

Rioja Alta & Alavesa

Maribel's Guide to the Rioja ©



Maribel's Guides for the Sophisticated Traveler ™

July 2026

"Rioja is living its most authentic moment... It is not a passing trend; it is a change that is here to stay" "Rioja belongs at the world's top table and has done it for some time" Tim Atkin Rioja Report 2026.

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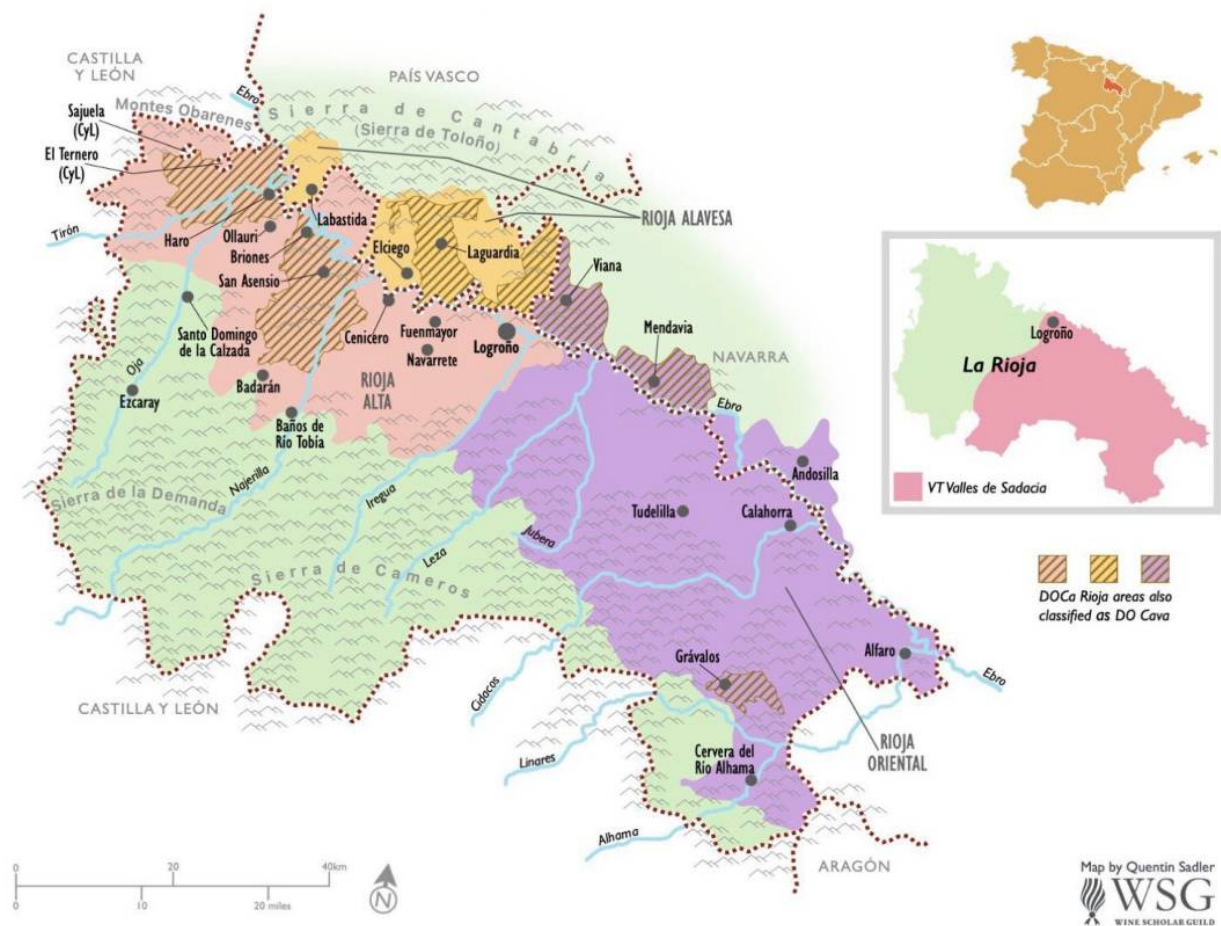
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The Rioja Wine Region



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 several 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 small section of southern Navarra, La Navarre Rioja Alta, often referred to as the "other Rioja", the undiscovered part of the Rioja, 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.



Rioja vineyards in January

There are 144 municipalities in the DOCa Rioja: La Rioja, Navarra and País Vasco (Basque Country), which runs some 100 kilometers from end to end. Spain's largest, the Rioja DOCa has more than 66,000 hectares of vineyards currently under harvest with nearly 16,700 winegrowers and thousands of wines.



The Castillo de Davalillo raising above the vineyards

Planning Your Visit

When to come? Although the Rioja makes an excellent 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. You will find the vineyards exploding in vibrant colors as fall approaches and will be at their most spectacular by mid to late September. Because of climate change, the fall harvest is beginning earlier, now as early as late August and will be completed in most of the Rioja mid October.

Most wineries in the Rioja offer guided tours, and all but a handful require you to schedule your visit in advance. Tours and tastings are conducted in Spanish, a few in French, with some offering 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. Visiting hours are normally restricted; some are open mornings only and nearly all will be closed for lunch (1:30 to 4:00 pm). Many of the wineries have an online booking request form detailing visiting hours and available languages. Be sure to request a tour in the

language you are most comfortable with. Tours and tasting can be as short as 90 minutes, with many exceeding two hours. A few wineries have opened wine bars to accommodate those who don't have the time to take a walk in the vineyard or visit the bodega, but reservations are still required at most of these wineries, with only a few allowing walk-ins.

The closest one gets to doing a “on-the-fly”, à la California's Napa Valley, the “Wine Ghetto” in Lompoc, or hitting the Urban Wine Trail in Santa Barbara are the local food, wine and music events such as the Villabuena Wine Fest in May and Haro's Barrio de la Estación in June. Or you can start the year off with the Uztaberri Eguna in Lapuebla de Labarca in early February when the village welcomes the new vintages with up to 20 wineries opening their doors to visitors.

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 Aspiazua 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.

