de Oro
(‘Golden Mile’) in the Ribera del Duero are among the Spain’s best, opened this new winery belonging to his Grupo Matarromera of prestigious wineries.

Wine & Spirits rates the 2014 Oinoz by Claude Gros, aged 18 months in oak and 16 months in a bottle, 91 points for 2021, along with Tim Atkin and Wine Spectator. Wine Enthusiast and Gourmets Guide rated it 92 points.

Their newest winery, with 20 hectares of their own vineyards and another 40 managed by Grupo Matarromera, is located on a hill on the north side of the N-232a, with views of the village. The winery is open for visits daily. The cellar, covering 1250 square meters, or nearly 13,500 SF, holds 2000 French and American oak barrels. Price of the 60 minute tour and tasting is 30€. Reserve online, or call (+34) 941 334 093 for more information.

**Bodegas Olmaza**

Three generations of the Gil family, Ángel, José Ángel and Raú, produce an average of 240,000 bottles a year from the 35 hectares of vineyards in the Alta and Alavesa; San Vicente de la Sonsierra, Briones and Labastida. Wines are aged in American and French oak. The winery is on the north side of the N-232a at Camino de San Martín, just behind Bodega Carlos Moro.

José Gil is another member of the generation of young, brave, new-wave winegrowers making an impact in the Rioja and Spain, and produces his own wine, *San Vincente de la Sonsierra Village Wine*, from a 5 hectare plot he purchased in 2011. Tim Atkin scored the 2017 vintage 93 points in 2019 and the 2018 vintage received 93 points in 2020.
Private visits are available during the week and on weekends by request. Contact them online, by email at info@bodegasolmaza.com or call (+34) 941 334 471 / 941 334 472 / 647 682 032 / 647 682 033.

**Bodegas Castillo de Mendoza**

The bodega was originally located within the walls of the Castle of San Vicente de la Sonsierra, once the largest Navarrese fortress built near the Ebro river, forming part of the defensive line of Laguardia and Labastida, but in 1994, needing more room, the family, headed by Eloy Antonio, restored a 17th-century distillery. Finally, in 2001, they opened the new winey after having planted their first ecological vineyard in 2000, expanding their production to 35 hectares.

Contact them online, call (+34) 941 334 496, or email bodegas@castillodemendoza.com to arrange a visit. The 1½ hour tour is available Monday-Saturday for 10€ and includes a tasting of two wines.

**Bodegas Sonsierra**

This winery in the village at Calle Paseo de Logroño, 3, came about in 1962 when more than 240 vine growers decided to pool their 430 hectares of vineyards to realize an old dream of farmers in the village, somewhere where they could produce their own wines, and became the first cooperative in Rioja to sell their own bottled wine. Today they have a total of 516 hectares comprised of 1485 plots ranging in age from 20 to 130 years old, with the highest vineyards at an altitude of 770 meters, and the lowest, and hottest, at 420 meters.

Six of their single varietal wines where awarded 90 points or more in Feb 2020 by two of the most famous “influencers” in the industry today,
James Suckling and Guía Peñín. Three of their winds won medals at the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles 2020 in September.

Contact the winery online, call (+34) 941 334 031, or email the at sonsierra@sonsietra.com to arrange a visit.

**Bodegas Moraza**

This small family winery, totally rebuilt in 1983, is the result of six generations working 23 hectares of vineyards, 11 plots in San Vicente de la Sonsierra and 2 in nearby Ábalos. Their new Cuvée, *Viura Moraza 4 Caminos 2018* is a medium bodied Orange Wine produced from Viura grapes grown on 40-year old vines at 530 meters altitude. Janire Moraza is the family winemaker who urged her father and uncle to convert their vineyards to organic farming.

Private visits are available by calling Patricio Brongo at (+34) 662 643 021, emailing info@bodegasmoraza.com or contacting them online.

**Bodega del Monge-Garbati**

Eduardo Monge and Lorena Garbati established Viña Ane in 2004 in the north end of the village, north of the N-232a, along the LR-317, the road to Rivas de Tereso, where the cellar holds barely 88 barrels of French, Hungarian and American oak. The vineyards, a total of 4.6 hectares, are located in Rivas de Tereso and San Vicente, none more than 1 hectare in size and an average age of 35 years, allowing them an annual production of around 24,000 bottles. The star wine, *El Laberinto de Viña Ane*, 100% Tempranillo, spends 16 months in French oak before being bottled. The 2012 vintage received 90 points from Robert Parker. The 2016 *El Laberinto* won a gold medal Mundus Vini 2020 and is recommended by David de Jorge (Robin Food TV).
You can call (+34) 941 311 870 / 659 167 653 to for more information or to arrange a visit.

**Bodegas Cupani**

Bodega Heredad de San Andrés is a small estate-winery belonging to the Enrique Eguíluz-Magdalena Mendoza family which opened in 2001 at Travesía la Concepción, 28, in San Vicente. They grow the bush-trained vines on their 12 hectares of vineyards using sustainable farming practices, and produce only a limited number of bottles, less than 20,000, of *Cupani*, *Rielo*, *Baskunes* and *Sir Cupani limited-edition* premium wines. Cupani is the original name for the native Tempranillo grape from the Rioja from before the phylloxera. Today the winery is run by Enrique Jr and Miguel Eguíluz, the winemaker, who is part of the new generation of young, new-wave winegrowers in the Rioja, and whom Tim Akins called a rising star in Oct 2019.

Call (+34) 659 611 206 or email them at sircupani@gmail.com to arrange a visit.
Hermitage of Santa María de la Pisciña

After a visit to San Vicente de la Sonsierra, head east on the N-232a/A-124 towards Ábalos and look for the LR-424. Turning left, head north toward the small village of Peciña, watching for a sign to take you on a short detour on a farm road to this medieval necropolis and hermitage. The hermitage of Saint Mary of the Pool sits in the vineyards to the east. This Romanesque treasure, a Bien de Interés Cultural, was built in 1138, was founded by Prince Ramiro Sánchez of Navarre, son of Sancho Gracés and the son-in-law of El Cid, who supposedly brought back from the Crusades a piece of the ‘True Cross’. If you’d like to visit the inside, you must inquire at the city hall in San Vicente de la Sonsierra or call (+34) 941 291 260 to schedule a visit. Next to the church is a necropolis dating from the 10th-century.
Labastida-Bastida

After your visit to San Vicente, you head west on the N232a to the small fortified medieval town of Labastida, the birthplace of Manuel Quintano, the 18th-century monk who brought Bordeaux wine-aging techniques to Spain. The village, the second gem of the Rioja Alavesa, been beautifully preserved over the years. Like its cousin Laguardia, Labastida was a walled stronghold of the Kingdom of Navarra until the year 1200 when it became part of the Kingdom of Castile. One enters the village through a majestic medieval gate, the Arco de Larrazuria, passing a number of large stone mansions with their well-preserved heraldic shields.

The monumental highlights of the town are its Town Hall Place, dating from 1732, declared a National Monument, and its immense 17th-century
Church of the Assumption (see below), housing yet another jewel of Baroque art that includes an altarpiece, elaborately carved walnut choir stalls and one of the most important organs in the Basque Country, but the church can only be visited at noon on a tour that’s given, in English by the folks at the tourist office on Calle Mayor.

This noble town lies at the foot of the Sierra de Toloño Mountains, where, after about an hour’s walk, one can enjoy outstanding views of the town and the meandering Ebro River, which serves as a natural frontier between La Rioja and Álava. There is a tradition among the inhabitants of the town to walk up to the mountain on the first Sunday in June, where a party is celebrated, along with a lunch of chorizo, morcilla, chistorra, cheese, and of course, Labastida wines. The pilgrimage into the Toloño Mountains, to the Hermitage of San Ginés, is repeated in December, on the Tuesday following the feast day of Santa Lucia.

The village doesn’t have the wealth of bars, restaurants and shops that Laguardia, its more frequently visited cousin, has, but it does have a couple of excellent wine shops and one of our favorite asadors in the Rioja, Restaurante Ariño. We’ve also enjoyed lunch at Mesón Alai, Diputación Etorbide, 9, aka the N-232a.

Labastida Wineries of Interest

- Bodegas y Viñedos Labastida
- Bodegas Mitarte
- Bodegas Tierra
- Bodega González Teso
- Finca de la Rica
- Nuestra Señora Granja de Remelluri
Bodegas y Viñedos Labastida
Located on the western edge of the village at Avenida Diputación, 22, the winery, established in 1964 by a group of local vine-growers, the Unión de Cosecheros, is part of the leading group of independent Spanish winegrowers, ARAEX, who are headquartered in Vitoria-Gasteiz. Its 535 hectares of vineyards are nestled between the banks of the Ebro River to the south and the foot of the Sierra Cantabria mountains to the north. Their modern cellar holds 6000 Bordeaux oak casks. One of their best-known wines, Manuel Quintano, is named in honor of the clergyman who revolutionized wine making in the Rioja.

Guía Peñín awarded 89 points to their 2015 Solaguen Reserva and 89 points to the 2018 Solaguen Crianza in 2020. Tim Atkin awarded 90 points to the 2014 Manuel Quintano Reserva in 2019 and 89 points to the 2015 vintage in the Rioja Special Report 2020.

The modern winery, in the forefront of Rioja wineries, is open to visitors every day of the week with guided tours priced from 9€, depending on the wine you select to taste. Call (+34) 945 331 161 / 657 797 043 or email putdeventa@solaguen.com to arrange a visit.

Bodegas Mitarte
The Gil-Orive family winery at Avenida San Ginés, in the northern part of the village, dates back some 600 years. While the old concrete vats, some 500 years old, are still used today to make their young wine, there is a modern winery which opened in 1992 and houses 900 oak barrels.

The Cubanegra, 100% Tempranillo, is aged for 18 months in 50% French oak 50% American oak barrels, while the Faula, harvested from a vineyard which is over one hundred years old, is aged for 18 months in
the same oak barrels that were used for fermentation, then aged in the bottle for a minimum of 24 months.

The winery is open for visits Monday-Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, and in the afternoons, Monday-Friday from 4:00 to 6:00 pm. You can email @mitarte.com to arrange a visit, or call (+34) 607 343 289 / 649 940 039. A one-hour visit is 10€/person, for up to 4 people. Premium wine tastings are available for 34€ and 50€/person.

Bodegas Tierra

With century old vineyards covering 30 hectares facing the slopes of the Toloño mountain, the winery consists of four houses and a backyard at Calle El Olmo, 16, where the family has lived and worked for generations. Below the houses are four ancient caves, dating from 15th and 16th centuries, joined together, they hold 500 oak-casks for aging their wines. They are a member of ABRA, Asociación de Bodegas de Rioja Alavesa.

The 2015 Tierra 'El Belisario', 100% tempranillo, from a plot south of Labastida named “Cuba Negra”, planted in 1910, fermented and aged in French oak for 24 months, was rated 93 points by Tim Atkin in 2020 and Guía Peñín in 2019. The 2016 'El Belisario' received 92 points from Guía Peñín in June 2020. The highly prized La Abuela Visi, named in honor of their mother, is a blend of Viura, Malvasía and Moscatel from a vineyard named “The Bear Canyon”, planted in 1910, is aged for 10 months in French oak. In March 2021 Tim Atkin proclaims Carlos Fernández "Viticultor 2021", “Winegrower of the Year”.

Contact them online, or call Carlos at (+34) 945 331 257 / 605 672 313 to request a visit to the winery in the old Jewish neighborhood of Labastida.
Bodega González Teso
This is another small family winery in the old Jewish quarter of Labastida at Calle El Olmo, 34, producing a selection of outstanding wines. Founded in 1922 by a *tonelero*, the cooper/barrel maker Wenceslao González, who originally sold his wine in bulk from the 15 hectares of vineyards he had purchased in 1905. The caves beneath the house date from the 14th-century. In 2003, the great-grandson, Jesús González Teso, decided to market their high quality wines under the name **Bodegas Gontés**, and currently produce five wines including *Olmo 34* and *Gotés Expresión*.

Tours are available with a tasting of four wines. Call (+34) 656 745 954 / 945 331 321 for more information or to arrange a visit to the winery.

Finca de la Rica
This modern winery, launched in 2010, is located a couple of minutes drive south of Labastida surrounded by vineyards along the Camino Rincon del Soto. The Amurrio Barroeta brothers, Arturo and Javier, whose family had been harvesting grapes in Labastida since 1793, along with Ignacio Uruñuela de la Rica, and Luis López, formally of Palacios Remondo (Alfaro), oversee the 39 hectares of vineyards with an average age of 45 years.

The *El Nómada*, 90% Tempranillo and 10% Graciano, is aged for 15 months in French oak barrels before being bottled. *Las Cabezadas de Matadula*, 100% Tempranillo, is aged in French oak for 18 months. Parker rates the 2014 *El Nómada* 90 points, with Tim Atkin awarding 88 points to the 2016 *El Nómada* vintage in Jan. 2020.

You can contact them online or call (+34) 628 833 065 / 628 56 831 / 941 509 406 for more information.
**Nuestra Señora Granja de Remelluri**

This distinguished family winery, an enchanting wine estate, is located northeast of the Labastita on the LG-316 in the direction of the village of Rivas de Treviso. The estate once belonged to the Monastery of Toloño and covers 160 hectares, 100 of which are under production. Owned by the Rodríguez family since 1967, Telmo Rodríguez took over operations in 2009 after being absent since 1998 to work on his own projects.

The *2013 Granja Nuestra Senora de Remelluri Reserva* was awarded 93 points by Guía Peñín in 2020, with Tim Atkin giving the *2014 Remelluri Reserva* 94 points in Jan. 2020. The 2017 Remelluri Blanco earned 97 points in 2020 from Guía Peñín and the *2016 vintage* 95 points in 2020 by Tim Atkin.

The winery is only open to professional visits at this time. You can email info@remelluri.com, or call (+34) 945 331 801 / 636 284 217, for additional information.
A tour through the vineyards with José Luis of the Hotel Villa de Ábalos

Ábalos

This tiny, blissfully quiet hamlet of 257 friendly inhabitants at the base of the Toloño Mountains, not more than a blip on the road, is surrounded by a vineyard-filled landscape, home to some of the best Tempranillos in Rioja. A considerable part of the land was owned by one noble family until the 1980s, but today there are more than a dozen small family wineries in the village, along with a parish church, the 16th-century la Iglesia de San Esteban Protomárítir, with one of the most beautiful façades in La Rioja and boasts a beautiful Baroque altarpiece. The church is open only for mass time, or by appointment with the deaconess. Although you can find a number of ancient stone presses located next to the vineyards around the area, the villages of San Vicente and Abalos is where you will find a concentration of nearly a hundred specimens.
Surrounded on three sides by the Rioja Alavesa, the village is in the Haro district of La Rioja. Each year, on the first weekend of September, the village celebrates the Virgen de la Rosa that includes its Jornada de Puertas Abiertas, the day of the open doors, when all the village’s wineries are open to the public for touring and sampling.

Most importantly, here is where you’ll find our very favorite rural inn, the 12-room Villa de Ábalos. It’s been our home away from home since it opened more than 20 years ago. And for lunch, you don’t want to miss “La Cocina de Merche”, the Kitchen of Merche.

Ábalos Wineries Of Interest

- Bodegas Puelles
- Solana de Ramirez Ruiz
- Bodega y Viñedo Solabal
- Fernández Eguiluz Peña La Rosa
- Bodegas y Viñedos Eguiluz
- Bodegas Abeica
- Bodegas la Real Divisa
- Bodega Eduardo Garrido
- Bodegas Cantauri
- Bodegas Obalo

Bodegas Puelles

This lovely boutique winery-estate, which includes a 6-room hotel with heated pool and spa, is located at the end of the road, Carretera de los Molinos, at the northern end of tiny Ábalos. Surrounded by vineyards, the estate lies just below the 17th-century watermill they acquired in the mid-1800s. The family has been involved in the wine business for centuries and the winery is now in the hands of the brothers Jesús and Félix Puelles.

Their 2010 Puelles Zenus, 95% Tempranillo, received the gold medal in the Mundial de Tempranillos 2018, the 2018 Tempranillo World Contest, with
the 2007 Puelles Gran Reserva receiving the gold medal in the International Wine Challenge.

One hour-long tours are given Monday-Saturday at 11:30 am and in the afternoon 5:00 and priced at 8€. An extended tour of the winery and vineyards, lasting approximately 2-1/2 hours, is available for groups of at least six for 25€/person. The tasting room and shop are open from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm and 4:00 to 7:00 pm, where you can have a tasting of five different estate wines for 4€.

You can email the brothers at informacion@bodegaspuelles.com or call (+34) 941 334 415 to request a tour and tasting. We’ve always enjoyed them.

**Solana de Ramirez Ruiz**

The family has lived in Ábalos for generations and have worked the land since the 1920s, when the original cellar was built over the ruins of an ancient Roman “trujal” and a winepress dating from the 2nd century. The new winery, founded in 1985 by the three brothers Vicente, Romualdo and Francisco, has 50 hectares of south facing vineyards running from the foothills of the Sierra Cantabrica Mountains to the banks of the Ebro River, and produces between 400,000 and 500,000 bottles of red, white and rosé wines, including their excellent *Valsarte Gran Reserva*, 24 months in oak, 48 months in a bottle.

Their *2004 Valsarte Reserva*, 85% Tempranillo, 15% Graciano, 24 months in French and American oak, received 90 points from Guía Peñín in June 2020, while Tim Atkin gave the *2015 Valsarte Reserva* 89 points. Both Guía Peñín and Tim Atkin awarded 88 points to the *2017 Valsarte Crianza* in 2020.
Located at Calle de Arana, 24, the winery is open for tours and tastings Monday-Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and 4:00 to 8:00 pm, and in the mornings on Sunday at 10:00 am. There is also a wine bar and tasting room where you can sample their wines if you don’t want to do a tour. Email consultas@solanaderamirez.com for reservations, or call (+34) 941 308 049 / 941 334 354

**Bodega y Viñedo Solabal**

Founded in 1988 in the heart of the Sonsierra district at Camino San Bartolomé, 6, their 120 hectares of vineyards of Tempranillo and Viura grapes form a mosaic spread out over about 300 plots of south-facing slopes in the microclimate of Ábalos. The winery boasts modern facilities using state-of-the-art technology and traditional Rioja winemaking methods.

In 2020 Guía Peñín awarded 91 points to the 2015 ‘Vala de Solabal’, their patronial (heritage) wine, produced from Tempranillo grapes hand picked from the oldest vineyards (90-100 years) and aged for 20 months in new French oak, followed by 12 months in the bottle before release.

The winery is open for guided visits during the week, but closed Saturday and Sunday over the winter months. Email visitas@solabal.es or call (+34) 941 334 492 to arrange a tour and tasting.

**Bodegas y Viñedos Eguíluz**

Located next to Bodega Solabal at Calle San Bartolomé, 10, is the small family winery founded in 1982 by Javier Eguíluz, whose 30 hectares of vineyards, 12 owned by the family, sit above 600 meters facing south in the foothills of the Cantabria mountains. A member of the small group of Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja, he has been joined by his son
Israel in their father-son endeavor of producing artisanal wines pressing whole grapes in exposed concrete basins by foot, as has been done for centuries. The reserva is age for 18 months in American and French oak.


You can call Israel at (+34) 941 334 064, email info@bodegaseguiluz.es, or contact them online to arrange a visit.

**Fernández Eguíluz Peña La Rosa**

This small family winery, founded in 1989, sits on the site where the sanctuary of the Patron Saint of Ábalos was once located, Calle Los Morales, 7, inside the village. The 13 hectares of mostly Tempranillo grapes typically produce 70,000 bottles of excellent red table wine, 6500 bottles of *Tinto Vendimia Seleccionada*, which spends 18 months in American Oak, and with a limited production of 6000 bottles of Viura each year.


Email info@penalarosa.com, or call (+34) 941 334 166 to request a tour and tasting.

**Bodegas Abeica**

Located near Bodega Solabal at Camino San Roque, 8, the 5th generation family winery is producing excellent organically grown artisan wines off of their 30 hectares of vineyards. *Abeica* is the ancient name of Ábalos dating from the 8th-century. The four brothers, Pachi, Ricardo, Isabel and Raúl, offer three types of visits including the standard visit with a tasting...
of 3 wines (10€), a walk in the vineyards (20€) and a mini-course on wine tasting (15€). They are a member of the small group of Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja.

Both the 2019 Abaris Blanco fermentado en barrica, 100% Viura, and the 2019 Abeica Mazuelo, 100% Mazuelo, have received 94 points in the Tim Atkin Special Rioja Report 2021.

Visits to the winery are available in English or Spanish. One hour visits with a tasting of 3 wines are 10€/person. The 2-hour visits, including a walk in the vineyard, is 20€/person. You can call (+34) 941 308 009, Whatsapp them at (+34) 633 381 690, email abeica@abeicabodegas.es, or contact them online to arrange a visit.

**Bodegas la Real Divisa**

Founded in 1367, it is still owned by the family of the Marqués de Legarda, and is one of the oldest wineries in Europe. It was also the first Rioja winery to receive a Medal at the Bordeaux Exhibition (1895). Only 20% of it’s limited production is exported.

The 2016 Marques de Legarda Crianza received 86 points, with the 2015 Marques de Legarda Reserva receiving 88 points in Jan. 2020 by Guía Peñín.

Visits are available on weekends only. Email _realdivisa@fer.es_ or call the winery at (+34) 941 334 118 to arrange a private tour and tasting.
**Bodega Eduardo Garrido**

This family winery, which had its first production in 1923, is now in the hands of the third generation wine maker, Amelia Garrido. Here they produce a classic Rioja, with the Gran Reserva spending 24 months in oak and 36 months in the bottle before being offered to the public. The winery is located in the village of Ábalos at Plaza de la Constitución, 2, a few minutes walk from our favorite small hotel, Villa de Ábalos, and are another member of the group Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja.

Tim Atkin rated their 2018 Reserva, 100% Tempranillo, 18 months in oak and 24 months in a bottle, 90 points in the Special Rioja Report 2019.

Email amelia@bodegaeduardogarrido.es, call (+34) 941 334 187 / 679 038 560 / 679 715 198 in Spain, or (+1) 305 322 1997 in Miami for more information or to arrange a visit.

**Bodegas Cantauri**

Bodegas Alonso González / Cantauri is a family winery begun in 1977 when the grandparents of the present generation, Juaquín Zuñeda and Maria Nieves Estibaliz, began to make wine. The winery is at Calle el Hospital, 9, with a cellar with a capacity for 700 barrels, was opened in 1982. In 1990 the family launched the brand Cantauri to bottle their own wines. They now own some 24.2 hectares of vineyards at 520 to 580 meter elevation, with winemaker Carlos Alonso Zuñeda, the grandson, overseeing the operation.

The Special Rioja Report 2021 awarded their 2011 Abelo de Noa, 100% Tempranillo made from 40 year old vines and aged in French and American oak, 90 points and the limited production (1500 bottles).
2001 Alma de Cantauri, 90% Tempranillo, made from vines more than 65 years old, was awarded 92 points.

Visits with the oenologist are available, as are a master tasting. There is a small dining room for families or friends where you can taste the traditional cuisine. You can email vinoscantauri@gmail.com, or call (+34) 941 334 554 / 669 897 630 to arrange a tour and tasting.

**Bodegas Obalo**

This modern winery, belonging to Terraselecta, opened in 2006 across the N-232a from Bodegas Baigorri, sitting on the dividing line between the Rioja Alta and Alavesa. Oenologist Juan Carlos Martínez oversees the production of their wines, which are from small plots surrounding the winery.

Their 2019 Obalo Rosé, produced from grapes growing in a high-altitude vineyard, 700 meters above sea level, received 90 points from Guía Peñín in 2020, and the 2016 Obalo La Encina, 100% Tempranillo from vineyards in the heart of the Riojan “sonsierra” at an altitude of between 700-1000 meters and between 45-70 years old, aged 12 months in French oak, was awarded 91 points.

Guided visits are available for 9€ with a tasting of three wines. The 90-minute ‘Family’ tasting of five wines is 15€. The ‘Gourmet Experience’ is 20€. Call (+34) 629 936 554 or email visitas@bodegasobalo.com to request a tour and tasting.
Samaniego

The tiny golden sandstone village of 300 residents, a picturesque Riojan winemaking village, is home to several renowned wineries, including Remírez de Ganuza, Ostatu and the cutting edge Bodegas Baigorri and boasts yet another immense, 15th-century fortress-church, the Church of the Assumption, with its two defensive towers, one cylindrical and the other rectangular. Once again, the church is kept locked outside of mass hours. The historic Palacio de Samaniego, a 17th-century manor house, has been turned into a 9-room luxury resort with garden and outdoor pool, and its own Franco-Basque bistro-restaurant, Tierra y Vino, by the Edmond de Rothschild Heritage.
As do other towns in the Basque Country and Navarra, on Easter Sunday every year the townsfolk celebrate the ‘Judgement of Judas’ with a mock trial, condemnation and subsequent burning of the effigy for all of the bad things that the village has gone through the past year. A couple of years ago it took place during blizzard-like conditions of an early spring snowstorm. Los Picaos, the celebration of Pentecost takes place 50 days after Easter, while the celebration of Our Lady of the Valley, the *Fiestas de Nuestra Señora del Valle*, is held between 7 and 11 September and is the most popular festival of the year. Then on 7 December they celebrate *Las Mañas*, a celebration in which the villagers walk through the streets holding burning branches to purify the town of evil spirits and keep the demons at bay.

**Samaniego Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodegas Baigorri
- Bodegas Ostatu
- Bodegas Amaren
- Remírez de Gauza
- Bodegas Alútiz
- Bodegas Heredad de Aduna
- Bodegas Bello Berganzo
- Bodega Pascual Larrieta

**Bodegas Baigorri**

This spectacular, avant-garde winery, designed by the late Basque architect Iñaki Aspiazu, opened to much acclaim in ’05. Located outside of Samaniego on the Vitoria-Logroño highway, km 53, in the foothills of the Sierra de Cantabria, you can’t miss it, although it does not appear, at first glance, to be a winery with its very large and empty zinc and glass cube, sitting like a lighthouse above the vineyards. The rest of the design is hidden 20 meters underground. The winery itself is seven stories deep, sunk into a hillside to take advantage of the natural process of gravity to
produce the wines, avoiding the use of pumps and machinery that could harm the grapes. Grapes fall into the presses, from the presses, the juice falls into the fermentation tanks and then into the casks. La Canoca is officially the second “Singular Vineyard” wine from Baigorri.

The 2016 Baigorri De Garage, 100% Tempranillo, was awarded 96 points and 92 points was awarded to Baigorri Reserva 2014 in the Special Rioja Report 2021. Six other wines received 91 points or more, including the 2014 B-70 and 2018 Maturana receiving 94 points each.

Tours and tastings are available Tuesday to Saturday at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm by prior appointment for 15€. There is also the possibility of taking a tour through the vineyards during the fall harvest. The restaurant is open Tuesday-Saturday from 2:00 pm, after the guided tour of the cellar, with the classic menu at 55€. Highly recommended. For reservations email mail@bodegasbaigorri.com or call (+34) 945 609 420.

**Bodegas Ostatu**

This small winery, whose name means “boarding house” in Basque, belongs to the Sáenz de Santamaría family who have been growing grapes and producing wine in the village of Samaniego for generations, sits just across the Vitoria-Logroño highway from Bodegas Baigorri and is your chance to visit a winery and be given a tour by the winemakers themselves rather than a member of the PR staff. It’s also among our favorites in small wineries in the Rioja.

Winemaker Iñigo Sáenz de Samaniego’s Gloria de Ostatu 2011 is Tempranillo at its best and received 95 points in the Tim Atkin 2020 report and 96 points in the 2021 Special Rioja Report. All of their other wines are rated above 90 points for 2021.
The winery is open for tours and tastings Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm and in the afternoon from 3:00 to 6:00 pm, Saturdays from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm, plus Sundays and holidays from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm. The Flight Tasting of two wines with an appetizer is 15€/person. A Premium Tasting is 24€/person, while the Vineyard Tour and Tasting is 25€/person. The Wine Bar and Shop are also open during the week and where you can sample any of the wines in the patio or courtyard. To schedule an appointment, contract them online, call (+34) 945 609 133 or email Ainhoa at comunicacion@ostatu.com.

Bodegas Amaren
Located on the road to Villabuena, the winery opened in 2016 and was named in honor of the wife of Luis Cañas, mother of Juan Luis; Ángeles, and continues the long family tradition of producing premium quality wines. Amaren in Basque means ‘of the mother’. The winery is surrounded by 65 hectares of vineyards between 35 and 110 years old, with the pre-phylloxera singular vineyard El Regollar located at the top of Villabuena. The wines are elaborated in concrete tanks, as was done in the days when Ángeles worked the vineyards.

Ángeles de Amaren Rioja 2011 was ranked No. 9 best red wine in Spain by WAWWI. The Colección Exclusiva Amaren Malvasía 2014 received 96 points in the Tim Atkin Special Rioja Report 2021, with the Carraquintana Viñedo Singular 2017 and El Cristo de Samaniego Viñedo Singular 2017 each receiving 94 points. The Viña Chelus Viñedo Singular 2017 earning 93 points. Six of their wines were awarded from 92 to 96 points for 2021 from Guía Prosensa. Amaren Reserva 60 Tempranillo 2010 has obtained the qualification of Master in The Rioja Masters 2021.
Guided tours are currently available on Monday and Wednesday from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm and on Saturdays from 10:30 am to 2:00 pm. Closed Sundays and holidays. The 75-minute guided tour of the winery and vineyards, with a tasting of 5 wines, is 28€/person, while the regular 1 hour tour of the winery is 20€/person and includes a tasting of 4 wines. Private tours are available for 48€/person, and the premium private tour is 60€/person for up to six people. You can make your reservations online, contact Natialia by email at info@bodegasamaren.com, or call (+34) 945 175 240. Tours here are always interesting.

**Remírez de Ganuza**

Established in 1989 by Fernando Remírez de Ganuza, this family run winery located in the center of Samaniego. He was joined in 2010 by Jose Ramon Urtasun. With 80 hectares of hand-picked tempranillo, viura and malvasía grapes gracing the slopes of the Cantabrian mountains, the family produces high quality wines through a unique innovative extraction process developed over the years.

Robert Parker’s ‘The Wine Advocate’ in 2019 awarded the Ramírez de Ganuza Gran Reserva 2004 a score of 100, the highest possible rating given by any publication, and the first Gran Reserva to receive 100 points. For 2021, Guía Peñín has awarded 93 points to the 2014 and 2015 Fincas de Ganuza Reserva. Both Guía Peñín and Tim Atkin gave the 2013 Fincas de Ganuza Reserva 92 points for 2021. Robert Parker gave it 91 points. The 2018 Ramírez de Ganuza Blanco received 93 points from both Guía Peñín and Decanter. Guía Peñín gave the 2017 vintage 93 points, with Parker giving it 92 points. In October 2020, Guía Vino Gourmets awarded 99...
points to both the 2009 Ramírez de Ganuza Reserva and 2011 Gran Reserva 99 points.

Guided tours are available Monday-Saturday at 10:30 am and 12:30 pm. Reservations are required and can be requested online, or by calling (+34) 945 609 022. You can also contact cristina@remirezdeganuza.com if you would like additional information.

**Bodegas Alútiz**

Just around the corner from Bodegas Ostatu, at Calle Matarredo de Abajo, 8, is another interesting family enterprise, three wineries that have belonged to the Pascual Berganzo family since the 17th-century, and now they’ve added an 8-room wine hotel, La Casona de Alútiz. In the 1980s the father, Eduardo Pascual, was part of the new generation of winemakers, and now the third generation have taken over, renamed the winery after their mother’s maiden name, and set out to produce artisan wines from the 70 hectares of vineyards. The ancient cellars, one of 85 in the Matarredo neighborhood, are 12 meters deep.

You can visit the three bodegas and have a tasting of 3 wines at 11:30 am, or take a walk through the vineyards in the late afternoon before the tasting. Call (+34) 945 623 337 or email info@alutiz.com to arrange a visit.

**Bodegas Heredad de Aduna**

The José Martínez Aduna settled in Samaniego in the 17th-century (1650), where the family worked the vineyards and sold their own wines. The modern winery, at Calle Matarredo, 39, is now in the hands of the 3rd generation of the Aduna-Pepe family; twin brothers Oskar and Fernando, and their children, the 4th generation. Today they cultivate 30 hectares of Tempranillo, Garnacha and Mazuelo grapes in vineyards that are located
from 400 and 700 meters in altitude at the base of the Sierra de Cantabria. They are part of ABRA International, a group of small family wineries that came together to promote their wines.

The *Aduna Selected Harvest 2016* received 90 points in the Peñín Guide 2019. Their *Aduna Blanco 2018*, 100% Viura, from a vineyard planted in 1925, has received the silver medal at the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles 2021.

Request a tour and tasting or a tour of the vineyards online, by email bodegas@heredadaduna.com or call (+34) 650 006 571. Guided visits are 22€/person.

**Bodega Bello Berganzo**

The three sons, the second generation, Ángel, Juan Carlos and Jose Antonio are part of a family renowned for its long wine-making tradition. Using the *corquete*, a tool used for over two thousand years in the vineyards and one still in use today, as their distinguishing mark. Their 40 hectares of vineyards are in the foothills of the Toloño Mountains. They are also part of ABRA International.

Guía Peñín rated the *2019 Bello Berganzo M Bello Blanco* 87 points in June 2020. The *M. Bello Blanco 2017* is available at SpanaLife in Huntington Beach.

You can visit the winery with a tasting of three wines, for 16€/person, or a visit to the vineyards and winery, with a tasting of 4 wines, for 25€/person. You may also get to meet the now 94-year old Marino Bello and his wife Isabel Berganzo, who started it all. Send an email to berganzo@gmail.com to arrange a tour and tasting.
**Bodega Pascual Larrieta**

This small, unpretentious, traditional artisan family winery, with 15 hectares of vineyards with an average age of 50 years, can be found at the eastern edge of the village, at Camino de Santa Lucía, 5. They won their first prize at the regional wine fair, *Rioja de Cenicero*, in 1993.

Their 2017 *Pascual Larrieta Tempranillo Vendimia Seleccionada* won a gold medal at the *International Wine Awards 2020*, along with four other awards. The 2017 *Pascual Larrieta Gran Reserva 2014* was recently awarded 95 points and the 2017 *Tempranillo 2017*, 93 points in the 11th edition of *CWWSC 2021*.

They are open on Saturdays only, from 11:00 am to 2 pm. Tours and tastings are available for a minimum group of 4. You can email them at info@pascuallarrieta.com, or call (+34) 945 609 059 / 609 415 872, to arrange your visit.

**Bodegas Lozano Rioja**

The Lozano family history goes back to 1853 in the vineyards around the village of Villarrobledo (Castile-La Mancha), and the family winery, *Bodegas Lozano Albacete*. The new modern winery opened in 2005, located along the road between Samaniego and Páganos, Ctra A-124 Vitoria - Logroño, Km 60, near Leza.

The 2015 *Bodegas Lozano Montes de Leza Crianza* received 90 points from Guía Peñín in 2020, 87 points from Wine Enthusiast in 2019.

You can reserve one of their guided visits online or call (+34) 945 605 197. The wine bar, with views of the Sierra de Cantabria, is open from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. There is also a restaurant.
This small village situated along both the banks of the Herrera River has a collection of 50 bodegas, more than one for every six of its residents. *Eskuernaga*, as it is called in Basque, has a long tradition of wine making and sits in the very heart of the Rioja Alavesa, a few minutes west of Laguardia, capital of the Rioja Alavesa, ten minutes from Elciego on the back road, and thirty minutes from Logroño, capital of the Rioja. Founded in 1164 during the reign of Sancho VI, king of Navarra, it’s ancient castle was an important defensive position against both the Moors and the Castilians. The Festival of San Torcuato is celebrated on 15 May and the Festival of San Andrés on 30 November.
Besides the number of wineries, the village is noted for its numerous Renaissance houses, notable mansions with decorative coats of arms that identify the original owners, “Indianos” and noble stone palaces dating from as early as the 17th-century, and now for the avant-garde architecture of the Hotel Viura, which sits next to the 17th-century Iglesia de San Andrés, one of the oldest churches in the Álavesa, and has unobstructed views of the Cantabrian mountains to the north.

If you are in Villabuena at lunch time, the Hotel Viura is an excellent choice, either the bistro or the dining room. Hector Oribe in Paganos is just under a 15-minute drive away. Amelibia in Laguardia is a few minutes more. 1860 Tradición in Elciego is a 10-minute drive, as is La Cocina de Merche in Ábalos. Restaurante Alboroque in Haro and Restaurante Alameda in Fuenmayor are a little over 20 minutes drive.

Villabuena Wineries To Visit

- Bodegas De La Marquesa
- Bodegas Izadi
- Bodegas Luis Cañas
- Bodegas Badiola
- Bodegas Bikain
- Bodegas Benetakoa
- Bodegas Cándido Besa
- Hermanos Frías del Val
- Bodegas Araico
- Bodegas Zintzo
- Sierra de Toloño

Viñedos y Bodegas De La Marquesa

We first visited this small family winery, now in its 5th-generation, about 18 years ago when Rioja wine tourism was still in its infancy. Although they were not open for wine touring at the time, Jaime de Simón, who had recently returned to help run the business, was gracious enough to
give us a private tour of the winery followed by a tasting of their excellent Valserrano and of course some pintxos, in traditional Basque style.