If this is your first time in the Rioja, we recommend doing a private tour and tasting, scheduling no more than two tours in a 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. Three days in either the Rioja Alavesa, Alta, or the Rioja Oriental, will give you time to visit several wineries, but we feel 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. Just note that here still remains a language issue in areas outside of Haro, Laguardia, Logroño and Alfaro.

Hotels can arrange some tours but don't rely entirely on your hotel staff to do this for you if 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 bodegas in 69 villages in the Rioja Alavesa, Alta, Oriental and Navarre Rioja Alta, plus 13 more in the 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 plus 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 50€, while premium tours and tasting can be easily exceed 150€/person.

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.



Looking north at the Sierra de Cantabria from Págonos

Getting To The Rioja

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 regions of the Rioja, the Alavesa, Alta and Oriental.

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, a more scenic drive. 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, or take a slight detour and spend your first night in Spain in Sigüenza, at the Castle of the Bishops, the Parador de Sigüenza.

By Car From San Sebastián-Donostia

If you're staying in sophisticated, stately San Sebastián, 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 road through Navarra will take you to Logroño then Laguardia after passing through Navarra's major western wine producing region which starts just south of Pamplona. If you have the time, this route gives you a chance to taste some of Navarra's excellent vintages from Bodega Otazu, Pago de Larrainzar, Irache, Arinzano, Castillo de Monjardin, Señorío de Sarría and Bodegas Nekeas, to name just a few.

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 an 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.

By Car From Pamplona

If you're planning on staying in Pamplona, Navarra's capital is just over an hour's drive from Logroño on the A-12. There is an easy connection to Laguardia and Haro without having to go into Logroño if you want to start your visit in Haro. One-day guided tours are also available from Pamplona.

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, with one Repsol sun. If you want to take a short detour to Cintruénigo, then you can have lunch at Restaurante Maher. In Alfaro, we recommend Graccurreis, Morro Tango or San Roque Asador. When driving from Barcelona we often spend the night at the AC Hotel Ciudad de Tudela so we can explore the city, see what's new.

The rather unique 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 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 4 hr 5 min from downtown at 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 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 the Riojan villages of Labastida, Ábalos, Samaniego and Laguardia.

Arriving By Train

Most visitors to the Rioja arrive by car, but there is currently an AVE departing Madrid at 8:30 am, arriving in Logroño at 12:52 pm and one in the afternoon departing at 12:30 pm, getting you to Logroño at 4:51 pm. There is also a daily departure from Barcelona Sans Station at 8:45 am on the Alvia train that will get you into Logroño at 12:52 pm. There is another departure at 12:50 pm, getting you to Logroño at 4:51 pm. See Renfe 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, on a limited basis, 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. Zaragoza (ZAZ) is the closest international airport to Alfaro, a little over a one-hour drive away. 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.



Hotel Villa de Ábalos, La Rioja

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, but 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 feel you don't want to stay at the Frank Gehry designed Hotel Marqués de Riscal in Elciego, you have a few more excellent options to choose from, including one of our favorite places, the popular but modest 3-star 12-room Hotel Villa de Ábalos where you can dine on the best Riojan gastronomy at “La Cocina de Merche”. Some of the newer upscale properties available in the Rioja are the luxury 9-room Palacio de Samaniego, with its French-Basque restaurant and pool. It belongs to the Rothschild Family. The 16-room boutique Hotel Santa María

Briones, a comfortable, renovated 16th-century manor house, belongs to a local Riojan family. The chef here is Juan Cuesta, a native of Logroño who trained in Etxaurren's El Portal in Ezcaray, Venta de Moncalvillo and Martín Berasategui's MB Tenerife. Hotel Palacio de los Ángeles, a 5-star 18th-century baroque palace, opened recently in the heart of Haro with a restaurant by the Echapresto Brothers of Venta de Moncalvillo.

Options of where to stay in the Rioja for wine touring with a car include bodega hotels Finca de los Arandinos with 14 rooms near Entrena and Eguren Ugarte with 21 rooms in Párganos. Other excellent choices include the avant-garde 35-room Hotel Viura in Villabuena de Álava, Eurostars Los Agustinos in Haro, and the Silken Villa de Laguardia, in Laguardia. And if you're a Marriott-type, the Palacio Tondon, with a wine bar and restaurant, sits along the Ebro River in the small village of Briñas, not far from Haro. The Bodega-Hotel FyA, belonging to Grupo Piérola, is located near Navarrete.

If you need to rely on public transportation, then Logroño is your only practical choice with a few good options including the 54-room Fuerte Ruavieja, 30-room Hotel Calle Mayor, the boutique 41-room Áurea Palacio de Correos and the luxury boutique 4-suite hotel Ibiza Rooms in the "Plaza del Espolón". Although the city itself doesn't exude the feel of a wine town, that all changes with the Rioja Wine Harvest Festival (20-26 September 2024) and the Festival of San Mateo celebrated on September 21, when 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 fiestas.

For those wanting something different, then you can check out what's available through the Association of Casas Rurales de la Rioja.



Bodegas Gómez Cruzado

Rioja Wine Classifications

- Joven - Fresh, young table wine, designed to be consumed today.
- Crianza - Is wine aged a minimum of one year in an oak cask and up to 12 months in the bottle. These are quality wines meant for everyday consumption.
- Reserva - Spends at least one year in oak casks and 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. Some Gran Reservas can be much older.
- Espumosos de Calidad de Rioja - This is the new sparkling wine designation, which includes such wines as Pandemonium Blanco De Blancas, Lumen Brut Reserva, Cava Conde de Haro Brut Reserva, Vivanco Cuvée Inédita Rosado Reserva Extra Brut, Conde Valdemar Finca Alto Cantabria Brut Nature, Santalba Brut Nature, Carlos Serres Brut and Tres Espumosos.

New Zonal Classifications

In 1912, 44 grape varieties coexisted in Rioja, which by 2000 had been reduced to just seven. In the 1970s, Garnacha accounted for 39 percent of the vineyards planted, whereas today it barely reaches 7.31 percent of the red varieties that make up its 4,435 hectares.