The *Nico by Valserrano 2016* was recently awarded 92 points in the Peñín Guide and 91 points by the Wine Advocate. One of our favorites, the *Blanco Gran Reserva 2015*, was awarded 94 Points by Tim Atkin and 93 Points by Decanter, while the 2016 Finca Monteviejo, 95% Tempranililo and 5% Graciano, received 95 points in the Tim Atkin 2021 report, with seven other wines received 90 points or more. Four of their wines have received top scores in the Catavinum World Wine & Spirits Competition 2021, with *El Ribazo* receiving 95 points and the *Reserva* 93 points.

A private tour and tasting (3 wines), starting in the ancient underground cellars, takes 1-1/2 to 2 hours. You can add a tasting of two additional wines. Tours are available in Spanish, French or English, Monday-Friday at 11:00 am. The cost of the tour will depend on the options you choose. You can contact María at info@valserrano.com, or call (+34) 945 609 085 to schedule a visit.

The Wine Bar, Shop and Terrace are open Monday-Friday from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm and on Saturdays from 11:00 am to 1:30 pm. They are located a few minutes walk from the Hotel Viura.

**Bodegas Izadi**

The winery first came into being in 1987 when a group of friends from Vitoria, the capital of the Basque Country, came together to form Grupo Artevino to open a winery on land the Antón family already grew grapes. The other wineries in the group are Bodegas Orben, Finca Villacreces and Vetus. They own 100 hectares and control another 80 in the villages of Villabuena, Samaniego and Ábalos.
Wine Spectator awarded 94 points to the *Izadi Selección*. Parker has awarded 90 points to the 2017 *Izadi Crianza*. Tim Atkin has awarded 92 points to the *Izadi Rioja Reserva 2015*, with James Suckling giving it 93 points.

They offer different types of visits including dining in one of their three dining rooms (with a minimum group of 10). Visits are 15€/person for a tasting of three wines with cheese and chorizo, 25€ for a guided e-bike tour (3 km) to the “El Regalo” vineyard, and 35€ for the “Secrets of Villabuena” tour on an e-bike. The wine bar is open where you enjoy wine by the glass and a tapa/pintxo. Tours are available Monday-Friday at 12:00 am and 4:00 pm, and on Saturdays and Sundays at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm. Email visitas@izadi.com to arrange a visit, or call (+34) 945 609 086 / 689 757 245.

**Bodegas Luis Cañas**

Another friendly, family-run winery, now in its 4th-generation, offers a warm welcome to our wine-touring clients and is easy to find, right on A-3214 south of Samaniego at km 10 behind the wrought iron gate on your right. It was in 1970 that Luis Cañas first went to market selling his own wines and now the family is enjoying the fruits of their labor. Sadly, Luis passed away the morning of Dec.11, 2019.

Six wines exceeded 90 points in the *Grupo Gourmets* Guide 2020; *Viñas Viejas 2019, Reserva 2014, Reserva de Familia 2015, Finca El Palacio 2017, Luis Cañas Gran Reserva 2013* and *Camino Leza 2017*. And now 6 wines have received 91 points or more in the Rioja 2021 Special Report by Tim Atkin; *Luis Cañas Viñas Viejas 2019* and *Luis Cañas Reserva 2014* (91
points), *Finca El Palacio 2018* and *Camino Leza 2017* (92 points), *Prodenero 2018* (93 points) and *Ribagaitas 2018* (94 points).

The wine bar has reopened to the public, but by reservation only, Monday to Friday from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm and Saturdays from 10:30 am to 2:00 pm. The shop is open Monday-Friday from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm. The 2-hour Private Tour, available Monday-Friday, is in English, Spanish or French and priced at 65€/person, with a maximum group size of 8. Regular visits, including a walk in the vineyard, is priced at 26€ with a maximum group of 6, or 8 if it is a family group. You can request a reservations online, email bodegas@luiscanas.com, or call Carmen (+34) 945 623 373.

**Bodegas Badiola**

Gorka Izagirre, Basque entrepreneur and txakoli producer, along with Península Viticultores, purchased Bodegas Arabarte, in May 2018. The winery had been opened in 1990 by three Alava families to market their own wines. The winery’s 100 hectares of vineyards, 300 plots, are in the foothills of Sierra de Cantabria in the villages of Villabuena, Leza, Samaniego, Navaridas, Laguardia and Baños de Ebro. The current cellar holds 600 barrels of American and French oak and will be expanded. A new winery is under construction.

Their first vintage, 2018 *Badiola Las Parcelas Blanco* was awarded 90 points by both Guía Peñín and Tim Atkin in 2020. There are plans to make a crianza from the 2020 vintage and a Reserva in 2021, but wines from very specific sites won’t be produced until 2022.
You can contact winemaker Tao Platón at t.platon@peninsula.wine for additional information, or call (+34) 945 609 408 to arrange a tour and tasting.

**Bodegas Bikain**

The Ramírez de la Peciña family can trace their history back through 13 generations of winemakers (1560), to a time when the wine was made in the *Cueva del Puente*, a cave where the temperature remains constant. In the ‘60s they sold wine in bulk from a warehouse in Bizkaia. In the ‘70s they built a small winery and became one of the first Villabuena growers to market their own bottled wines. In the 80s Antonio Ramírez de la Peciña takes over and builds a larger winery and introduces the “Bikain” and “Viña Sokaire” brands. In 1998 he started to produce *De Garage* (100% Tempranillo), putting it on the market for the first time in 2011.

The 2016 *De Garage*, fermented in French oak, has been awarded 95 points in the Guía Peñín 2021.

The lovely winery overlooks the village from the east bank of the Herrera River at Calle El Monte, 1, and is available for visits by calling (+34) 945 609 088 or 699 874 317, by email bikain@gmail.com, or contacting them online.

**Bodegas Benetakoa**

The original family winery was founded in 1985 by Carlos Martínez de Cañas, and expanded the facilities in 1997, opening the new winery in the upper part of the village across the street from Bodegas Izadi. In 2001 the founder’s son, Gorka, took over the operation, with the younger brother, Imanol, joining the operation in ’07 when they offered their first vintage of *Haritz Blanco*. The 20 hectares of vineyard they own and the 40 they
manage are located between 400 and the 700 meters in the rugged terrain where they grow Tempranillo (90%), Garnacha (5%) and Viura (5%) grapes. They are also a member of ABRA International. Their limited production Goren, 100% Tempranillo, is fermented in French oak then aged for 18 months in French oak before resting for 18 months in the bottle.


You can email Gorka at @benetakoa.com or call (+34) 945 609 098 to request a visit.

**Bodegas Cándido Besa**

This winery in the middle of the the village at Calle Mainueta, 19, had been making its own distinctive wines from the 10 hectares of Tempranillo (90%) and Viura (10%) grapes, from 20 to 100 years of age, since the 1940s, then in 1975 started to market them under its own brand.

The Cándido Besa Kuttuna won the silver medal 2011 Challenge International du Vin in Bordeaux, followed by Cándido Besa Bihotzekoa, 90% Tempranillo and 10% Viura, winning the silver medal in 2012.

The winery is open to visitors by prior arrangement only. Call +(34) 945 623 355, email bodegascandidobesa@telefonica.net, or requesting a visit online. The tour, with a tasting of two wines, or a tasting of three wines with a tapa without the tour, is 10€/person. Tours are only available in Spanish and Basque.
**Hermanos Frías del Val**

Founded in 1969 by the brothers Vicente and Fernando, the winery owns and manages 35 hectares of vineyards of Tempranillo, Malvasía and Viura grapes in 90 different plots around the village and in the nearby villages of Elciego, Navaridas, Leza, and Samaniego, typical of small wineries in the Rioja.

The 2015 *Hermanos Frias del Val Reserva* received 90 points from Guía Peñín and 88 points from Tim Atkin in 2020, who rated the 2011 *vintage* 91 points in 2019. Their 2016 *Hermanos Frias del Val Crianza* received 89 points from Guía Peñín in 2020 and the *Selección Personal* was awarded the gold medal in the Rioja Masters Challenge 2020.

Private tours with a tasting of 4 wines are available for 12€/person. Contact the winery [online](mailto:info@friasdelval.com), by emailing info@friasdelval.com, or call (+34) 656 782 712 / 656 782 714 / 945 386 379.

**Bodegas Araico**

This small artisan winery was started by three brothers in 1986 after hundreds of years of the family growing grapes on it’s 36 hectares of land in Villabuena and Samaniego. The son Miguel (winemaker) and daughter Estibaliz (marketing and tourism) now work along side their father Julian.

The limited production (1000 bottles) 2017 *Araico Fermentada En Barrica Viura*, 6 months in French oak, received 90 points from Tim Atkin and won the bronze award from Decanter in 2019. The 2014 *Araico Crianza* was awarded 89 points from Tim Atkin and 88 points from Guía Peñín in 2019.
The winery at Calle La Hoya, 5, just off the A-3214, is open for the premium visit on Saturdays at 10:30 am. During the summer and on holidays there are two tours times, 10:30 am and 5:00 pm. The tour takes about 1-1/2 hours and includes a tasting of three premium wines. They also offer an interactive tour for families with children. You can request a visit online, by emailing info@bodegasaraico.com or calling (+34) 945 623 366 / 619 661 772.

**Bodegas Zintzo**

This is another Basque family with a long history of wine making, when in 1994, Tomas Mtz. De Cañas, decided to market his own brand grown from grapes on their 40 hectares of vineyards that are spread across the area in 70 plots. In 2000 his son, oenologist Karlos Martínez, joined the business and the winery expanded to allow production of their wines in a single facility.

The *Izena 2015*, their signature wine (4000 bottles), was awarded 92 points by James Suckling and the 100% Tempranillo *Zintzo 5 Crianza 2014*, 12 months in American and French oak and 6 months in a bottle, received 90 points for 2021, and can be purchased at Spana Life in Huntington Beach, CA.

The winery is located at Calle Baños de Ebro, 17, in the old wineries barrio of Villabuena de Álava. Email them at info@bodegaszintzo.com, call (+34) 945 609 186 or contact them online to request at visit to the winery.

**Sierra de Toloño**

Sandra Bravo, the Logroño-born winemaker, is the first in her family to work in the wine business, part of a new generation of winemakers focusing on the terroir and the grapes. She returned to the Rioja after
seven years managing vineyards in the Priorat and working in places such as in the Chianti region of Italy and California. After producing her first Rioja vintage in 2012, she added 9.5 hectares of her own vineyards in Villabuena de Álava, which are located at an elevation of 650 meters, some of the highest altitude vineyards in the Rioja Alavesa, in the shadow of the ruins of the Santa María de Toloño monastery, destroyed in the First Carlist War, to the vineyards she manages in nearby Rivas de Tereso, where she continues to produce her red and white Sierra de Toloño cuvées.

Tim Atkins named Sandra Best young winemaker 2019, and her La Dula Garnachas de Altura the wine discovery of the year, awarding the 2018 vintage 96 points (2020) and the 2019 vintage 97 points in 2021.

You can email Sandra @sierradetolono.com, or call her for more information (+34) 626 233 085.
Looking north from the vineyards at Bodegas Torre de Oña

Páganos

This tiny hamlet sits just below and a little more than a stone’s thrown to the west of the medieval walled village of Laguardia. Here you will find the mansion of Juan Ortiz de Zárate, the Basque explorer and conquistador, that bears the shield with the legend “El mundo es ansí”, the world is there, which was the title of a novel by Basque writer Pío Baroja, considered to be the foremost Spanish novelist of his generation, and the 16th-century church of La Asunción with its Renaissance façade. This is also where you will find one of our favorite chefs, Héctor Oribe at his restaurant in the center of the hamlet.
Bodegas Torre de Oña

You’ll find this small winery, once only open to club members, at the entrance to Páganos. It excels in its production of outstanding wines, and opened a new processing facility in October 2016 to accommodate the increase in demand. Part of Grupo La Rioja Alta, S.A., the winery sits 630 meters above sea level in a prime location sheltered by the Cantabrian Mountains to the north.

Winemaker Julio Sánez’s 2014 Finca Martelo, 95% Tempranillo, aged 24 months in new American and French oak and racked 4 times, has received 97 points from Proensa, 94 points from Parker, Tim Atkin and Guía Peñín for 2021. The 2015 Torre de Oña Reserva, 18 months in new French and Caucasian oak, has received 94 points from James Suckling, 92 points from Parker and Guía Proensa, and 91 points from Guía Peñín for 2021.

It is open for private tours Monday-Friday at 10:00 am, 11:30 am and 4:00 pm, and on Saturdays at 11:30 am. Tours last 1-1/2 hours, costs 15€/person, and include a tasting of 3 wines and a snack. Two-hour premium guided tours are 30€/person. Email Izaskun at correo@enoaventura.com, or call her at (+34) 636 379 877 to reserve a tour.

The beautiful estate, Casa Palacio (Casa Señorial de Torre de Oña), is available to Club de Cosecheros members only, perfect for small groups of
6 to 10 who wish to stay at a luxury wine estate in the heart of the Rioja. You need to book a minimum of three of the five double rooms and this beautiful (5-star) palace is yours.

**Eguren Ugarte**

On the western edge of the village, along the road to Samaniego, you’ll find a charming family owned winery with a comfortable 21-room hotel overlooking the vineyards to the south. You can’t miss it, just look for the large boulders in the front that are meant to imitate the area’s *dólmenes*, ancient burial sites, making the winery look like something out of a Flintstones movie. This unique winery, built in 1989, houses 4000 barrels in its cellar, with 2000 meters of caves carved into the rock.

The family have been a fixture in the Rioja for six generations, since 1870. You’ll also find a work by Basque artist García Ergüin in the Barrel Room of the opera Carmen; 50 meters long by 3.65 meters high.

Drink’s Business rates the 2017 *Reserva Blanco*, 50% Viura and 50% Garnacha Blanca, aged 13 months in new French oak and 12 months in the bottle, one of the best Riojas of 2020, with Tim Atkin awarding it 90 points in the Rioja 2021 Special Report. The 2016 *Eguren Ugarte Ochenta*, 100% Tempranillo, aged 14 months in new American oak and 6 months in the bottle, received 90 points from Guía Peñín in June 2020.

Always a favorite stop during our excursions, this popular bodega offers a number of guided tours, including a Segway Tour through part of its 130 hectares of vineyards in Páganos and Labastida, which ends with lunch for 90€/person. The *Ruta a caballo*, a tour of the vineyards on horseback, is also 90€/person. Or do the tour in a horse drawn carriage. A tour of the cellar, tasting and lunch are available for 43€/person, while the regular

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**info@iberiantraveler.com**

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tour and tasting is priced at 15€/each. You can reserve online, call (+34) 945 600 766, or email tienda@egurenugarte.com to schedule your visit.

**Bodegas García de Olano**

Located along the Laguardia-Vitoria highway, the N-232A, is another small family winery with a long history in winemaking and is currently in the hands of the three brothers. The winery used to produce wine sold in bulk, but this changed in 1990 when they started to bottle and sell their own young red wines under the brand *Heredad García de Olano*. They built the new winery in 1997, expanding it in 2002 to meet the growing demand. Their 40 hectares of Tempranillo, Viura, Graciano and Garnacha vineyards in the Alavesa have an average age of 40 years.

The 2015 *Heredad Garcia de Olano Crianza* received 91 points from Wine Spectator in Dec. 2020, with Tim Atkin rating it 90 points in Jan. 2020.

Tours and tastings are available by reservation only for 5€ and 8€/person, or you can arrange a tour and lunch in their dining room for 36€/person. Email @gariadeolano.com or call (+34) 945 600 647 / 686 067 298 to request a tour and tasting or lunch reservations.

**Solar de Ayala**

The modern bodega surrounded by 4 hectares of vineyards is located in the foothills of the Sierra de Cantabria looking south toward the Ebro river, and is a state-of-the-art winemaking facility. The winery is also part of ABRA, an association of more than 100 wineries that came together in 1990 to promote the wines of the Alavesa.

Bodegas Solar de Ayala wines include the labels *Pradoayala*, *Marqués de Larra* and *Viña Arteche*, which is marketed by MCM Ayala. The *Viña*
Arteche Vino de Autor has a limited bottling of 2000. The Marques de Larra Reserva is aged 18 months in American and French oak.

There is a large dining room in the main building that can accommodate up to 130 people. Email info@solardeayala.com or call (+34) 945 600 779 for more information, or to arrange a private visit to the winery.

**Viñedos de Páganos & Dominio De Eguren**

These two wineries belong to the Eguren family’s Sierra Cantabria Group of six wineries, each with its own individual style. Five of the families wineries are in the Rioja Alavesa and one is located in the Toro appellation. Viñedos de Páganos is where they produce the single-vineyard 100% tempranillo El Puntido in association with the Jorge Ordóñez Group. The wine which spends 16 months in new Bordelaise barrels of French oak, and are made from grapes grown in the surrounding vineyards that were first planted in 1975.

The 2016 El Puntido received 93 points from Wine Spectator and 94 points from Tim Akin, while the La Nieta 2017 was recently awarded 98 points by Tim Akin, with 96 points from the Wine Advocate and 100 points from Guía Proensa 2020, the Essential Spanish Wines Guide. The popular Protocola and Codice wines from the bodega Dominio De Eguren, which was conceived by the 4th generation to offer fine wines at reasonable prices, are produced from grapes grown in the vineyards located in Manchuela (Castilla).

Call (+34) 945 600 590 or email info@sierracantabria.com for additional information, or to request a visit to the wineries.
Laguardia-Biasteri

After passing Samaniego and Villabuena, continue east on the A-124 until you reach the largest of the fifteen municipalities of the Rioja Alavesa, and its “crown jewel”, the most captivating of all the wine towns and considered the “wine capital” of the Rioja Alavesa. Looming like a sentinel halfway between Haro and Logroño, Laguardia, or Biasteri in Basque, makes a wonderful and unusual base for your visit to the Rioja. A fortified bastide town with around 1,500 inhabitants, it was founded in the 13th-century by King Sancho el Fuerte as a defensive fortress for the kingdom of Navarra and originally baptized as La Guardia de Navarra (the guard). Dramatically perched high atop the hill, it’s surrounded by two meters thick medieval walls complete with ramparts and four medieval gateways. When seen from the vineyards below, the town is particularly
striking as it is sits on a knoll in the Ebro valley with the dramatic Sierra de Cantabria Mountains as a background. Once inside the walls of this highly picturesque village you take a step back in time. It has a medieval look and feel as you walk one of the three narrow, shadowy pedestrians-only streets which lead you north or south and are lined with noble homes whose coats of arms are still visible.

On a typical day there will be laundry hanging from the geranium bedecked balconies as well as strings of red peppers drying in the sun above the streets which serve as the villagers’ front yard and meeting place. In the north end of the village you’ll find Iglesia Santa María de los Reyes and Plaza Nueva, which also serves as the bullring during feria. At the south end the streets converge on the Iglesia de San Juan in the Plaza de San Juan, and where you will find the subterranean caves of Bodegas El Fabulista.

The entire town is closed to vehicular traffic except for delivery of butane via electric carts, and only a dozen at a time, for below the village lies a warren of 320 wine cellars or “cuevas” excavated under the homes, some two stories deep. These subterranean caves, dug most likely for defensive use during the period of constant battles between the feuding kingdoms of Navarra and Castilla, are inter-connected, so that during sieges the villagers could go underground, survive for months and plot their counter attacks. They later came into use as places where wine could be produced and stored. Nearly all the houses have wine cellars, meaning the ground below the streets is like Swiss cheese. Underground Laguardia is larger in surface area than the village above.
There are multiple opportunities for wine tasting within the walls of Laguardia and within a few kilometers radius. Saturdays and Sundays are Laguardia’s most hectic days for sightseeing and winery touring. You will find parking, and table for lunch, more easily if you are not staying in the village and visit mid-week.

**Lunch in and around Laguardia**

There are several options for lunch in Laguardia including **Amelibia**, which is located at the south end of the village, beyond the walls, with views looking out over the vineyards. Our favorite, **Hector Oribe** is next door in Páganos, a 2-minute drive away. **1860 Tradición** and **La Florida** are a few minutes down the road in Elciego. The **Restaurante Bodegas Luis Alegre**, with panoramic views of the mountains and vineyards, is just outside of the walls, with parking. **El Medoc Alavés** is located in the hotel Villa de Laguardia. The **Villa-Lucía Rotisserie**, which has a large terrace and parking, is also an option. You’ll find **La Huerta Vieja** just off the N-232a, in the direction of Samaniego. The restaurant at **Bodegas Eguren Ugarte**, also on the road to Samaniego, is popular with the locals.

**Staying in Laguardia**

If you would like to stay in Laguardia, then the **Hospedería de los Parajes**, an 18-room boutique inn, is positioned on the main street, Calle Mayor, facing the square and Town Hall. It has two restaurants, ”Los Parajes” and ”Las Duelas” and it’s own bodega. **Posada Mayor de Migueloa** is an antique-filled 17th-century stone mansion, the Palacio de Viana, built by the Samaniego family in Baroque style. It was the pioneer entry in Laguardia’s charming inn type lodgings and the first one located within the walled town. It also has a restaurant and bodega.
Ugarte is a small (4-room) cozy option located on Laguardia’s principal street at Calle Mayor, 17. They also have two apartments in the center of the village, perfect for families. The 10-room Castillo El Collado, a real charmer, is located in upper Laguardia, outside the walls, is one of the most delightful rural guesthouses in the area. It has a restaurant and a bar. Casa Rural Erletxe is a 6-room country home located just outside the western wall. You can book a room or the whole house for your family. The 4-star Villa de Laguardia is located on the Logroño highway below the walled village and remains my recommended choice for families and for those who do not care for small, family run inns or B&Bs.

**Laguardia Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodega El Fabulista
- Carlos San Pedro Pérez de Viñaspre
- Bodegas Casa Primicia
- Bodegas Javier San Pedro Ortega
- Bodegas Luis Alegre
- Bodega Gil Berzal
- Bodegas Pujanza
- Bodegas Palacio
- Bodegas Solar de Samaniego
- Bodegas Solar Viejo
- Bodegas Vallobera
- Bodegas 1808
- Bodegas Ysios
- Bodegas Ruiz de Viñaspre
- Bodegas Campillo
- Bodegas Artadi
- Bodegas Laukote
- Bodegas Exopto
- Bodegas Lopez Oria
- Bodega 202
- El Sacramento
- Oxer Wines
- Bodega Basilio Izquierdo

**Bodega El Fabulista**

Located in the Plaza San Juan inside the walls of Laguardia, the small family winery is housed in the 17th-century Samaniego Palace (the current tourist office) where the writer Felix María de Samaniego was born. The
bodega is located seven meters below amid the 300 underground cellars, combining four different cellars, it is one of the largest in the village.

Guided tours are available daily and begin with a tour and tasting of 2 wines for 8€. The “Tour for Enthusiasts”, with the winemaker, oenologist or sommelier, and a tasting of 5 wines, is 36€/person. Contact them online, email info@bodegaelfabulista.com, or call (+34) 945 621 192 to book your tour.

Carlos San Pedro Pérez de Viñaspre

The second winery within the walls of medieval village can be found at Calle Páganos, 44, which runs parallel to the main street Calle Mayor de Migueloa. It belongs to the San Pedro Family who have been producing wine in Laguardia for over 500 years. Their cellar, more than 600 years old, have been used in wine production for some 300 years and lie at a depth of eight meters below the street. A visit to the bodega, whose walls are blackened with mold and covered with spiders’ webs, is a trip into the past. The visit includes an explanation of the traditional methods of producing wine in these underground caves and a video, then participants explore the subterranean cave where they will taste a crianza wine.

The 2016 Viñasperi Crianza, from 30-year old vineyards, aged in American oak, was awarded 90 points in the Tim Atkin Rioja Special Report 2021. The 2010 Viñasperi Selección, from 30-year old vineyards, received 91 points. The 2011 Carlos San Pedro was rated 92 points by sommelier Andreas Larsson.
Tours are available daily in Spanish and English (by appointment). The standard tour is 5€ and lasts about 35 minutes. Guided tours with the winemaker are also available. Email info@bodegascarlossampedro.com.

**Bodegas Casa Primicia**

The winery, founded by Teresa Castaña and Julian Madrid, is located in Casa de la Primicia (XI century), the oldest building in Laguardia and has one of the largest and oldest caves in the Rioja Alavesa at 9 meters below ground. The winery is now run by the grandsons of Julian Madrid. Their vineyards are go from the foothills of the Cantabria Mountains to the plains near the Ebro River. Their Carravalseca vineyard is a unique vineyard surrounding the lagoon, the most northerly wetlands endorheic watersheds in Europe.

Their 2014 Julian Madrid Reserva won the gold medal at the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles in 2019. Two of their wines won gold at the Mundus Vini Spring Tasting 2021, the 2015 Julian Madrid Reserva and the 2017 Casa Primicia Crianza. Three others won silver medals.

The Casa Primicia Tour, with a tasting of two wines from the cellar is 12€/person. The Varietal Tour, with a tasting to 4 wines is 17€ with a minimum group of 4. The 5-star Tour is 25€/person. Tours are available Tuesday-Friday at 11:00 am, 1:00 and 4:00 pm, Saturdays at 11:00 am, 1:30 and 5:30 pm, and Sundays at 11:00 am and 1:30 pm. Lunch is available. There is a maximum of 10 people for the tours, or 16 for a group traveling together.

Email info@bodegascasaprimicia.com or call (+34) 945 600 296 to schedule a tour and tasting, or contact them online.
Bodegas Javier San Pedro Ortega

Born in Laguardia, Javier San Pedro is the fifth generation of a wine-making family. After years of working at the family winery, he produced his first wine in 2005, and decided to undertake his own project in 2013, which is located along the Camino de La Hoya, directly across the road from Bodegas Ysios, to the north of Laguardia.

The *Viuda Negra Crianza*, 100% Tempranillo, 14 months in French oak, received 91 points from both Tim Atkin and Guía Peñín for 2021, while the *Viuda Negra Villahuercos*, 100% Tempranillo Blanco, was awarded 93 points from Tim Atkin and 91 points from Guía Peñín.

The wine bar opened in the fall of 2018. Here you will find "quick-guided tastings", of all the vintages served by the glass and a selection of “tapas”. You can contact Javier at info@bodegasjaviersanpedro.com, or call (+34) 945 386 196 to arrange a tour and tasting, or book your tour online. Open daily from 10:30 am to 7:30 pm.

Bodegas Luis Alegre

The winery, located on the road to Navaridas, the A-4207, below the village on the west side, was opened in 1968 by a winemaking family for the purpose of making the highest quality single vineyard wines from their 21 hectares in Laguardia, Labastida, Elvillar, and Torremontalbo. The aging cellar houses more than 1500 hand selected barrels of French and American oak.

*Finca La Reñana Reserva Special Selection White* received 92 points in the Best of the Rioja awards in June 2019, and Tim Atkin was very good to them this year, awarding 95 points to the 2018 *Blanco Finca la Reñana*, and 94 points to the 2015 *Reserva* and 2015 *Pontac Gran Vino*. The *Parcela*
No.5 received 92 points and the 2019 Desbastado Blanco “Sobre Lías” scored 91 points.

A visit and tasting of two wines is 10€. A tour and tasting of 5 unique wines is 32€. The wine bar and terrace are open following the tour and tasting. The restaurant is under the direction of chef Beñat Ormaetxea.

**Bodega Gil Berzal**

José Luis Gil, with a long history of wine making passed down from generation to generation, founded the winery in 1998 along with his wife Gloria in order to commercialize his own brand of wines. The winery is located on the A-3228, the Elvillar road, outside of the fortified walls to the north. The sons Saul and Benjamin run the winery now, following the family tradition and instigating new innovative projects for the winery, including organic wines from their 20 hectares of vineyards in Baños de Ebro and Laguardia. Their *Vino de hielo BAJO 0º* is a 100% Viura ice wine from a single vineyard planted in 1955. This year they have added a new white to the brand *Recoveco*, made from a blend of old Viura and Malvasía grapes.

Their 2018 *Alma Pura*, 95% Tempranillo, from a single vineyard planted in 1930, spending 18 months in French oak, was awarded 93 points in 2020 by Tim Atkin, who also gave the 2014 *Alma Pura* 91 points.

Tours of the winery are available by contacting them online, emailing info@gilberzal.com or by calling +34 945 600 735.

**Bodegas Palacio**

Originally founded in 1863, his historic winery, located at the foot of Laguardia, beyond the wall on the south side, has been producing quality
wines since 1894 when Don Cosme Palacio took charge of his family’s winery. It became one of the most advanced wineries in the region, producing Bordeaux style wines and laying the foundations of the modern D.O.C.. Today the winery belongs to the **Bodegas Palacio 1894 Group**, who control some 200 hectares of vineyards in the Rioja and have a cellar that holds an amazing 12,000 American and French oak barrels.

Guía Peñín awarded the 2017 *Bodegas Palacio 'Glorioso' Crianza* 90 points, while Tim Atkin gave the 2016 *'Glorioso' Crianza* 91 points, and the 2016 *'Cosme Palacio' Vinedos en Altitud Crianza* 93 points in 2020.

Guided tours allow you to discover the winery and its vineyards and learn about the methods of elaboration of a century-old know-how. You can request a visit or additional information by calling (+34) 945 600 057.

**Bodegas Pujanza**

This is one of the premier wineries in the Rioja, established in 1998 at Carretera de Elvillar, s/n, when the then 25 year-old winemaker Carlos San Pedro came up with the idea of going back to his roots, to focus on the land, producing wines from the 40 hectares of indigenous Tempranillo and Viura grapes, all located within 4 kms of the bodega.

The Wine Advocate in 2019 rated all of the 2016 and 2017 vintages 91 points or more. The 35th Edition of *la Guía Gourmets de Vinos* (2020) rated five of the wines 90 points or more, with the 2015 *Pujanza Cisma* awarded 98 points and the 2016 *Pujanza Norte* receiving 95 points. Five wines received 92 points or more in the Special Rioja Report 2019, with the 2016 *Añadas Frías* awarded 97 points and ‘named wine of the year’ by Tim Atkin. The 2017 *Pujanza Norte* was awarded 96 points by Tim Atkin and 94 points by Guía Peñín in 2020.
All of the winery tours include a visit to one of the most charismatic vineyards, Finca Valdepoleo, followed by a wine tasting. Call (+34) 945 600 548 or email Carlos at info@bodegaspujanza.com to arrange a visit.

**Bodegas Solar de Samaniego**

The winery opened in 1972 just beyond the walls of medieval Laguardia when the family returned to its roots. They now own 80 hectares of vineyards in and around the village. Access to the winery is off the A-3210, at the foot of the village, on the road to Elciego, where they offer a unique wine touring experience with the recovery of the *Espacio Medio Millón* and the murals by the Australian artist Guido Van Helten on the old concrete tanks of the winery, seven murals, each more than 10 meters high.

The *2106 Cabeza de Cuba Crianza* won the gold medal at the El Mundial de Tempranillos Bruselas 2019, the Tempranillo World Cup.

They are open for visits on weekends only at 11:00 am, 1:00 and 6:00 pm, and on Friday and Saturdays nights at 8:00 pm. Call (+34) 618 122 460 or reserve online. The family also owns *Bodegas Durón* in Roa (Burgos).

**Bodegas Solar Viejo**

The original winery was founded in 1937 in a manor house within the walls of Laguardia but was moved to it’s present location some 30 years ago. Now overseen by winemaker Vanesa Insausti, a native of Logroño, the winery now belongs to the Ferrer family (Freixenet); Bodegas Valdubón (Ribera de Duero), Bodegas Vionta (Rias Baixas) and Finca Ferrer (Argentina).

Visits to the winery, with a tasting of two wines, is 10€. A wine tasting course is 25€, with a minimum of 6 people. A stroll through the vineyard with a taste of their signature wines is 29€, with a minimum of 6. The winery is open Monday-Friday at 11:00 am 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm, on Saturdays at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm only. Call (+34) 945 600 113 or email solarviejo@solarviejo.com to reserve your tour and tasting. The wine bar is open Monday through Friday 11:00 am to 2:30 pm.

**Bodegas Vallobera**

Born 31 years ago (1990) when Javier San Pedro Rández, from a family of winegrowers in Laguardia, and Ana Ortega decided to open their own winery, producing unique wines from their collection of plots in Leza, Elvillar, Páганos, Navaridas, Elciego and Laguardia.

Six of their wines were awarded 91 points or more in the Guía Proensa 2020; *Vallobera Colección Familiar* and *Terrán de Vallobera*, 96 points, *Vallobera Graciano* and *Finca Vallobera*, 94 points, *Vallobera Crianza*, 93 points and the *Vallobera Tempranillo*, 91 points. The Decanter 2020 awards recognized the 2017 *Vallobera Graciano* (Silver), 2017 *Finca Vallobera* (Silver) and 2017 *Vallobera Crianza* (Bronze). In March, the 2018 *Finca Vallobera* and 2018 *Vallobera Crianza* won gold medals and the 2018 *Vallobera Graciano* won a silver medal in the Mundus Vini.

You can contact Javier online, by email at vallobera@vallobera.com, or call (+34) 945 621 204 for additional information or to request a visit to the winery on the Camino de la Hoya, just to the north of Laguardia.
**Bodegas 1808**

The Martinez family began their wine enterprise in the 16th-century in a cave six meters below the streets of Laguardia. In 2002 the family of Jenaro Perfecto Martinez opened a new winery to the north of the village. Total production is limited to 3,000 cases/year.

The limited production (1000 bottles) *1808 Selección de Autor*, 100% Tempranillo, from the Laguardia vineyards, is aged 20 months in American oak.

Located on the road to Elvillar, you can contact them online, email info@bodegas1808.com or call (+34) 685 752 384 for additional information.

**Bodegas Ysios**

For a visit to one of the region’s most architecturally stunning wineries, drive two kilometers west of town towards Samaniego, and follow signs to La Hoya and Ysios to this very impressive, state-of-the-art bodega, an ultramodern design of the famed Valencia architect, Santiago de Calatrava. Look for the undulating titanium roof “waving” in the distance.

The *2016 Ysios Finca Las Naves*, 100% Tempranillo, aged for 16 months in French oak, received 95 points from Guía Peñín in June 2019, was awarded 93 points by Tim Atkin in 2020, and rated 98 points in Guía Gourmets 2020.

One hour tours are available Monday-Saturday at 10:00 am and 12:30 pm, Sundays at 10:00 am and 12:00 noon with a tasting of two wines for 18€. The tour and a tasting cost 18€. A 1-1/2 hour tour with a walk through the
Carravacas vineyard is 25€. The Private Tour and Tasting is 50€. Ysios is part of the Allied Domecq wine empire. Reserve your visit online. Open in August.

**Bodegas Ruiz de Viñaspre**

With vineyards in Elvillar and Laguardia, the family of winegrowers has been working the land since 1910 when the winery was located in the village of Elvillar-Bilar, which lies a few kilometers northeast of Laguardia. The modern winery opened in 2005, eight years before the daughters Ainhoa and Jaione, two young Bodegueras, part of the new winemakers in the Rioja, joined the business. Now managed by the sisters, the winery sits between the walled village and the Sierra de Cantabria-Toloño mountains, in the same area as Bodegas Ysios and Bodegas Javier San Pedro Ortega, producing their wines from the old estate of de la Hoya, 30 hectares of vineyards with an average age of 40 years. They are members of ABRA International.

The Special Rioja Report 2021 rates five of their wines 90 points or more, with Tim Atkin awarding the 2014 *Delirio Ruiz Viñaspre Limited Edition* 94 points and the 2015 *Viña del Tío Gregorio* 93 points.

Guided visits to the winery, which include a tasting of two wines, are available Monday-Thursday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Private tours are also available on the weekends. The wine bar is open for those who only want to taste the wines and relax in the garden. You can contact them online, send an email to info@bodegaruizdevinaspre.com, or call (+34) 945 600 626 to request a tour.
**Bodegas Campillo**

This beautiful château-style winery surrounded by 50 hectares of vineyards, with the Cantabrian mountains as a backdrop, was designed by Logroño architect Aurelio Ibarrondo Fragùela. The winery belongs to the family-owned Faustino Group, and was named for the families first estate. They celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2020.

The 2013 *Campillo 57 Gran Reserva* won the gold medal at the Mundus Vini contest in Germany in March, after the 2017 *Campillo Crianza* won gold last summer. Tim Atkin has awarded the 2019 *Campillo Blanco Fermentado en Barrica* 91 points and the 2016 *Campillo Reserva Colección* 90 points in the Special Rioja Report 2021. Wine Enthusiast awarded 94 points to the *Finca Cuesta Clara Raro*, 24 months in French oak.

Open Monday-Friday at 10:00 am, 12:00 noon, 1:00 pm and 4:00 pm, Saturdays at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm, with the standard tour (vineyards, fermentation tanks and cellar) lasting 90 minutes, and cost 10€/person. The ‘Vintage Experience’ tour is 4 hours and costs 25€, is available for the whole family during the harvest season (September-October). And now they also offer a 4-hour Segway vineyard tour during the harvest season. You can reserve online, by email at visitas@grupofaustino.es, or call (+34) 945 601 228.

**Bodegas Artadi**

Founded in 1985 by a group of local winemakers rooted in tradition who produce only organic wines from their 83 hectares of vineyards. In 1992 the Lacalle and Loarden families assumed control and expanded in 1996 to Navarra (*Artazu*), in 1999 to Alicante (El Sequé) and in 2015 to Guipúzcoa (Izar-Leku).
Their flagship single-vineyard Viña el Pisón 2018, from a 2.4-hectare vineyard in Laguardia planted in 1945, was awarded 99 points by Robert Parker for 2021. The Wine Advocate also rated five of their other wines above 94 points for 2021; 2018 El Carretil and 2018 San Lazaro, 97 points, plus the 2018 Quintanilla, 2018 Valdegines and 2018 La Poza all received 94 points.

The winery sits below the village, across the roadway from Bodegas Campillo, and is open for visits Monday to Friday by appointment only. You can request a tour online, email comunicacion@artadi.com, or call (+34) 945 600 119 to arrange a visit.

**Bodegas Laukote**

With only 8.5 hectares of vines, this is one of the smaller premium wineries in the Rioja Alavesa. It was founded in 2004 by Norberto Miguel and Josune Biurrarena, both descendants of a long line of wine makers from Laguardia, and who produce their selection of fine wines from vineyards in Laguardia and Elvillar. They also produce a ground breaking, high-end sweet wine, Tostados de Laukote, in the French Sauternes method, made from 100% Viura grapes and aged for 72 days in a cherry wood barrel, the first sweet wine from the Rioja Alavesa D.O.Ca.. Only 110 bottles (375ml) were produced in 2007, the first vintage. Expect to spend at least 500€ + VAT.

Tim Atkin rated the 2015 Laukote ‘Gaubela' 89 points in the Special Rioja Report 2020. Gaubela is Basque for ‘during the night’, for when the grapes are harvested.
If you need information or would like to arrange a private tour and tasting, you can contact them online, call (+34) 945 600 815 / 686 392 238, or email info@bodegaslaukote.com.

**Bodegas Exopto**

This is a project by Tom Puyaubert, to produce different wines within the historical context, all blends of the three principal Rioja grape varieties, of the noted French cooperage salesman and winemaker. Founded in 2003, to recover old vineyards in the Sierra Cantabria and Monte Yerga mountains, the winery currently has 12 hectares of vineyards around the villages of Ábalos, San Vicente de la Sonsierra and Baños de Ebro, with the vast majority of Tempranillo, Malvasía and Viura over 60 years old. There are an additional 10 hectares of old vines around the villages of Alfaro and Aldeanueva de Ebro where the Garnacha and Graciano grapes are harvested. The single vineyard grapes are from fields where horse-drawn ploughs turn the soil.

Eight wines received 91 points or more in the Rioja 2021 Special Report, with the 2018 *El Espinal*, 100% Maturana Tinta from the San Vicente de la Sonsierra vineyard, receiving 96 points, and four wines receiving 94 points. Robert Parker awarded 94 points to the 2017 *La Mimbreta*, from the 100-year old vineyard in Ábalos, aged 18 months in French oak, and 92 points to the 2018 *El Bernate*, produced from 85-year old Malvasía from the vineyard in San Vicente de la Sonsierra.

You can email info@exopto.net, or call (+34) 650 213 993 for additional information.
Bodegas Lopez Oria
The winery, on the road to Elvillar, was orginally built by the grandfather Ángel Lopez, and is now in the hands of the 4th generation of the family, Isabel and Jose Antonio.

The limited production 2016 Pola Antonio López, 100% Tempranillo from goblet-trained vines, received 89 points from Guía Peñín in 2019.

Guided tours of the vineyards and winery with a tasting of three wines with aperitif, are 12€. Email info@bodegaslopezoria.com, or call (+34) 649 628 420 to schedule your tour.

Bodega 202
This is a personal family endeavor of Francis y Kathleen Rooney that started in 2014 after walking the Camino de Santiago and fell in love with the Rioja; producing handcraft small batch vintages from old mountain plots, focusing on quality over quantity. Their oldest vines are 80 to 100 years. Their son Michael, a lawyer in Washington, D.C. oversees the operation, but it is the winemaker Luis Güemes, along with Luis and Marta who run the winery, which is along the A-3228, the road to Elvillar.

Wine Enthusiast has rated the 2015 Bodega 202 Aistear, 100% Tempranillo from plots in Kripán, Lanciego and Salinillas de Buradón, aged 14 months in new French and American oak, 92 points in 2021. The 2016 Bodega 202 ‘Ansa’, 100% Tempranillo from a plot in Elvillar, aged 14 months in new French oak, received 95 points from Tim Atkin in Jan. 2020 and 93 points from Guía Peñín in June 2020.

Email marta.ortizarce@bodega202.com, or call her at (+34) 650 020 381 from additional information or to arrange a visit.
El Sacramento

Belgian Etienne Cordonnier is one of the newer faces of Rioja. His surname on his mother’s side is Leizaola and he is the grandson of the former second lehendakari of the Basque Government in exile, Jesús María Leizaola. After several years looking for a way to reconnect with his Basque roots, in 2011 he had the opportunity to buy a vineyard in Laguardia that responded to his idea of quality. The plot, El Sacramento, two and a half hectares of tempranillo in glass located 520 meters above sea level on clay-calcareous soils, met these conditions and also had a story behind it; the brotherhood of the Santísimo Sacramento de Laguardia.


You can contact Etienne online, email him at info@elsacramento.com, or call (+34) 945 046 904 for additional information or to arrange a tour of the modern winery surrounded by vineyards south of Laguardia.

Oxer Wines

A new player in Rioja, Oxer Bastegieta is a Basque producer who divides his time between the family winery in the Bizkaiko Txakolina appellation and his highly personal wines in the Rioja. He currently has 4.8 hectares divided in 16 plots in the villages of Leza, Navaridas, Elciego, San Vicente de la Sonsierra, Laguardia and Elvillar.
Guía Peñín rated the 2016 Oxer Bastegieta Kalamity 94 points in 2019, with Robert Parker and Tim Atkin giving it 95 points. The 2017 Oxer Bastegieta Kalamity, a blend of Tempranillo (48%), Garnacha (48%), Viura (2%) and Garnacha Blanca (2%), received 95 points in the Rioja 2021 Special Report by Tim Atkin. The 2017 Suzzane Old Vines, 100% Garnacha from a 3-hectare vineyard planted in 1903 in Cárdenas (Rioja Alta), were awarded 95 points in the Rioja 2021 Special Report and 94 points from Parker.

The winery is currently not open for visits, but you can call (+34) 616 984 118 if you have any questions or need additional information.

**Bodega Basilio Izquierdo**

Basilio Izquierdo was named one of the 50 Exceptional Winemakers by the University of Bordeaux in 2016. He was the Technical Director and head of research and development at C.V.N.E. for more than 30 years and started Viñedos del Contino in 1974. After more than 40 years of working for others and considered one of Spain’s most brilliant winemakers, he decided in 2007 to open his own winery in the old Cooperativa El Collado cooperative, a garage-style space in Laguardia. Basilio doesn’t own any vineyards, but instead each year selects the best vines from old vineyards in San Vicente de la Sonsierra, Leza, Laguardia, Haro, Tudelilla or Cárdenas.

The 2013 Bodegas Basilio Izquierdo 'B de Basilio', a blend of Tempranillo, Graciano and Garnacha, aged 24 months in French oak, was awarded 93 points by Tim Atkin in January 2020.

You can email b@bodegasbasilioizquierdo.com or call Basilio at (+34) 666 461 853 / 666 461 854 for additional information.
Elciego-Elziego

If you make your home base in Laguardia you’ll be able to hop back and forth from there to Gehry/Rascal-land in less than 10 minutes as the two villages are only 7 km apart, connected by the A-3210. There’s far more to keep you entertained in Laguardia, as Elciego, with only about 1000 or so inhabitants, is still a very conservative, sleepy, somber, no-nonsense wine producing village despite its new fame as the home of one of the most talked about wineries in the world.

It is a charming village in its own quiet way, filled with noble homes from the 17th and 18th centuries bearing coats of arms and a fine, immense church, La Iglesia de San Andrés, a 16th-century Gothic-Renaissance, Romanesque, Baroque, Neoclassical mix. If you’d like to see the inside,
either hit it during mass, or inquire at the tourist office in the village square. The Nuestra Señora Virgen de la Plaza, in the Plaza Mayor is from the 18th-century.

The village celebrates the Virgen de la Plaza on September 8, the festival of San Andrés on November 30, Santa Isabel on July 2, San Gregorio on May 9, San Roque on Aug 16 and San Vicente on the last Saturday of August.

A visit to Elciego isn’t complete unless you stop to sample some of this little shop’s wares, local wines served by the glass and maybe a few tapas. We always take home a liter (or two) of the superb Maja label olive oil from the Navarran town of Mendavia, which belongs to the Rioja DOC. While you’re walking around the village, stop and pick up some Idiazábal cheese, tins of delicious roasted red peppers, asparagus and have a snack or a lunch of cheese or charcuterie platter at Vinoteca La Ermita, in Plaza Mayor, across from city hall, or have pintxos at Taberna 1583, on Calle San Andrés.

**Lunch in Elciego**

For lunch in Elciego, you’ll find 1860 Tradición in the Marqués de Riscal is a good option, but you’ll need reservations. La Florida, with a terrace, is at the Casa de Cultura (Kultur Etxea). We’ve dined at the Real Fortuna, a gastrobar/asador in a 17th-century former inn, a few times. It has a large outdoor courtyard in the back.

**Staying in Elciego**

The Hotel-Bodega Marqués de Riscal is the obvious choice for staying in Elciego. It’s a Marriott Luxury Collection, but if you want something a
little less expensive, **Bodegas Valedlana** is a comfortable wine hotel with 12 rooms. The 18-room **Hotel Restaurante Villa Elciego** is in the village near Plaza Mayor. The small 5-room **Casa Rural Rojanda** is another option in the village.

For walkers, **Stage 15: Elciego - Oyón**, begins next to Marques de Riscal winery, heading south the La Puebla de Labarca, then on to Laserna and finally ending up in Oyón/Oion, a distance of 25,5 km and should take about 6 hours, without stops.

**Elciego Wineries Of Interest**

- Herederos del Marqués de Riscal
- Bodegas Murua
- Bodegas Muriel
- Bodegas Valedlana
- Bodegas Diez-Caballero
- Bodegas Fos
- Vina Salceda
- Pago de Larrea
- El conjuro del ciego
- Bodegas Luberry

**Herederos del Marqués de Riscal**

Since it’s opening in 2006, the Frank Gehry designed **City of Wine**, the “Spanish château of the 21st century”, has been one of the main highlights of this area for wine lovers and is the oldest and best-known wine producer in Spain, dating from 1858. This spectacular 33,000 square foot project includes a tasting pavilion and a 61 room, **Luxury Collection Hotel** with an Caudalie vinotherapy spa, gourmet restaurant and Bistró, the 1860 Tradition, under the able direction of 2 Michelin stared chef **Francis Paniego** of **El Portal** in the village of Ezcaray. There is also a hotel bar and Vinoteca.
The original bodega, *El Palomar*, the Dovecote, is a Bordeaux-style structure built in the late 1880s, where the premium wines are still made and the “Cathedral” is the cellar where they store their ancient wines. The “New Era of Rioja” wine, *Barón de Chirel Reserva*, 65% Tempranillo, from vines between 80 and 110 years old, received 100 points from Guía Proensa, 97 points from Decanter and 94 points from James Suckling in 2020.

The winery is open for visits daily from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm with tours beginning at 19€/person. The 90-minute tours are conducted in Spanish, English, French, Italian and German. Private tastings lasting 2 to 2/12 hours are available. You can book your tour online, by emailing reservations.marquesderiscal@marriott.com, or by calling (+34) 945 180 888.

**Bodegas Murúa**

You’ll find this classic family winery on the left just as you enter the village on the road from Laguardia, where it’s stood since the Middle Ages. Part of the *Masaveu Bodegas* (1974), the old, low yield vines are their most prized treasure. Originally purchased with the aim of making wine only for the family, that changed in 1998 with the passing of Pedro Masaveu Peterson.

Guía Peñín rated the *2012 Veguín de Murua Gran Reserva*, a blend of Tempranillo, Graciano, Mazuelo, 91 points in 2020, with Tim Atkin giving the *2010 vintage* 89 points in Jan. 2020.

If you are looking for a unique wine experience, 90-minute visits are available Monday-Saturday at 11:00 am. The cost is 25€/person with a maximum of 12 visitors. Other times are also possible. For reservations,
email enoturismo@bodegas.masaveu.com, or call (+34) 671 483 542. The wine bar is open Monday-Friday from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm, reservations highly recommended.

**Bodegas Muriel**

Down the street from Bodegas Murúa, just on the outskirts of the village and close to the Mayor river, is the first winery founded by José Villaverde Murúa in 1926 to trade in bulk wines. In 1986 Julián Murúa Entrena resumes the work begun by his father and creates the Muriel wines, named for his father and the village. He has since been joined by his son, Javier. The Muriel Group; Bodegas Eguía and Marqués de Elciego, in Elciego, Pazo Cilleiro in the Rías Baixas, Real Compañía de Vinos, and the historic Conde de los Andes in Ollauri, own a total of 260 hectares of vineyards in Elciego, Laguardia and Viñaspre, including the 25-hectare El Gallo estate, a broad plateau that lies to the west of Elciego, an easy 1.5 km walk from the village.

Their 2015 Bodegas Muriel Reserva, aged 24 months in American and French oak, then resting for 12 months in a bottle, received 93 points from Wine Spectator in 2020, with the 2016 Muriel Crianza receiving 90 points. Decanter awarded 92 points to the 2011 Viña Muriel Gran Reserva Garnacha and 2011 Muriel Viñas Viejas Gran Reserva, and 90 points to the 2011 Viña Muriel Gran Reserva in a Feb. 2021 tasting.

You can email @murielwines.com for more information, or call (+34) 945 606 268 to request a visit to the winery.

**Bodegas Valedlana**

This family winery has been producing wine and olive oil since the 16th-century, covering fifteen generations. There is also an ethnographic and
wine museums located in its 15th-century underground cellar. Winemaker Juan Valdelana oversees the 67 plots covering 100 hectares, including the 100-year-old vines from their Santa Cruz plot on a small slope east of Elciego.

Their 2016 Seda de Oro Reserva, aged 24 months in French oak and then 18 months aging in a bottle, received the gold medal as the best ‘Tempranillo in the World’ in the AWC International Competition Vienna 2021.

Tours are 12€ for adults, 6€ for children, and are available Monday-Saturday from 8:30 am to 6:30 pm and Sundays from 8:30 am until 2:30 pm. Email noturismo@bodegasvaldelana.com or call (+34) 620 217 411 / 945 606 055 to reserve a visit. Or contact them online.

If you want to stay in a 15th-century winery in Elciego, they offer 12 double rooms that are quite comfortable.

**Bodegas Diez-Caballero**

This estate winery with 25 hectares of tempranillo grapes under the direction of Antonio Diez-Caballero and oenologist Manuel Ruiz Hernandez. The winery, with its concrete tanks, produces a traditional Bordeaux Châteaux-style wine. The 40-year old winery was updated with new buildings and wine tasting room.

The wine critic James Suckling has awarded their 2015 Vendimia Seleccionada Reserva 94 points for 2020, while Robert Parker gives it 91 points. The 2014 Bodegas Diez-Caballero received 92 points in the 2020 edition of Parker’s Wine Advocate.
You can email info@diez-caballero.es, or call (+34) 944 630 938 / 679 968 007 for additional information or to request a private tour of the winery, which is located at Calle Barrihuelo, 73, in the Barrio de bodegas.

**Bodegas Fos**

Founded in 2006, the winery, surrounded by 20 hectares of Tempranillo, Graciano and Viura vineyards a couple of minutes drive south of Elciego, just off the A-4208, on Térmimo de Vialba. This beautifully refurbished winery, renovated both inside and out, the former Bodegas Palacios Sáez, was designed by architect Enrique Muga Francisco of Donostia-San Sebastian.

Guia Peñin awarded their 2016 Fos Baranda, 90% Tempranillo and 10% Graciano, 14 months in French oak, and by winemaker Michel Murua, 94 points in 2020. Tim Atkin awarded the 2017 Fos Baranda 93 points in Jan. 2020, with the 2016 vintage also receiving 93 points in 2019.

The winery is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. You can call (+34) 945 606 681, or contact them online, to request a visit.

**Viña Salceda**

The winery opened in 1969 on the Viña Salceda estate in the village for the purpose of producing only top-quality red wines from their small-yield vineyards; La Dehesilla, El Roquial and Valdefrailes, located on the southern and south-eastern slopes near the banks of the River Ebro, from which they only produced four red wines, and since 2018, one white wine.
Winemaker Cesar Muñoz’s full-bodied 2015 Vina Salceda Conde de la Salceda Reserva received 92 points from Tim Atkin, while the 2014 vintage was rated 94 points in Guía Peñín.

The winery is open for visits Monday-Saturday for everything from a quick tour and tasting lasting 45 minutes for 10€, to a private VIP experience for 25€/person, with a minimum of 2 people. Email info@vinasalceda.com, or call (+34) 945 606 125 / 649 844 024 to book your tour.

Pago de Larrea

Wine was always a tradition in the Larrea family, which in the 60s began to make their own wine at 'El Curita', a small pequeño calado that still exists today. Originally associated with Viña Salceda, the family started its own project in 2003 on their farm called La Romañíguez, at the southern end of the village, along the A-3210. You’ll pass the finca (farm) on your right if driving in from the south. They have converted the garden, a few steps away from the vineyard, into a wine bar where you can stop along the way and enjoy a glass of wine or have a tasting.

Their Caecus Verderón Blanco Fermentado en Barrica was named the best value white wine of the year in the Tim Atkin Rioja 2021 Special Report.

A one-hour visit to the winery with a tasting of 3 wines is 12€, or try a tasting in the vineyard for 20€/person with a minimum group of 4. A guided blind tasting is 18€. Email enoturismo@pagodelarrea.com or call (+34) 945 606 063 to reserve a tour and tasting.
**El Conjuro del Ciego**

Another small winery with some 4.5 hectares of 80 year-old Tempranillo vines, opened in 2008 in an existing hundred-year-old cellar hewn into the sandstone rock, where they installed a state of the art facility using the gravity system. Oenologists Ana Martín and José Hidalgo produce the excellent LUR Tempranillo, a traditional classic red Rioja. LUR in Basque means ‘Land’.

Their 2010 *El Conjuro del Ciego Lur Tempranillo*, aged in new French oak for 14 months, won several awards in 2015, including a gold medal at the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles. It was later rated 90 points by Guía Peñín in June 2017, with the 2012 *El Conjuro del Ciego Lur Tempranillo* receiving 88 points in June 2019 by Guía Peñín.

Contact Andoni Godoy by email at lur@elconjurodelciego.com or call (+34) 945 264 866 for additional information or to request a visit to the winery, which is located at Calle Barrihuelo, 77, in Elciego's centuries-old wine-making district. Normally closed to the public.

**Bodegas Luberri**

You’ll find this family winery just off the road to Villabuena de Álava, the A-33214, on Camino Rehoyos, where since 1991 Florentino Monje, born and raised in San Vicente de la Sonsierra, oversees the operation of the 28 hectare Luberri-Monje Amestoy vineyards.

The *Las Salinas Zuri*, a blend of Viura and Malvasía grapes, is their premium barrel fermented white, aged 45 days in French oak. Zuri means white in Basque. The *Las Salinas Beltza*, a single vineyard wine from 60-year old finca Carravalseca, is aged 12 months in new French oak and two months in concrete. Owner Florentino Martínez’s top wine is the *Cepas*
Viejas, made from 70-year old Tempranillo grapes, 16 months in oak and 18 months in a bottle before being released, received 90 points for the 2001 vintage.

The tasting room is open, so you can request a tour of the winery and tasting by emailing luberri@luberri.com, or by calling (+34) 945 606 010.
If you are driving from Laguardia to Fuenmayor, you cross the Ebro river from the Álavesa to La Rioja Alta through this historic village on a bend in the Ebro river. One of the youngest villages in the Rioja Álavesa, it dates from the middle of the 14th-century when it became an important river crossing for the Kingdom of Navarra. The name of the village refers to the passage of the boat used to cross the river. The bridge wasn’t built until 1939. There are many houses from the Renaissance and Baroque periods with well-preserved coats of arms, and family wineries in the barrio de las Bodegas, and a must stop on the Route of Wine of the Rioja Álavesa. The parish church, Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, dates from the 16th-century.
The village celebrates several festivals during the year including for their patron saint, San Bartolomé, which typically begins on 23 August and will last for 4 to 5 days. The festival opens with the Bajada de Bartolo, a doll resembling a farmer, is lowered from the balcony of the town hall, and the chupinazo/txupinazo, the firing of the rockets announcing the start of the fiesta. A harvest festival usually takes place around the 2nd week of November, and here is the traditional Quema del Judas, the burning of Judas, during Semana Santa. They also do a Tamborrada, the beating of the drums for San Prudencio, the patron saint of Álava, on the evening of 27 April.

If you are up for a walk, the village is on the Ebro River Nature Trail, Stage 15: Elciego - Oyón.

If you are going to be in Lapuebla de Labarca at lunchtime, then you should consider reserving a table at a restaurant in Fuenmayor or in Elciego.

Lapuebla Wineries Of Interest

- Bodega Córdoba Martínez
- Bodegas Loli Casado
- Bodega Don Balbino
- Bodegas Covila
- Bodegas Harresi
- Bodegas Familia Chavarri
- Bodega Casado Morales
- Bodegas Estraunza
- Bodegas Zugober
- Bodegas Garrido Medrano
- Bodegas Espada Ojeda
- Bodegas Jilaba
- Bodegas Muro
- Bodegas Pavoni

Bodega Córdoba Martínez S C

The family of the founder, José Rodríguez Córdoba, has, for generations, worked their 20 hectares of vineyards, with an average age of 45 years,
between Lapuebla de Labarca and Laguardia, producing artisanal wines and Arroniz EEOV in this special microclimate along the Ebro. The winery was updated and enlarged in 2006 and became a member of the ARBA in 2009.

The winery, now in the hand of José Carlos, produces three wines; a young red and young white under the José Córdoba brand, and Onardoa Crianza, a red blend of 95% Tempranillo and 5% Graciano, which spends 12 months in American oak and 6 months in the bottle before release.

If you want additional information or would like to visit to the winery, Contact them online, by email at info@bodegascordobamartinez.com, or call (+34) 945 627 212 (during the day) / 659 999 250 (in the evening).

**Bodegas Loli Casado**

This small winery with 25 hectares of vineyards, with 9 hectares over 70 years old, is now in the hands of the granddaughter Loli, a 3rd generation winemaker, and her husband. The winery started selling its own wines in 1982. Loli produces two brands; Jaun de Alzate, their our most traditional wine, and Polus, their most innovative line introduced in 2005, as well as an EEOV, Loli Casado AOVE, made from Arroniz olives. This year they are producing a Polus Late Harvest 2020, harvested in late Jan. 2021.

Tim Atkin awarded the 2018 Polus Tempranillo, a single vineyard wine from a 75-year old vineyard, 93 points in the Rioja 2021 Special Report. The 2014 Polus Reserva was awarded 92 points, as was the 2014 Jaun de Alzate Reserva. The 2017 Jaun de Alzate Crianza received 91 points.

Tours with the winemaker are available on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays, and include a tasting of 3 wines and their olive oil. The cost is
15€ with a minimum of 2 and maximum of 6. Call (+34) 945 607 096 / 678 041 484, or email loli@bodegaslolicasado.com to arrange your visit. This is a favorite of our friend Carol Gutiérrez of Thabuca Wine Tours in Labastida.

**Bodega Don Balbino**

The original winey was founded in 1924, but the family has farmed their land since their great-grandfather José Fernández starting making wine and Basque txakoli in the 18th-century. Now in the hands of the fourth generation with new projects and concepts, like barrel fermented white wine and single vineyard wines. The new winey at Camino de la Poveda, 34, with 40 hectares of vineyards, was built in 1973, the year Balbino Fernández was born.

Both Tim Atkin and Guía Peñín awarded the barrel fermented 2019 Don Balbino White 91 points for 2021. Atkins also gave the 2019 Don Balbino Tinto 90 points.

You can request a tour online, call Mila Fernández at (+34) 945 60 70 18, or email administracion@donbalbino.com to arrange a tour and tasting with or without a traditional lunch at the winery. You can also have your wine on the terrace. The full tour is available Monday-Friday for 50€/person, or on Saturdays for 60€/person. The quick tour is 18€ and is available Monday-Saturday at 11:00 am.

They also own the Casa Rural Ikustieder, overlooking the Ebro river and the vineyards on the Rioja Alta side of the river from Lapuebla de Labarca.
**Bodegas Covila**

This micro cooperative was originally founded in 1989 by 65 families farming a total of 25 hectares of vineyards. With a philosophy of “Zaindu maite duzun hori”, Basque for “take care of what you love”, the winery now has 22 members and 250 hectares of vineyards in plots ranging from Lapuebla to Laguardia and Elciego, and produce an excellent selection of wines including their signature wine, *Pagos de Labarca*, Tempranillo 100%, that spends 18 months in oak.

Tim Atkin rated the 2016 *Pagos de Labarca AEX* 92 points in his 2019 Rioja Report, and gave the 2017 *Bodegas Covila II Crianza* 90 points in Jan. 2020. As part of CSC Wine Marketing Group; Bodegas Ainzón (DOP Campo de Borja) and Bodegas San Tirso (Kripan, Álavesa), together they produce 3,100,000 bottles a year, exporting to more than 20 countries worldwide.

The winery, at Camino del Soto, 26, is open Monday-Friday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, Saturdays from 10:00 am to noon. Contact them at (+34) 945 627 232, or email bodegas@covila.es to arrange a visit with a tour and tasting.

**Bodegas Harresi**

Founded in 1983, the bodega is located in "las bodegas", an area surrounded by ancient stone openings and well-cared for vineyards on the road to Elciego. In 1994, Txutxi Muro, who after 25 years as a co-founder of Cooperativa Vitivinícola de Lapuebla de Labarca (*Bodegas Covila*), and former Mayor of Lapuebla, opened his new winery Harresi (wall in Basque) and now has 12 hectares of vineyards in Elciego, Assa and Laguardia, from which he makes his "vendimia seleccionada", selected vintage wine. The winery is another member of ABRA.
The winery is normally not open to visitors, but there are exceptions. You can contact Txutxi Muro at contacto@bodegasharresi.com, or call him at (+34) 945 607 165.

**Bodegas Familia Chavarri**

The Chávarri family began in the wine business when their great-great grandfather Francisco Chávarri began producing wines from his vineyards in Laguardia, Elciego and Lapuebla de Labarca, and was the first to register wines with the Rioja Álavesa Bottling Register (1882). The family, now with wineries in the Ribera del Duero, Rías Baixas and Rueda, is headed by Ruth Chavarri, a forth-generation winemaker. The fifth is now in the wings.

Wine Enthusiast rated the classic 2012 Larchago Reserva 90 points in 2019, with Wine Spectator giving it 89 points. Then in 2021, Wine Spectator awarded the 2006 Izarbe Gran Reserva, 100% Tempranillo from the oldest vineyards in Laguardia, aged for 24 months in Allier oak and 36 months in bottle, 94 points. Izarbe means ‘Under the Stars’ in Basque.

Call (+34) 945 607 173, email info@familiachavarri.com, or contact them online for additional information or to request a visit to the cellar.

**Bodega Casado Morales**

Three generations of the Casado Morales family have worked the winery and their 50 hectares of vineyards since it’s founding in 1925 and is now under the direction of the brothers Joseba and Javier. The cellar holds 1000 barrels of American (300) and French (700) oak, which are replaced every 5 years. The family offers a wide range of red, white and rosé wines, as well as their own brand extra virgin olive oil from Arróniz olives.
Their 2017 *Laderas Sur de Casado Morales*, among the most expensive Riojas, produced from the grapes of a 135 year-old vineyard, was awarded 92 points in the Rioja 2021 Special Report. The 2011 *Casado Morales Seleccion Privada*, received 92 points from Wine Enthusiast in July 2018. Guided visits to the wine cellar and vineyards are available by calling the brothers at (+34) 945 607 017, by emailing visitas@casadomorales.es, or requesting a visit online.

**Bodegas Estraunza**

This medium-sized family winery, where craftsmanship takes precedence over production, opened in 1990 when they produced their first Crianza, *Sloar de Estraunza* in 1992 from the 1989 harvest. The first reserva was produced in 1995. The cellar holds 1700 oak barrels.


Tours and tastings at the winery at Avenida La Poveda, 25, are available by requesting a visit online, by calling (+34) 945 627 245, or emailing contacto@bodegasestraunza.com.

**Bodegas Zugober**

The wine-making family with its roots in Jerez dating back to 1898, were captivated by the rugged terrain and old vines of the Rioja Álavesa. Eduardo Gomez Palma and Maribel Bernardo, who studied viticulture in Bordeaux, opened the bodega in 1987 to produce their own estate wines from the four plots of land, a total of 20 hectares they purchased; Finca
Sierra Carbón, at an altitude of 612 meters in Laguardia. The 40 year old vineyard, Finca Zarzamochuelo lies halfway between Lapuebla de Labarca and Laguardia, Valle Andrés, the youngest of the vineyards at 20, borders Finca Zarzamochuelo, and is south-east facing, the 30 year old vineyard of Viña Assa is at the end of Lanciego, running alongside the Ebro river. The bodega is now in the hands of their sons Manuel and Kerman. Their wines are called ‘Belezos’, which were the old tools used for the harvest.

Besides their other awards, Tim Atkin awarded six of their wines 90 to 94 points for 2020, as Guía Peñín did in 2019. The 2013 Belezos Reserva, 100% Tempranillo, was awarded 92 points from Tim Atkin in Jan. 2020. The Belezos Gran Reserva is only produced when there is an exceptional vintage. Decanter WWA gave a silver medal to the 2014 La Malgranda, 100% Viura, aged 20 months in 500 liter French oak barrels.

The winery is open for visits Monday-Saturday by appointment. You can call (+34) 945 627 228 or email contacto@belezos.com to schedule a visit.

**Bodegas Garrido Medrano**

Originally founded by Salustiano Medrano in 1949, was one of those small typical Rioja wineries where the young wines were sold along the roadside. The new bodega, with 20 hectares of vineyards, opened in 1985 and is now under the direction of the 4th-generation of the Medrano family; Álvaro Garrido, along with winemaker Goyo Garrido González. They also a member of ABRA, Asociación de Bodegas de Rioja Alavesa.

The handcrafted El sueño de Patricia, a special wine named for their friend Patricia del Valle from Madrid who died in a motorcycle accident in 2011, is made from grapes selected from a one-hectare vineyard near
Lapuebla. Ferment with dry ice, it’s aged in new French oak for 12 months.

Their *Goyo Garrido 2016*, 95% Tempranillo and 5% Viura, fermented in a traditional open concrete vat, was awarded a Silver Bacchus in 2017. Wine Enthusiast rated the *2015 Viña Avelina Crianza* 86 points, and Tim Atkin giving it 89 points, in 2019.

Email info@bodegasgarridomedrano.com, or call (+34) 675 717 269 / 945 607 138 to request additional information or request a tour and tasting.

**Bodegas Espada Ojeda**

This small family winery, located in the center of the village just above the bridge if you are arriving from La Rioja on the LR-251/A-3216, was founded in 1986, now involves three generations. Headed up by Ascen and Dani, it produces quality wines from their 25 hectares of vineyards, all located in Lapuebla. The small cellar holds 23 oak barrels for aging. The winery now has a Wine Bar in addition to the tasting room, where you can stop in and enjoy a glass of wine.

Tours of the winery are available by reservations. Call (+34) 945 627 349 or email bodegas@espadaojeda.com.

**Bodegas Jilaba**

This classic French-style wine estate with four buildings overlooking the village is located to the north of Lapuebla on the road to Elciego. The cellar, with a beautiful chapel honoring the patron saint of Lapuebla de Labarca, San Bartolomé, holds 600 American and French oak barrels. The tasting room in the “Belle Epoque” glazed building overlooks the gardens and part of their 25 hectares of century-old vineyards. Owner and
winemaker, Luis Ángel Casado, is a founding member of the ABRA, the Asociación de Bodegas de Rioja Alavesa, the Rioja Alavesa Winery Association.

The winery is open daily from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and in the afternoons on Monday-Saturday from 4:00 to 8:00 pm. Guided tours of the winery start at 10€/person. Call (+34) 945 627 256 / 607 455 097 or email bodega@jilaba.es to arrange a tour and tasting. You can also visit the original bodega with its 400 year old cellar.

**Bodegas Muro**

The family's vineyards of Tempranillo, Graciano, Maturana, Viura and Macabeo, located in Lapuebla de Labarca and Laguardia. With an average age of 35 years, they are oriented to the south at between 450 and 570 meters elevation. The family was one of the first winegrowers in Lapuebla de Labarca who sold part of their harvest, bottled, since 1892. In 1985, they replaced the old concrete tanks with stainless steel, then later lined the tanks with wood. Originally called Bodegas Miguel Ángel Muro, they changed their name to Bodegas Muro in 2020.

ABC 2021 Guía rated the *Apolinar’s Dream*, 90% Tempranillo, from a 120-year old single vineyard near 600 meters elevation, 94 points, and their *Peña del Escorpión*, 60% Tempranillo, 93 points in November 2020. Decanter WWA 2020 awarded a silver medal and 92 points to the 2016 *Amenital*, and a bronze medal and 88 points to the 2014 *Bodegas Muro Reserva*.

Guided tours of the vineyards and winery are available by calling (+34) 627 434 726, or emailing info@bodegasmuro.es.
The family owns a guest house, **Pichón Etxea**, in Lapuebla de Labarca, that is perfect for families who would like to stay in the area.

**Bodegas Pavoni**

The Juan Carlos López de Lacalle family has a long history of winemaking in Lapuebla de Labarca and finally decided to open their own winery in 1995 in a 17th-century bodega located in the area known as "las bodegas", the old quarter, at Calle Bodegas, 41. A member of the **ABRA**, the winery was renovated in the 1980s and again in 1991. Their 18 hectares of vineyards include 3 hectares of trellis trained vines, from which they produce four wines.

You can contact Ion López de Lacalle at ion@bodegaspavoni.com, email bodegaspavoni@gmail.com, or call (+34) 609 905 871 to arrange a guided tour and tasting of their small family winery. Small groups only.
Cenicero

If you continue south on the A-3210/LR-211 from Elciego, past Viña Salceda (Alavesa), you will arrive at this historic village along the southern bank of the bend in the Ebro river, where you will find two of the oldest bodegas in La Rioja.

The village, first settled sometime during the third or second millennia BC, was occupied by the Arabs until 740, when Alfonso I of Asturias expelled the Muslims from villages in the north during the early years of the reconquest of Spain. During years of continuous warfare in what was a no man’s land, the Muslims returned to reconquer parts of the land before Sancho Garcés (Sancho III) de Navarra, one of the first great patrons of the Way of Saint James, reconquered Viguera, Cenicero and...
Nájera, making them, at that time, part of the kingdom of Navarra. The name, Cenicero, refers to either the place in which coal was made or the ashes left over from the shepherds bonfires. The medieval settlement of "Los Paletones" lies to the west, on a hill above the Najerilla river.

If you think you will be in Cenicero around lunchtime, then you should consider reserving a table at a restaurant in Fuenmayor or in Elciego.

**Cenicero Wineries Of Interest**

- Marqués de Cáceres  
- Bodegas Riojanas  
- Bodegas Mazuela  
- Bodegas Valentín Pascual  
- Bodegas Tritium  
- Bodegas Murillo Viteri  
- Bodegas Consejo de la Alta  
- Finca Cienvacas  
- Bodegas Larraz  
- Bodegas Sáenz de Santamaria

**Marqués de Cáceres**

Enrique Forner, who had learned the wine trade from his father, returned to La Rioja in 1968 after being exiled in France during the Civil War and in 1970 founded this notable winery, which is now under the direction of Cristina Forner.

The *2016 Crianza* was awarded 90 points in 2020 by Tim Atkin and the Wine Enthusiast, which also named it the best buy. James Suckling gave the *2015 Gaudium* 94 points, the *2016 Crianza* 91 points and named the *2012 Gran Reserva* one of the top 100 wines of Spain in 2020. The Rioja 2021 Special Report awarded 95 points to the signature wine, the *2018 Generación MC*, with James Suckling rating it 93 points.

The 1-1/2 hour long tour and tasting is priced at 15€/person and is available by reservation Monday-Friday at 11:00 am and 4:00 pm,
Saturdays at 11:00 am, 1:00 and 4:00 pm, and on Sundays at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm. You can request a reservation online, by calling (+34) 941 454 744 / 626 653 782, or by emailing reservas@marquesdecaceres.com.

**Bodegas Riojanas**

This is another one of the Rioja’s centenarian wineries, founded in 1890 by the Frias Artacho family and Rafael Carreras. The winery controls more than 300 hectares of vineyards in Cenicero, San Vicente de la Sonsierra and other nearby villages.

The *2011 Albina Essencia Reserva*, a blend of Tempranillo and Graciano, received 98 points from Guía Gourmets, 93 points from Guía Peñín and Robert Parker. In September 2020 James Suckling rated the *2018 Monte Real Crianza*, 92 points, with Wine Spectator giving it 90 points. The *2011 Monte Real Gran Reserva* received 93 points from, Tim Atkin and Wine Enthusiast in 2020, with the 2012 vintage receiving 93 points from Wine Spectator. The *2017 Monte Real Crianza* won the gold medal for ‘The Best of Spain’ at the Wine Challenge Ireland 2021, and the *2017 Marqués de Peñamonte Colección Privada* picked up the gold at Mundus Vini 2021 in Germany.