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 Associations in the Rioja

[ABRA-Asociación de Bodegas de Rioja Alavesa](#)

[Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja](#)

[Asociación Menudas Bodegas de Rioja](#)

[VIR - Viticultores Independientes en Rioja](#)

[Subsierra, Asociación de Bodegas y Viticultores](#)

[Bodegas de Logroño](#)

[Samaniego In Wine](#)



Laguardia, the fortified bastide town and capital of the Rioja Alavesa

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, (31 miles). 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 Dinastia 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 three of our favorites; Bodega de la Marquesa (Valserrano), Bodegas Luis Cañas and Bodegas Badiola. 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 Rioja region firmly on the international wine tourism map.

The Rioja Alavesa Tourist Office can be found in the village of Laguardia at Calle Mayor, 52. They have produced an excellent online guide; ‘Rioja Alavesa Wine Route’. The office is open Monday-Saturday mornings from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and in the afternoon from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. On Sundays and public holidays it’s open from 10:45 am to 2:00 pm.

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 weekday mornings from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm and in the afternoon from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. The office is open Saturday and Sunday mornings from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and in the afternoons from 5:00 to 7:00 pm. Hours vary during the winter months. They also produce an excellent online guide of La Rioja.

Some of the historic towns in the Rioja Oriental you’ll find along the way from Logroño to Alfaro 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 7-day Fiestas de Pan y Queso, the bread and cheese festival in Quel, a centuries-old tradition, runs every

year from 4-10 August. Plan on arriving early. Arnedo, a 20-minute drive southwest of Calahorra along the Cidacos River, a tributary of the Ebro, is the third largest and one of the most prosperous towns in the Rioja. It has a defensive fortification dating from the time of the Moors which overlooks the village. Here they celebrate 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 regions of the Rioja, the Alavesa, Alta & Oriental.



Looking south over the vineyards at Bodegas Ostatu

Wine Touring in Rioja Alta & Alavesa

You can begin your wine touring journey in the western end of the Rioja at Haro, an agricultural town of just under 12,000 inhabitants, with 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.

An option would be to begin your wine adventure in Logroño (page 154), the largest city in the Rioja and its capital. From here you can head west toward Haro, east toward Alfaro, or into the Iregua Valley.

The other option would be for you to start your wine adventure in Alfaro, allowing you to explore the southern most part of the Rioja region, the Rioja Oriental, the Eastern Rioja (see the Rioja Oriental Guide).



Plaza de la Paz

Haro

Many of the notable wineries in Haro 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, is limited and can be difficult, especially around lunch time and impossible during the festival.

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 known 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 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 festivals of San Juan, San Felices and San Pedro take place during the last days of June, beginning with bonfires of San Juan the night of the 23rd, and the Amanecer del Chocolate, the Chocolate Dawn, the next morning. The chupinazo is at 12 noon in the Plaza de la Paz.

The Patron's day, San Felices Bilibio, is June 25th, while the 29th is the celebration of San Pedro, the feast of St. Peter with its popular *Batalla del vino*, Battle of Wine, when thousands of liters of wine are thrown on the participants who are dressed in the traditional costume of white and red. If you go, be prepared.

The pandemic delayed the La Cata del Barrio de la Estación, the Haro Station Wine Experience for two years. This year's event took place yesterday, June 15. We look forward to the next celebration which will take place on 10 June 2026, with tickets becoming available 10 September 2025.

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 Bar El Remolino is at Calle San Martín, 2. Bar Beethoven III is at Plaza de la Iglesia, 8. The Michelin star, 2 Repsol sun Nublo Restaurant can be found in the Plaza San Martín, between the popular Los Caños and La Esquina.

Located in a space next to Café Suizo at Juan Garcia Gato, 2, at the entrance to the Plaza de la Paz is chef Raúl Muñoz and his wife Laura's Alboroque, another great addition to the fine gourmet dining scene in Haro, but plan ahead as the restaurant only seats 16. 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 Los Agustinos, a building with some 600 years of history. The 19th-century palace Hotel Arrope was commissioned by the Duke of Moctezuma de Tultengo, a descendant of the Aztec Emperor Moctezuma II. It is located at Calle Virgen de la Vega, 31. They also have an excellent small restaurant and tapas bar serving local cuisine. The historic 16-room Hotel Plaza de la Paz, overlooking the Plaza de la Paz, is also an option for those wanting to stay in Haro.

If you follow the LR-401 a few minutes north of Haro, about 5 km, you'll come to the small village of Villalba de Rioja (maybe 150 population) sitting on the

southern slopes of the Obarenes Mountains overlooking the vineyards below. Bordering the provinces of Álava and Burgos, the village dates back to the 13th-century and was the birthplace of Pedro Ruiz del Castillo, conquistador and founder the city of Mendoza, Argentina. It's now home to the Palacio Condes de Cirac, a new boutique Casa Rural where you can book one of it's 8 rooms or rent the entire house for a family get-away in the Rioja.

Wineries of interest

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. Ramón Bilbao was again named one of the world's 50 most admired brands by Drinks International in 2023, the 5th year in a row. Winemaker Rosana Lisa, launched *Lalomba*, their new single vineyard collection, in 2020, using concrete tanks and 500-liter French oak barrels. The Tempranillo is from bush vines planted in 2000 on a 2.8 hectare plot on the 650 meter high terraces of Finca Villalba de Rioja. All of the wines are highly rated by Guia Peñín, Tim Atkin and Decanter.

Visits to the winery are available year around. You can do everything from the standard visit, a tasting course, or a special vineyard tour and tasting. The Wine Bar is open Saturdays from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm and on Sundays until 2:00 pm, except in August when it is open Monday-Saturday from 11:00 am to until 6:00 pm for a tasting of 3 wines for 14€. Reservations are required. The restaurant in the wine bar is open for lunch on Saturdays only with a wine paring menu for 52€/person, with a children's menu for 12€. 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. Celebrating their 125th anniversary in 2022, the winery, which remains family-owned and operated, moved to its current location in the mid 20th-century to accommodate its 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. 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.

Email them at info@carlosserres.com or call (+34) 941 310 294 for additional information, or to request a visit to the winery.

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, just south of Pamplona, the oldest winery in Navarra (1864). The Haro winery, originally known as Bodegas Berceo, located in the Plaza de la Paz; the oldest winery in Haro (1801), and the Palacio de Manzanos (1733), have undergone a major renovation and is now available to visit. 14 of their wines were chosen at the top of the Gourmets Guide for 2024.

Visits to the bodega in Haro are available daily for 35€/person with a minimum of 2 people, with a tasting of 5 wines. Visits in English are at 3:30 pm, while the visits in Spanish are at 11:00 am. You can now book your visit online, call them at (+34) 941 618 761, or email visitas@manzanos.com to request a tour and tasting.

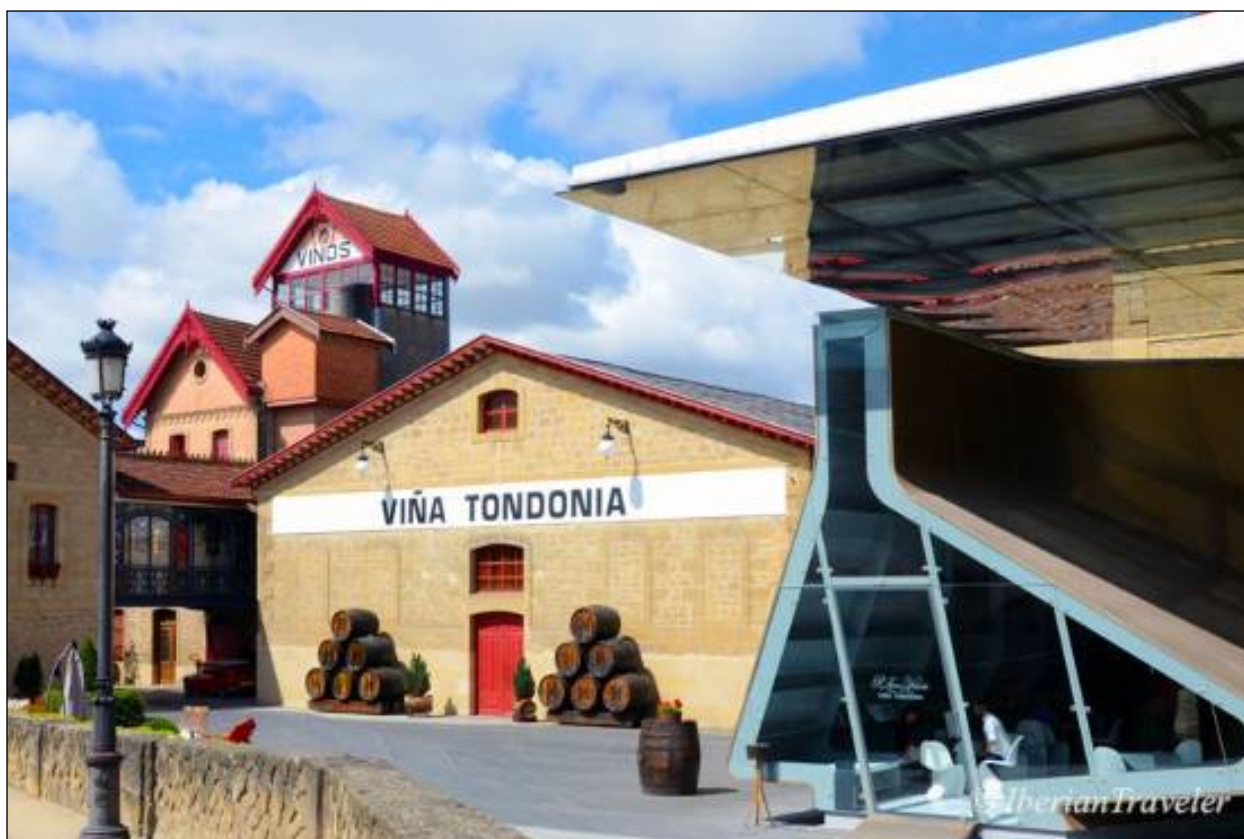
Bodegas Martinez Lacuesta

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 modern winery is run by the 6th-generation of the Martínez Lacuesta 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. Guía Peñín awarded 7 of the traditional wines with 90 or more points in 2023. Their line of vermouths were chosen “Best Buy” by Wine Enthusiast for 2023.

This modern winery, managed by our amigo Javier Bañales, is available for visits from Tuesday to Saturday. The regular 90-minute visit is 18€/person. A 2-hour long Harvest Visit is can also be arrange for only 20€/person. And the 90-minute vermouth visit is 25€/person. Tours are normally given in Spanish, but you can request a tour in English, Basque, German or French.

The Wine Bar and Terrace, open Saturdays from 12 noon to 2:00 pm, does not require reservations. The wine shop, which displays the entire range of wines, artisanal vermouths and olive oil, is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm, and on Saturdays from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. The shop is closed 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, with a minimum of 10, as well as a private dining-room for Friends of the Bodega. Call (+34) 941 310 050, or email reservas@martinezlacuesta.com to request a tour and tasting.



Bodegas López de Heredia

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.

Wineries of interest

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, 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 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. If you are fortunate enough to arrange a private tour you will find the dimly lit 200-meter long spider-web covered vaulted underground corridors of the original winery, it's dark walls covered with a natural penicillin mold. It's an amazing walk, as though as you are stepping back in time.

Unfortunately, the winery is currently only open to professionals and closes during the fall harvest. The shop is open for sales to the public Monday-Saturday from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm, but only by appointment. Tastings are not available. For more information you can email bodega@lopezdeheredia.com or call (+34) 941 310 244.

Bodegas Roda

Established in 1987 by Mario Rotllant and his wife Carmen Daurella, this relatively "young" Rioja winery opened its doors in 2001 at the very north end of the Barrio de la Estación atop a small hill slightly north of Viña Tondonia and continues to produce 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.