Guided visits with 3 wines and an aperitivo are available at 15€/person, children 6€. There is also a wine shop where you can taste a wide selection of wines if you do not want to do a tour. You can reserve online, call (+34) 941 454 050 or email info@bodegasriojanas.com to arrange a tour and tasting.

**Bodegas Mazuela**

Manuel García, born in the vineyards, opened his own winery after 12 years as a manager of a cooperative and private winery, Bodegas Marqués...
de Terán, so that he could work the family vineyards and make his own wines. The cellar, at Ctra. Laguardia, the LR-211, next to the Marqués de Cáceres complex, currently holds 160 barrels of new French oak, with the wines being racked twice a year.

The 2014 La Hoya de Mazuela Reserva, 100% Tempranillo from 50-year old vines at 690 meters elevation, is aged 40 months in French oak and was rated 91 points in Guía Peñín, 90 points by Tim Atkin, in 2020.

Visits, by appointment only, are 15€/person and can be arranged by by emailing manuel@bodegasmazuela.com, or calling him at (+34) 607 548 054 / 941 455 118.

**Bodegas Valentín Pascual**

It was in 1885 that Don Felipe Lagunilla San Martín produced his first wines, five generations later it is one of the last wineries in La Rioja that continues the traditional treading of the grapes barefoot, fermenting them in a lago de piedra, a stone vat in a 15th-century cave behind an arched stone openings eight meters deep.

If you would like to experience the traditional methods of making wine, a tradition that has nearly disappeared, and artisan vermouth, guided tours are available daily. Call (+34) 941 454 053 or email José Maria info@bodegasvalentinpascual.com to reserve a visit to their small family winery at Plaza de España, 8, in the old quarter of Cenicero.

**Bodegas Tritium**

Instead of building a new winery from scratch, the family decided on a total renovation an existing 16th-century winery, with its original ashlar stone lagar and wine press, in Cenicero’s old town at Avenida de la
libertad, 9, with spectacular results. The family, the 5th-generation, owns 8 hectares of vineyards in Cenicero and Tricio ranging in age from 90 to 113 years.

The 2017 Tritium Mazuelo, 100% Mazuelo (Carignan), aged for 15 months in French oak, with a limited production of only 400 bottles, received 91 points from Tim Atkin.

Tours are available daily at 11:00 am, 1:00 pm and 5:30 pm. The standard 90-minute tour, with a tasting of 4 wines and an aperitivo, is 15€/person. The premium 2-hour visit to the bodega and vineyards is 39€/person. The 7-hour getaway tour is 92€/person (group of 8 only). You can book a tour online, or you call (+34) 629 152 822 / 627 410 801 for reservations.

**Bodegas Murillo Viteri**

This small family winery is the result of six generations of love, work and passion, since great-great-grandfather Ruperto Rubio first ventured to make and market wines in the “Las Erres” winery, an architectural jewel steeped in history, and still part of the family. The new winery, built a few years ago, was one of the first in Europe to provide 100% accessibility. The vineyards; Los Valles, Tahola and Valdegún, are located in Cenicero and Fuenmayor at an elevation of 466 meters with an average age of 35.

The limited edition 2014 Murillo Viteri Reserva, 85% Tempranillo, 10% Mazuelo, 5% Graciano, is from vineyards over 40 years old, is aged for 24 months in oak, 12 months in concrete tanks and rested for 18 months in a bottle before release.

90-minute guided tours, with a tasting of 4 wines, are available by reserving online or by calling Iñaki or Patxi at (+34) 944 495 839. You can
also email them at imurillo@bodegasmurilloviteri.com if you have any questions.

**Bodegas Consejo de la Alta**

Don Hipólito Bañuelos began in the wine business in 1846 when he set up a small cellar in Briones to make his own wine. The winery, now in Cenicero and under the direction of Pedro Eguizábal Oter, was born in 1990. Today the wines, from the 140 hectares of vineyards, are overseen by winemaker Ignacio Fernández Lacuesta, and aged in 2500 French and American ozone-sanitized oak barrels.

Their 2014 *Consejo de la Alta Cata de Consejero Tempranillo* was awarded 91 points by Wine Enthusiast in 2019 and 89 points by Tim Atkin in January 2020. The 2011 *Consejo de la Alta Reserva* won a gold medal at the International Wine Challenge in Brussels in 2020, awarded 92 points by Wine Enthusiast and 90 points by Guía Peñín.

The winery, at Avenida de Fuenmayor, s/n, LR-211, is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm, closed weekends. You can contact them at (+34) 941 455 005 or email administracion@consejodelaalta.com for additional information or to request a visit to the winery.

**Finca Cienvacas**

Carlota Simón and her winemaker brother, César Simón Echevarría, produce their wines from the family’s 20 hectares of 60-year old vineyards divided into 9 plots (eight from Tempranillo and one from Graciano) in Cenicero once worked by their grandparents. They opened the new winery, “*the farm with 100 cows*”, in 2007 on the banks of the Ebro River. The *Finca Cienvacas Tempranillo*, produced from 40-year old vineyards, was fermented in open vats.
You can contact Carlota at rioja@fincacienvacas.com or call (+34) 620 768 460 for additional information.

**Bodegas Larraz**

The family purchased ‘La Casa de los Navarros’, an old farm on the right bank of the Ebro, between the villages of Cenicero and Huércanos, which once had livestock, in 1940 and began working the land. In 1974 Carlos Piserra, the father, planted Tempranillo grapes to give more value to the farm, selling their highly valued grapes in bulk to other wineries in the area. It wasn’t until 2003 that they started producing their artisan wine, “Caudum Bodegas Larraz”, from a 1/2 hectare plot out of their 17 hectares of vineyards. Despite its small size, you will find Caudum on the menus of such prestigious restaurants as Arzak, Venta Moncalvillo and El Portal del Echaurren.

Their first vintage in 2007 was a limited release to a maximum of 3000 bottles; 600 bottles of Caudum Selección Especial and 2400 bottles of Caudum, which is aged in French oak Allier barrels from Radoux Tonnellerie (50%) and American oak Tonnellerie Victoria (50%) for 12 months, racking at 6 months. Their 2017 Caudum Bodegas Larraz (3,744 bottles) was named one of the first Viñedos Singulares red wines in the Rioja, and receiving 93 points.

You can contact Carlos Piserra, the son, and a doctor, by calling (+34) 639 728 581, info@bodegaslarraz.com, or contact him online for additional information, or to arrange a visit to the winery.

**Bodegas Sáenz de Santamaria**

Although the family has a long history in the Rioja of being cosecheros, harvesters, the winery didn’t open until 1993 when the family decided to
make their own wines, producing their first vintage in 1994. The winery is located about half-way between Cenicero and Torremontalbo along the N-232. Their 60 hectares of vineyards, the oldest, Viñedo Rondan, dating from 1886, are spread out behind and above the winery, extending as far south as Huércanos. The cellar holds 1800 barrels of American and French oak and a bottle storage for aging wine.

The 2015 Sierra Cantabria Coleccion Privada was rated 92 points by Wine Spectator and 94 points by Tim Atkin in 2018. The 2015 Rondan 1904 Reserva, aging 18 months in oak, then resting 3 years in a bottle, was one of 44 Spanish wines to receive a gold medal at the Challenge International du Vin 2020. Thirteen of the gold medal winners were from the Rioja.

You can visit the winery Monday-Friday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and on Saturdays from 10:30 am to 2:00 pm. Sundays by appointment only. You can email José at bodegas@bodegassaenzdesantamaria.com or call (+34) 941 454 008 / 941 454 063 to arrange a visit.
Laserna

A few kilometers southeast of Laguardia on the Laguardia-Logroño highway, the N-232a, you’ll find this small hamlet in the Alavesa is not to be missed. First settled during the Roman Empire, it sits on the banks of the Ebro river, on a meander near the ruins of the historic Mantible Bridge, *Puente romano de Mantible*, and the ruins of the 14th-century Castle of Assa.

Laserna Winery Of Interest

- Señorio de las Viñas
- Bodegas Hermanos Fernández
- Bodegas Viñedos del Contino
- Bodegas Viña Real
- Villota

*The large wine Vats in the cellar of Bodegas Contino*
Señorío de las Viñas
The bodega is located in the center of the hamlet on Calle Mayor since the end of the 19th-century, where four generations of the Viteri family have dedicated themselves to the culture of wine in their state-of-the-art facilities. With 60 hectares of vineyards in the Alavesa, 4 are dedicated to white grapes, mainly Viura, and all are harvested by hand. The cellar holds 500 barrels of French, Hungarian and American oak for the aging of their Reserva and Gran Reserva wines.

Tours, with a tasting of 4 wines, is available for 17€/person, or 20€ for a tasting of 6 wines. And if you are thinking of spending a few days in the area, they also offer 6 double rooms in their rural guesthouse, with a pool. The restaurant is open to the public. Call (+34) 945 621 110 / 635 485 083 / 635 485 558, or email the family at bodega@senoriodelasvinas.com to arrange a visit.

Bodegas Hermanos Fernández
The family winery that Constancio Fernández started in the 1940s can be found at Plaza Nueva, 3, as you enter the village. The new winery where they produce their Castillo Laserna Crianza, 8 COPAS, Viña El Vedao and Elatus wines opened in 1990.

Generally not open to the public, but you can call (+34) 945 621 103 or email info@castillolaserna.com / castillolaserna@hotmail.com for additional information.

Bodegas Viñedos del Contino
This was the first château (1973) belonging to C.V.N.E. in the Rioja. The estate dates from the 14th-century, named for the officer in charge of a
troop of one hundred soldiers tasked with protecting the royal family "de contino", from the times of the Catholic Monarchs. The vineyards cover 62-hectares of prime farmland along the sweeping bend in the Ebro River, and are protected by the Cerro de la Masa to the north and the high banks of the Ebro River to the south. The combination of soils, Atlantic-Mediterranean climate and technique have made Contino a premiere wine for more than 30 years, and a pioneer of the single vineyard wine concept in the Rioja Alavesa.

The Contino Reserva 2016 was awarded 95 points by Tim Atkin in the Rioja 2020 Special Report. The 2017 Contino Reserva was awarded 92 points by Guía Peñín in June 2020.

The 90-minute gourmet wine tastings, available in Spanish, English or French, are given Monday-Saturday for 25€/person. Tours during July and August are from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. You can add lunch to your tour for an additional 45€, with a minimum group of 8. The store and wine bar are open from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm. Book your reservations online or call (+34) 941 304 809. The winery is closed during December.

**Bodegas Viña Real**

You’ll find this spectacular Bordeaux-based Philippe Mazières designed winery belonging to Compañía Vinícola del Norte de España (C.V.N.E.) on the north side of the Cerro de la Masa, along the road to Logroño. Inaugurated by the King of Spain Juan Carlos I in 2004, the winery covers nearly 30,000 square meters and was designed by French architect Philippe Mazières and is one of the most impressive avant-garde wineries in the Rioja. Sitting near the top of the hill, it is constructed of red cedar in the form of a huge wine fermenting vat, measuring 56 meters in
diameter and 16 meters tall. Its vineyards flow down the hillside toward the Ebro River.

The Viña Real Gran Reserva 2014 received 95 points in the Tim Atkin’s Rioja 2020 Special Report.

Two hour long tours in English are available by reservations at 10:00 am Monday-Saturday and 10:30 am on Sundays. The price is 15€ for adults, 5€ for children. You can add lunch at the winery and a tour of the vineyards. Email visitas@cvne.com, call (+34) 941 304 809, or reserve online.

Villota
In 1930 Ricardo Pérez Pérez returned to the Rioja after spending several years in Chile, settling in the San Rafael, a 175-hectare estate, and started growing grapes. In 1973 Ricardo Pérez Calvet and his son Ricardo Pérez Villota, joined the C.V.N.E. group, bringing about Viñedos del Contino. In 2013 Pérez Villotas left the group and started Viña del Lentisco, which is now in the hands of his daughter, Carmen Pérez Garrigues.

The 2017 Villota Selección Tinto and 2016 Selección Blanco were recently awarded 90 and 93 Parker points respectively, with the Viña Gena awarded 94 points by Tim Atkin, 93 points by Parker and 90 points by Guía Peñín.

While the vineyards are in Laserna, the winery is at Avenida de la Poveda, 16, in nearby Lapuebla de Labarca. Villota was named the outstanding winery of the month of October 2020 in the Spanish Wine Lover by Yolanda Ortiz de Arri. You can contact Carmen at info@vinovillota.com, or call (+34) 606 849 634 for more information, or to request a visit.
Laguardia Barrio El Campillar

Barrio El Campillar is few minutes drive southeast of Laguardia on the N-232a, on the way to Logroño, just before reaching the tiny hamlet of Assa along the Ebro river.

Barrio El Campillar Wineries Of Interest

- Bodegas Gómez de Segura
- Bodegas Viña Emiliano

Bodegas Gómez de Segura

You’ll find the winery, which opened in 1948, on the left bank of the Río Assa where the third generation of the Gómez de Segura family harvests the grapes from 50 hectares of goblet trained vines, 90% Tempranillo,
nestled between the Sierra de Cantabria and the Ebro River. There are 10 concrete vats 7 meters deep in the original winery, which was renovated in 2009, adding 15 new stainless steel tanks.

Their 2014 Finca Raton Reserva Tempranillo, aged in stainless steel vats and fermented French Allier oak for 12 months, followed by 24 months’ aging in the bottle before release, received 90 points from Guía Peñín in 2019. The 2015 Finca Raton Reserva Tempranillo, was awarded 94 points by Wine Enthusiast in 2021 and 91 points in the Rioja 2021 Special Report.

Call (+34) 945 600 227 or email info@gomezdesegura.com to arrange a tour and tasting.

**Bodegas Viña Emiliano**

On the other side of the highway, between the Río Assa and the Ebro river, in the shade of a thousand year old Holm Oak, sits the estate of Mayorazgo El Redondo de Assa. The two-story castle-like ashlar stone winery was built on a former quarry along the bank of the Ebro dating back some 800 years. Acquired in 1980 by Juan José Urarte Espinosa in 1980, it is now in the hands of the 4th-generation. Their 40 hectares of vineyards are distributed between the Ebro and Sierra de Cantabria. They are another member of ABRA.

You can schedule a visit to the finca by calling (+34) 945 600 102 or emailing vinaemiliano@vinaemiliano.com.
The “calao” aging cellar at Finca Valpiedra

Fuenmayor

This village of some 3000 inhabitants lying a few minutes drive south of Elciego, across the Ebro River, 12 kilometers west of Logroño, is filled with historic palaces like the 18th-century baroque-style Palace of Fernández Bazán, a Knight of the Golden Fleece (1797), *Orden del Toisón de Oro*, the Palace of the Marquises of Terán and El Portalón, the 18th-century Renaissance palace that serves as the city hall, as well as several mansions such as the 16th-century Manor house, Casa Navajas, in the Plaza del Coso. It is also one of the most important wine-producing villages in the Rioja Alta.

The village celebrates the *Fiestas de La Cruz*, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, around September 14, with the festival lasting for several
days of music, fireworks and a taste of the local gastronomy. The festival of San Juan is held on June 24 to celebrate the start of summer. *Los Marchos*, the Marches, happens the night of December 7 when bonfires are lit in the streets around the city and the locals celebrate the time they deceived the French army during the 19th-century War of Independence, with local Fuenmayor wine and roasted potatoes offered by the city council. Since 1991 the village has also hosted *La Feria de Artesanía y Vino*, a 3-day craft and wine fair which begins on the Friday before July 25, the day of Santiago. And *Bodegas Altanza* offers a *Vendimia gourmet*, a daily harvest celebration that lasts from late September to December 22.

*El Camino Ignaciano*, the route Ignacio de Loyola traveled in 1522 which goes from his birthplace in a village near the small town of Azpeitia (Guipúzcoa) and ends in the Cave of St. Ignatius in Manresa. The 7th of a total of 27 stages of the camino leads from *Laguardia to Navarrete*, a distance of 19,6 kms through Lapuebla de Labarca and runs through the streets of Fuenmayor. It’s about a 4 hour walk that takes you through the vineyards.

For lunch in Fuenmayor, we highly recommend *Restaurante Alameda*, with two Repsol suns in 2021. Closed Sunday night and Mondays. If you can’t reserve a table there, then try *Mesón Chuchi*, or try *Mesón El Escudo*, part of *Bodegas Las Erres*.
Fuenmayor Wineries Of Interest

• Finca Valpiedra
• Bodegas Marqués de Arviza
• Viños Zearra
• Bodegas Thalion
• Bodegas Vallemayor
• Marqués de Tomares

• Bodegas Heras Cordó
• Bodegas Las Erres
• Bodegas Montecillo
• Bodegas Altanza
• Bodegas LAN

Finca Valpiedra

This gorgeous chateau-style winery sits on 80 hectares of vineyards in a beautiful setting at a bend in the Ebro river between Fuenmayor and Cenicero, and a few minutes south of Elciego as the crow flies. Opened in 1999 by the Martínez Bujanda Family, it is the only winery in the Rioja belonging to the Asociación Grandes Pagos de España. The winery also has an outstanding collection of paintings by Muñoz Vera and López Garrido in their art gallery. The calao, or aging cellar, is just stunning, a cathedral-like cellar holding 4,000 French oak barrels, which they change every three years.

The Petra de Valpiedra 2016 received 92 points from Robert Parker for 2020, while the Finca Valpiedra Reserva 2012 received 91 points.

Tours, including a 4x4 tour of the vineyards, are available Tuesday-Saturday from 10:30 and 11:30 am, and on Mondays at 11:30 am. The Finch Tour, through the vineyards and a tasting of 2 wines, is 22€/person. The Cantos Tour is 15€, or you can just do a tasting of 3 wines for 9€. For reservations call (+34) 941 450 878 / 628 046 505, email lvillegas@bujanda.com, or book your tour online.
**Bodegas Marques de Arviza**
The second oldest winery in the Rioja, established 1874, was constructed over more than 500 meters of original 16th and 17th century *calados*, underground cellars. They produce six premium wines, including a premium red reserva, and high quality crianza, from manually sorted hand picked grapes from their 45 hectares of vineyards, most of which are located in the village of Clavijo in the Iregua Valley at 600 meters altitude.

The *2016 Marqués de Arviza Selección Especial*, 100% Tempranillo from vineyards located at 620 meters and aged 18 months in french oak, was awarded 91 points by Guía Peñín in June 2019 and 92 points in 2020. The *El Tractor Vendimia Seleccionada*, 75% Tempranillo and 25% Graciano, also received 92 points from Guía Peñín.

Visits can be arranged to the winery by calling (+34) 941 451 245, or emailing rrpp@marquesdearviza.es.

**Bodegas Pertalanda Viños Zearra**
Ignacio Pertalanda Uria opened his family winery in 1983, culminating a long, rich family history in the world of gastronomy and good wine, at Avenida La Estación, 40.

The *2014 Marqués de Zearra Crianza* received 90 points from Decanter in a tasting in November 2019.

Visits to the winery and vineyards are possible by calling Josune (+34) 941 450 462, or by emailing info@zearra.com. The price will be determined by the wines you are interested in tasting.
**Bodegas Thalion**
Pedro, Gerardo and Alberto, the third generation of the Ojeda winemaking family, manages 36 hectares of vineyards in Uruñuela, Huercanos, Cenicero and around Fuenmayor, along the Ebro and Najerilla Rivers, running from 400 to 800 meters elevation. The small family winery, which produces five wines; three reds and two whites, is located at Calle San Cristobal 77.

You can contact them online, by email info@bodegasthalion.com, or call (+34) 941 450 089 for additional information or to request a tour and tasting.

**Bodegas Vallemayor**
The Pérez Foncea family-owned winery was opened in the late 19th-century, but they didn’t start selling their own bottled wines until 1984. The family owns 70 hectares of vineyards and manages another 60 hectares. The cellar holds 3,000 Bordeaux-type barrels, 1800 American oak and 1200 French oak, which are replaced every 4 to 5 years.

Decanter awarded the 2016 Crianza 90 points in 2020.

Visits to the winery and vineyards (weather permitting) are available by calling (+34) 941 450 142 or by emailing vallemayor@vallemayor.com.

**Marqués de Tomares**
Don Román Montaña, who had been working the land since 1886, opened the family winery in 1910 when he began producing his own wines, becoming the founder of a saga of master artisans in wines, aging them in the 15th-century cellar carved by hand out of rock. Now managed by the third generation, the winery, part of the Premium Fincas Group, can be
found off the N-232 at Avenida Ciudad de Cenicero. The nearly 106 hectares of family owned vineyards, many of which more than 100 years old, are in Haro, Fuenmayor and the surrounding areas. The cellar, built in 1989 and undated with the latest technology, has a capacity of 650,000 bottles of reservas and private reservas and has a dining room for seating up to 60 people.

The 2016 Marques de Tomares Reserva, 80% Tempranillo, 15% Graciano and 5% Mazuelo, aged for 24 months in French and American oak with racking every 6 months and a minimum of 30 months in bottle, was awarded 89 points by Guía Peñín in June 2020. Decanter rated the “insanely valued” 2017 Crianza, 90% Tempranillo, 7% Mazuelo and 3% Graciano, 12 months in American and French, racked at 6 months and 14 months in bottle, 89 points from a tasting in November 2019.

The winery is open daily for visits, including during the fall harvest. Email info@marquesdetomares.com or call (+34) 941 451 129 to request a tour and tasting.

**Bodegas Heras Cordón**

The original winery opened in the 19-century in the Heras Cordón family’s hometown of Lapuebla de Labarca, across the Ebro river in the Rioja Alavesa, when the wine was meant only for local consumption. Then in the 90s they obtained 70 hectares vineyards north of Fuenmayor and decided in 1995 to built a new winery, which opened in 1997 and is managed by the three brothers. In 2005 they added a private dining room and social lounge for club members. The family vineyards, the 70 hectares they own and another 60 hectares they manage, are located in
the Rioja Alta; Cenicero, Fuenmayor and Navarrete, an Rioja Alavesa; Laguardia, Elciego and Lapuebla de Labarca.

Their full-bodied 2015 *Heras Cordón Expresión*, 90% Tempranillo, aged for 22 months in French oak, was awarded 96 points in 2020 with the 2015 *Heras Cordón Reserva*, 90% Tempranillo, 5% Mazuelo and 5% Graciano, aged 18 months in French and American oak, receiving 95 points for 2019 from Tim Atkin.

Sitting along the road to Lapuebla de Labarca at km 2, the winery is open for visits Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm and in the afternoon from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. A guided visit to the vineyards and the ancient underground cellar, accompanied by the sommelier is priced at 70€/person with a minimum group of 4. You can contact them online, by sending an email to the winery at calidad@herascordon.com, or by calling (+34) 941 451 413 to request a visit or additional information.

**Bodegas Las Erres**

Ramón and Ramón, a father and son team, after years of pairing Riojan gastronomy with wine at their restaurant *Mesón El Escudo*, decided in 1991 to open their own winery in the heart of the Rioja in a century-old bodega at Plaza de Félix Azpilicueta, 11, in Fuenmayor.

Tour of the winery and tastings are available by appointment by calling (+34) 941 450 105, or emailing laserres@bodegaslaseres.com.

**Bodegas Montecillo**

Founded in 1874, the third oldest winery in the Rioja is now part of the Osborne family. In January 2016, the Wine Advocate awarded their *Montecello Reserva 2010*, with 24 months of aging in American and French
oak, a solid 90 points. Wine Enthusiast also awarded 90 points to the Montecello Crianza 2016 and placed it at the top of the list of the best buys for 2021. The winery is located a 5-minute drive south of Fuenmayor, just off the Fuenmayor-Navarrete road, the LR-137.

The 2013 Montecillo Rioja Reserva was rated Number 25 on Wine Spectator's Top 100 list for 2019, making it the second best wine in the world from the D.O.Ca. Rioja. Eight Montecillo wines received from 91 to 94 points in the 2021 Guía ADN de Verema, the largest community of wine lovers in Spain, with the 2015 Viña Monty Garnacha Reserva receiving 94 points. Decanter awarded the 2011 Montecillo Gran Reserva 91 points in March 2021. Tim Atkin awarded four wines over 91 points, with the 2005 150 Aniversario Gran Reserva receiving 94 points in the Rioja 2021 Special Report.

Two-hour guided tours (15€) with a pairing of 5J Iberian ham, are available by reservations Wednesday-Friday at 12 noon, Saturdays at 10:30 am, 12:30 pm and 5:00 pm. Open for tours on Sundays at 10:30 am and 12:30 pm. Ask for times in English. A 2-1/2 hour workshop is also available upon request. The wine bar is open where you can taste a flight of four wines by the glass with the winemaker, Mercedes. Call (+34) 941 100 306, email visitas.montecillo@osborne.es, or book your tour online.

**Bodegas Altanza**

Opened in 1998, this 300 hectare estate, located a few minutes west of Logroño off the N-232, uses 100% Tempranillo to produce its award winning red reserva wines. The 2005 Lealtanza Club Reserva was recently awarded 95 Parker points by the Wine Advocate. They also produce an excellent organic EVOO under the Lealtanza brand.
The 2010 Sorolla Reserva, 100% Tempranillo, aged 18 months in French oak, has been named one of the top 9 red Rioja reservas in the Rioja 2021 Special Report and awarded 95 points by Tim Atkin and Decanter, 93 Guía Peñín and 91 points by The Wine Advocate. The 2012 Altanza Club Reserva, 100% Tempranillo, aged 18 months in French oak, was awarded 92 points by Guía Peñín, 90 points by Tim Atkin and James Suckling for 2021.

Visits to the beautiful state-of-the-art winery are available in Spanish and English, Monday to Friday. The Essences of Rioja tour is 20€/person, while the Reserved tour is 30€. There is also a 3-hour Bike & Wine Tour available Tuesday-Saturday for 40€. Call (+34) 941 450 860 / 659 648 306, book online, or email enoturismo@bodegasaltanza.com to book your tour.

**Bodegas LAN**

The winery, founded in 1972, takes it's name from the initials of each of the three provinces that make up the Rioja DOCa: Logroño, Alava and Navarra. Its Viña Lanciano vineyards, which cover 72 hectares, lay along the southern bank of the Ebro River, where you will find two semi-circular arches, the remains of the Mantible Roman Bridge dating from the 2nd-century AC. Legend says Charlemagne passed through this area, crossing the bridge on his way to rescue his knights who had been captured by the Saracens.

One of the winery's best-guarded secrets is the spectacular barrel cellar, a distinctive arrangement of pyramids of barrels; a stacking, racking and climatic control system that is the only one of its kind in the world. The classic Viña Lanciano Reserva spends 14 months in Tronçaise French oak
barrels and eight months in Russian oak barrels from the Caucasus, then 20 months in a bottle aging before being released.

The 2015 Culmen Reserva, made from grapes picked from a small plot in the Lanciano vineyards, was awarded 96 points by the Wine Spectator for 2020 and 95 points in Tim Atkin’s Rioja 2020 Special Report. The 2017 LAN A Mano and 2017 LAN-D12 received 93 and 92 points from Wine Spectator in March 2021, but the LAN Crianza remains is one of my favorite wines for daily consumption.

90-minute tours are available Tuesday-Saturday at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm in Spanish or at 3:30 pm in English. The cost is 15€/person and includes a tasting of three wines, served with an appetizer. Tours on Sundays are at noon in Spanish only. You can request a tour online, by calling (+34) 941 450 950 / 676 569 115 or by emailing enoturismo@bodegaslan.com.
Logroño

You can end your wine touring of the western end of the Rioja DOCa in its largest city, the capital of the autonomous region of La Rioja, with its busy plazas, narrow streets, and a mixture of popular gastro-bars where you can have traditional pinchos or dine in one of the cities excellent restaurants. Logroño could serve as a base during the festival of San Mateo in late September, or you can use it as a second base if you have a full week to spend touring the area. Besides being one of the more important stops on the Pilgrim's Route to Santiago de Compostela, you’ll find the Church-Catedral de Santa María de la Redonda in the Plaza de Mercado, Museo de Ronda in the Plaza de San Agustín, and visit Félix Barbero Botas Rioja, in the center of the old quarter, where you can buy a classic goat-skin wine bag.
The Ebro River passes through the northern part of the city, where there are four bridges, three for traffic and one pedestrian, connecting the main part of the city with Navarra and the Rioja Alavesa. The oldest bridge, Puente de Piedra (arched stone bridge), is used on the Pilgrim's Route into the city from Navarra. The old iron bridge, Puente de Hierro, leads you directly into the old quarter on Calle Sagasta, straight to Parque del Espolón, where you can find underground parking. Street parking can be a little difficult, but not impossible during the week.

The city is included in Stage 15.1: Cenicero - Logroño, 28,5 km, and Stage 16.1: Logroño - Agoncillo, 30,9 km, of the Western Ebro GR-99 Nature Trail.

Logroño is well known for its tapas bars on Laurel Street, but because of the pandemic, it’s been rather quiet this past year. Of course our favorite places in the city, Tondeluna, owned by Michelin stared chef Francis Paniego, does have a terrace as well as indoor dining and a great Brunch which is available everyday except Tuesday. And Chef Aitor Esnal’s Wine Fandango offers indoor and outdoor dining. It’s open’s Monday-Friday at 11:00 am and Saturdays and Sundays at noon. Juan Carlos Ferrando, recommended by Michelin and which received its first Repsol sun in 2021, is at Calle María Teresa Gil de Gárate 7. Taberna Herrerías only has indoor dining, so reservations are limited for now. Txebiko is a newer addition by chef José Luis Vicente’s dining scene; Restaurante Cachetero, a Michelin Bib Gourmand, and La Brasa de la Laurel, and is open daily for lunch at 1:30 pm. Chef Iñaki y Carolina’s Ikarro, with a Michelin star and one Repsol sun, is another great option. La Galería, which chef José Félix Rodríguez opened in 2005, is always a good bet and has received a Repsol sun for 2021. And for sushi, there’s chef Félix Jiménez’s Kiro Sushi.
for lunch or dinner, but you may have to be on the waiting list. He was awarded his second Repsol sun on April 12. Chef Ramón Piñeiro’s La Cocina de Ramón, another Michelin Bib Gourmand, with one Repsol sun, is at Calle Portales, 30, in Logroño’s old quarter. Tastavín, at Calle San Juán, 25, which opened in 2006, has been recommended in the Michelin Guide since 2015 and in the Repsol Guide since 2016.

If you just only want some tapas, we’ve always found Alex García’s Umm to be worth trying. You’ll find it at Marques de Vallejo, 10, in the city center. Bar Soriano, founded in 1972, is a must stop for it’s champiñón a la plancha con gamba, grilled mushroom with shrimp. Pata Negra, Calle Laurel, 24, is where you can select from 60 wines from different D.O.s by the glass. La Tavina is a three-story pinchos and wine bar, tavern and dining room at Calle Laurel, 2. There are 62 tapas bars on Calles Laurel, San Agustín, Albornoz for you to choose from.

If you are planning on staying in Logroño for a night or two, then we can recommend the Hotel Calle Mayor, a 4-star boutique hotel in a restored 16th-century mansion in the heart of Logroño’s historic quarter, with a small gym and private parking. The 45-room Eurostars Hotel Marques de Vallejo is in the cultural heart of the city in a historic building built in 1911, and the 54-room Eurostars Fuerte Ruavieja, a beautiful boutique property close to the old quarter, are excellent options. The 48-room Sercotel Hotel Portales is a comfortable, centrally located 3-star with a private garage. The 4-star Hotel Gran Vía Logroño, NH Logroño Herencia Rioja and the F&G Logroño, which overlooks the Ebro River, are also centrally located. The AC Hotel La Rioja by Marriott, is a little longer walk away from the old quarter, but is an excellent business-class property.
Logroño Wineries Of Interest

- Bodegas Ontañón
- Bodegas Olarra
- Bodegas Franco-Españolas
- Bodegas Valoria

- Bodega Viña Ijalba
- Arizcuren Bodega y Viñedos
- Bodegas Campo Viejo

**Bodegas Ontañón (Rioja Oriental)**

Because this in-city winery lacks the charm of being surrounded by vineyards, it makes up for it by serving instead as a museum, exhibiting the work of local artist Miguel Angel Sainz, who's works evolve around a mythological theme of the wineries stained glass, paintings and sculpture. Located at Avenida de Aragón, 3, you enter the winery, a lifetime dream for the Pérez Cuevas family, through the *Patio of Olive Trees*. Raquel, Leticia, Rubén and María, the 4th-generation of the family, are involved in its day to day operation, which includes more than 120 vineyards in 4 wine growing regions. Their *Gran Reserva Mitológico*, 95% Tempranillo, 5% Graciano, from a small, four-hectare parcel, some of the oldest in the region, spends 24 months in American and French oak. The *Ontañón Tempranillo Blanco* is from a 15 hectare vineyard of planted in Quel, which is from the original white grapes discovered on a Tempranillo parcel in Murillo de Río Leza in 1988.

The 2016 *Ontañón Crianza*, 90% Tempranillo, 10% Garnacha, which spends 12 months in American and French Oak and is from their vineyards on the slopes of the Sierra de Yerga, on the left bank of the Ebro River in the Rioja Oriental (Baja), received 89 points from Tim Atkin in 2020, with the 2010 *Bodegas Ontañón Reserva* awarded 90 points by Tim Atkin and 92 points from Wine Enthusiast in 2019.
Tours of the winery are available Monday-Saturday at 12:00 noon. The 90-minute tours are 15€/person and include a tasting of two wines with two tapas. The wine bar “La Sacistía” is open Monday-Saturday from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. Email Jesús Arechavaleta at enoturismo@ontanon.es, or call (+34) 941 234 200 to arrange a visit. You can also reserve online.

**Bodegas Olarra**

This unique Y-shaped bodega with 111 hexagonal domes covering the cellar opened in 1973. Commonly referred to as the Cathedral of the Rioja, it is the work of architect Juan Antonio Ridruejo and part of Grupo Bodegas Olarra that includes Bodegas Ondarre in Viana (Navarra) and Casa del Valle in Yepes (Toledo, Castilla La Mancha). Located on the north side of the Ebro River at Avenida Mendavia, 30, the winery is a few minutes by taxi from the center of the city.

In addition to its many other awards, their fully oaked *2011 Cerro Añon Gran Reserva* received 91 points in 2020 from the Wine Enthusiast. 2020 marked the 50th anniversary of this wine, among the first released by the winery. In the Rioja 2021 Special Report, the *2018 Cerro Añón Crianza* was awarded 90 points, the *2017 Reserva*, 90% Tempranillo, 5% Garnacha, and 5% Mazuelo and Graciano, 92 points, and the *2015 Gran Reserva* scored 93 points.

90-minute long guided tours are available Monday-Friday at 11:30 am and 4:00 pm, Saturdays at 12:00 noon and 5:30 pm, and on Sundays and holidays at 11:30 am. Tours include a tasting of two wines plus an aperitivo for 10€/person. On Sundays you can do an introduction to wine tasting at 11:00 am. Call Álavaro Garcia at (+34) 941 235 299 or email him at info@grupobodegasolarra.es. Or book your tour online.
Bodegas Franco-Españolas
Located across the iron bridge, Puente de Hierro, a short walk from the center of Logroño, the Eguizábal family winery, under the direction of oenologist Rubén Provedo, was founded in 1890, when the French came to the Rioja in an attempt to replace their vineyards devastated by phylloxera.

Their classic Bordón Gran Reserva, a result of 131 years of experience, is a blend of Tempranillo, Graciano and Mazuelo, aged in oak for 30 months, racked every 6 months before resting another 30 months in the bottle before release. Both Tim Atkin and the Wine Spectator have awarded the 2009 Bordón Gran Reserva vintage 92 points in 2020.

The 1-1/2 hour tour and tasting of 4 wines, two Riojas and two Riberas, is 30€, and the 45-minute tour and tasting of two wines is 15€. A Limited Edition tour and tasting of three wines; Diamond Cut, Viña Sole Reserva Bordón and Bordón d'Anglade Reserva, is 28€/person. Tours are by reservation online. You can also call (+34) 941 251 290 to find out about upcoming events at the winery.

Bodegas Valoria
The

Bodega Viña Ijalba
Also on the north side of the Ebro river, on the road to Pamplona, the Ruiz family winery began when Dionisio Ruiz planted his first vines in 1975, opening the modern bodega in 1991. They now have 90 hectares of their own vineyards around Logroño, San Vicente de la Sonsierra and in the Valle del Iregua, to the south of Logroño. They are the first bodega to
produce wines exclusively from the native varieties; Tempranillo Blanco, Maturana Blanco, Graciano and Maturana Tinta.

Their 2015 Vina Ijalba Reserva received 91 points from Tim Atkin in 2020, while the 2014 vintage received 90 points in 2014. Their extra virgin olive oil is produced from arbequina olive groves more than 200 years of age. The arbequina olives are the most renowned in la Rioja for the quality.

There are several tours available, including a 2-hour Harvest Tour for 25€/person with a minimum group of 4. You can reserve online, email vinaijalba@ijalba.com, or call (+34) 941 261 100 to schedule a tour and tasting.

**Arizcuren Bodega y Viñedos**

An architect by trade, Javier Arizcuren is from a family of winegrowers from the village of Quel in the Sierra de Yerga in the Rioja Oriental (Baja) and one of the new generation of winemakers in the Rioja. He opened his Arizcuren Bodega in 2016, more of a wine workshop in an urban space, a cellar garage, in Logroño at Calle Santa Isabel, 10. His single vineyard 2018 Barranco del Prado, only the second vintage, is from Garnacha grapes manually harvested in late October from a .32 hectare vineyard planted in the 1890’s, and aged for 16 months in American oak. Only 700 bottles were produced of the 2018 vintage, but that was more than double the 2015 vintage.