We were very impressed the first time we visited the winery in 2003 and it remains one of our favorites. 90-minute visits are available in English, French and Spanish are priced at 45€/person for a tasting two great Rioja wines and one from Ribera del Duero, plus their own Extra Virgin Olive Oil. A two-hour private tour is available for 64€/person with a tasting of 4 premium wines, or you can do a tasting of their excellent EVOO's, *L'Amo* and *Aubocassa*. A tasting of their historic wines is 100€/person. Take a buggy ride through the vineyard for 62€/person; available from May to October, depending on the weather. [Book your tour and tasting online](#), or you can email visitas@roda.es, or call (+34) 669 776 564 / 941 312 187 to arrange a visit.

The wine bar in the shop is open daily from 10:30 am to 3:00 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 exhibition "A Day Long (2004)" by Jaume Plensa is on currently on display until 20 January 2026.

Two-hour guided tours with a tasting of the Imperial Reserva and Gran Reserva wines are available Friday-Sunday for 40€/person. Visits to the vineyards will be available during the harvest. Lunch in the cellar is also possible where you can also enjoy a traditional Riojan lunch for 80€. The Gastronomic visit with a tasting of 5 wines is still 110€/person. Call (+34) 941 304 809, [contact them online](#) to schedule a tour and tasting, or [reserve your tour online](#).

Bodegas Bilbaínas

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 121-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, as well as *Ederra*, *Legaris* in the Ribera del Duero D.O., and *Scala Dei Prior* in the Priorat. 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, not updating until it was taken over by Codorníu (1997), the Catalán bubbly makers, renewing the old facades and historical buildings, and building new production and aging facilities. Several different visits are available starting at 30€/person and can be booked online. You can also call (+34) 941 310 147, or email reservas@bodegasbilbainas.com for additional information.

Bodegas Muga

Founded in 1932 by Isaac Muga and Aurora Caño, this 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 affect the vineyards, which are located on a plateau, at the highest altitude in La Rioja, a few kilometers west of Haro.

Bodegas Muga offers a standard 90-minute tour with a tasting of three wines from Monday-Saturday for 30€/person, and a tour of the vineyards on a E-bike is 90€/person. The minimum group size for the tour is 2, with a maximum is 8. A 3-1/2 hour Segway tour (110€/person) is available from mid-March to mid-November, depending on the weather. They also offer hot-air balloon trip and a mid-morning snack for 225€ which includes a visit to the winery. Other tours and events are also possible. Book your tour and tasting online or call (+34) 941 306 060 to arrange a private visit. Closed Sunday.

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 has about 30,000 barrels of American oak. Barrels are racked every 6 months by candlelight to preserve the quality of the wine. And for sustainability, they have set aside 16 of their 425 hectares of vineyards for 100% organic viticulture and installed a solar farm at the wine cellar they built in 1996, a few minutes away in the village of Labastida (Alavesa). The group owns three other wineries; Torre de Oña in the village of Paganos (Rioja Alavesa), Lagar de Cervera, near O Rosal (Pontevedra) in the Rias Baixas, and the small wine estate of Áster, near the village of Anguix (Burgos), where, like Torre de Oña, you can spend a few days in a beautiful manor house in the Ribera del Duero.

Two-hour guided tours and tasting are available Monday-Friday at 10:15 am in English at a cost of 45€ for adults, 10€ for children (min. age 9), or at 11:30 in Spanish for 35€/person, free for Club de Cosecheros members. The private dining rooms, for from 2 to 30 people, are open Monday-Friday with a 65€ menu. The wine bar and shop (El Garaje del Club de Cosecheros) is open for tasting by the glass Monday-Friday from 11:00 am to 5:30 pm, and Saturdays from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Book your tour online or call (+34) 902 123 904 to arrange a private 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 always one of our must-stops when in the Rioja. A boutique winery 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 2021 *Pancrudo* from the vineyard in Badarán (650 meters), was

awarded 97 points by Robert Parker in February 2024 who then rated seven of their wines 92 to 95 points for 2025. Tim Atkin has rated seven of their wines from 92 up to 96 points in his Rioja 2025 Special Report and James Suckling awarded ten wines 90 to 95 points for 2025.

Flight Tasting of 5 wines are 20€ or three wines for 15€. The 90-minute guided tour and tasting is 29€/person, or a premium private tasting of their exclusive wines in the upstairs tasting room are 70€/person for up to 12 people, and are available in Spanish, English or French. You can [book your tour online](#), call (+34) 941 312 502, or email Mikel Ruiz or Casilda at visitas@gomezcruzado.com to arrange your tour and tasting.



In the vineyards of Bodegas Alonso & Pedrajo

Villalba de Rioja

You'll find this small village about 5 km, or a 10-minute drive northwest of Haro, on the southern slopes of the mountains Obarenes, where one can find quail, partridge, rabbit, hare, malbiz (Song Thrush), the dove, wild boar and roe deer. The villagers participate in Haro's Battle of Wine. The 16th-century Palacio de los Ruiz del Castillo sits in the village. Pedro Ruiz del Castillo is often associated with the foundation of Mendoza in Argentina. The castle is now a premium rural boutique house known as the Palacio Condes de Cirac. It was also the home of Alvaro Fernández, Riojan cyclist.

Bodega Alonso & Pedrajo

Javier Alonso and Alberto Pedrajo, along with their wives, began their adventure in 2013 at Finca la Cala, a 3.5-hectare plot in the heart of the spectacular landscape of Villalba de Rioja at an altitude of 600-650 meters. First generation winemakers, they set out to demonstrate that it's not necessary to have grown up among vines to produce great wines. Their 2021 Suañé Rosado Reserva 2021, aged in oak for 12

months, received 93 points from Parker and 92 points from Atkin. They are a member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja.

You can contact them at (+34) 687 421 306 or email pedrajo@alonsopedrajo.com or alonso@alonsopedrajo.com for additional information, or to arrange a tour and tasting.



Tobelos vineyards, Briñas

Briñas

The small picturesque village of Briñas sitting 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.