Seven of his wines have received 90 points or more from Luis Gutiérrez of Robert Parker’s Wine Advocate for 2021. The 2018 Valdetrillo, 96% Garnacha and 4% Malvasía de Rioja, from a 1,36 hectare plot at 762 meters altitude, was awarded 94 points. Only 765 bottles and 99 magnums were produced in 2020.
Visits the the ‘Urban Cellar’ are available on Saturdays at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm with a minimum group of 4, maximum of 15 for 15€/person. A premium visit with a tasting of 5 wines is available Monday-Friday at 6:00 pm with a minimum of two for 30€/person. The 4-hour visit to the Yerga vineyards is 60€/person for a group of 4 to 12. A 2-hour ‘Experience with Javier Arizcuren’ is 120€/person for a group from 2 to 6. You can call Javier at (+34) 941 233 073, email enoturismo@arizcurenvinos.com, or contact him online.

**Bodegas Campo Viejo**

This dramatically contemporary, immense winery designed by Riojan architect Ignacio Quemada, is as amazing to behold as it is almost impossible to find on your own. Opened in 2001, the 45,000 square meter winery lies 5 km distance from from Logroño, about 15 minutes by car or taxi, and takes up an entire hillside with its vast hallways and subterranean cellars. We first visited this winery when it was Bodegas Juan Alcorta and were amazed. It can house up to 70,000 barrels of wine piled high in rows of six, and a whopping six million bottles of crianza and reserva.

Their popular *Campo Viejo Reserva 2015* received 89 points from Wine Spectator and 90 points from Guía Peñín and Tim Atkin in 2020.

During the elaboration process the grapes are moved by gravity only, without suffering any type of pressure that could alter the final result. The three winemakers here are woman; Elena Adell, chief winemaker, Irene Pérez and Elena Suárez, and all three where born in Logroño.

A 90-minute tour and tasting of three wines is 12€/person and is available Monday-Friday at 10:30 am and 1:00 pm. The 2-1/2 hour tour and tasting
of 5 wines, a workshop is 20€/person, while the 2-hour private guided tour visit is 60€ with a maximum of 4 people. It’s available Monday-Friday at 3:00 pm. The wine bar is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Reserve online, email campoviejo@pernod-ricard.com, or call (+34) 941 279 900 to arrange a visit.
Fall colors in the vineyards of Oyón

Oyón-Oion

If staying in or around Laguardia or Logroño, you can take an easy morning drive to the Basque village of Oyón in the Rioja Alavesa 6 kms to the north of Logroño. Here you’ll find a small village of medieval buildings and baroque palaces; Marqués del Puerto and Conde de Bureta, as well as several wineries, some, like Bodegas Faustino and Conde Valdemar, whose products you surely have sampled. Then after a morning of touring and tasting, be sure to take a peek at the village church, Iglesia de Santa María de la Asunción, and the Plaza Mayor. The baroque tower of the church is considered to be one of the most beautiful and best designed in the Rioja Alavesa. El Katxi, a centuries old character plays an important role in two local festivals, San Vicente, the Revolcón.
del Katxi, 21-22 January, and San Anastasio, La Bajada del Katxi, the last Wednesday in August.

If you don’t have reservations today at one of the wineries, be sure to look for the wine shop Bar Vinoteca Escudo Mayor in the plaza, where you can relax, sample some of the local wines (more than 100 labels). The bar is open during the week from 9:00 am to 10:00 pm and on the weekends from 10:30 am to 10:30 pm.

Oyón Wineries Of Interest

• Bodegas Faustino
• Bodegas Conde Valdemar
• Bodegas El Coto de Rioja

• Bodegas Ondalán
• Bodegas Zuazo Gastón

Bodegas Faustino

One of the most prestigious wineries of the Rioja of international fame, still completely in the family’s hands, Faustino mixes tradition with modern wine making methods. The estate covers 650 hectares of vineyards and has a cave holding 47,000 oak barrels. Faustino is Spain’s leading exporter of grandes reserves, exporting 37% of this category abroad, to more than 100 countries. Faustino & Eneko is a new wine Faustino made in conjunction with 5-Michelin star chef Eneko Atxa.

The 2016 Faustino & Eneko received 93 points from James Suckling, along with the Faustino I Reserva 75th Anniversary in 2020. The Rioja 2021 Special Report awards 92 points to the 2015 Faustino Icon, 91 points to the 2010 Faustino I 75 Aniversario, and 90 points to the 2010 Faustino I Gran Reserva. The 2014 Faustino V Reserva was awarded 92 points by Wine & Spirits in December 2020 and named a best buy.
The winery is open for visits Monday-Friday during normal business hours, visits on Saturday are conducted only at 10:30 am and 1:00 pm. Tours (14€) last about 1-1/2 hrs, followed by a tasting of two wines. To visit this venerable winery, call (+34) 945 622 500, or send an email to info@bodegasfaustino.es.

**Bodegas Conde Valdemar**

In 2021 this family winery celebrates 132 years of winemaking in the Rioja as the 5th-generation continues the work of its founder, Joaquín Martínez Bujanda.

The 275-hectare winery estate, a few minutes drive from Laguardia or Logroño, offers one hour tours of the bodega and vineyards Monday-Saturday for 16€, as well as a chance to enjoy a glass of wine and a tapa/pintxo on the terrace without visiting the winery. The wine bar and terrace are open Monday-Thursday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, Friday and Saturday from noon to 3:00 pm and in the evening from 7:00 to 9:00 pm, and on Sundays by reservation only. For additional information or to make reservations, email enoturismo@valdemar.es, or call (+34) 945 622 188.

Six of their wines have achieved the Grand Gold Taste in the **Wine Up Guide** for 2021 and awarded 93 to 95 points. La Guía ADN 2021 has awarded the **Finca Alto Cantabria** 93 points, with Tim Atkin and Decanter awarding it 95 points. The **Gran Reserva** and **La Gargantilla** received 92 points each. Decanter also named the **2010 Count Valdemar Gran Reserva** one of the best Rioja Grand Reservas for 2021.

The winery is now open Monday-Saturday at 11:30 am and 12:30 pm for tours and tastings, with the possibility of being open on Sunday. The 60
minute tours, with a tasting of two wines, are 16€, and are available in Spanish, English and French. Reserve online. A 60 minute visit to the vineyard is also available Tuesday-Saturday at 10:30 am, 28€/adults, 10€/children, with a minimum group of 6.

The wine bar and terrace are open Monday-Thursday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, Friday and Saturday from noon to 3:00 pm and in the evenings from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Sundays by reservations only.

The Bujanda family has the first non-American winery in Washington State; Valdemar Estates in Walla Walla, WA, which opened its doors in April 2019.

**Bodegas El Coto de Rioja**

With its first harvest in 1970, they followed with opening the original winery six years later, finally expanding to its currant facilities in 1995 to meet the world-wide demand for its wines. In 2004, with the addition of Finca Los Almendros in Ausejo, El Coto de Rioja, a combination of twelve small wineries, became the largest producer in the Rioja DO, with a total of 730 hectares of vineyards on eight farms spread throughout the Rioja. They were named the best Spanish winery of 2016 in London at the International Wine & Spirit Competition.

The *El Coto 2012 Coto de Imaz Gran Reserva* was awarded 94 points by Wine Enthusiast and was named number 9 on the top 100 wines of 2020. The *Coto de Imaz Reserva*, 100% Tempranillo, aged 18 months in American oak, resting 18 months in a bottle, has been awarded 91 points by Wine Enthusiast in 2021, with James Suckling and Wine & Spirits awarding 92 points to the *El Coto Crianza*.
You can call (+34) 945 622 600 to inquire about visiting the winery when you will be in the area.

**Bodegas Ondalán**

Founded by Julio Martínez-Bujanda in 1976 to produce unique wines from his own vineyards, which cover 55 hectares. The families roots in the Rioja Alavesa go back to 1889. The name *Ondalán* means “hard work” in the Basque language. His son Enrique now oversees the family project of producing unique wines, and an Extra Virgin Olive Oil.

The Wine Advocate has awarded 90 points to the *100 Abades 2011*. Guía Peñín rated the *2017 Bodegas Ondalan Crianza* 87 points in 2020.

The 1-hour “Winery” Experience” tour includes a tasting of the wines and olive oils for 12€/person, or you can do a guided visit of family’s 18th-century cellar in the old town during a 2-hour tour for 18€/person, with a minimum group of 6. A walking tour of the vineyards is also 18€/person. Or do a wine pairing for 28€, with a minimum group of 6. Tours can be booked online, by calling (+34) 685 787 571 / 679 231 368 or emailing them at visitas@ondalan.es.

**Bodegas Zuazo Gastón**

The family has been growing grapes in the Rioja since the 1850s and it was in 1908 that they built their first cellar in Oyon, one with two stone wine presses. Later, in 1947, Mariano Zuazo and Victoriano Gastón formed a wine cooperative with other local winegrowers to sell their wines in bulk. Later, in 1987, Luis Zuazo and nine regional winegrowers founded a cellar where they could elaborate, age and bottle wines from their own vineyards.
In 2001 the Zuazo family opened its own new state-of-the-art winery and by 2013 when they had a total of 100 hectares of vineyards, had to expand the winery because of the increase in production and to accommodate the 2,000 American and French oak barrels in the cellar. The Zuazo Gastón Group now includes Bodegas Teófilo Reyes in Peñafiel in the Ribera del Duero.

The Zuazo Gastón Reserva, a modern-style red from the oldest and most valuable vineyards, sends 20 months in oak and 18 months in the bottle. James Suckling awarded the Zuazo Gastón Crianza 91 points in the latest ranking of Spanish wines in January 2021.

You can visit their wine museum before tasting their wines, or have a traditional Riojan lunch in the dining room. Call (+34) 945 601 526, or email zuazogaston@zuazogaston.com to request a tour and tasting.
Wine Touring In The Iregua Valley

The area of Logroño and Villamediana de Iregua calls to mind the splendid past of what was the region's leading vineyards before the introduction of other crops. The beginning of the Iregua Valley, one of the Seven Valleys of the Rioja, where the river passes the to east of Logroño, in the middle of the Rioja, the Rioja Media, marks the traditional transition line between La Rioja Alta and La Rioja Oriente (Baja), thus dividing the valley into two wine regions, from the Ebro river to Nalda.

The valley is famous for its olive, walnut and almond orchards, as well as it’s outstanding wines, which exhibit softer tannins, balanced with sweet black cherry-plum fruit flavors. The valley is home to some important
wineries, including the legendary Marqués de Murrieta and Bodegas del Marqués de Vargas.

If you’re in the area for lunch, we highly recommend the Echapresto brothers Venta Moncalvillo in Daroca de Rioja, with one Michelin star and two Repsol suns. It’s about a 10-minute drive from the village of Entrena. The Loro sisters restaurant El Arriero, recommended in the Repsol Guide, is another great option located in the hamlet of Sorzano, south of Albelda de Iregua. You can also have lunch at Restaurante Abantos in the Sojuela Golf Club. Restaurante Alameda, two Repsol suns and recommended in the Michelin Guide, in Fuenmayor is another top option. To the east of Albelda de Iregua you’ll find Restaurante Casa Tila in the village of Clavijo, where the Castillo de Clavijo overlooks the village.

Or you can return to Logroño for lunch at chef Ramón Piñeiro’s La Cocina de Ramón, chef José Félix Rodríguez’s La Galería, both with Repsol suns in 2021, or Restaurante Juan Carlos Ferrando, where chef Juan Carlos picked up his first Repsol sun in April.

Iregua Valley Wineries Of Interest

- Bodegas Marqués de Murrieta
- Bodegas del Marqués de Vargas
- Bodegas Castillo Clavijo
- Bodegas Latente
- Bodegas Vinícola Real
- Finca de los Arandinos
- Bodegas Gregorio Martínez

**Bodegas Marqués de Murrieta**

This venerable family winery, reopened to the public in 2014 after being carefully rebuilt stone by stone over eight years, was the first bodega in
the Rioja (1852) when it's founder, Luciano Murrieta, produced his first Bordeaux style wines. Murrieta was also the first to export his wines. The winery is situated on the 300-acre Finca Ygay estate a few minutes outside of Logroño, off the Logroño-Zaragoza highway, the N-232, near the airport. In the center of this beautiful estate visitors find the Castillo de Ygay, where rare vintages, dating from 1852, are housed in the “Library”.

Its *Castillo Ygay White Grand Special 1986 Reserve* was awarded 100 Parker Points in September 2016, a first for a white wine from Spain. The *Castillo Ygay Reserva Especial 2010* was named the best Spanish wine by Wine Spectator and awarded 99 points by James Suckling, while the *Castillo Ygay Blanco Gran Reserva Especial 1986* was crowned the best white wine in the world for 2020.

The winery is open for visits Monday to Saturday with tours in English, Spanish, French or German by prior arrangement only. Closed on Sundays and from July 30 to August 24. You can request a visit by emailing visits@marquesdemurrieta.com, or call (+34) 941 271 380 / 941 271 374, or book your visit online. Standard visits and tasting are €42 to €129/person. The Wine Bar is open Monday-Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm but reservations are required.

**Bodegas del Marqués de Vargas**
Located next to Marqués de Murrieta is another fabulous wine-estate sitting in the center of a vineyard, part of its 50 hectares of vineyards, divided into 32 plots of Tempranillo, Garnacha, Mazuelo, Graciano and Maturana. It was in 1840 that the 8th Marquis of Vargas, Felipe de la Mata, planted the first grapevines at the Hacienda Pradolagar, an area popularly
known as *Los Tres Marqueses*. The family winery is now in the hands of the 5th-generation of winegrowers.

The 2016 *Marqués de Vargas Hacienda Pradolagar* was awarded 97 points from Tim Atkin in the Rioja 2020 Special Report. The 2016 *Marqués de Vargas Selección Privada* received 96 points, with the 2016 Marqués de Vargas Gran Reserva awarded 95 points and the 2016 *Reserva*, 94 points.

The winery is normally open Monday-Saturday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Other times and dates can be considered. Guided tours are 25€/person, children under 12 are free. Request a visit online, by calling (+34) 941 261 401, or by emailing visitas@marquesdevargas.com.

**Alberite**

Your first stop heading south of Logroño into the valley on the east side of the Iregua Valley, in the heart of the Rioja will be this farming village with mansions and palaces.

**Bodegas Castillo Clavijo**

The winery, which opened in 2000, is just to the east of the village, manages 550 hectares of vineyards and is owned by the family-run Bodegas Criadores de Rioja. Winemaker Paloma Redondo oversees the production, working with local wine growers, producing several brands, including El Guardian and Alegro.

Tim Atkin rated their 2011 *Criadores de Rioja Castillo Clavijo Reserva* 89 points in 2018, with Guia Peñín awarding it 86 points in 2019. The *Castillo Clavijo Rioja Barrel Fermented Viura* is a blend of 90% Viura, 10% Malvasia, rich and creamy but with a fresh finish.
Visits to the winery are available by reservation. Call (+34) 941 436 702 or email info@castilloclavijo.com for additional information.

**Albelda de Iregua**

If you follow the LR-255 south for another 10 minutes, you’ll arrive in the prosperous village of **Albelda de Iregua**. The village was founded by the Arab king Muza of Zaragoza and was the scene of several major battles between the Muslims and the kings of Asturias and Navarra in the 9th-century. You will be within a 15-minute drive of the ruins of the cliff-top medieval Castillo Clavijo, overlooking the small village of **Clavijo**, where legend has it St James appeared on his white horse to support the Christian troops during the battle of Clavijo (844) against the Moors and put an end to the Tributo de las cien doncellas, the Tribute of the Hundred Maidens.

In the “barrio de las bodegas” you’ll find an interesting group of caves which one theory calls the "scriptorium rupestre", a school of scribes from the Monasterio de San Martín in the 10th-century. Others believe the caves were used to store and preserve food and call it a "granero rupestre", a granary or barn. The area is popular with walkers, including 77 kilometer route that takes you from Logroño south to Puerto de Piqueras in the mountains. It is also an important part of the Camino de Santiago.

The traditional Pilgrimage of San Marcos takes place on April 25 followed three days later by the 5-day Festivities of San Prudencio. The Fiestas del Triunfo, to celebrate the work in the field being done, is now celebrated in late August when the weather is better rather than in October, and
where a huge paella is cooked and served. The three-day “Los Quintos" celebration is held during the feast of Santa Agueda in early February.

While here, you should also plan on visiting the medieval Castillo de Nalda, "Señorío de Los Cameros”, in the nearby village of Nalda, that wasn’t “discovered” until 2012.

**Bodegas Latente**

This small family winery at the north end of the village was opened in 2003 and is a member of Bodegas Familiares de Rioja. Their 17 hectares of vineyards of Tempranillo, Graciano, Mazuelo and Garnacha are located in Albelda de Iregua and the neighboring villages of Nalda and Entrena at an altitude of 600 meters and are between 17 and 30 years old.

They planted the native white Tempranillo in 2015, producing their first white wine in 2017. The *Latente Reserva*, 85% Tempranillo, 15% Graciano, an innovative red wine from the oldest and lowest-yielding vines, spends 20 months in new French oak, while the *Latente Crianza* spends 12 months in oak.

Call (+34) 941 443 048, email info@bodegaslatente.com or contact them online to arrange your free 90-minute tour and tasting with the winemaker.

**Bodegas Vinícola Real**

Founded in 1989 by Miguel Ángel Rodríguez, the family winery has an underground cellar measuring nearly 800 meters long carved out of the mountain.

Their signature *200 Monges Reserva* is aged a minimum of 20 months in new French oak, with a minimum of 16 months in a bottle before being
released. The 2012 vintage received 92 points from Guía Peñín in 2020, while the 200 Monges Gran Reserva 2006 was awarded 94 points by Tim Atkin in Jan. 2020.

Visits, with a tasting of two wines (15€) are available Tuesday-Thursday plus Saturdays at 11:30 am and 6:00 pm. On Fridays and Sundays there is a tour at 11:30 am. Additional tours are available for 22€ and 72€/person. The wine bar is open Monday-Saturday from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm, and on Sundays from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. The restaurant is also available for lunch for small groups. Request a visit online, call (+34) 941 444 426 / 608 131 316, or email reservas@lacasadelcofrade.com to arrange a tour and tasting.

The winery also has a small 18-room wine-hotel, La Casa del Cofrade, with views to the mountains and valley, that you can use as a base to tour the immediate area.

**Entrena**

It’s a 15-minute drive from Albelda de Iregua to the hilltop village at the foot of the Sierra del Moncalvillo, or, you can take the N-111 south from Logroño for 13 kms, connecting to the LR-254 after passing Lardero. A farming community, the village celebrates the Feria San Martín de Entrena in mid-November beginning with the “Día del Pincho” in all the bars of the village. Romería de la Hermedaña, the pilgrimage to the ruins of the Hermedaña hermitage on mount Moncalvillo, celebrating the end of the tribute of the 100 maidens, takes place 50 days after Easter Sunday, on Pentecost Monday. Only two of the original 30 villages still do the pilgrimage that dates from 1836. After the mass, everyone goes to “Las
Riberas”, a nearby spring, where there is a picnic, followed by singing and dancing.

**Finca de los Arandinos**

You will arrive at this modern 4-star 14-room bodega-hotel and spa, designed by Riojan architect/winemaker Javier Arizcuren. Opened in 2011, the wine-hotel-spa sits in the middle of the vineyard. The vineyards, a total of 16 hectares spread out over 30 plots, are from 4 to 60 years old, and from 500 to 600 meters above sea level.

Their classic Rioja *2016 El Conjuro* received 90 points from Peñín for 2021. The *2016 Finca de los Arandinos Crianza* was awarded 91 points by Tim Atkin and 88 points by Guía Peñín in 2020.

There are regular visits on Saturdays and Sundays at 11:30 am with a tasting of two wines for 12€, or on Fridays and Saturdays you can take a tour with the winemaker, with a tasting of two wines, for 15€. Special visits to the winery mix with gastronomy, art and culture. The **Tierra Restaurant** is available for lunch, offering a tasting menu for 69,50€. Request your visit online, email **welcome@fincadelosarandinos.com**, or call (+34) 941 446 126.

**Nalda**

The village, with its medieval **Castillo de Nalda**, sits at the foot of the Moncalvillo Mountain surrounded by spectacular scenery 4 kms south of Albelda de Iregua on the LR-255.

**Bodegas Gregorio Martínez**

Over the years Don Gregorio Martínez acquired neighboring parcels of land until today the estate covers more than 150 hectares around the
villages of Nalda, Sorzano and Entrena. Planted in 1980, there are 40 hectares under the vine. The new winery was opened in 2001 sitting on the high plain, 700 meters above sea level facing north, overlooking the Ebro and Iregua valleys, close to the Moncalvillo and Camero mountains. Today, the winery estate are managed by the 2nd and 3rd generations after his premature death.

The reasonably priced 2016 Bodegas Gregorio Martinez Finca Tempranillo, 100% Tempranillo, aged 12 months in oak and an additional 4 months in the tank before bottling, was awarded 90 points from Tim Atkin in 2020, with the 2015 vintage receiving 91 points in 2019. Tim Atkin also awarded the 2017 Blanco Seleccion Monica Martinez, 90% Viura, aged 24 months in American oak and a further 2 years in the bottle, 95 points and the 2015 vintage, 94 points in 2020.

Visits with the winemaker are available starting at 10€/person Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm and can be booked online, by emailing info@gregoriomartinez.com, or by calling (+34) 606 998 259. You can also picnic in the vineyards, under century-old oak trees.
The village of Elvillar de Álava-Bilar

Elvillar de Álava-Bilar

This small village of less than 350 inhabitants sitting in the shadow of the Sierra Cantabria at one of the highest points in Rioja Alavesa, is 6 km or about a 10-minute drive northeast of Laguardia following the A-3228. Vineyards have dominated the landscape around Elvillar for hundreds of years due to its poor soils, consequently the region is known for having some of the oldest vines in all of Rioja.

The 16th-century Gothic church, Iglesia de la Asunción de Nuestra Señora, built on the ruins of a former castle, prevails over the village. Built by the Beaugrant family, its main Renaissance altarpiece is one of the most outstanding in La Rioja. You’ll also find a series of palatial houses in both the main square and on adjacent streets, including the
18th-century Indiano mansion La Casa del Indiano, a beautiful baroque palace with its coat of arms and artistic iron railings on the balconies, and one of the more interesting examples of rural architecture in Rioja Alavesa.

The villagers celebrate the patron saint San Roque for three days in August. On the eve of the festival, the 15th, they hold a “coven”, a traditional *akelarre*, a witches’ sabbath in Basque, at *La Chabola de la Hechicera*, the Dolmen of the Sorceress, which wasn’t discovered until 1935.

**Elvillar Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodega Viña Laguardia
- Bodegas Medrano Irazu
- Bodegas Bhilar
- Heredad de Baroja
- Bodegas Lar de Paula
- Altos de Rioja
- Bodega San Roque SC

**Bodega Viña Laguardia**

The winery, sheltered by the Sierra Cantabria, is along the road from Laguardia, the A-3228, the *“Carretera de los Viñedos”*, or the road of the vineyards, as you enter the village. The original winery, an underground cellar in Elvillar, dates from 1910 and was moved to it current location in the 70s, then expanded in 2006. The cellar contains 1000 barrels of French (80%) and American (20%) oak.

*Pirgos*, their premium avant-garde wine, is made from grapes of a century-old vineyard in Elvillar and is the first buried wine, spending twelve to fourteen months buried in the earth near where they were born, bottle aging.

info@iberiantraveler.com  Maribel's Guides ©
The winery is open for visits Monday-Friday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm and on Saturdays from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm, with tours available with the chief winemaker oenologist Eusebio Casado. Call (+34) 945 604 143 or email reservas@vinalaguardia.com to schedule a visit.

**Bodegas Medrano Irazu**

The family winery was founded by Luis Medrano in 1984 and has been in the hands of his son and oenologist Amador Medrano since 1995. They own 39 hectares of vineyards at the foot of the Sierra Cantabria and manage another 75 hectares, with most vineyards located above 600 meters of altitude. Bodegas Ureta, at the north end of the village, is part of their group.

The 2015 Amador Medrano Private Collection received a Gold Medal at CINVE 2020. All seven of the *Amador Medrano* wines, ‘vinos de finca’, have received 90 points or higher in the 2021 edition of Guía Peñín, including their 2019 Rosé and 2019 Tempranillo. The 2018 Private Colección received 93 points and the limited production 2017 Parcela 14.8, 100% Tempranillo, aged 14 months in oak, 94 points.

You can contact Amador online, by email at info@medranoirazu.com, or call (+34) 945 604 066 for additional information, or to request a visit.

**Bodegas Bhilar**

This boutique winery on the outskirts of Bhilar, Elvillar in the Basque language, opened in 1999, is run by the husband and wife team of winemaker and viticultor David Sampedro Gil and American Melanie Hickman, who work only with indigenous grapes. They eliminated the tractor in 2014 and began working the vineyards with the horses that were reintroduced to work the farm.
Their premium *Phinca La Revilla 2013*, a remarkable single vineyard white wine of 100% Viura with an incredible freshness after spending six years in French oak, received 96 points from Tim Atkin in 2020, 95 points from Robert Parker in 2019, then was awarded 95 points from Falstaff Magazine in November 2020. The *2016 Phinca Lali*, 90% Tempranillo and 10% Viura sourced from a .54-hectare north facing plot of old bush vines, received 95 points from Tim Atkin in 2020.

You can call David at (+34) 647 157 283, email info@bodegasbhilar.com, or contact him online for more information, or to request a visit.

**Heredad de Baroja**

The Meruelo family created the bodega in 1964 to produce top-quality Tempranillos as an expression of elegant Rioja wine. The winery is now part of ARAEX Grand Spanish Fine Wines, a private academic association of independent Spanish winegrowers.

Email Fernando at info@heredadbaroja.com, or call (+34) 945 604 068 for additional information.

**Bodegas Lar de Paula**

Fernando Meruelo created Bodegas Lar de Paula in 2005 as a family project direct related to his Bodegas Heredad de Baroja. An experimental winery, they carefully selects the best grapes from the best suppliers in Lapuebla, Laguardia, Elvillar, Lanciego and Kripan, with all of the vineyards up to 650 meters above sea level.

Four of their wines were awarded 90 points or more in the Rioja 2020 Special Report by Tim Atkin, with the limited edition *Lar de Paula Blanco Reserva*, a blend of Viura and Malvasía, 12 months in new French oak and
12 months resting in a bottle, receiving 93 points. Guía Peñín rated the limited edition *2015 Lar de Paula Crianza* 90 points in 2020.

This upscale winery, just up the street from Bodegas Baroja, is also part of ARAEX and is open for visits. You can do a vertical tasting in the comfort of the beautiful tasting room. Email Fernando at info@heredadbaroja.com, or call (+34) 945 604 068 for additional information and to request a tour and tasting.

**Altos de Rioja**

This is another boutique winery in the heart of the best wine growing area of the Rioja Alavesa, 700 meters above sea level. Founded in 2006 with the sole aim of creating a range of stylish, modern Rioja wines, it moved from its previous location in Laguardia into a new, modern winery in Elvillar. The partners in the project; Jean Marc Sauboua, award-winning winemaker from Bordeaux, Roberto San Ildefonso, successfully developed the trailblazing *Bodegas Sobreño* (Toro D.O.), and Bienvenido Muñoz, hails from a long line of respected winemaker from his families *Bodegas Muñoz* (La Mancha), came together to produce new Rioja wines.

Tim Atkin places the winery among the best in the Rioja DOCa in 2020 and awarded 94 points for *2016 Pigeage*, 93 points for the *2016 Reserva* and *2016 Graciano*, 92 points for *2017 Crianza, El Somillo* and *Salix Alba*; 90 points for *2019 Tempranillo, 2018 Blanco Pigeage*, and 89 points for the *2018 Blanco*.

Email altosderioja@altosderioja.com, or call (+34) 945 600 693 for additional information or to request a visit to the winery.
Bodega San Roque SC

This traditional winery was founded in 1951 by a group of local winegrowers to continuing the wisdom of wine making passed down from fathers to sons and now has more than 350 hectares of old vineyards at an altitude of 585 meters. Their COTA 585, the fruit of the mountain, is a result of their reinterpretation of a way life with the wine.

The *Cota 585 Rioja Reserva*, 100% Tempranillo, spends 22 months in oak.

The winery, a few minutes walk from Iglesia de la Asunción de Nuestra Señora, is open from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and in the afternoon from 4:00 to 6:30 pm. Call (+34) 945 604 005 or email bodega@cota585.com for additional information or to arrange a tour of the winery.
Lanciego-Lantziego

A quick 10-minute drive east of Elvillar will put you in a village with an abundance of renaissance and baroque buildings and palaces, all emblazoned with coats of arms, such as the palace of the Marquesa de Armendáriz. The 16th-century church San Acisclo y Santa Victoria has one of the oldest existing Baroque organs in the Basque country. The 18th-century Ermita De Nuestra Señora Del Campo has an image of "Andra Mari", while the Virgen de la Plaza Basilica in Elciego contains the 14th-century sculpture of "Andra Mari", the Virgen de la Plaza.

Birthplace of Sebastián Iradier, composer of "La Paloma" (1860), the village was settled around the end of the 13th-century when it was part of the Kingdom of Navarra, and is rich in wine (20 bodegas) and olive oil
production. Here you will find Arrolan, one of the premium oil producers in the Rioja, with centuries-old olive groves. El Trujal de Lanciego, installed in an old flour mill, is the oldest olive press in the Basque Country and the Cantabrian Coast still in operation.

The Fiesta de la Vendimia de Rioja Alavesa will be held in Lanciego on September 14, 2021.

Lanciego Wineries Of Interest

- El Mozo Wines
- Bodegas De Luis R
- Azpillaga Urarte
- Tentenublo
- Bodega Lanzaga (Telmo Rodriguez)
- Mendieta Osaba Wines

Bodegas Compañon Arrieta-El Mozo Wines

This small family winery dates back more than 40 years and has a total of 9 hectares of vineyards divided into 18 different micro-plots, all in Lanciego. El Mozo, the nickname of grandfather who started the business, in now the hands of the third generation, Itxaso, the winemaker, and Unai, sister and brother, have concentrated on producing limited quantity, high quality wines such as their Malaspiedras, a blend of Tempranillo, Viura and Garnacha, which is from plots planted by their grandfathers and aged 8 months in 500 liter barrels.

Tim Atkin awarded the 2017 El Cosmonauta en el Barranco de Agua, 90% Malvasía and 10% Viura, from vineyards planted in 1965, 93 points in 2019.
You can contact Itxaso or Gorka Compañon by calling (+34) 658 737 625 or emailing info@elmozowines.com for additional information or to arrange a visit to the winery.

**Bodegas De Luis R**

Opened in 1983 after decades of working the land, Luis Maria Rodriguez and Charo Urarte decided to open their own family winery, producing wine from their 40 hectares of vineyards in Lanciego; 36 hectares of Tempranillo and 4 hectares of Viura, in 27 plots. They also produce their own Arróniz olive oil from 100 year-old olive trees. The Arróniz olive is ideal for a climate between Mediterranean and Atlantic, able to withstand the harsh winters in this area.

Both Guía Peñín and Tim Atkin rated the 2017 *D Luis R Crianza* 89 points in 2020. The 2016 *D Luis R Crianza* was also rated 89 points in 2020 by Guía Peñín.

The winery, at Camino de Elvillar, 22, is open for tours and tastings. You can also have lunch in the winery. Call (+34) 945 608 022, or email dluisr@bodegasdeluisr.com to schedule your visit.

**Azpillaga Urarte**

This is a family with a long winemaking tradition, producing grapes for sale in bulk until the 70s when they decided to make their own wines. In the 80s, Emilio Pérez de Azpillaga and M. Carmen Urarte built their new winery and produced their first brand, *Viña El Pago*. In 1993, Eduardo Pérez joins the family winery, followed in 2011 by his brother Ignacio. The brothers now manage the 12 hectares of vineyards spread out over 30 different plots, and around the winery. And because they are in Lanciego,
they produce their own brand of EVOO from Arróniz olives from olive trees more than over 100 years of age.

Their Senorio de Aztule, 90% Tempranillo, spends 18 months in oak. Tim Atkin awarded 91 points to the 2016 Vina El Pago, 90% Tempranillo, in 2019.

Call (+34) 605 710 348, or email bodegas@azpillagaurarte.com for additional information or to arrange a visit.

**Tentenublo**

Roberto Oliván is a determined and energetic 37-year old winemaker who has been making extraordinary wines from the 10 hectares of his family estate in the hamlet of Viñaspre (Lanciego), which lies about 12 km northeast of Laguardia as the crow flies since 2011. The high, wind-swept vineyards of Tempranillo, Garnacha and Viura grapes are at an altitude of between 450-650 meters.

His 2016 Escondite del Ardacho Las Guillermas is aged in French barrels and Hungarian oak for 10-11 months, received 94 points from the Guía Peñín in 2020, while the 2018 Escondite del Ardacho Las Guillermas received 93 points.

The winery is located in Lanciego at Calle La Fuente, 52-54. You can email Roberto at info@tentenublo.com, or call (+34) 699 236 468 for additional information.

**Bodega Lanzaga**

Telmo Rodríguez (the face of Remelluri, his family’s winery) and Pablo Eguzkiza set up Compañía de Vinos Telmo Rodríguez in 1994. The project identifies old vineyards throughout Spain planted with native grape
varieties that they feel have potential. In 1998 they started to buy old vineyard sites around the town of Lanciego, which was the catalyst for Telmo Rodriguez’s project with a total of 19 hectares of vineyards, 15 in Lanciego and 4 in Labastida. "We dream of making the best Rioja wine of the 18th century”.

Their unique 2017 Bodegas Lanzaga Las Beatas, made from a small 1.9 hectare plot, a steep slope of ten levels of terraces facing east, south and northwest in Labastida, was awarded 97 points in the Tim Atkins Rioja 2020 Special Report.

Contact Telmo by emailing info@telmorodriguez.com, or call him at (+34) 945 628 315 for additional information.

Mendieta Osaba Wines

The Juantxu (Mendi) Mendieta and Carmen Osaba family has been growing grapes on its historic vineyards in Lanciego for generations and now produces small production, quality, handcrafted organic high altitude, single estate, terroir driven wines. Some of the 35 hectares of the mostly Tempranillo vineyards are over 70 years old. Their Vascomendi brand was first released in 2019.

If you would like to taste the wine with the Mendieta Osaba family, you can call (+34) 635 892 937 / 605854399 or email mendi@ or osaba@mendietaosabwines.com to request a tour and tasting.
Yécora-Iekora

If you continue east on the A-4209 for another 10 minutes or so, you’ll reach this small hamlet located on a hill between two river valleys, surrounded by vineyards, a few steps from the border with Navarra. Just outside of the hamlet to the south you’ll find the hermitage of Santa María de Bercijana, built between the 13th and 14th centuries. If you find yourself here the second weekend of May, or on the third weekend in August, you will see the traditional La Cadena dancing; eight dancers, four men and four women, and the Katximorro, a traditional Basque dancer, leading a procession to the hermitage to honor the virgin of Bercijana. The harvest festival is held in mid-September.
If you’re up for a walk, then on the second Saturday in June there is the Subida a San Tirso, the climb up to San Tirso (1328 meters) with a stop at the hermitage. The route begins in the village of Bernedo. Another route will that you up to León Dormido, the “Sleeping Lion”, at 1244 meters.

Yécora Wineries Of Interest

- Bodega Rubén Fuidio
- Bodegas Juan Campinún

Bodega Rubén Fuidio

When you visit this family winery at Calle de San Bartolomé, 32, you can take a walk through the vineyards, which face south and southwest, ideal for grape ripening in this region, and have lunch for an unforgettable experience. The Fuidio family had been working their 21+ hectares of vineyards in Yécora for generations, selling their grapes in bulk to different winemakers, when they decided in 1999 to open their own winery, releasing the first vintage in 2010. In 2012 they released their Fuidio Iraley brand, a well-balanced Tempranillo.

The 2017 Fuidio Iraley Crianza was awarded a Silver Medal by the International Wine Awards Spain 2020.

Contact them online, or call (+34) 679 255 045 to schedule a tour and tasting.

Bodegas Juan Campinún

The family winery began in 1983 and now has 30 hectares of vineyards distributed between Yécora, Lanciego and Elvillar at an average elevation of 650 meters. The new winery, with a cellar currently holding 108 barrels
of American and French oak, was opened by Juan Antonio Campinún in 1997. He has been joined by his sons Álvaro and Rubén, part of the new generation of winemakers in the Rioja, and Álvaro's father-in-law, José Antonio García to help with the operation.

Their *Tinto Joven 2019* received the top prize for young wines in the 27th edition of the *Fiesta de la Vendimia de Rioja Alavesa 2020* Wine Contest, the 2020 Harvest Festival.

Contact them at bodegasjuancampinun@hotmail.com, or call (+34) 945 601 237 for additional information.
Barriobusto

Originally known as Gorrebusto (1196), the village is a stone’s throw across the Arroyo de Horcajo from Labraza. Its narrow streets are flanked by manor houses, some from the 18th-century. It’s church, Iglesia San Millán Abad, is the most modern in the region, dating from the 19th-century, but its altarpiece is from the 17th-century, moved from the ruins of the Monasterio de San Prudencio on Mount Laturce. The Museo del Aceite de Oliva, an old trujal (oil mill) has been converted into an informative center/museum on the history of olive production in the area. You can still visit the last stronghold of centenary olive trees in Álava on a strip of land that runs from Oyón-Oion to Moreda, ending in Labraza, where ancient Arróniz olive trees survive today, and little by little are recovering due to efforts of some of the young farmers in the region.
Barriobusto Wineries Of Interest

- Bodega Torre San Millán

**Bodega Torre San Millán**

Located just south of the village on the A-4212, the Martínez family winery’s “Gorrebusto” wine is named in homage to the village from the 12th-century. The modern brick, wood and carved stone winery, directed by Eduardo Martínez, is on three levels, with a tasting room on the top floor. Their vineyards range from the banks of the Ebro to the Sierra de Cantabria and have been in the family for generations.

The *Vendimia Seleccionada*, 100% Tempranillo, spends 14 months in new French oak and a minimum of 6 months in a bottle before being released. Tim Atkin rated the *2015 Gorrebusto Crianza* 89 points in January 2019.

You can contact them online, by calling (+34) 945 622 904, or by email at info@bodega-torresanmillan.com to arrange a tour and tasting.
Labraza

This small medieval walled village sits on a summit in the eastern corner of the Rioja Alavesa close to the border with Navarra, about 10 km due north of Oyón-Oion on the A-3230. Founded as a defensive village by Sancho VII in 1196, its history is much older and belonged to the kingdom of Navarre until 1461, when it was conquered by the army of Pedro Girón of Castile.

Access to the village is through the main gate in the center of the southern wall, the Door of La Concepción. Entering is like stepping through time. Inside you will find three narrow streets with connecting passageways and small squares. Most of the houses are from the 16th-century. The smallest fortified village of all the medieval Basque villages; “55 houses
surrounded by walls with 4 towers and a fortress in the middle”, it won the World Prize of Walled Cities in 2008 and celebrates its medieval history on weekends in September and October.

If you need some refreshment, Bar El Fronton is your only choice. It does have an outdoor terrace.

**Labraza Wineries Of Interest**

- Viñedos Hontza

**Viñedos Hontza**

This artisanal winery is a family project born in 2015 to “close the cycles - from the vineyard to the glass”. They are the first and only winemakers in the medieval village, a unique microclimate 650 meters above sea level, where their 14 hectares allow them to produce about 20,000 bottles of Certified Organic wine each year. The winery is located at the north end of the village, a few minutes walk from Iglesia de San Miguel on the Plaza Mayor.

Contact Iker García online, email him at info@vinedoshontza.com, or call (+34) 686 678 239 for additional information or to request a visit.
Moreda de Álava (Moreta)

Bordered by Navarra on two sides, this is the easternmost village in Álava, a 5-minute drive northeast of Oyón-Oion on the A-3226. Its name is taken from the blackberry bush that stands on the slopes where the two streams, the Valdebuesa and Horcajo, converge. The landscape surrounding the small village (300 inhabitants) is dominated by olive trees and vineyards. The medieval village of Moreda is considered one of the oldest in the Alavesa (934), and the highest point in the village is the beautiful 15th-century church of Sta. María de Moreda.

The village celebrates several festivals during the year, including the Fiesta del Aceite de Oliva de Álava, which is held in mid to late March. On August 16, the night of San Roque, bonfires are set in the street, and the
jumpers yell “¡Viva San Roque!, ¡Viva la Virgen! y ¡Viva la Calabaza!” as they leap over the bonfires. The largest bonfire is on Calle San Roque.

There are no restaurants in the village, but if you need a pintxo, you can stop by Cafe-Bar De Moreda, across from Trujal Cooperativo La Equidad, the olive oil cooperative, or Café-Bar Larri, across the street.

Moreda Wineries Of Interest
- Bodegas Fernández de Piérola
- Envite Wines

**Bodegas Fernández de Piérola**
The Piérola Family opened this small family winery in Moreda in 1996 with the aim of producing quality wines. Their highly popular *Piérola Crianza*, 100% Tempranillo, spends 18 months in American and French oak, and racked every 6 months.

The 2015 *Piérola Crianza* received 88 points from Tim Atkin in January 2020 and 89 points from Decanter World Wine Awards in June 2018. The dining room faces Logroño.

The winery is open to visits during the week by appointment only. The tour includes a tasting of 5 wines. You can contact the winery online, or call (+34) 945 622 480 to arrange a visit to the winery.

**Envite Wines**
The brothers Marcos and winemaker Ruben Sáenz, the first generation of winemakers from a family with a long agricultural tradition asked, “What can we do for wine?”, before opening their new innovative winery in the former Bodegas San Prudencio in 2005. Surrounded by vineyards and
mountains, and working with 12 families, the brothers produce unique 12 wines.

The *2017 Envite Seducción*, a semi-sweet blend of Garnacha Blanca, Viura and Malvasia, was rated 88 points, while the *2014 San Prudencio ‘Depadre’*, 100% Tempranillo, was awarded 90 points by Guía Peñín in June 2019 and 84 points by Tim Atkin in January 2020.

The winery is open for visits by reservation almost anytime you want. Contact the brothers online, by emailing info@bodegasanprudencia.es or by calling (+34) 945 622 451.
Wine Touring In The Rioja Oriental

The Rioja Oriental, Spain’s largest sub-region, and also its newest wine appellation (2018), has been undergoing a winemaking transformation the past several years as a new generation of winemakers have sought to reclaim the long abandoned higher ground, bringing about a rebirth of the native Garnacha grape.

Originally known as the Rioja Baja, Rioja Oriental begins just to the east of Logroño when you cross the Río Leza, continuing along the Ebro River to Alfaro, a distance of some 70 kms. The region to the south and southeast is strikingly different of what you find west of Logroño, with more of the Mediterranean influence than the Rioja Alavesa and Alta. It is the warmest, driest and windiest part of Rioja, tending to have hotter and
drier summers and colder winters, which traditionally produce stronger reds. This sub-region, largely flat and expansive, includes a narrow strip of the rich Navarran countryside to the north, the Navarre Rioja Alta, and is the largest wine producing region of Rioja, with over 24,000 hectares of vineyards, or 40% of Rioja’s total wine production. It is also an area where vegetables reign supreme on both sides of the Ebro river.
Bodegas Paco García

Murillo de Río Leza

A 20-minute drive from the center of Logroño will put you in the area where the slow moving Jubera and rushing waters of the Leza rivers meet, and where you will find signs of a Roman encampment. The village prospered during the time of the Muslims and their cultivation techniques, and when the continued after the Navarrans arrived in the 10th-century. The church of San Esteban Protomártir, built in the 16th-17th centuries, was declared Bien de Interés Cultural in 1979.

The village celebrates a number of religious and popular festivals during the year. “La procesión de los piojosos” is held in Las Candelas on the first Sunday in February. The festival of San Esteban Protomartir (the first martyr of Christianity), used to be celebrated in December is now held
the first week of August with an encierro, a running of the vacas, parades, tastings. Market days are Tuesdays and Fridays. It was here that the first white Tempranillo grape was grown in 1988, a result of a natural mutation from the red grape.

Your best options for lunch today would be in Logroño.

**Murillo de Río Leza Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodegas Paco García
- Bodegas San Esteban
- Hacienda Grimón

**Bodegas Paco García**

Francisco García and Julia Pablo founded their family winery in Murillo de Río Leza in 2001 after years of growing grapes for the bulk market. *La mano de Paco García*, the hand of Paco García on the label represents the values of the winery. After more than 6 years working, the son and manager, **Juan Bautista** wanted to make wines for the new generation, a wine that pleases and attracts, wines that were more enjoyable to drink. One of their new projects is aging wine in terracotta containers.

The *Paco García Garnacha 2017* received 94 points in the ABC Wine Guide 2020, as did *Beautiful Things de Paco García 2015*, a blend of Tempranillo and Graciano grapes from their *La Dehesa* vineyards, planted in 1943 (470 meters), and aged for 16 months in French oak. It is their "Premier Cru" wine.

A 1-1/2-hour long visit, with a tasting of 4 wines, is 25€/person, while the 2-hour visit is 50€/person. If you only want to do a tasting of 4 wines with an aperitivo in the wine bar, that will be 18€/person. You can book your
guided tour online, or call (+34) 941 432 372 / 699 082 810 to request a visit.

**Bodegas San Esteban**

This was the first cooperative in the DOCa Rioja (1953) and started with 16 founding members. Today there are 350 members with 500 hectares of vineyards located at an altitude of between 407-420 meters. In the 80s the winery was extended and modernized and in 2000 they expanded to accommodate the larger production. In 2010 their “*Tierras de Murillo*” brand was born.

Their *Colección Antigua No. 1, 2012*, and *No. 2, 2016*, by winemaker Nacho Terrado, received 90 points by Julie Sheppard of Decanter in Aug. 2020. Guía Peñín 2021 awarded the 90 and 91 points in July, while Tim Atkin awarded them 94 and 91 points in February.

The winery and shop are open Monday-Saturday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and in the afternoons Monday-Friday from 3:00 to 6:00 pm. You can reserve a tour and tasting online, or by calling (+34) 941 432 031.

**Hacienda Grimón**

You’ll find this winery, founded in 1999 by the brothers Paco and Eliseo Oliván, a few minutes south of Murillo de Río Leza on the LR-261 in the small hamlet of Lagunilla Jubera, in the Jubera Valley, near the Camero Viejo. The family’s 38 hectares of vineyards are at an average elevation of 650 meters, with 24 hectares devoted to Tempranillo. All of their wines are made from their own vineyards and harvested by hand. They also produce their own olive oil and conservas. German winemaker Alexandra Schmedes, co-owner of *Bodegas Más Que Vinos* (Toledo), has been
involved in the creation of their successful line of wines, including the new barrel fermented Chardonnay 2017.

Their 2017 Hacienda Grimon Finca la Oracion, 100% Tempranillo, fermented in new American and French oak, was awarded 92 points by Guía Peñín in June 2020 and 90 points by Tim Atkin in January 2020.

Contact them online, email info@haciendagrimon.com or call (+34) 941 482 184 for more information or to arrange a visit to the winery.
Galilea

This village of less than 400 inhabitants, whose name is derived from the pilgrims who traveled to the Holy Land during the Crusades, sits on a hill in the lower Ocón valley, a short drive from Murillo de Río Leza on the LR-259. It’s location offers a panoramic view of the Sierra de Cantabria in the distance to the northeast and the beech and pine forests of Sierra Hez in the western Pyrenees. It’s one of 11 villages in what is called the Land of Ocón: Aldealobos, Los Molinos, Oteruelo, Pipaona, Las Ruedas, San Julián, Santa Lucía, Corera, El Redal, Galilea and Villa de Ocón, capital of this territory. The valley of Ocón is a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve.

The parish church of San Vicente, dating from the 16th-century, is where Diego de Tejada y Laguardia, bishop of Ciudad Rodrigo and Pamplona,
and archbishop of Burgos, is buried. His 17th-century house is nearby. The village is also the birthplace of Juan de Balmaseda, Governor of Chile (1768-70). They celebrate the parton saint of the village, San Vicente, on January 22 and San Roque and La Virgen on August 15 and 16. You can also visit the local olive oil producers, Aceite de Galilea and Aceites Hejul if you are in the area. Well worth a stop.

For lunch, you could try Bar Restaurante La Alameda, serving traditional and seasonal cuisine in the village of Pipaona, just to the south. Worth the short drive.

**Galilea Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodegas Nestares Eguizábal

**Bodegas Nestares Eguizábal**

The winery estate is located a ten-minute drive down the road from Murillo de Río Leza in Galilea ad the Ocón Valley. After 15 years of working the vineyards, José Marí Nestares, a viticulturist from Fuenmayor, decided in 1998 to develop his own wines from the families 26 hectares of vineyards located on the plateau that separates the Ocón and Jubera valleys at an altitude up to 650 meters, and where you will also find almond and olive trees. In 1983 he began planting the vineyards exclusively with Tempranillo grapes and adapted to organic farming.

Tim Atkin rated the 2010 Segares Reserva 89 points in 2020, awarding 90 points for the 2009 Segares Reserva.

The winery, now in the hands of Lucía and her parents, Ramón and Marisa, is open during the week from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm and in the...
afternoons from 4:00 to 6:00 pm. They are members of the small group of Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja. Contact Lucía online, by email at bodegas@nestareseguizabal.com, or by calling (+34) 941 480 351 / 619 182 884 to arrange a visit, or for additional information.
Fall color in the vineyards of Bodegas Ochagavia

**Alcanadre**

From Galilea, you can take a short 15-minute detour north on the LR-260 to this small village located along the Ebro River, whose name in Arabic means "the bridge. Here you will find the Santa María Church dating from the 16th-18th century. Outside of the village are the remains of the 1st-century Roman aqueduct called “Puente Moros”, 13 arches and more than 30 buttresses. It probably provided Calahorra with water for hundreds of years.

**Alcanadre Wineries Of Interest**

• Bodegas Aradón
• Bodegas Ochagavia
Bodegas Aradón

Opened in 1957, Vinícola Riojana de Alcanadre, a union of 240 local winegrowers, is now in the third generation who work the 510 hectares of vineyards planted on steep slopes from 350 to 600 meters altitude. Their signature Aradon Reserva, a blend of Tempranillo, Graciano and Garnacha, from highest vineyards, over 50 years of age, and spends 18 months in French oak and another 18 months resting in the bottle. The winemaker is Cristina Alesanco Benito (Logroño) who joined the project in 2009.

The 2014 'Aradon' Crianza, a blend of Tempranillo, Graciano and Garnacha, received 88 points from Tim Atkin in 2018. The 2016 Calzadas de Aradon was awarded 90 points by Guía Peñín in 2020 and 86 points from Tim Atkin in Jan. 2020.

A two-hour guided tour of the winery and vineyards, with a tastings of five wines is available by calling José Ramón at (+34) 941 165 036, or emailing info@aradon.es.

Bodegas Ochagavía

This small winery, founded in 1880 near the railroad tracks at Calle Carretera Estación, 31, is now in the hands of the fifth generation of the Alejandro Ochagavia Rodriguez family, with the young winemaker Jesús Ochagavía Saez, who joined the business in 2014. Bodaño, aged 12 months in oak, is a new creation, with a label designed by Jorge Ochagavía, Illustrator.

You can contact Jesús online, by email at info@bodegasochagavia.com, or call (+34) 941 165 010 for additional information or the arrange a tasting.
In the vineyards of Señorío de Librares

**El Villar de Arnedo**

Another 20 minutes down the road you’ll come to this village founded in the early Middle Ages by settlers from Arnedo, but with archaeological evidence dating back nearly 3000 years before Christ. The village is located 5 km west of the Ebro river. Primarily a farmland filled with vineyards, almond trees, olive trees and cereals, it was once part of the lordship of Fernández de Velasco. Pedro Fernández de Velasco, 2nd Count of Haro, died in Granada toward the end of the Reconquista, in 1492.

On March 25 the village celebrates Nuestra Señora de la Asunción (*la Virgen de marzo*) with bonfires, dancing, concerts, and encierros (running of the vacas). On September 14 they celebrate Cristo de los Buenos
Temporales with bonfires, *degustaciones* (tastings), concerts, encierros and traditional pelota (handball) games. There is a procession on New Year's Eve, followed by churros and another festive procession on New Year’s Day. Market day is Wednesday. The historic *Castillo de Arnedo* is located in Arnedo, a 15 minute drive south on the LR-123.

For lunch today we recommend Calahorra, where you will find some decent options; **Chef Nino**, Calle del Padre Lucas, 2, the **Parador de Calahorra**, Paseo Mercadal, Coliceo 29, Travesía Coliceo 29, **Restaurante Mercadal 21**, Paseo Mercadal, 21, **La Taberna de la Cuarta Esquina**, Calle de las Cuatro Esquinas, 16 and **La Comedia**, Plaza Monte Compatri, bajo.

**El Villar de Arnedo Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodegas Casa La Rad
- Bodegas Señorío de Librares
- Bodegas Faustino García Martínez

**Bodegas Casa La Rad**

Not everyone in the Rioja managed to survive the crisis of 2008, and the family estate of *Bodegas Alicia Rojas*, one of the largest in the Rioja, was one, but luckily the chateau-style estate in the northern foothills of the Iberian Massif, the Valle de Ocón, between Ausejo and El Villar de Arnedo, was resurrected from the ashes by a group of European investors including some from the Rioja, releasing their first vintage, a limited bottling of the 100% Tempranillo *Solarce Crianza 2013*, in late 2016. The estate encompasses 110 hectares of vineyards, 15 hectares of Arbequina olive trees, fields of cereals and almond trees, two man-made lakes, rich farmland and a private game reserve.
Five of their wines received 91 points or more in the Rioja 2021 Special Report by Tim Atkin including the 2017 Casa La Rad Special Edition Garnacha P38, 100% Garnacha from plot P-38, at a altitude of 650 to 700 meters. The limited production (2000 bottles) is aged 15 months in oak and rests for 12 months before labeling.

A 2-hour picnic in the vineyard is 50€/person. The premium tasting with the winemaker or a cycling tour of the vineyards with a tasting at the winery are 50€/person. Join the harvest in September and October for 150€/person. Call (+34) 941 430 010, email info@casalarad.com, or contact them online to schedule one of their unique tours.

**Bodegas Señorío de Librares**

This small winery in the village received its first Gold Medal at the Universal Exposition in Paris in 1878 and is now in the hands of the fourth generation of the Pedro María Espinosa family.

Their signature wine, *Selección 2015*, uses Tempranillo and Graciano grapes from 40-year old vineyards, while the *Reserva*, 100% Tempranillo, spends 24 months in French and American oak and more than 12 months aging in bottle. They also offer an excellent Rosé; 50% Tempranillo and 50% Chardonnay grapes.

Their EVOO *Olivares Tiracanto* was awarded a second place medal at the *IV Concurso a la Calidad Aceite de Oliva Rioja 2020*.

If you’d like to visit the winery or need additional information, you can contact Clara Espinosa by calling (+34) 638 585 993 or emailing her at slibrares@slibrares.com.
Bodegas Faustino García Martínez

It was in the mid-1940s when Félix García Crespo began making artisanal wine for his own consumption from his own vineyards in his small family winery, while also making wineskins to transport wine. His son Faustino García Martínez opened the new winery in the 1960s, which today is managed by the 4th-generation of winegrowers, are the leader in bag-in-box wines.

Their signature wine Viña Salvaje Reserva is produced from 100% Tempranillo, spending 22 months in American oak and 12 months resting in the bottle before being released.

Call (+34) 941 159 036 or contact them online for additional information.
Early spring in the vineyards in the High Cidacos Valley

Arnedo

Located 48 kms from Logroño, the third largest town in La Rioja is also one of the most prosperous. Better known for its shoe industry than its wine, it does produce its share of good wine. Along with its medieval castle, you find the palace of the Baroness of Benasque, Blanca de Olózaga, built 1901 by Minguillot in modernism-art nouveau style. Its restoration was completed in 2000. The place of Archbishop Argaiz (1678), the Vico Monastery, where it is said that the Virgin Mary appeared in 1045, and don’t forget the Shoe Museum or La Cueva de los Cien Pilares, the Cave of the Hundred Pillars.

The city has its own mineral hot springs, Las Pozas de Arnedillo, a set of three natural pools on the banks of the river that have been in use since
the time of the Romans. The Castle of Arnedo overlooks the city and
dates from the time of the Romans. Rebuilt by the Muslims in the 9th-
century, it was the most important castle in the region during the Middle
Ages. This year’s Carnaval, 12-16 February, was held online. The 7-day
Fiestas of San Cosme and San Damián, a historic rivalry between the
towns of Arnedo and Andosilla (Navarra), are celebrated beginning on 26
September each year. The 2-day Kan de Vico Medieval Market is held the
1st week of September. Arnedo is also on the Route of the Dinosaurs.

For dining in Arnedo, you can try Restaurante Picabea, Calle Virrey
Lizana, 1, Gastrohotel Virrey, Paseo de la Constitución, 27, and
Restaurante Sopitas, Calle de la Carrera, 4. You can also reserve a table at
El Quizal in the nearby Autol, at Calle González Gallarza, 11, or at La
Posada del Laurel, in Préjano.

**Arnedo Wineries Of Interest**

- Nuestra Señora de Vico
- Bodegas Faustino Rivero Ulecia

**Nuestra Señora de Vico**
The winery, with 350 hectares of vineyards under cultivation, was
founded in 1956 and is currently made up of 300 families who live in
villages in and around the High Cidacos Valley, a countryside filled with
olive and almond trees, aromatic herbs and vineyards. The mostly 2-
hectare size vineyards are located between 400 and 900 meters above
sea level, on either the slopes or at the top of ravines. The area is known
for its scarce annual rainfall, long hours of sunlight, hot summers and
cold winters.
The 2016 Ciencuevas Crianza, 100% Tempranillo, aged 12 months in American oak, received 89 points from Guía Peñín in June 2020 and the 2015 Ciencuevas Crianza was rated 91 points in 2019. Falstaff has rated the 2012 Ciencuevas Reserva 91 points. The wineries other labels are Mocete and Cantoblanco.

You can call (+34) 941 38 02 57 or email administracion@bodegavico.com if you would like to visit the winery, which was moved to a larger facility at Calle Raposal, 80, to accommodate its growth in 1993.

**Bodegas Faustino Rivero Ulecia**

This is the original winery of Grupo Marqués del Atrio, which began its wine growing adventure in Arnedo in 1899 and now has wineries in five DOs; Rioja, Duero, Navarra, Utle-Requena (Valencia) and Rias Baixas. It was in the 1980s that the 4th generation of the family took over the business and built a new winery on the outskirts of the town, with a cellar large enough to hold 4000 barrels of American and French oak.

Wine Enthusiast, Tim Atkin and Decanter all rated the 2016 Bodegas Marques del Atrio Reserva, a blend of Tempranillo y Graciano, which spent 24 months in French and American oak, 90 points in 2020. The 2016 Faustino Rivero Ulecia Reserva received 87 points from Guía Peñín in June 2020 and 89 points from Tim Atkin in Jan. 2020.

The 90-minute guided visits, including a tour of the original winery, are priced at only 10€/person and finish in the tasting room. A “Catas maridadas”, a paired tasting, which changes monthly, is 15€, but is only available at 8:30 in the evening by appointment. You can book one of their tours online, by email at visitas@marquesdelatrio.com, or by calling (+34) 948 379 994 / 948 379 995.
Bodegas Queirón

Quel

A short 15-minute drive down the road from El Villar de Arnedo on the LR-123 you’ll find the ruins of the Castillo de Quel (currently under reconstruction) sitting on the edge of a rocky crag, overlooking this historic village in the valley along the left bank of the Río Cidacos between Arnedo and Autol. The village’s name derives from the Arab word Qalāti, meaning ‘fortified place’. The village has been celebrating its famous week-long Bread and Cheese Festival since 6 August 1479, one of the oldest festivals on the Iberian Peninsula, when 2,500 loaves of bread and 50 kilos of cheese are thrown from the balcony of the chapel Santo Cristo.

There are about 350 individual family cellars in the Barrio de Bodegas located in the hillside along the river, most dating from the 18th-century and still in use today. La Almazara, a modern oil mill with 235 hectares of
olive trees located just north of the village is open daily for tours. The village is also the birthplace of Bretón de los Herreros, poet and prolific comic playwright of the 19th-century.

For lunch, El Quizal in the nearby Autol, at Calle González Gallarza, 11, should work, or you can drive up the Calahorra.

**Quel Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodega Queirón

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**Bodega Queirón**

The Pérez Cuevas family can trace it’s history in the area to the middle ages (1327) when they worked the slopes the Sierra de Yerga in the Cidacos river valley. Gabriel Pérez, a pioneering viticulturist and winemaker, founded Bodegas Ontañón in 1985 after producing wine for the families own consumption since 1980, when there were few commercial wineries in the Rioja Orientale. It was in 2010 that they opened the new winery in the Barrio de Bodegas de Quel in old factory that once made alcohol. At the west end of this beautiful winery you’ll find a small fountain with a sculpture by Miguel Ángel Sáinz from El Villar de Arnedo, who inspired the design of the new winery and who designed Bodegas Ontañón in Logroño. The winery is currently run by his children, Raquel, Leticia, Rubén (the winemaker) and María.

The wines from Queirón adhere to the new Rioja classification “Vino de Pueblo” which means the vineyards must be family owned within a named village. The 2017 Queirón Mi Lugar is a blend of bush-vine Tempranillo and Garnacha from a selection of small plots at 600 meter
altitude. It spends 18 months in new oak and a final 6 months in large French oak foudres. The 2017 Queirón El Arca Garnacha is from a tiny single vineyard, ‘El Arca’, planted in 1892, and is official Viñedos Singulares. The 2011 Queirón Reserva is a tribute to the founder, from the vines that Gabriel Pérez planted more than 30 years ago.

You can request a visit by contacting them online, emailing info@queiron.es, or by calling Leticia at (+34) 941 234 200. It’s well worth the time.
Finca Vistahermosa vineyards

Tudelilla

Another small hamlet with a long tradition of wine making is a 30-minute drive southeast of the regional capital of Logroño, and 15 kms west of Calahorra. Sitting at an altitude of 545 meters above sea level, it covers an area of about 700 hectares of scrubland of olive trees, almond fields and vineyards. Its rocky landscape produces unique characteristics in its wines, the ancient Garnachas and newer Tempranillos. The village celebrates San Roque on August 16, and San Bartolomé on the 24th. December is the festival of, Santa Bárbara. Friday is market day.

For lunch around Tudelilla, try Sopitas, with 1 Repsol sun, or Virrey in Arnedo, El Quizal in Autol, or one of our recommendations in Calahorra.

Tudelilla Wineries Of Interest
Bodegas Ortega Ezquerro

The Ortega family’s first vines were planted in the year 1896 by Quintín Ortega, a cosechero, or harvester, and humble barrel-maker with ambitions. The current head of the family, Carmelo Ortega, runs the winery with the help of his team and winemaker David Bastida Caro.

Tim Atkin awarded 91 points in 2020 to the Ortega Ezquerro Reserva 2014, 91 points to the 2017 Ortega Ezquerro Garnacha and 93 points to their 2017 Don Quintin Ortega Blanco.

Call (+34) 941 152 046, email them at info@ortegaezquerro.com, or contact them online to arrange a visit, or for additional information. The winery is located next to the Fronton.

Bodegas Escudero y Vinsacro

Juan Escudero began making wine in a small cave carved out of a hillside in 1852, the family continued winemaking through the years, with Juan’s grandson, Benito, moving into producing Cava in the 1950s. Under the leadership of Bordeaux-trained brother Amador, the brothers, Jesus, Maria Angeles and Jose Maria, founded the French château-style winery Bodegas Vinsacro, and following the advice of their grandfather, decided to start a new project in Grávalos, in the foothills of the Sierra de la Demanda, where they planted 12 hectares of vines in 1996, but the key to the success of the modern winery was a small organic vineyard owned by the family for 120 years, the Cuesta la Reina, planted around 1945 on the stony southern slope of Mount Yerga between 450 and 800 meters.
elevation. The underground cellar, where the wines age for 12 to 36 months, holds 4,500 barrels of American (50%), French (40%) and Romanian (10%) oak.

The 2005 Arvum, 16 months in new French oak, has received 90 points from Guía Peñín. In 2000 the family opened a new winery, Bodegas Logos, in the Navarra D.O. near Monteagudo, south of Navarre’s Ribera Region, about a 20-minute drive from Tudela.

Bodegas Escudero (Grávalos) is open Monday-Friday from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm and in the afternoon from 4:00 to 5:00 pm. Call (+34) 941 398 008, or email visitas@familiaescudero.com to schedule a visit.

**Finca Vistahermosa**

The farm, with 400 hectares of land is mainly dedicated to the culture of wine but also grows cereals and legumes and tend to the pine and holm oak and the conservation of the land, is located about 3 km to the northwest of the village off the LR-381, in the foothills of the Sierra de la Hez. The farm started in 1973 with 87 hectares of vineyards, planting another 76 hectares between 2004 and 2014, Vistahermosa is the largest Grenache reserve of old vines in all of La Rioja.
On the road from Logroño to Zaragoza, about half way between Calahorra and Alfaro, you’ll find this small village known locally as el pueblo de las tres mentiras, the “town of the three lies”, as it is not a village, nor is it new, nor is it on the Ebro, but as it is on the Ruta del Vino Rioja Oriental, it is home to several premium bodegas.

The village celebrates several festivals during the year. The first weekend in May is the start of the Fiestas de la Juventud, that includes an encierro with wild vacas and other festival events for the children, plus the Jornadas del Vino u La Viña, wine tastings at the local wineries for the adults. The week-long Festival of San Bartolomé, the patron saint, begins 23 August. The two-day Fiestas de la Virgen de Los Remedios begins on 7
September and includes an encierro and procession in honor of the Virgin of Los Remedios. The 7-day winter celebrations begin 31 December, ending on Epiphany, 6 January. The winter festivities includes bull runs, gastronomy events, a handcraft fair and wine tastings. The villagers gather for the hogueras, the bonfires in the streets for San Antón on 16 January and again on 20 January for the Hogueras de San Sebastián.

For lunch in the area, you can try El Quizal in Autol, or consider one of our recommendations in Calahorra or Alfaro.

**Aldeanueva de Ebro Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodegas Cicerón
- Bodegas del Medievo
- Bodega Viñas Nuevas
- Bodega Viñedos Ruiz Jiménez
- Bodega Sendero Royal
- Viñedos de Aldeanueva
- Fincas de Azabache
- Bodegas Viña Herminia
- Bodegas Domeco de Jarauta
- Bodegas Álvarez Alfaro
- Bodegas D. Mateos
- Bodegas Real Rubio
- Real Agrado

**Bodegas Cicerón**

The modern family winery, a unique eight-sided building like a bullring sitting in the middle of the vineyard below mount Yerga in Aldeanueva de Ebro, was opened in 2001, which was also the year of their first harvest. The families history dates back to 1888 when their grandfather Vicente was awarded the *Medalla de Bronce* at the Universal Exhibition in Barcelona. The vineyards with an average age of around 30 years, are at an elevation of 450 to 500 meters.

You can call (+34) 941 105 330, or email beatriz@bodegasciceron.com for more information or to arrange a visit.
**Bodegas del Medievo**
The winery, managed by Joseba Almaraz, was founded in 2002, and has 130 hectares of vineyards in the highest area of Aldeanueva de Ebro, in the foothills of the Sierra de Yerga, between 400 and 550 meters. The cellar contains 2,500 barrels of American and French oak. Medievo wines are the fruit of the work of generations of farmers who form this small group of artisans; Bobadilla, Sota and Moreno, and the winemaker Santiago Garde.

Their 2012 Medievo Gran Reserva, 90% Tempranillo, 10% Grenache, won the Silver Medal in Concours Mondial de Bruxelles 2020, and Tim Atkin awarded the 2016 Medievo Crianza 87 points in 2020. Wine Enthusiast awarded the 2014 Medievo Reserva 91 points, with Tim Atkin giving it 88 points in 2020.

Contact them online, email info@bodegasdelmedievo.com, or call (+34) 941 163 141, or to arrange a visit to their tasting room with views overlooking the vineyard.

**Bodega Viñas Nuevas**
This family winery in Aldeanueva de Ebro is currently in the hands of the Ruiz brothers, Enrique, the oenologist and Francisco, viticulturist, overseeing the production of their new project, Laetus, 100% Graciano. The winery was expanded in 2004 to accommodate the increase in production.

A visit to the winery includes a walk through the vineyards. Call (+34) 629 490 828 or you can email Cristina at info@laetusrioja.com, for additional information or to arrange a tour and tasting.
Bodega Viñedos Ruiz Jiménez

After more than 15 years growing grapes on their 65 hectares vineyards located from 400 to 600 meters of altitude, they began making their own organic wines, and in 1998 founded the winery in Aldeanueva de Ebro. This was the first of only two wineries in La Rioja whose vineyards were certified by International Demeter, the biodynamic certification body, 61 have been certified as organic. Francisco Ruiz, director of the winery stated that “Today organic viticulture is the exception but tomorrow it will be the norm”.

Their Pago de Valcaliente Reserva 2013 has received 90 points from Guía Peñín. They have now released their 2017 Ingenium Garnacha, 100% Garnacha from their vineyard ‘La Plana de Turrás’.

The winery is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. Contact the winery online, by emailing francisco@vinedosruizjimenez.es, or Patricia at export@vinedosruizjimenez.es, or call (+34) 941 163 577 for additional information or to schedule a visit.

Bodega Sendero Royal

Located next to Bodegas Álvarez Alfaro is another family of winemakers and breeders, and collector of classic cars. Belonging to the Gonzalo Ruiz Pastor family, the new winery was founded in 1998, and is surrounded by 5-hectares of vineyards with another 60 hectares, which have been in the family for generations, on the the slopes of Monte Yerga. The aging warehouse holds 600 barrels of American and French oak.

The 2017 Sendero Royal Crianza, 80% Tempranillo and 20% Graciano, spent 14 months in oak. The Sendero Royal Tempranillo Blanco is
produced from 100% Tempranillo Blanco, which was only discovered in 1988.

The family offers a tour of the winery, Monday-Saturday, with a tasting of two wines by appointment only. Call (+34) 941 743 999 or email info@senderoroyal.com to schedule a visit to the winery.

**Viñedos de Aldeanueva**

The association was founded in November 1956 by a group of local growers, the partners joining together to unite against the few buyers of bulk grapes who took advantage of the dispersed offering of the growers in the small town. The winery was expanded in 1995 and a new management team took over in 2001. The cooperative, the largest in the Rioja, with 850 members, has some 2850 hectares of vineyards that extend from the Ebro river to the high slopes of Mount Yerga, the largest plots being the Tempranillo vineyards, 228 hectares, and Garnacha, 152 hectares. There are three cellars holding 15,000 barrels, mostly American oak, for the aging of crianza, reserva and gran reserva wines.

The wineries belonging to the association are **Fincas de Azabache** and **Bodegas Viña Herminia**, plus Cosecheros y Criadores del Alto Ebro, which bottles the surplus wines of Viñedos de Aldeanueva, selling them at an unbeatable quality/price ratio.

You can request a visit online, or call (+34) 941 163 039 to arrange a tour of the facilities.

**Fincas de Azabache**

Azabache now has its own beautiful modern winery with cutting-edge technology which only adds to the tradition that began in 1956 when a
group of local wine growers opened their own bodega to market their top-range organic wines. The new aging cellar holds 12,000 barrels. The new winery also has its own restaurant and a professional tasting room.

Tim Atkin rated the 2015 Azabache Reserva, 70% Tempranillo, 30% Graciano, 89 points in the Rioja 2020 Special Report.

Email info@fincasdeazabache.com, or call (+34) 941 163 039 for additional information or to arrange a visit to the winery and vineyards.

**Bodegas Viña Herminia**

The winery was originally founded in 1949 by Joaquin Casas, who was from a long winemaking lineage, and named the bodega after his wife, Herminia. A joint venture between the Luis Caballero Group (owner of Emilio Lustau) and the major Rioja cooperative Viñedos de Aldeanueva, the winery lies between the River Ebro and the Sierra de Yerga mountain range in the village of Aldeanueva de Ebro, a few minutes drive northwest of Alfaro, just southeast of Calahorra, surrounded by vineyards, which spread up the slopes of Mount Yerga to an altitude of 700 meters, allowing the vines to embrace the sun. The director, José Luis, a 4th generation winemaker, joined Viña Herminia in 2007 and manages the cellar with its 3200 oak barrels.

Their 2014 Vina Herminia Reserva was awarded 89 points by Guía Peñín and 87 points by Tim Atkin, with the 2016 Vina Herminia Rioja Crianza receiving 87 points from Guía Peñín in 2020.

You can contact them online, call (+34) 941 142 305 or email them at vherminia@vherminia.es to arrange a tour of the winery.
**Bodegas Domeco de Jarauta**

Built in the style of a French "châteaux" by José Vicente Domeco de Jarauta in 1995, the new winery added to a tradition of wine making that dates back more than 100 years, when the family began in the wine business, it’s first award coming in Barcelona in 1888. The oldest vineyards surround the winery, which is located a few minutes northwest of Aldeanueva de Ebro. The rest of their 100 hectares of vineyards are in Alfaro, Autol and Rincón de Soto. The barrel room holds 700 casks of French and American oak, along with some Romanian and Russian barrel they are experimenting with. Barrels are racked four times/year, and after 24 to 36 months of aging, the wine rests in a bottle for at least 9 months before being released.

Guía Peñín awarded the *2018 Sotomayor Vendimia Seleccionada* 86 points, with Tim Atkin rating it 87 points in 2019. The *2014 Vina Marro Reserva* received 87 points by Guía Peñín in 2020.

You can email info@bodegasdomecodejarauta.com, or call (+34) 941 163 078 to request a tour and tasting. Mount Yerga

**Bodegas D. Mateos**

What began as a small vineyard on the slopes of Mount Yerga in 1886 evolved after seven generations of the cultivation of the vineyards with the research and development of new grape varieties like Tempranillo blanco. Their vineyards cover nearly 100 hectares with more than half of the vines goblet trained, the rest are trellis trained. The new winery was opened in 2000 and under the direction of Mateo Ruiz, offers great wines with their own distinctive personality and character.
The 2017 La Mateo Garnacha cepas viejas, 100% Garnacha from century-old vineyards, aged for 15 months in new French oak, which was awarded 92 points in the 2019 Guía Peñín. The 2018 La Mateo Tempranillo blanco, with 6 months in French and American oak, received 91 points.

You can call (+34) 941 261 897, email info@bodegasmateos.com or contact them online to request a visit to the winery, which is open Monday-Friday.