On 15 May the village celebrates the festival of San Isidro Labrador. On 15 August it's the fiesta of la Virgen de Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, followed on the 16th by the fiesta of San Roque. On 16 September there is another celebration for the patron saints San Cornelio and San Cipriano.

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 Briñas, 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.

Briñas At Lunchtime

If you're planning on being in Briñas around lunchtime, then Restaurante Tondón is the top option, recommended in the Repsol Guide for 2024. The Wine Bar is open for lunch daily while the restaurant is open for dinner from 8:00 to 10:30 pm. Mesón Chomin and Bodegón de Ayala are small family restaurants for casual dining. Or you can head to Haro for lunch at Alboroque in the Plaza de la Paz, where reservations are highly recommended anytime of the year. Closed Mondays.

Staying In Briñas

Located just 4 kms from Haro, the village, Briñas is an excellent option for staying outside of Haro. The 4-star Palacio Tondón, now a Marriott Autograph Collection, is in a 16th-century palace overlooking the Ebro River and offers a perfect retreat after a long day of touring and wine tasting in the area. The 18-century, 9-room Finca Torre de Briñas Resort, 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 Briñas was one of the first rural hotels to open in the Rioja and offers an unforgettable experience. The 17th-century Casa de Legarda, with only 5-rooms, is another option.

Wineries of interest

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 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. 90-minute visits to the winery are available during the week with a tasting of three wines for 20€. The wine bar is now open Monday-Friday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, and Saturdays

from 12:30 to 2:00 pm. You can [reserve online](#), email tobelos@tobelos.com, or call (+34) 686 897 858 to arrange a private tour and tasting.

Bodegas Ramón de Ayala

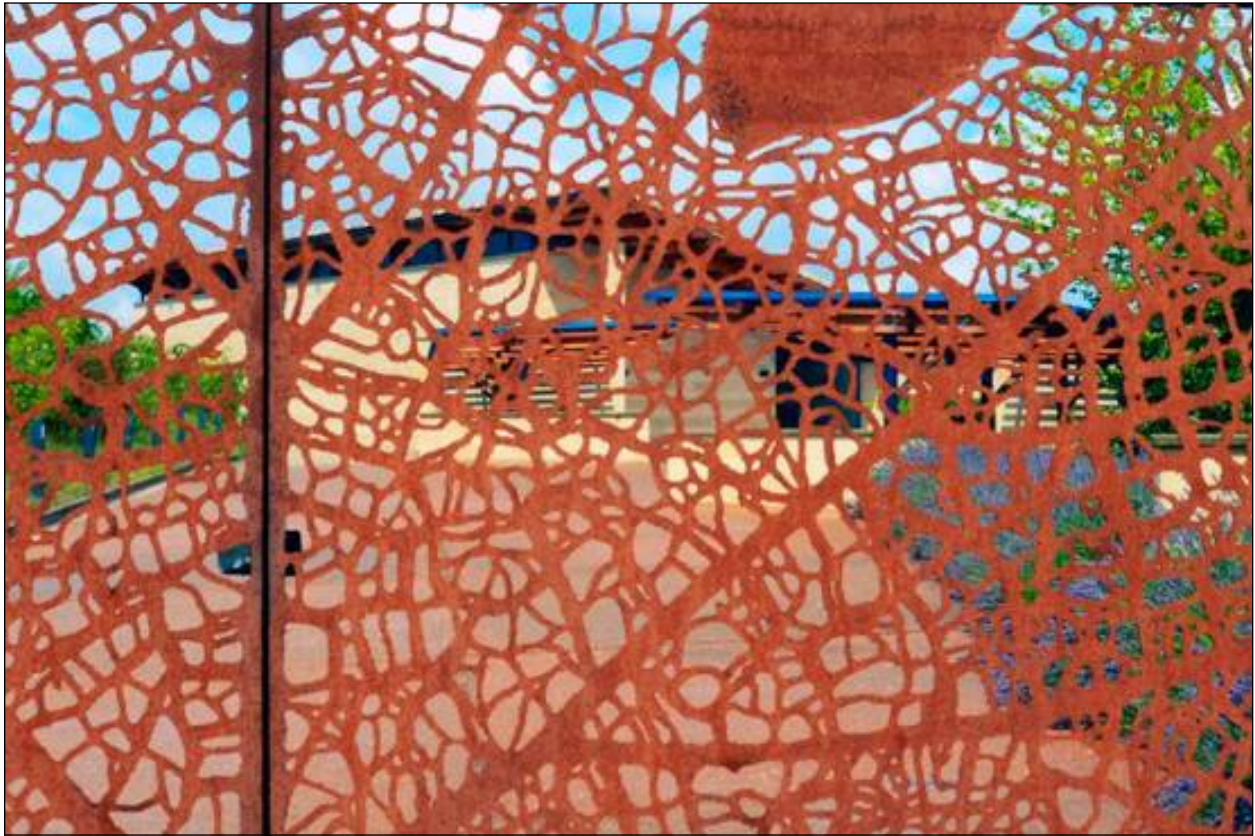
The Ayala family has been in Briñas since 1853 when the great-grandfather Tomas acquired a large stone house with a courtyard, a barn and a winery, and was one of the first winemakers to obtain the Denomination of Origin Rioja. The original winery was renovated and enlarged in 1985 and boasts an impressive 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.

Although not generally open to the public, you can contact them at (+34) 635 729 591/ 941 310 575, email bodegas@rayalaehijos.com for additional information. Or, if you want to have a unique slow wine experience, contact them on WhatsApp at (+34) 658 747 194.

Álvaro Loza

The youngest member of [Martes of Wine](#), the new generation of small producers championing the Rioja terroir and a first-generation producer, his red wine, called Álvaro Loza, is made from his grandfather's vines, which he began to farm organically in 2019. They cover two hectares divided into four plots: two in Haro and two in Labastida. His Contacto 2023 is a Rioja Orange Wine, 100% Viura. At Madrid Fusión 2024, he received the "Juli Soler Talent and Future of Wine" Award and is included in the Basque Culinary's 2024 list of 100 young talents in gastronomy. He is also a member of the group of [Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja](#).

You can contact Álvaro by email at mailchi or at contacto.vinos.