**Bodegas Álvarez Alfaro**

Pablo Álvarez Alfaro opened his small family winery in 1890, establishing his first wine sales office in San Sebastián in 1895, selling only wines grown in his own vineyards. The new winery was opened in 1999 a few minutes north of Aldeanueva de Ebro by Pablo Bretón Ruiz and is still in the hands of the family, the 4th generation of artisan winemakers. The aging cellar holds 1300 225-liter barrels of American and French oak, where the wines are racked every four months instead of the usual twice a year. The winery, with 62 hectares of vineyards, is located a few minutes north of Aldeanueva de Ebro along the LR-384.

Email Pablo Ruiz at info@bodegasalvarezalfaro.com or call (+34) 941 144 210 for additional information or to arrange a visit.

**Bodegas Real Rubio**

The family had been working the land from more than 100 years when Mariluz Ruiz and Javier Rubio founded their own cellar at the foot of Monte Yerga. The family’s modern wine-estate, with over 90 hectares of vineyards, many over 60 years of age, is located along the LR-384, to the south of their neighbor Bodegas Álvarez Alfaro. 26 hectares of their
vineyards are set aside as organic for growing Verdejo, Graciano, Chardonnay, Tempranillo and Muscatel varieties.

Their 2017 Crianza Garnacha was awarded a Silver Medal by Decanter WWA in 2020. The 2016 Real Rubio Crianza received 87 points from Tim Atkin in 2020.

The bodega is open for you to tour the vineyards and winery and learn about the process, followed by a tasting, or you can enjoy a more advanced tasting. Email visitas@realrubio.es, or call (+34) 941 163 672 to schedule a tour and tasting.

Real Agrado

The journey began for Viñedos de Alfaro in 1974 when 100 hectares of vineyards, between 300 and 650 meters above sea-level, were planted between Aldeanueva and Alfaro. In 2005 they began to build a new winery in the middle of the vineyards and started producing their own wines. In 2008 the winery opened and in 2018 they became part of the El Gaitero Family (Galicia).

Guía Peñín awarded four of their wines 90 points or more for 2021. The 2010 La Lobera, a blend of Tempranillo, Garnacha, Mazuelo and Graciano, scored 92 points with the 2017 Canterabuey, 100% Garnacha from a 3.5 hectare plot planted in 1975, and which spends 16 months in oak, receiving 91 points. It was the first wine certified as Viñedo Singular. Their 2017 Real Agrado Crianza and their modern ‘Enfant Terrible’ 2019 VA! each received 90 points.

You can email info@realagrado.com or call (+34) 941 142 389 for information or to request a visit the the estate.
Alfaro

Alfaro, the capital of the Orientale (Baja), the city of the white storks, sits just south of the Sotos del Ebro nature reserve. The rooftop of its 17th-century Baroque masterpiece, the Colegiata de San Miguel Arcángel in the Plaza de España, is covered with some 400 stork nests, the largest urban collection of stork nests in the world. As you walk through the town, you’ll find churches and palaces with centuries of history. Friday is market day in the village. The Festival of San Rouque in August fills the town with music, parades of giants and big-heads, bullfights and gastronomic events. The Plaza de toros de Alfaro, which seats up to 5800, was built between 1924 and 1925 by a company from Bilbao. Owned by the city, it was renovated from late 2019 to early 2020.
The nearby Eras de San Martín archaeological site (179 BC), the Roman city of Graccurris, sits on a hill to the north of the city, and there are indications that the area had been continuously populated since the 8th or 9th century BC, before the arrival of Tiberius Sempronio Gracco. The Rioja’s “Jurassic Park”, the Paleontological Interpretation Center of La Rioja, lies a thirty-minute drive southwest, in the village of Igea, about 87 km from Logroño.

Alfaro is also the home of Tonelería Magreñán, the prestigious Spanish cooperage with a tradition of barrel making dating to 1820 when Rafael Magreñán establish his own cooperage. The company is now managed by the fifth generation, Antonio and Teresa.

Lunch time in Alfaro provides you with the opportunity to enjoy the local regional cuisine. Asador San Roque, ‘El Chorrilla’, offers an excellent 30€ menu, and was one of the first places we dined in Alfaro. Graccurris is another good option in the city.

Your dining options outside of the city are much better; La Taberna de la Cuarta Esquina, in the old quarter of Calahorra. Chef Luis Salcedo’s Remigio, with 1 Repsol sun, is located in the center of Tudela. Chefs Marisol Pastor and Ricardo Gill’s Treintaitrés, and Elena Pérez’s Trinquete are both highly rated with 1 Repsol sun and recommended in the Michelin Guide for 2021. Mesón Julián is also located in Tudela. Chef Enrique Martínez’s Restaurante Maher, 2 Repsol suns, is just 15 minutes to the south in Cintruénigo (Navarra). The restaurant at Pago de Cirsus Bodega offers you a spectacular view across the vineyards, as well as a gourmet dining experience. It’s a 30-minute drive southeast of Tudela.
Although it is the capital of the Rioja Oriental, there are not many options for staying in Alfaro itself. We like Aire de Bardenas, which is about a 30-minute drive away outside of Tudela (Navarra), the AC Ciudad de Tudela and Hostal Remigio, both of which are in Tudela, about a 20-minute drive. And of course, the 12-room Pago de Cirus Bodega, in the middle of the vineyard.

Alfaro is a stop on Stage 19.2: Rincón de Soto - Castejón de Ebro, 26,7 km, of the Western Ebro GR-99 Nature Trail.

Alfaro Wineries Of Interest

- Bodegas Ilurce
- Finca Egomei
- Bodegas de Familia Burgo Viejo
- Bodegas Palacios Remondo

Bodegas Ilurce

Before lunch one day, schedule a visit to this 4th-generation family owned winery on the LR-385, the road to Grávalos. Founded in 1940, the family’s modern winery was opened in 2010 and has been working with noted the Jorge Ordoñez Group for several years.

Their excellent 2017 Garnacha Rosé received 91 points in the Tim Atkin’s Rioja 2020 Special Report, while the Rio Madre Graciano, 100% Graciano, by winemaker Jorge Ordoñez, has earned 92 points from James Suckling and 86 points from Wine Spectator for 2021.

90-minute visits to the winery, with the possibility of visiting part of the 60 hectares of centenary vineyards, including those in the Yerga mountains, are available in Spanish, English, French and German. Call
Finca Egomei
The family owned 125-hectare estate of Hermanos Torres-Librada (Finca Estarijo), located on the Alfaro-Corella highway a few minutes south of Alfaro, was purchased in 2007 by Arturo Beltrán Picapeo, owner of the 'Vista Alegre' arena in Madrid and Grupo Bodegas A&B (Navarra), and is now a small modern, avant-garde winery producing only two red wines, both Crianzas

The 2009 Egomei and 2009 EgomeiAlma both received 90 points from the Wine Advocate, with the 2009 Egomei Alma receiving 92 points by Guía Peñín when first released. The 2015 Finca Egomei Alma was awarded 89 points by Tim Atkin in Jan. 2020.

Email info@egomei.es, or call (+34) 902 108 101, to arrange a visit to this prestigious, boutique winery. Open Monday-Friday and Saturday mornings.

Bodegas de Familia Burgo Viejo
With 200 hectares of vineyards and a hundred years of tradition behind them, the winery was founded in 1987 by six families after producing wine in bulk as a cooperative since 1950s. The now 16 family’s vineyards, with some Garnacha are over 90 years old, are spread throughout the area, in the foothills of Yerga Mountain. Winemaker Gorka Etxebarria oversees the modern winery, which opened in 2004, to accommodate the increased production and the export market.
Tim Atkin awarded the 2015 *Licenciado Reserva* 89 points in 2020, while the 2017 *Bodegas Burgo Viejo Crianza* received 86 points from Guía Peñín and Wine Enthusiast, and 89 points from Tim Atkin in 2020.

The winery is located in Alfaro at Calle Concordia, 8, just down the street from the asador *San Roque* and about a 15-minute walk from Plaza Esperanza. You can call Gorka at (+34) 941 183 405 to arrange a visit to the winery, or at (+34) 627 837 611 if you want to know more about his new project, **Sínodo Vitivinícola**.

**Bodegas Palacios Remondo**

The winery had always been among the leading producers of red wine in the Rioja Baja, noted more for mass-produced wines rather than quality brands, but that was before Álvaro Palacios took over the winery and its jewel, the fabulous La Montesa vineyard, and popularized the change in the name to the Rioja Oriental.

The 2017 *La Montesa*, 95% Garnacha, has received 93 points from Guía Peñín and 93+ points from Robert Parker for 2021. The 2017 *Propiedad*, 92% Garnacha, received 97 points from Guía Proensa, with the 2018 *Plácer*, 100% Viura, awarded 94 points by Parker. Their 2019 *Camins Crianza* was rated 94 points by James Suckling and the 2018 *Les Terrasses Crianza*, 94 points from Parker for 2021.

You can email pedidos@alvaropalacios.com or call (+34) 941 180 207 for additional information or to request a visit to the winery.
Grávalos

Once a Roman villa, this small hilltop village of less than 200 inhabitants sits between the Yerga and Peñalosa Mountains 26 kms southwest of Alfaro on the LR-385. Here you will find vineyards, almond trees and cereal. You will also find deer, wild boar, quail, partridge and hare. In the center of the village is the 16th-century parish church of Santa María de la Antigua, and 128 private caves where each neighbor makes their own wine. It’s where the first cava was made in La Rioja, the Brut Nature. The spa has been in operation since at least the 16th-century. The Mirador de Peña Herrera and the ruins of the 18th-century hermitage of Santa María. The spa hotel Balneario de Grávalos is located just outside the village on the road from Alfaro, the LR-385.
Grávalos Wineries Of Interest

• Bodegas Escudero

**Bodegas Escudero, S.L.**

Many years ago the great-grandfather Juan started making wine in a small cave dug out of the mountain and over time was joined by his son, Amador. Benito Escudero, the father, after many years of trying, managed to make his own cava, a sparkling wine following the traditional method or Champenoise he had learned of in Bordeaux and Champagne, being one of the first winemakers to form part of the D.O. Cava.

The winery, founded in 1852, is now run by the 4th generation, who manage four wineries; Bodegas Escudero (Grávalos) dedicated to the elaboration of Cavas, Bodegas Vinsacro (Pradejón), Hacienda Logos (Castejón) and and Bodegas Escudero (Monteagudo).

Their 200 hectares of vineyards are located in both the Rioja and Navarra DOs, with most located on the southern slopes of Monte Yerga between 400 and 800 meters about sea level. The main cellar in Pradejón holds 6000 French (50%), American (40%), and Central European (10%) oak barrels.

They also own 70,000 Arbequina and Tosca olive trees from which they produce Becquer de Leyenda, Becquer Eterno and Landoliva EVOOs.

You can email info@familiaescudero.com, or call (+34) 941 398 008 to request a visit to the original bodega in Grávalos.
La Navarre Rioja Alta

Navarre Rioja Alta, the Ribera Occidental, is often referred to as the “other Rioja”, the undiscovered part of the Rioja DOCa that runs from the border with Logroño to Azagra along the north bank of the Ebro River, with nearly 6800 hectares of vineyards under production and offers a some excellent options for wine touring in the region. Winemaking in the region dates back to the time of the Romans, but there are vines of the prehistoric *Vitis sylvestris*, wild grapevines that were discovered growing along the Ega River, indicating they were thriving here long before the arrival of the Romans.

The area is also the important center of *Productos de Navarra en Conserva*, with products from Conservas Meleta, Juanchu, Adolfo Sadaba,
Gilvemar, J. Vela, Palacio S.A.. Conservas Artesanas Rubio is in Cárcar.
Conservas DANTZA, El Chaval, Almanaque, Rosara and Aceitunas Sarasa are in Andosilla. One of our favorites, La Catedral de Navarra, is in Mendavia. You will find El Navarrico and Conservas Ecológicas Monjardín in San Adrián. In Lodosa you’ll find Conservas Perón, Pedro Luis, Aragonillo, Conservas Baigorri, Bujanda, and Conservas Lodosa Cooperativa, but there are no wineries.

Villages in the Navarre Rioja Alta include Aras-Ayto, Bargota, Viana, Mendavia, Lodosa, Sartaguda, Cárcar, Andosilla, San Adrián, Azagra and Cadreita.
**Navarra de Aras**

This small village of around 150 inhabitants is a short drive north of Viana on the west side of the Río de Valdenuevas valley, an area that was once lush with holm oak forests, is filled with olive trees, almonds, vineyards and cereals. Ara means altar or sacrificial stone in Latin and the village was once know as *Tres Aras*, the three altars. The temple’s 13th-century pointed half-barrel vault is all that remains.

In January the village celebrates San Sebastian, their patron saint, with a small festival, and on May 15 there is a pilgrimage to the hermitage of San Isidro, a quick walk to the north of the village along the west bank of the Valdenuevas river.
Navarra de Aras Wineries of Interest

- Bodegas Cadarso Ciordia

**Bodegas Cadarso Ciordia**

In 1999 Pedro Luis Cadarso built his small winery over a cellar the family has used since the 17th-century in the village of Aras, producing wines from the family’s 30 hectares of vineyards between Aras and Viana, spread out over 5 plots at a elevation from 480 and 640 meters. They released its first vintage of their *Tresaras* brand wine in 2000. The winery is now directed by Severiano Cadarso, the 2nd-generation, along with winemaker Jesús Bauza, of *Bodegas Bauza* in Elciego.

The *Don Severiano* is a special 100% Tempranillo wine; sweet, bold, dry, of which they only produce around 800 bottles a year. *Tresaras Blanco Fermentado en Barrica* is a blend of 60% Viura, 20% Tempranillo Blanco and 20% Garnacha Blanca, which spends six months in new oak.

You can email info@bodegascadarsociordia.com, or call (+34) 948 644 040 / 650 444 377 for information.
Known for its excellent wines and the legend of the famous Brujo de Bargota (Johanes, the clergyman), who lived in the village in the 16th century, each July this small village to the east of Aras, 7 kms from Viana, becomes the capital of witchcraft for a week when the people of the village dress up the streets with banners, hay bales and old furniture to celebrate the past. There is a mediaeval market, exhibitions and workshops about the world of witchcraft and performances by Grupo de teatro Garañango. The village’s stone houses hide underground wine cellars where for generations each family has made and stored wines. If you need a coffee in the morning or lunch you can stop by José Antonio Zúñiga Pinto at Calle Monte Yoar, 3. Bars Lanas and Pitxi have a Pintxo-Pote night on Fridays at 8:00 pm.
The village is equally well know for its three BTT Routes, mountain bike routes, the most demanding being Ruta 1-Integral de Bargota, covering 33,7 kms. Ruta 2-Mariñanas is 16,2 kms takes you up into the highest and most mountainous area, and Ruta 3-Arbanta is 18,6 km takes you down through dry ravines and past the vineyards.

**Bargota Wineries of Interest**
- Bodegas Biurko Gorri

**Bodegas Biurko Gorri**
The Llorens family Bodega’s name means “place of two waters” in Basque. Surrounded by its vineyards and olive groves, the winery was built on a hill overlooking the countryside. The winery started out as a cooperative but then became a private initiative, producing wines that are modern, fruity and balanced, grown from vineyards covering nearly 40 hectares around the village at up to 600 meters elevation, on terraces, gentle sunny slopes, flat fields, and mountain tops. They are a pioneer in the certification of wines.

Tim Atkins rated their 2011 *Biurko Gorri Gran Reserva*, 80% Tempranillo, 20% Graciano, aged 16 months in oak, 12 months in stainless steel, then resting 30 months in the bottle before release, 90 points and the 2006 *Biurko Gorri Gran Reserva* 91 points in January 2020.

You can contact the family [online](mailto:info@iberiantraveler.com), call (+34) 948 648 370 or email them at [ocijo@biurkogorri.com](mailto:ocijo@biurkogorri.com) for more information or to arrange a tour and tasting. They are located a couple of minutes from the village center off of the NA-7253.
Bodegas Ondarre vineyards near Mendavia

**Mendavia**

This is the Navarre Rioja Alta’s largest village on the north bank on the Ebro River, and is surrounded by 3000 hectares of fertile land, where in the spring you can find delicious white asparagus, artichokes and other vegetables. In the summer there are pochas, cherries, peaches, pears, watermelons and melon, followed in the fall by piquillo peppers. The village celebrates the Hogueras de San Antón, with bonfires in the streets, each year on 16 and 17 January. The fiesta to honor San Juan Bautista, the village’s parton saint, takes place the end of August with parades, the encierro; the running of the bulls, gigantes (giants) and cabezudos (big heads), traditional dancing and the “caldico de madrugada” at dawn, and everyone dresses for the fiesta in white and red.
The Circuito de Navarra racetrack is in nearby Los Arcos. Mendavia is also on both Stage 16: Oyón/Oion - Mendavia, 29.6 km, and Stage 17: Mendavia - Lodosa, 18.1 km, of the Western Ebro GR-99 Nature Trail.

**Mendavia Wineries of Interest**

- Bodegas Barón de Ley
- Bodega Rioja Vega
- Bodegas Ondarre
- Bodega Rioja Vega
- Bodegas Maximo
- El Coto

**Bodegas Barón de Ley**

A first stop would be at this classic wine estate, a historic 16th-century castle-fortress monastery thirty minutes drive east of Logroño, on the north bank of the Ebro River, in Mendavia, outside the village of Lodosa, best known for its world-famous Piquillo Peppers. The estate, constructed in 1548 by the Count of Eguía as a castle-fortress, sits on the banks of the Ebro River on land that once belonged to the Kingdom of Navarra but by then had come under the control of the Crown of Castile and Aragón.

The monastery and estate would later become part of the Benedictine Order, being used for grazing their wool-producing sheep, but the Benedictines were also experts in making wines and spirits. It remained in the Benedictine’s hands until 1836 when it was confiscated by the Spanish government during the “Mendizábal Disentailment”. Given to Zurbano, who ended up loosing the estate some years later in a historic card game to a French Count, the estate was finally acquired by the founders of Barón de Ley in the 1980s. Bodegas Maximo, located across the Ebro River in Oyón, is also part of the Bodegas Barón de Ley group, as is El Coto, one of the largest wineries in the Rioja. They also own the Finca Museum in Cigales.
With the first planting of the vineyards in 1985, the Monastery Estate grew over the years to include more than 1000 hectares around the villages of Mendavia, Cenicero, Carboneras and Ausejo, with the vineyards in Carboneras, one of the highest in the Rioja at 840 meters elevation. The winery is one of the classics in the Navarre Rioja Alta.

Tim Atkins has rated 10 of their wines with 90 to 94 points, with the 2013 *Tres Viñas Reserva Blanco* awarded 94 points and the 2015 *Finca Monasterio, 2011 Siete Viñas Reserva Tinto*, and 2015 *Varietal Maturana* awarded 93 points each. Wine Spectator awarded 92 points to the 2010 *Baron de Ley Siete Viñas* in 2021.

Wine Enthusiast awarded the 2015 *Reserva*, 100% Tempranillo from the Mendavia vineyard, 20 months in new American oak and 20 months resting in a bottle, 91 points. Wine

Guided tours of the Monastery of Imas, completely restored in the mid-1990s, and its cellars, containing 15,000 new American and French-oak casks, and six French-oak "foudres", unique fermentation vats, is available by appointment only. You can email info@barondeley.com, or call (+34) 948 694 303 to arrange a tour.

**Bodega Rioja Vega**

Originally founded in Haro in 1882 by Felipe Ugalde as Bodegas Felipe Ugalde, he registered the name Rioja Vega in 1921 and is today only one of four wineries that can use the Rioja name in their brand as it predates the creation of the Regulatory Council. They became part of the Príncipe de Viana Group in 1983; *Finca Albret*, Príncipe de Viana in Navarra, and *Bodegas Clunia* in Castilla y León. The beautiful new chateaux-style
A winery, which opened in 2002 in the area known as “La Venta del Jalón”, is surrounded by 70 hectares of vineyards.

Their 2014 'Venta Jalón' Reserva Especial was rated 92 points by Falstaff Magazine in April 2020, awarded 91 points by Tim Atkin in Jan. 2020 and 91 points by Guía Peñín in June 2019. It was recently awarded 93 points in Decanter and 94 points and Gold Medal at the Rioja Masters. The classic Rioja Vega Reserva, a blend of Tempranillo, Graciano and Mazuelo, aged two years in American oak and resting at least one year in the bottle, received 91 points from Wine Enthusiast, 90 points from Decanter, 90 points from Guía Peñín and a gold medal in the Best of Spain Wine Challenge.

A guided tour and tasting is 10€/person and is available Monday-Saturday at noon. For a tour with pintxos, add 5€. The guided tour and tasting, plus lunch at the wine cellar's restaurant is 40€/person for groups. Reserve your tour online, by email at info@riojavega.com, or call (+34) 948 646 263.

Bodegas Ondarre
Part of the Bodegas Olarra Group (Logroño), the winery in Mendavia was created with the aim of producing wines with a clear personality reflective of Viana with wines from the small, ancient vineyards on the slopes of the Sierra.

The 2014 Mayor de Ondarre Reserva, 90% Tempranillo, is aged 19 months in new American and French oak and remains at least 17 months in a bottle before release, received 93 points from Decanter. The Valdebarón is from grapes found in a series of small valleys just north of Viana, dotted with vineyards, cornfields and ancient olive trees. The 2017 Valdebarón
*Tinto*, aged for 18 months in American oak, received 93 points from Tim Atkin and 90 points from Decanter. The 2019 *Valdebarón Blanco*, cask-fermented in new French oak, was awarded a gold medal and 90 points in the *Sélections Mondiales des Vins* (Canada).

Guided tours and tasting are available at *Bodegas Olarra*, ‘The Catedral of Rioja’, in Logroño.
Working in the vineyards of Bodega Valdelares

Cárcar

This small farming village of around 1100 inhabitants 10 km east of Lodosa, on a ridge overlooking the Ega River, began in the 10th-century when Sancho Garcés I built a defensive castle. In 924 the village was burned to the ground by Abderramán III, who had occupied the village in 920. The palace stood until 1277 when the village was once again destroyed, this time by the Castilian army. Be sure to drive up to the Mirador de Cárcar and hike up to Monte San Pedro for sweeping views of the countryside.

As with all of the towns and villages in Navarra, they celebrate all of the traditional holidays, but September is filled with events. The Fiestas de la Juventud, the youth festival with the encierros de vaquillas, the running of
the heifers, is the first weekend in September. The 9-day Fiestas de Santa Cruz begins on September 14. September 29 is a one-day festival in honor of their patron saint San Miguel. The Pilgrimage to the Virgen de Gracia is celebrated on Pentecost Monday, with the fiesta beginning on Thursday. A procession called “El Encuentro” is held on Holy Wednesday of Semana Santa followed by the Good Friday procession by the three brotherhoods of Cárcar.

For lunch in the village, you can try the restaurant in the Hotel Villa de Cárcar.

Cárcar Wineries of Interest

• Bodega Valdelares

**Bodega Valdelares**

Constructed by the brothers Máximo and Rosana Pardo Guillén in 2003, the French “chateaux-style” winery, surrounded by 12 hectares vineyards of Chardonnay, Moscatel de Grano Menudo, Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, specializes in the production of aged reds.

Their *Valdelares Alta Expresión*, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, spends 15 months in oak. The *Valdelares Rosado* is a blend of Tempranillo, Cabernet and Merlot.

You can call them at (+34) 656 849 602 or contact them online for additional information, or to request a tour and tasting.
The harvest begins, Bodega Bagordi

Andosilla

This is another farming village of about 2800 inhabitants a few minutes down river from Cárcar, on the north bank, and home to the conservas Dantza, El Chaval and Rosara. Like Cárcar, it was one of the outposts for the kingdom of Pamplona against the Moors during the 10th-century.

During the morning of Good Friday, the streets of Andosilla are the backdrop for a living representation of Vía Crucis, the Way of the Cross. After this solemn ceremony, you can enjoy a typical Hebrew crafts market organized by Napar Bideak, the artisan cooperative. The winter festivities are celebrated in honor of San Sebastián on January 20. The first Saturday in May is the pilgrimage of Santa Cruz, the Holy Cross. Andosilla also celebrates the Fiestas de la Juventud, the youth festival with the encierros
de vaquillas, the running of the heifers begin on Friday of the first weekend in September. The 7-day festival for the Virgen de la Cerca begins on September 7.

**Andosilla Wineries of Interest**

- Bodegas Bagordi

**Bodegas Bagordi**

The Luisma family’s 65 hectares of Tempranillo, Graciano, Garnacha and Viura vineyards lie along the banks of the Ega and Ebro rivers, between the towns of Andosilla and San Adrián, where, since 1723, 14 generations have worked the land through dry summers followed by cold winters, producing their *Vinos Ecológicos*; Bagordi, Usoa de Bagordi and Navardia. The new winery was built in the mid-1990s with a cellar that holds 1000 barrels of French and American oak. The winery is managed by Luis Manuel Cárcar García, and they are a member of Bodegas Familiares de Rioja.

Wine Enthusiast rated the *2017 Navardia Organic Joven*, 80% Tempranillo, 15% Garnacha and 5% Graciano, 86 points in September 2019.

The winery is open for visits Monday-Friday and Saturday mornings. Contact them at info@bagordi.com, call (+34) 948 674 860 or contact them online to request a tour and tasting.

**Bodegas Navarrsotillo**

This is another top organic wine producer belonging to the brothers Andrés and Ramón Serrano Arriezu, who come from a long tradition of winemakers. Their 85 hectares of Rioja DOCa vineyards are divided
between Calahorra, Andosilla and San Adrián, in the so-called “Mediterranean Rioja”, with cold winters and hot, day summers. They also have 35 hectares of vineyards in the Navarra DO, in Andosilla between the Ega and Ebro rivers. The winery opened in 1997 and they have been producing EVOO since 2020.

Decanter gave the Magister Bibendi Garnacha Crianza, 84 points in a November 2019 blind tasting, with Tim Atkin awarding the 2014 Noemus Tinto, 100% Tempranillo, 91 points in January 2019.

You can contact them online, by email at info@navarrsotillo.com, or call (+34) 948 690 523 to arrange a tour and tasting.

**Bodegas Alore**

This family winery belonging to the Resano and Alonso families is surrounded by 20 hectares of vineyards from which they produce four traditional wines, three reds and one white.

The winery is open for visits on Saturday for 10€/person. You can email them at bodegasalore@hotmail.com, call (+34) 948 919 011 / 681 316 328 / 630 957 590 (Pablo) for information or to arrange a tour and tasting.
Fall colors in the vineyards of Bodegas Luis Gurpegui Muga

San Adrián

Sitting across the Ebro river from Calahorra, is a city of more then 6000 inhabitants. The village began with a monastery, followed by a defensive castle on a hill offering excellent views of the Ebro plain; a land once crossed by many armies. In September both patron saints, the Virgen de la Palma and San Adrián, are celebrated, but for 8 days, beginning July 24, they celebrate the Holy Relics, the bones of martyrs from the catacombs of Rome, given to the village in the 12th-century by Doña Urraca, daughter of Alfonso VII.

San Adrián is on Stage 18: Sartaguda - San Adrián, 16,3 km, Stage 18.1: Alcanadre - San Adrián, 28,5 km, Stage 19: San Adrián - Milagro, 29,5 km
and Stage 19.1: San Adrián - Rincón de Soto, 24.7 km, of the Western Ebro GR-99 Nature Trail.

San Adrián Wineries Of Interest

- Arriezu Vineyards
- Bodegas Luis Gurpegui Muga

Arriezu Vineyards
Founded by winemaker José Félix Arriezu in 1989 originally to sell wine in bulk from his family’s 72 hectares of vineyards, in 2013 he started producing his own Tempranillo from the 43 hectare plot ‘El Monte’ in San Adrián and a Verdejo from his 90 hectares of the "La Sombría” pre-phylloxera vineyards in Pozaldez (Valladolid).

His E de Esperanza 2017 and E de Esperanza 2018, 100% Verdejo won gold medals at the XXI Concurso Internacional de Vinos Eológicos in 2020.

Call (+34) 696 701 619 or email comercial@arriezuvineyards.com for information and to request a tour and tasting when in San Adrián.

Bodegas Luis Gurpegui Muga
Primitivo Gurpegui Muro, a first generation winemaker, opened the winery in San Adrián in the early 20th-century. Upon his death, his son Luis Gurpegui Muga remodeled and expended the winery to include vineyards in the Ribera del Guadiana DO (Extremadura) and Navarra. The winery now contains 12,500 oak barrels for producing Reserva and Gran Reserva wines. It is now part of Manzanos Wines Group.
James Suckling awarded their *Primi Luis Gurpegui Tempranillo*, 100% Tempranillo, 90 points in 2020, while Guía Peñín rated the *2019 Luis Gurpegui Muga ‘Primi’* 89 points in June 2020.

Email info@luisgurpeguimuga.com, or call (+34) 948 692 500 to arrange a visit to the winey at Calle Luis Gurpegui, 3 in San Adrián, and see all the stages of wine production.
Azagra

The village, surrounded by a sea of vineyards, has been around since the time of the Romans. The Muslims had a military presence here and the Navarran king built a fortress, which was destroyed in 1874. The 16th-century Parroquia de San Salvador is late Gothic with Renaissance influences, and whose main altarpiece is the work of sculptor Francisco de San Juan and his son José, in the year 1700. The Basilica of the Virgen del Olmo houses a polychrome Gothic carving of the Virgin from the 14th-century.

A busy agricultural community, Carnaval is one of their major celebrations of the year with everyone turning out. The streets are filled on May 1, for Labor Day. A pilgrimage to the hermitage of San Esteban
happens the Saturday before Pentecost Sunday. Farmer’s Day is May 15 with festivities throughout the day. The one-day Fiesta del Barrio de la Chantrea takes place in July in the neighborhood of La Chantrea. The Fiestas de la Juventud is in August, and the 8-day Patron Saint Festivities celebrating the Virgen del Olmo begins on September 7.

**Azagra Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodegas Manzanos Azagra
- Bodegas El lagar de la Aldea
- Bodegas Viña Marichalar
- Bodegas Manero Barricarte

**Bodegas Manzanos Azagra**

The Fernández de Manzanos family, whose winemaking tradition dates from 1890, opened this new state of the art winery in 2007 overlooking the Ebro River between San Adrián and Azagra, designed for you to enjoy its views, taste traditional food and wines from the area, and share the moments.

With 10 wineries in the Rioja Alta and Navarre Rioja Alta after acquiring Bodegas Luis Gurpegui Muga (San Adrián) and Bodegas Berceo (Haro) in 2016 and three more in the Navarra DO in 2018, the 5th generation of the family (Víctor and David and Victor’s wife Laura) now owns 250 hectares of vineyards and manage another 700 in the Rioja DO, and in the Navarra DO, they have 50 hectares, managing another 525.

Their *Las Campanas Rosé* was voted the best rosado in Spain in March at the 28th edition of ‘Mundus Vini’. Also winning a gold medal were the *1864 Castillo de Olite Reserva, 1864 Castillo de Olite Crianza* and *Castillo de Eneriz Colección*. Tim Atkin’s Rioja 2021 Special Report awarded 90 points or more to six Manzanos, Berceo and Luis Gurpegui wines.
The Manzanos Azagra winery is open Monday-Friday at 11:00 am, 1:00 and 4:00 pm. Two-hours visits are 15€ for the basic visit and 35€ for the premium visit. A two-hour tour through the vineyards is also available Monday-Friday at 10:00 am. You can extend your visit with a selection of wines available in the Wine Bar. The wine bar is open from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday-Friday without appointment. The restaurant offers a 35€ menu during the week, but is currently closed due to the pandemic. Reserve your visit by email visitas@manzanos.com, call (+34) 948 692 500, or reserve online.

**Bodegas El lagar de la Aldea**

Bodegas El Lagar is another part of the Manzanos Family group of wineries, and is located at Calle Navas de Tolosa, 88.

**Bodegas Viña Marichalar**

This is the first winery that the family Fernández de Manzanos owned in Rioja appellation, and was built when the appellation was founded and is at Calle Navas de Tolosa, 83.

**Bodegas Manero Barricarte**

Founded in 2010, the winery is the result of a family of vine growers going back nearly 200 years who love the vine and the wine. They produce two reds and a white from the 55 hectares of vineyards with an average age of 20 years.

Visits are available during the week. Contacting Raúl Manero by email info@bodegasmanero.com, or call (+34) 696 682 075 for information or to request a tour and tasting. Reunited with the Muslims in 1,084
Cadreita

Sitting across the Ebro River from Alfaro, the village, with a population of just under 2000, is located 5 kms from the Bardenas Reales and 26 kms from the Route of the Dinosaurs. Reconquered from the Muslims in 1084 by King Sancho Ramírez, was destroyed by the Castilian army in 1335, before falling victim to the great plague of 1348. After that it was pretty quiet until September 1810 when the second battalion of Don Francisco Espoz y Mina's party of guerrillas, commanded by D. Gregorio Cruchaga, arrived after 24 hours of marching with the intention of taking refuge in Castile, and crossed the river. Luckily, the French army decided not to continue the pursuit.
The village celebrates the Festivities of San Antón on January 17, Labor Day on May 1, and have a 8-day fiesta for the patron saint San Miguel beginning July 15. The Fiestas de la Juventud takes place the last weekend of September.

**Cadreita Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodegas Finca Albret

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**Bodegas Finca Albret**

This winery, founded in 2002, is named after the last king on Navarra, Juan de Albret (1469-1516), belongs to the Bodegas Príncipe de Viana group. Its 50 hectares of vineyards are spread around the immediate area; La Loma (the hill), La Viña de mi Madre, the mother’s vineyard, El Alba (dawn), Rocío (dew), El Balcón (Balcony), and Lastra (a flat stone). The production of premiums wines, under the direction of winemaker Pablo Pávez, have become the contemporary benchmark for the “new Navarra” wines, which are aged in 2000 new French and American oak barrels produced by Tonelería Intona in Monteagudo (Navarra).

The 2015 Finca Albret La Vina de Mi Madre Reserva was rated 95 points by Falstaff Magazine and awarded 93 points by Guía Peñín in 2020. Their La Viña de mi Madre Reserva and El Balcón Crianza received a gold medal at the latest edition of Mundus Vini March.

You can contact the winery at info@fincaalbret.com or call (+34) 948 40 68 06 for additional information, or to arrange a visit.
La Ribera Baja de Navarra wine region

La Ribera Baja de Navarra

The Ribera Baja, often referred to as the “kingdom of the vegetables”, is a flat river plain with sparse vegetation at the southern tip of Navarra between Aragón and La Rioja, a region dominated by the imposing Sierra del Moncayo mountain range to the southwest, and includes the villages and towns of Ablítas, Arguedas, Barillas, Cascante, Castejón, Cintruénigo, Corella, Fitero, Monteagudo, Murchante, Tulebras, Valtierra and the capital of the region, Tudela, which was founded by Arabs in the 9th century.

The semi-arid zone gives the 3300 hectares of farmland in the area the longest growing period in Navarra, from 255 to 277 days and where you will find Natural Park of Las Bardenas Reales, Europe’s largest desert.
Tempranillo and Garnacha are the dominate red grapes of the Ribera Baja de Navarra, with Viura and Moscatel making up the largest number of white grapes. Some of the vines where brought to the region by the Romans more than 2000 years ago.
A few minutes drive south of Alfaro, at the confluence of two river valleys, the Ebro and the Alhama, near the borders of Navarra, La Rioja and Aragón, at a point approximately 100 km from Pamplona, Logroño, Zaragoza and Soria, you will find Corella, a city whose picturesque streets in the old quarter are filled with noble buildings of mainly Baroque architecture; manor houses and palaces, and held alternately by Muslims and Christians during the 10th and 11th centuries. Home to many centenarian bodegas, the city is steeped in history. It was the birthplace of the 18th-century artist Antonio González Ruiz and one of the most prolific and popular composers of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Blas de Laserna.
The corellanos celebrate *Jornadas barrocas*, Baroque days, during *Semana Santa*, with the Good Friday procession being regarded as the most baroque and colorful of the entire Ebro valley. The *Fiestas del Villar*, a religious and gastronomic event, takes place fifteen days after Easter, with a bonfire on Saturday. The 8-day long *Fiestas de San Miguel*, when the city shuts down, begins on September 23 with bullfights in the Plaza de toros. The *Gigantes*, giants, will be dancing in the Plaza de España two days before the fiesta begins, and like Pamplona, the chupinazo (rockets) go off at noon to announce the start of the fiesta, which dates from 1847.

For lunch today you can consider *Restaurante Maher* in Cintruénigo, or take the drive over to Tudela for lunch at *Restaurante Trinquete*, 1 Repsol sun and recommended in the Michelin Guide for 2021. Another good option in Tudela is chef José Aguado’s *Restaurante Topero*, or the more traditional *Mesón Julián*.

Corella Wineries Of Interest

- Viña Zorzal
- Bodegas Corellanas
- Bodegas Camilo Castilla
- Bodegas Marqués de Berol
- Viñedos De Calidad

**Viña Zorzal**

In 1989, after a lifetime of working in the vineyards, Antonio Sanz opened his own winery and began producing his own wines from his 40 hectares of vineyards, 25 of which are Garnacha. Beginning in 2007 with the rescue of native Navarran grape varieties that had been almost forgotten, the three sons of Antonio Sanz, Xabier, Iñaki and Mikel, found a treasure in the very old, abandoned vineyards near the winery within Fitero (Navarra), a few minutes south of Cintruénigo, where the summers are
very hot and the winters very cold, on the edge of the Ebro River valley and the start of the Iberian mountains where they launched their first Navarra wines in 2013; Viña Zorzal Malayeto and Viña Zorzal Corral de los Altos. In 2015 the produced their first Rioja wines from vineyards located between Labastida and San Vicente de la Sonsierra.