Bodegas Valenciso's gated entry was designed by Juanjo Novella

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 the quiet farming village of Ollauri. With a population of around 300 and a long history of wine making, it sits along the banks of 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, or the Ollauri Wine Week, took place from 19-24 February this year.

There is a small restaurant in the village, La Taberna de Ollauri, Calle Huertas, 2, a Repsol Solete since 2021 and recommended by siete Caníbales. Open daily, it's a couple of minutes walk from Bodegas Ollauri Conde de los Andes. Or for more options, check our recommendations in Briones, Casalarreina, Rodezno, San Vicente de la Sonsierra or Haro.

Wineries of interest

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 16 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. .

Private visits, with a tasting of two wines is still only 65€/person, in Spanish, English or French and are normally available Monday-Saturday at 12:30. Group visits, with a visit to the vineyard and a tasting of two wines, is 30€/person, in Spanish only. The minimum cost of the group tour is 60€. Email them at valenciso@valencisco.com, or call Luis, Carmen or Ana Ruiz at (+34) 941 304 724 to arrange your tour and tasting. This is another one of our favorites and a visit our clients really enjoy. The wine bar will be open in the summer from 12 noon to 3:00 pm and from 5:00 to 8:00 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.

This unique winery is no longer open for visits but you can join the Marqués de Terán Club. Call (+34) 941 338 373 for additional information.

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. 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.

The new winery, rated as one of the most sustainable in Europe, is now open for tours and tasting from 28€/person to 50,50€/person; Tuesday to Saturday from 11:00 am until 2:30 pm. You can call (+34) 941 338 000 / 653 910 390 for more information, contact them online or email consultas@beronia.es.

The Txoko de Beronia's Experiencia Gastronómica Txoko is available for groups of ten or more. Email tienda@beronia.es for availability and rates.

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. Two-hour tours with wine tasting in the cellars are by appointment only. Call (+34) 941 338 380, or email them at enoturismo@condedelosandes.com to request a private tour.

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. They have opened an olive mill where they produce their own EVOO, Almazara El Alberque from a project to recover the olive trees once cultivated by the ancestors.

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. Contact Miguel or Julio at bodega@bodegasmartinezpalacios.com, or call (+34) 941 338 023 to arrange a tour and tasting.

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 plus a blend of 15% for Mazuelo and Graciano varietals, and the *Honderas Crianza*, spend 24 months in a barrel, with another 12 months in the bottle before release. The *Blanco Concejo*, a blend of Viura, Tempranillo and Garnacha, is barrel fermented.

If you are a professional who would like to arrange a visit, you can contact them online, by email at bco@bodegasconcejodeollauri.com, or call (+34) 976 455 115 or (+34) 619 22 09 17.



Bodegas Santalba vineyard

Gimileo

You'll be passing the small hamlet of Gimileo with its 120 inhabitants and 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 with a bonfire on Saturday as they have done since 1630. In August it's three days of the Fiestas de Acción de Gracias.

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.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Santalba

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

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 family's grocery store in the Basque city of Eibar (Gipuzkoa) which 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. 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, by email tienda@bodegaspagola.com, or call Carlos at (+34) 659 256 661, or Susana at (+34) 616 959 887.

Bodegas Zamaca - Cor de Mei

The name of the winery means "Heart of Wine" and is where the family has been producing their own wines since 1956 when Felipe Pérez Díaz was only 18 years old. Their vineyards of Tempranillo, Graciano, Garnacha, and Mazuelo can be found in Ábalos and Briones, at the foot of the Sonsierra. They are also a member of the Independent Family Wineries.

Visit the winery, its 16th-century and 18th-century cellars, take a walk through the vineyards. The 90-minute tours are 25€, in Spanish only. Call Susana Palacios Castro at (+34) 657 273 479 / 657 273 480, email info@cordemei.com for additional information, or contact them online to reserve a tour and tasting in their glass-enclosed terrace with views of the surrounding countryside.



Iglesia de Santa María de la Asunción in the Plaza de España

Briones

After visits to the Barrio de la Estación in Haro and the small village of Ollauri, our next suggested stop on the wine trail comes a few minutes down the N-124 / N-232 highway past 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* which is 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. 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, sharing the local cuisine and wines.

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. The upscale Hotel Santa María Briones, which opened after a two-year long renovation of the original 16th-century military mansion and has an excellent restaurant; Allegar which means “to fill the plate”. Recommended in both the Michelin and Repsol Guides, and is open Thursday-Sunday for lunch and daily for dinner. The hotel also has an excellent wine bar. You can have also have lunch at Dinastía Vivanco after a tour and tasting at the winery.

Wineries of interest

Bodega Miguel Merino

We are always delighted when we get to visit this small, outstanding winery located below the hill town of Briones. The founder, Miguel Merino, named a winemaking legend in 2020, spent his high school years in North Carolina, while his son, Miguel Jr, who now oversees the operation along with his wife Erika, studied in New England. This has been one of our favorite wineries to take guests or send clients to as the visit is always personal and the wines are highly rated. A member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja.

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) 661 087 442 or 941 322 263.

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. A member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja.

90-minute guided visits start at 18€/person. The 2-1/2 hour long visits to the vineyards, where you can feel like a farmer, are 44€/person. Call (+34) 650 862 104 / 663 473 444 for more information, or reserve one of their experiences online. Or you can email Francisco betolaza@betolaza.es to arrange a private 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 inter-active 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. Vivanco was again named one of the Top 50 of World's Best Vineyards in 2024, one of 8 Spanish wineries, of which 5 are in the Rioja.

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, oenologist 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. ‘Allende’ means “to go a step further”.

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

Jaime Ruiz

This is a small winemaker whose winemaking tradition comes from his great-grandfather Manuel, who also ran "El Mesón," an inn in Briones that welcomed wine merchants arriving by train. Jaime produced his own first wine in 2019, Troqueao, and keeps his small production of Troqueao and El Rey que Rabió to around 1500 bottles a year. He is a member of the Menudas Bodegas, 11 micro-producers in the Rioja.