Luis Gutierrez at the Wine Advocate went wild over Robert Parker’s rating of their wines, awarding the 2018 Punto de Fuga Corral del Mate, 100% Garnacha, 96 points. Falstaff Magazine rated the 2018 Vina Zorzal Garnacha 89 points, with Guía Peñín awarding the 2018 vintage 90 points in 2019 and the 2019 Vina Zorzal Garnacha 91 points in 2020.

You can contact them at info@vinazorzalwines.com for more information, or call (+34) 948 780 617 to arrange a visit to the winery located in the village of Corella (Navarra), a few minutes south of Alfaro.

**Bodegas Corellanas**

The Jorge A. Johansson Family (Hans Investment Group) acquired the winery which was founded in 1900 by Julián Hernández Malumbres in Corella and built a new winery to better control the process. They control 60 hectares of vineyards of Moscatel de Grano Menudo, Tempranillo, Garnacha, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay.

Wine Enthusiast rated their 2013 Vina Rubican Crianza, from Garnacha and Tempranillo vineyards more than 50 years old, 88 points in 2018.
Guided tours of the winery are from 60 minutes (visit and tasting of wines and Muscatels) to 3 hours (visit, tasting and lunch in the tasting room). You can request a visit online, by email at info@bodegascorellanas.com, or call (+34) 948 780 029.

**Bodegas Camilo Castilla**

The oldest winery in Navarra, founded in 1856 by Don Camilo Castilla Alzugaray, owns some 42 hectares of vineyards and specializes in the production of sweet wines. In 1987, under the then direction of Ana Beltrán, the winery was modernized and re-established the family of sweet wines that had died out under the Goya name, and introducing a new vermouth. The winery is now under the direction of Luis Balanza.

The *Capricho d'Goya Vino Dulce Muscat*, aged for 3 years in oak, then three years in weather on the terrace of the bodega in *las damajuanas*, glass jars, before resting another year in smaller oak barrels, was named the best Muscat wine of the world in 2006 and received 94 points from Robert Parker.

The bodega is located in Corella at Calle Santa Bárbara, 40, near the Plaza de toros de Corella. Call (+34) 948 780 006 for additional information.

**Bodegas Marqués de Berol**

The wineries location was not by accident as it is where the humid Atlantic, temperate continental, and the dry, warm Mediterranean climates intersect. Established in 1962, the estate’s manually harvested 78 hectares of vineyards are at an altitude of 450 meters, 125 meters above the Arga river, in the southeastern Ribera-Tudelana, on one of the routes the Way of Saint James. The wine cellars where first modernized during the 60s and 70s, then completely renovated with new technology at the

The winery is located at Carretera Madrid, northeast of Corella on the N-113. You can contact them by email at info@marquesdeberol.es or call (+34) 948 782 255.

**Viñedos De Calidad - Viños Alex**

The estate is located just outside of the city, across the Alhama river, on the road to Tudela, the NA-6922. Their Finca Ontinar vineyard is 25 hectares of Tempranillo, 25 of Merlot and 4 of Viura. The aging room holds 2000 new casks of American and French oak. The bodega, under the direction of Javier Cantarero, is associated with Tierra 3 Riberas.

Winemaker Rubén Hernández’s signature wine, *2019 Vinos 'Alex' Garnacha Rosado*, was rated 97 points by Guía Peñín, with his 'Alex' Crianza receiving 87 points, in 2020.

Visits are available Monday-Friday by appointment. Call (+34) 948 782 014, email javier@vinosalex.com, or contact them online for additional information or to arrange a tour and tasting.
South of Alfaro between Fitero and Corella, bathed by the waters of the Alhama River, you’ll find the “portal of Navarra with Castilla”, a lively agricultural community known for its vegetables (asparagus and artichoke of penca), wines and olive oils, and still known for its alabaster. The village existed long before the fertile lands of the Navarrese Ebro were conquered by the Moors who installed the irrigation systems that still exist today, in the early 8th-century. The Moors stayed for 400 years until the reconquest by Alfonso el Batallador, Alfonso the Battler, king of Aragon and of Navarre, in 1119. Later in the 12th century it was the home of Los Templarios, the Knights Templars; Rodrigo and Martín de Argaiz, dos caballeros navarros, two Navarrese gentlemen, and mercenaries. For
15 days in the mid 19th-century Cintruénigo hosted Francisco de Asís, Duke of Cádiz, king consort of Spain, husband of Queen Isabella II.

On January 24 they celebrate the Feast of the Virgin of Peace. The Procesión de los Ballesteros de la Santa Cruz takes place on May 3 when the Brotherhood of the Crossbowmen of the Holy Cross parade through the streets of Cintruénigo, a tradition at dates from the 15th-century. The Fiestas de San Juan Bautista is on June 24. The most important festival in Cintruénigo is the festival of the patron saint, the Virgen de la Paz. The celebration goes on for 8-days beginning September 7 each year and includes a “running of the bulls”.

If you find yourself in Cintruénigo at lunch time, Restaurante Maher, with 2 Repsol suns in 2021, is a must stop. Or you can drive to Tudela for lunch (see our recommendations above).

**Cintruénigo Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodegas Gran Feudo
- Dominio Lasierpe

**Bodegas Gran Feudo**

This classic winery, the oldest in the area, was orginally founded in 1647 by Juan Chivite Frías and his sister-in-law María Rubio, widow of Joseph Chivite, when the farm was still a stagecoach stop. Their vineyards of Tempranillo, Garnacha, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Chardonnay and Moscatel are located in Cintruénigo and Corella. The “La Cascajera” winery, forerunner to Gran Feudo (1975), was built in 1872. In the early 1990s Julián Chivite Marco (1910-1997) decided to update the bodega for the production of high-quality wines. The winery is currently run by the
11th generation of the Chivite family: Julián, Carlos, Fernando and Mercedes Chivite, one of the oldest wine dynasties in Spain and internationally recognized for producing excellence wines. The family also owns Señorío de Arínzano (Navarra) where the "Colección 125" is produced, and Viña Salceda (Elciego).

The Edición Limitada Viñas Viejas Reserva, 80% Tempranillo, 20% Garnacha, is aged 18 months in French and American oak. The 2015 Edición Limitada 626 Barricas Crianza, aged 12 months in French and American oak, was rated 86 points by Guía Peñín in 2019.

The winery is open Monday-Friday, on weekends by special request. The basic 90-minute tour with a tasting of three wines is 10€. The premium visit, with a tasting of five wines, is only 15€/person. Contact them online, by email info@granfeudo.com or call (+34) 948 811 000 to request a visit.

Dominio Lasierpe
You’ll find this bodega founded in 1920 just down the street from Gran Feudo. After growing grapes for decades, the winegrowers decided to opened their own winery, Bodega Cirbonera, to market their own wines. Under the direction of José Ramón Aznar, the cooperative owns more than 1,300 hectares of vineyards; the largest surface area of vineyards in the D.O. Navarra, and the most diverse where they grow both native grape varieties; Garnacha, Tempranillo, Mazuelo, Graciano, Viura and Moscatel, plus Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Chardonnay. The vineyards, with an average age is 30 years, are found 400 meters above sea level on a gently sloping hillside, producing wines with body, structure and a smooth palate, but not releasing their first crianza until 1997.
The *Flor de Lasierpe Garnacha*, 100% Garnacha, from 35-year old vineyards, with a great balance between wood and fruit, spends 10 months in French oak.

Email [comercial@dominiolasierpe.com](mailto:comercial@dominiolasierpe.com) or call (+34) 948 811 033 to arrange a visit to the winery, which is just a few minutes walk from Restaurante Maher.
The view across Finca La Cantera vineyard toward mount Moncayo

**Murchante**

The village, located about 6 kms, or a 15-minute drive southwest of Tudela on the NA-6840, 95 kms from Pamplona, in the Middle Valley of the Ebro overlooking the Queiles river, has been around since long before the arrival of the Romans. Most of the Moors here were expelled in the early 16th-century but some stayed and converted to Christianity. Murchante today is considered one of the most dynamic towns in the Ribera de Navarra. The Basiano Museum is a space where you will find some of the outstanding works of Navarran landscaper artist Jesús Basiano Martínez Pérez.

The pilgrimage to the hermitage of San Gregorio during the festival of the Virgen de Nuestras Manos, one of the most important festivals of the year,
takes place the Monday after Easter Sunday. The 3-day Fiestas de la Juventud takes place the last weekend of June or the first weekend in July and includes food, wine, music and a running of the Vacas twice each day. The eight-day festival to honor San Roque and the Virgen de la Asunción begins August 14, with with a ‘Night of Wine and Tapas’ on the Friday before the start of the fiesta. October 12 is the Pilgrimage to Urzante. The second weekend in November is the festival of Santo Cristo de la Buena Siembra, with a large bonfire in the Plaza de los Fueros.

For those in for a walk or a bicycle ride, the Vía Verde del Tarazonica is a 22 km long path from Tudela through the orchards along the banks of the Ebro river, through Murchante to mount Moncayo, ending in Tarazona. DESAFIO 132 is in late April/early May (canceled this year). The cycle route runs through Navarra, La Rioja and Soria province.

Your best option for lunch today would be at one of our recommendations in nearby Tudela.

**Murchante Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodegas Príncipe de Viana
- Finca La Cantera de Santa Ana

**Bodegas Príncipe de Viana**

Although the winery is named for the heirs to the throne of Navarre and Spain, the bodegas only opened 30 years ago and since then, has been a leader in research, including climate change and sustainable viticulture, and is part of the group of premium wineries that includes Bodegas Finca Albret, (Cadreita) Bodegas Rioja Vega (Mendavia) and Bodegas Clunia (Burgos).
The 2017 *Príncipe de Viana Edición Limitada* won a Gold Medal at the Mundus Vini 2021 in March.

Open Monday-Thursday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm and after lunch from 3:00 to 6:00 pm. On Fridays they are open from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm only. Email info@principedeviana.com or call (+34) 948 838 640 for additional information and to request a visit.

**Finca La Cantera de Santa Ana**

Tomás Santos Irujo’s 14 hectares of vineyards of Chardonnay, Syrah, red Grenache, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon are located in the heart of a large terrace know for centuries at “Monte de las Viñas”, in sight of the majestic Moncayo, the tallest peak in the Iberian range.

The *Finca la Cantera Red*, a blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot and 20% Syrah, is aged 10 months in oak. The *Nomeolvides White* is from trellis trained vines harvested by hand in 15 kg boxes, spending 5 months in new French oak, which the *Nomeolvides Rosé*, 100% Red Grenache, is from bush vines.

90-minute visits with the owner/winemaker, who is from Pamplona, can be in Spanish, English or French, and includes a tour of the vineyards, winery and a tasting of three wines and an aperitivo for 12€/person for groups of up to 12. Tours are available Monday-Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Saturdays from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm. Call Tomás Santos at (+34) 656 658 007 or email vinos@fincalacantera.com to book your tour.
Cascante

Once an ancient Celtiberian settlement and a major Roman city known as Cascantum, the town is located between the Natural Park of Bardenas Reales and mount Moncayo, in the southernmost reaches of Navarra’s Ribera Baja region, a short 20-minute drive southwest of Tudela on the N-121C. During the 19th-century the town flourished with flour mills and bread ovens, brandy and chocolate factories, trujales (oil mills) and wineries, and the first phosphoric match factory in Spain. This is also the birthplace of famed sculptor Clemente Ochoa and home of renowned artist/painter Javier Hernández Soria, “JHERS”.

The 17th-century Basilica of Nuestra Señora del Romero, built as a watchtower over the ruins of a synagogue from the middle ages, stands at
the highest point in Cascante, with views over the Queiles River valley and nearby mount Moncayo. Its unique 137 meter long Baroque brick arcaded gallery, with 37 arches and the Stations of the Cross, protects the passage from the town to the Basilica, and whose architect remains unknown.

September is an important month in Cascante, when the city celebrates las Fiestas Patronales for 9 days beginning on the second Saturday with the Txupinazo at noon when everyone is dressed in white and red. The encierros, the running of the bulls, takes place three times each day; the first is in the morning, then at noon, followed by one in the evening. There will be bullfights, music, dancing and food.

The third weekend of May is the second most important fiesta, the pilgrimage, on carriages, buggies, decorated trailers or on foot, to the monument of La Cruceta to bless the fields and the harvest. After eating traditional chorizo tortillas, they return to the Plaza for the Contest of Carriages, and the party begins for the rest of the weekend.

Cascante Wineries Of Interest

• Bodegas Malón de Echaide

Bodegas Malón de Echaide

Founded in 1951 by a group of 230 Cascantino winemakers, the winery is located between mount Moncayo and the Ebro river, in the heart of the Queiles valley. Their 400 hectares of vineyards are located in the Ribera Baja, Ribera Alta and Tierra Estella. The first bodega was built in 1952, and renovated in 2018 with the addition of a new bottling plant.
October 2020 they became the official wine supplier for Club Atlético Osasuna (Pamplona) for the next three seasons.

The *2016 Malon de Echaide Crianza* was rated 86 points and the *2019 Malon de Echaide Blanco* received 85 points by Guía Peñín in 2020.

Guided visits to the winery are available by reservation. The guided visit, with a tasting of three wines, is 8€/person, and for a degustation of five wines, is 12€, with a minimum group of 6. Custom tours are also available upon request. Call (+34) 948 851 411 or email visitas@malondeeechaide.com to schedule your tour.

You can also tour the vineyard in 4x4 and have a tasting of three wines, with a minimum group of 4, for 55€/person. Call (+34) 948 850 448 or 654 500 512, or email info@activaexperience.com to arrange this tour.
Olive tress on the Nuestra Señora del Rosario estate

Ablítas

This small village of around 2500, at the southern end of the Ribera de Navarra, was resettled shortly after the reconquest of Tudela (1119). It was declared a “villa ejemplar y bonita”, exemplary and beautiful, in 2014 by the EU. The historic medieval watchtower of the Castillo de Ablitas has been rebuilt. Looking out over the village, it was reopened to the public this past December.

The village is home to four major Navarran olive oil producers; La Ablitense, Aceites Sandúa, Conservas Artesanas María Jesús and Nuestra Señora del Rosario, who also produces a decent table wine.

Like other Navarran towns, Ablitas celebrates a number of important festivals, including the 8-day festival of the Virgen del Rosario beginning
on September 7 at noon with the Txupinazo (rockets) being fired from the balcony of the old town hall announcing the start of the fiesta, and ends at midnight on the 14th. It’s not a big as the Fiesta de San Fermín in Pamplona but just as exciting. On July 21 and 22 there is a fiesta to celebrate Santa Maria Magdalena with the tossing of 300 kilos of pears from the balconies of the town hall. The Virgin of October is celebrated the first weekend of October.

For a traditional Navarran lunch in Ablítas, you can try El Rincón de Constantino, at Calle Donantes de Sangre, 1. Expect large portions.

**Ablítas Wineries Of Interest**

- Bodega Pago de Cirsus

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**Bodega Pago de Cirsus**

We first visited this impressive single vineyard winery estate, which is built in the style of a 14th-century fortress, not long after it opened, when Navarran chef Ignacio “Nacho” Gómara was in charge of the kitchen. At that time the estate covered a total of 220 hectares with 137 hectares of vineyards under production. Located a few kms northeast of Ablítas, it was the ambitious project of visionary film producer and wine maker Iñaki Núñez. The winery sits at the highest point of La Finca Bolandín, surrounded by vineyards and olive trees, with beautiful views of the Sierra del Moncayo in the distance. The cellar contains large French oak vats and 1,000 barrels of French oak, where the wines age a minimum of 12 months.
Gilbert & Gaillard, the prestigious French Wine Guide, awarded five of the Pago’s wines from 90 to 96 points in 2020. Guía Peñín has awarded 93 points to the 2016 Cuvée Especial, 92 points to the 2018 Vendimia Seleccionada and 91 points to their 2018 Chardonnay Fermentado en Barrica for 2021. The Chardonnay is one of our favorites.

You can visit the winery for the one-hour tour at noon on Saturdays and Sundays before having lunch in the restaurant. Call (+34) 948 386 427, or email recepcion.hotel@pagodecirsus.com to arrange your visit.
Barillas

A few minutes southwest of Ablitas on the NA-3040 is another small farming village of around 200 residents in the Queiles Valley near the border with Aragon and in middle of the migration route of birds from Central and Northern Europe. Laguna de Lor, which gets its water from mount Moncayo, and is popular for fishing, walking and birdwatching, is just to the north of the village. The main attraction here is the 15th-century altarpiece of the parish of San Miguel, considered one of the most outstanding works of naturalistic Gothic preserved in Spain. The village came under Christian rule in 1119 with the reconquest of Tudela, but it’s population of Moors remained under the protection of the king of Pamplona, García Ramírez, “el Restaurador”, García The Restorer, son of El...
Cid’s daughter Cristina and Ramiro Sánchez, lord of Monzón. Barillas finally become part of Navarra in 1834.

Barillas sits along the Tarazonica Greenway, “El Tarazonica”, the old narrow-gauge train route that connected Tudela and Tarazona, which you can walk or bike the 22 kms from the banks of the Ebro river to the slopes of Moncayo.

**Barillas Wineries Of Interest**

- Ubeta Wines
- Bodegas Viña Magaña S.L.

**Ubeta Wines**

This small modern organic winery actually began more than a century ago when the great-grandfather, Ricardo Agramonte “Rebote”, made wine in a small family winery in nearby Ablitas. Today, biologist-winemaker Roberto Agirre Ubeta produces only high-quality Garnache wines from his Finca Ubeta, an organic vineyard covering 20 hectares in the upper part of the Mendianike river valley, 400 meters above sea level. The bodega’s logo represents the endangered Dupont lark (*Chersophilus duponti*), which can be found around the vineyard.

The *Ubeta Tina*, 100% Garnache, comes from a 4 hectare plot and is aged 12 months in French oak, then spends 8 more months in a cement tank before release.

Contact Roberto online, by email ubeta@ubetawines.com or call (+34) 678 421 303 for additional information or to request a visit of the winery at Carretera de Barillas-Malon, km. 05, just south of the village.
Bodegas Viña Magaña S.L.
The winery was founded in 1970 by Juan Magaña, considered a pioneer, a visionary, on barren land, bringing in new strains of vines from France, then unauthorized (Franco). He smuggled the vines, including Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, through the Pyrenees on a donkey, releasing his first vintage in 1978. Today, with the winery in the hands of his winemaker son Diego Magaña Tejero, they own more than 120 hectares of unique vineyards, a subsoil comprised almost entirely of limestone. Many of the clones came from the same vines supplied to Château Pétrus in Pomerol in the 70s. In 2015 they added a new aging room with 47 concrete tanks in the cellar designed by noted Pritzker Prize winning Navarrese architect Rafael Moneo. There are 1000 French oak barrels (Alliers and Nevers).

The 2013 Viña Magaña Dignus, a modern Navarran wine, a blend of 40% Tempranillo, 20% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Garnacha, aged 16 months in French oak, was awarded 90 points by Robert Parker.

Visits to the winery are possible. You can call Diego at (+34) 948 850 034 or email bodegas@vinamagana.com for more information.
Beyond The Wine

Exploring The Other Rioja

If you are planning on being in the Rioja for more than a few days, you have a great opportunity to visit some of the areas outside of the popular wine producing regions, or combine these areas with your daily wine touring. We usually visit Casalarreina, Santo Domingo de la Calzada and Ezcaray in the Oja Valley when in the Haro area.

The villages of Viniegra de Abajo and Arriba in the Najerilla Valley can be a full-day outing. A visit to the villages in Cameros; Torrecilla, El Rasillo, Ortigosa, Pradillo, Villanueva, and Almarza in the Iregua Valley, and Soto en Cameros, San Román, Muro and the Mirador del Cañón, in the Leza
Valley, also involve a full day excursion but are easy to reach from Haro, Laguardia or Logroño.

**Day Trips In The Rioja**

**Casalarreina**

A short 10-minute drive south of Haro will put you in the village of Casalarreina where you can visit the 16th-century *Monasterio de Nuestra Señora de Piedad*, a National Historic-Artistic Monument. The bishop of Calahorra founded this convent for cloistered Dominican nuns in 1509. Construction began in 1514, concluding in 1524 in the richly ornamented Gothic Isabelline style, popular during the reign of Queen Isabella. Of the site’s three components, only the church with its beautiful Plateresque façade and the lovely two-story cloister are open to visitors. Closed Mondays.

**Festivals** include the 5-day long harvest festival to celebrate the *Virgen del Campo* in September on the Saturday following *San Mateo*. The festival begins in the Plaza de La Florida with the firing of the chupinazo (rocket) from the balcony of the Ayuntamiento (town hall) at 1:00 pm. The fiesta of *San Juan* is celebrated on June 24 with a wine battle and wine tasting. The 3-day celebration of parton saint *San Vítores* is during the last week in August and includes a craft market with local gastronomy one of the highlights.

If you are interested in staying in Casalarreina, then the lovely rural hotel, a reconverted Dominican Monastery founded in 1509, *Hospedería Señorío de Casalarreina*, might be of interest. It sits next to the Monastery’s church and was created inside the building that housed the monastery’s former school, and is filled with character, with just 15

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*Maribel’s Guides © 350*
beautiful rooms. The 10-room Solar de Febrer is also a good option. Another option is the 5-room La ilera, a 19th-century guest house in the center of Casalarreina, fully restored in 2006.

For lunch in Casalarreina we recommend La Vieja Bodega with one Repsol sun, Lumbre Restaurante, and Entreraires, which offers Riojan and Basque cuisines and a 12€ menú del día during the week.

Ezcaray
It’s a gorgeous drive past forests of oak and beech trees to the beguiling mountain town in the high valley of the Oja river, one of the Seven Valleys of the Rioja, and the heart of the Sierra de la Demanda, the roof of the Rioja. The village is a traditional summer retreat for Riojan and Basque families and a winter sports center, the Vladezcaray ski area, and snowshoeing at the base of the majestic San Lorgezo mountain, the highest peak in the region. The Picos de Urbión nearby marks the border between Burgos and Soria.

In early July Ezcaray holds the International Jazz Festival and this year, from July 30 - August 1, the village celebrates the Ezcaray Fest, a major music festival in the Rioja. The 2-day celebration of the patron saint, La Virgen de Allende, is on September 24 and 25. The pilgrimage to the hermitage of Santa Bárbara takes place on Pentecost Easter Monday in May. The traditional Las habas de San Benito, the beans of San Benito, takes place on the Saturday closest to March 21.

If you do land here by 3:00 in the afternoon and want one of the top gourmet experiences in the Rioja, be sure to stop by Echaurren, where you have the choice of dining at Echaurren Tradición, the original restaurant of Marisa Sánchez, who started it all, chef Francis Paniego’s El
Portal de Echaurren, with two Michelin stars (reservations required), El Cuartito, the casual restaurant, or have tapas in the Chimney Living Room. The hotel is located on the square in the center of the village across from the Parroquia de Santa María la Mayor.

This is also the perfect place to shop for beautiful mohair scarves, shawls and blankets. You can stop by the workshop of Mantas Ezcaray on Calle González Gallarza before or after lunch. They have been in business here since 1930.

**Santo Domingo de la Calzada**

If you are driving to Ezcaray from Haro, San Vicente de la Sonsierra, Briones, Ábalos, or even Logroño, you will pass through this walled city sitting on the banks of the Oja River that has been a major staging area for pilgrims on the way to Santiago de Compostela, a mere 528 kms to the west. There’s no parking within the stone walls, but you can park outside and walk along its medieval streets. While here, take the time to visit the Cathedral of Santo Domingo de la Calzada, which dates from the 12th-century. The cathedral opens daily at 10:00 am while the tower is only open on Saturdays and Sundays.

The Fiestas del Santo normally begins on May 10 and continues until the 15th. On May 11 there is a procession of sheep through the city to celebrate King Alfonso I of Aragón’s order from 1112 stating that the town's livestock could graze freely on the kingdom's mountains (moved to September this year). In mid-August there is a play about the miracles of Los Milagros del Santo, performed by La Asociación Teatral Calceatense, in the Plaza de España, the miracle of the rooster and the hen. The harvest festival, Fiestas de Gracias and San Jerónimo Hermosilla, begins on September
17 this year. There is a Medieval Market, Ferias de la Concepción y Mercado Medieval, when the city dresses up with flags and colored ribbons, the balconies adorned with family shields. It will be held on December 6-8 this year.

The town’s founding father, Saint Dominic, is buried here in an elaborate mausoleum with small crypt underneath. He dedicated his life to the building of a road, bridge and pilgrims’ hospital-this hospice becoming a focal point for the pilgrims to Santiago and constituted the beginnings of the new town, which was named Santo Domingo after his death. Since he is the patron saint of road workers and engineers, surrounding the burial site are votive plaques and offerings from engineering firms.

But what tourists really flock to the cathedral to see are its live cock and hen kept in a carved wooden gallery. They have to do with a miracle whose tale goes something like this... In the Middle Ages, a married couple and their 18 year-old son, Hugonnell, arrived to Santo Domingo from Germany as pilgrims on the road to Compostela. The girl at the inn where they were staying fell in love with the son, but he rebuffed her. Seeking revenge, she planted a silver goblet in his luggage, and when the family took up their journey onward to Santiago, she denounced the lad as a thief. Under the laws of the time, the punishment for robbery was death; thus once captured and judged, the innocent boy was hanged. His grief stricken parents continued on their journey to Compostela, but several months later they returned. They went to the spot to see where their son had been hanged. Upon arriving at the gallows, they heard his voice telling them that Santo Domingo had saved his life. Their son was alive! They went straight to the Judge’s house to inform him of the miracle and demand that the boy be cut down from the gallows. The Judge replied...
with scorn that their son was “about as alive as the roast cock and hen I’m about to eat.” And at that moment, the cock and hen leaped from the Mayor’s plate and began to crow. The boy was then set free.

In memory of this event, a white cock and hen are kept in an ornate henhouse inside the cathedral, to the left of the entrance. Local farmers donate these birds, and they’re changed every month.

If you want to spend a few days in the city, you can check out the Parador de Santo Domingo de la Calzada, a former 12th-century hospital. The Hotel Santo Domingo Bernardo de Fresnedo is the 3-star sister of the Parador and is located outside of the walled medieval quarter and is currently closed for renovation. The Abadía Cisterciense, dating from 1610 when the Cistercian nuns moved from Abia de Torres, was fully restored in 1979 and offers 78 rooms. It is also a Pilgrim’s Hostel for those on the Road to Santiago.

For lunch, you can consider La Cancela at Calle Mayor, 51, next to the tower. Los Caballeros is just across the street at No. 56., at the entrance to the Plaza del Ayuntamiento.

Anguiano
This small village located just down the LR-113 from Nájera attracts spectators from around the region for the celebration of the village’s parton saint on July 21-23. Its famous dancers, Danza de los Zancos, perched atop half-meter tall wooden stilts, perform precariously (and astonishingly), descending 45 meters from the church, first down six stone steps, then a very steep, narrow cobblestone street called Cuesta de los Danzantes, dressed in the traditional costume of a colorful vest and large yellow and white billowing skirts. The dancers set off as they twirl
around, seemingly in oblivion, accompanying the procession carrying the image of *Santa María Magdalena*. Spectators form a human shield to catch them should something happen as they launch themselves, spinning down the steep street.

This four hundred-year old tradition, one of the most noteworthy events in the Rioja, is said to be La Rioja's oldest folk tradition. The dancers also perform the last Saturday in September when the image of the Virgin is returned to her hermitage, where she will await the following spring.

**Full-day Excursions**

**Camero Nuevo and the Sierra de la Demanda**

For a full-day excursion, venture south from Logroño through Nájera, once the capital of the Kingdom of Navarre, to the completely unspoiled, untouched, small, medieval, rough stone villages, complete with cobblestone streets, of *Viniegra de Abajo* and *Viniegra de Arriba*, two of the seven Viniegra villages in the Rioja.

Situated between the San Lorenzo and Urbión mountains, 10 kilometers apart, you’ll experience a trip back in time. Both are believed to be inhabited during the time of the Visigothic’s with the discovery of ancient tombs and Visigothic stele (art), but they were also around during the Roman period. The houses of Abajo are constructed primarily of reddish stone and have three stories, the downstairs stable for the cattle, the first floor living quarters for the family and top floor used to store herbs and grains. the newer homes where built by “Indianos” who returned from America with their fortunes.
Considered one of the prettiest villages in the Rioja, both are listed in the *Los Pueblos más Bonitos de España*, there are only a few cafes here with outdoor grills and a couple of small B&Bs for fishermen... That’s about it.

But you’ll find the family run restaurant of *La Venta de Goya*, on the LR-113 highway across from the bridge over the Najerilla river, where a yearly international fly-fishing competition takes place. Its *menú del día*, Monday-Friday will still only set you back a paltry 12€, or 18€ on weekends from July-September. This modest looking restaurant has been featured in Saveur magazine, Food and Wine, as well as the Spanish language cookbook, *La Rioja: Mesas de Calidad*. Dishes offered include trout filled with ham, wood pigeon, partridge, red beans, lamb stew, venison with apple and chestnut compotes and wild boar stewed with wild mushrooms. Solid, traditional food in an out-of-the-way destination.

Or you can also pack a picnic for a day’s outing in the mountains, say in Viniegra de Arriba.

The drive to Viniegra de Abajo will take a little over an hour. If you continue up to Viniegra de Arriba, then you can return to Logroño by way of *Villoslada de Cameros*. The loop covers 150 km. Or you can return via *Ortigosa de Cameros* and *Brieva de Cameros*, which would cover just under 200 km.

**Los Cameros (Camero Nuevo)**

The home of the famous *Los Cameros* cheese and the *Sierra de Cebollera Nature Reserve* is less then an hour drive south of Logroño. The Cameros is a land of forests, pastures, summits and small valleys and makes for an excellent day trip from almost anywhere in the Rioja, especially in the autumn.
Driving south from Logroño on the N-111 Navarrete in the Valley de Leza, the natural dividing line between the Rioja Alta and Rioja Oriental, you continue south to the small but elegant mountain village of **Torrecilla en Cameros**, where you can stop to visit the 15th-century **Parish Church of San Martín** with its three naves. The village’s most important festival is held on September 8, the Fiesta of the Virgen de Tómalos, their patron saint. The beautiful **Santuario de Nuestra Señora de Tómalos** is from the 16th-century. The festival of San Marcos, their other patron saint, is in April. At the end of October there is a new tradition, a 3-day/night **Fiestas de las Calaveras**, the festival of the night of the skulls, a kind of Halloween. If you have time, plan on visiting the 455-meter long **Cueva Lóbrega** with its its galleries of stalactites and stalagmites. If you happen to be here during lunch, then you can try **El Parque**, with its 19€ menú del día. The bar-restaurant belongs to the **Hospedería Sagasta**.

From here continue south to the small mountainous village of **El Rasillo de Cameros**. Surrounded by pine forests, the village overlooks the popular Gonzalez-Lacasa reservoir. If adventurous, you can visit the **Ortigosa caves**; La Paz (236 meters long) and La Viña (114 meters), where you will see spectacular examples of stalactites and stalagmites. Guided visits begin at 11:30 am take about one hour.

After a loop around the reservoir, with a stop in the village of **Villanueva de Cameros** just for the views, with maybe a quick side trip to see the tiny beautiful hamlet of **Aldeanueva de Cameros**. Once nearly abandoned, it is now busy during the summer. The only sounds you’ll hear will be the stream running through the village. After a brief stop, head north on the N-111 to the LR-245, the road will take you to the tiny hamlet of **Almarza de Cameros**, “The Port” in Arabic, with a population of 28, and where
during the summer months and in September you’ll likely see the Danza de los Pañuelos (Dance of the Scarves) performed. The next village along the road is the slightly larger Muro en Cameros (36 people), followed by San Román de Cameros, where you can visit the old basket weavers’ workshops. And don’t forget to taste the world-famous Camerano cheese in its native setting.

From here you head north on the LR-250 to Soto en Cameros and the Mirador del Cañón del Leza, and where, if you are lucky, will see the large colony of Griffon vultures in flight. If you are up for a walk, you will see signs of the sauropod dinosaurs, terapods, and Neolithic burial sites. Guided tours are available. The village is famous for its Mazapanes de Soto, which you can find at the shop at the end of Calle Marqués de Vallejo, Mazapanes Viuda de Manuel Redondo (1870). The cattle fair, Feria de Ganado Selecto del Camero Viejo, is held in mid May with a full days worth of events including, food, traditional dancers and a concert.

This loop covers about 130 km, but because of the road, will take around 3 hours, without stops.

If you have the time, drive south to Villoslada de Cameros. During Holy Week, the group Amantes de la Jota presents “Sones de Pasión” with 17 jotas, which recall every moment of the Passion of Christ to begin the week long celebration. Visit the Interpretation Center for Parque Natural de Sierra Cebollera, the Sierra Cebollera Nature Reserve.

Your choices for lunch are limited, but Restaurante Asador Presa de Terroba is one option. The gastrobar LavidaesSueño in San Román de Cameros is another and Club Náutico El Rasillo is open all year and offers a daily menu.
A book of the Gregorian Chants in the Exhibition Hall, Yuso monastery

The Monastery Route

For cultural and historical tourism in the Rioja one can visit the ancient World Heritage Monasteries of Suso, dating from the 9th-century, and Yuso, completed in 1661, in the village of San Millán de la Cogolla, in the middle of the Cárdenas River valley, 20 minutes south of Nájera. The diminutive, pink stone Mozarabic Monastery Suso is set on a wooded mountainside with caves dug out in the rock to form chapels. Notice the Mozarabic horseshoe arches and the empty sarcophagus of the hermit San Millán. Yuso, the lower monastery, was built in the same stern and somber style as El Escorialis and is called the Escorial of the Rioja, and in its day was a center of letters. Here is where the first words written in the Castilian language were found, the glosas, which were margin notes that a monk, Gonzalo de Berceo, scribbled in his vernacular rather than in Latin.
The wood bound Gregorian Chant books are not normally opened due to their age.

Both Yuso and Suso are open Tuesday-Sunday from Easter to September from 10:00 am to 1:30 pm and 4:00 to 6:30 pm. From October to Easter they close one hour earlier in the afternoon. Both are closed Mondays except during August. Parking is at Yuso and there is a shuttle bus that will take you from Yuso and Suso.

Following your visit to Suso and Yuso, head back north on the LR-204, detouring northeast onto the LR-206 to visit the beautiful and lesser known 12th-century Cistercian abbey, Abadía de Santa María de San Salvador, **El Monasterio de la Luz**, at Cañas, home to Carmelite nuns, who make delicious monastic cakes and sweets. It’s just exquisite! Open Tuesday-Sunday, mornings and afternoons.

Leaving Cañas, follow the LR-206 north to the N-120, then head east to Nájera, the former capital of the Kingdom of Navarre, and a stopping point on the French Way, to visit this beautiful Gothic-Plateresque **Monastery of Santa María la Real**. Once in Nájera, park on the east side of the river in the modern town where is ample free parking available, then walk across the pedestrian bridge, entering the atmospheric old quarter and follow signs through the narrow streets to the monastery. Parking is also available in front of Restaurante El Trinquete and in Plaza Santiago. Visits are by guided tour, which takes you upstairs first to see the magnificently carved choir stalls, then down to the Cloisters, the Church and the Royal Pantheon. The monastery is open Tuesday-Sunday.

Secluded, tucked away in a thick mountain forest 20 minutes south of Nájera, the monastery **Santa María de Valvanera** was built to shelter the
11th-century Romanesque-Byzantine statue of its Virgen, the patroness of the Rioja, as well as for beekeepers. The drive up to this secluded spot rates as one of the countryside’s most scenic. According to legend, the construction of the monastery is owned to the discovery of an image of the Virgin, by a repentant bandit named Nuño, in the cavity of an oak tree plagued by bees. The statue can be found in a private room high above the altar and is reached via marble steps on the right side of the church. The restaurant is open to the public, views from the dining room are breathtaking. And if you want, you can spend a night or two. They also produce Licor Benedictinos Valvanera, a natural digestive.

If you want to stop for lunch in Badarán, there is the Conde de Badarán, at the Hotel Mirador Conde de Badarán.
Route Of The Dinosaurs

One can follow the Route of the Dinosaurs through the Valle del Río Cidacos, another one of the Rioja’s seven river valleys. The beginning of the route is a 50-minute drive southwest of Calahorra in the Jurassic Park of the Rioja Oriental. Over 3,000 dinosaur tracks have now been catalogued where dinosaurs roamed what was once a land of marshes and sandy planes during the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. You can normally cover the entire 60 km route through the valley in two days starting in the small village of Enciso, where you will find the Museo Paleontológico. The center has a collection of scale reproductions of skulls, eggs and teeth of the dinosaurs that inhabited this area 120 million years ago, perfect for a family outing. The Paleontological Center is open daily at 11:00 am, but closes on Mondays.
If you start your walk, or bike ride, in Enciso, the next stop is the village of Munilla, with its 15th-century Romanesque bridge. It’s about 7 kms through the high valley of the Cidacos, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve where a large number of the fossilized dinosaurs tracks can be found. If you are looking for lunch in Munilla, Casa Rural Casino de Munilla has a bar and restaurant, while Restaurante La Baldufa, in an old shoe factory that was once a hermitage, is also a good option.
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