You can contact Jaime online, by email at info@jaimeruizvinos.com, or call him at (+34) 670 306 209 for more information.

Bodegas Óscar Pérez

Óscar Pérez and his wife Sara Martí are the 4th generation, their winery, in a building belonging to the family since 1860, was founded in 2020 coinciding with the first vintage of its Zaruga wine. The winery, at Calle Olmo, 15, currently under renovation, contains a “*calado*” or “*calao*”, a cave, or wine cellar, over 200 years old, approximately 100 meters long. They are also a member of the Asociación Menudas Bodegas de Rioja.

Contact Óscar online, or email him at hola@bodegasoscarperez.com, or call (+34) 676 537 054 to arrange a tour and tasting.

Barbarot Bárbara Palacios

A a member of the Palacios de Alfaro family, and a member of the Rioja’n’Roll collective of independent producers, she is a 3rd-generation winemaker. Barbarot is a combination of her name and Merlot, her favorite variety. The winery is in a rented warehouse in Briones with a vineyard of barely seven hectares near San Felices (Haro).

You can contact Bárbara online or call her at (+34) 610 455 584 for additional information.



Castillo de Davalillo overlooks the Ebro river and is surrounded by vineyards

Castillo de Davalillo

Before leaving the Briones area you might want to take a detour to visit the 14th-century Castillo de Davalillo, built during the reign of Alfonso VIII to serve as a watchtower against attacks from Navarre. The castle sits atop a hill in a bend of the Ebro River in the middle of the vineyards and offers expansive views of the fortress towns of Briones and San Vicente de la Sonsierra. It one of the few Romanesque castles still standing in Spain. Next to the castle, on the southern slope, you will find the hermitage of Nuestra Señora de Davalillo. The castle was recently purchased by Bodegas CVNE, who is now in charge of its conservation.

For centuries the people from the nearby village of San Asensio have climbed up to the castle during the pilgrimage to the Virgin of Davalillo, which takes place on the second Sunday after Easter. The virgin is carried up to the castle, accompanied by dancers, to protect the fields during the rest of the spring and summer until the harvest.



Castillo de Davalillo

To reach the castle, follow the N-232 for a few minutes in the direction of Logroño, taking the turnoff across from the winery/restaurant Bodegas San Chicón. The road leads north through the vineyards to the remains of the former village of Davalillo and its castle.

If you are up for a short walk from Briones, there is a 4.63 km route, the Sendero de Davalillo, 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.



16th-century Iglesia de La Ascensión de San Asensio

San Asensio

You'll find the village of San Asensio with its 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 while in the area, 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.

Wineries of interest

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 Verbalde de San Asensio, where there is a network of underground caves that date back more than 500 years.

The standard 90-minute long tour is available Monday to Friday at 10:30 am for 25€/person, while the 3-hour tour, which includes a tour of the caves, is priced at 55€/person. Take a 2-hour ride through the vineyards on an E-bike for 50€. The lunch and winery tour is 47€/person. There is also the possibility of taking a horse carriage ride through the vineyards. And of course you can join in on the grape stomping, a full weekend event that has been going on since 2011. Reserve your tour online or call (+34) 685 010 400. Great for families.

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.

A guided visit to the winery, finishing with a tasting of one wine at the Wine Bar, takes about one hour. You can [reserve online](#), email info@bodegaelarcadenoe.com, or call (+34) 941 457 231 to request a tour. Small groups only.

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 best wine 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 along with a visit to the winery and tastings are available Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 1:30 pm and in the afternoon from 3:30 to 6:30 pm. On weekends they are open from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm. You can call (+34) 941 457 133, [contact them online](#) or email bodegas@senoriodelaestrella.es to arrange your visit.

Bodegas Perica

This family winery, with 140 hectares of vineyards, 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.

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. [Contact them online](#), 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 as well as 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.

The winery is open for tours and tastings Monday to 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 bodega@villarica.es to arrange a visit.

Bodega Fran Corres

This family winery 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.

If you'd like to visit the winery for a tour and tasting, then you can email info@bodegafrancorres.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. Tim Atkin called their 2023 *De Boca en Boca* the "*Best Value Rosé of the Year*".

Visits to the winery can be arranged Monday to 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. You can email info@sancebrin.com or call (+34) 941 457 640 / 672 708 808 to arrange a visit.

Bodegas González-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, its 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 60-minute Descubre Rioja tour and tasting is 9€/person. The Rioja Auténtica tour, with a tasting of three wines is 49€/person, for groups of 6 to 10. You can call them at (+34) 687 936 272, or email info@bodegasgonzalezpuras.com to request a tour and tasting.

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 from which they produce their Cabezalgo wines. All of the plots are within 15 kms of the winery. 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 to 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.

Bodegas Reminde

This is another small winery and a member of the Menudas Bodegas group, the project a creation of Rufino Lecea. *Reminde* comes from the Basque word *larramendi*, which means "grassy hill". In 2012, he produced his first vintage and

continues this endeavor with what is one of the smallest wineries in Rioja with only two hectares of Tempranillo vineyards in three plots, producing only 2000 bottles a year. The wine labels are reproductions of works by his friend, painter Ernesto Montero. In 2017 the small Tempranillo vineyard at Reminde was declared a Singular Vineyard by the Rioja DOC and is the smallest Singular Vineyard in Rioja, and is a member of the Asociación Menudas Bodegas de Rioja.

Visits to the winery are available for groups of 4 to 10 and cost from 35€ to 50€/person. You can contact them online, or call Rufino at (+34) 626 499 140 to arrange a tour and tasting.



After the harvest, Bodegas Altún

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. Its 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.

Wineries of interest

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, 3rd generation winemakers, Iker and Alberto, who cultivate 48,56 hectares, 120 acres, spread across 23 plots in Baños de Ebro, Laguardia, San Vincente and Elciego. Their popular small production high-end wine, Everest de Altún spends 20 months in new French oak. A member of the group of Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja.

Generally not open to the public, but you can contact them online, by email at everest@bodegasaltun.com, or call Iker at (+34) 945 609 317 for more information or to request a private 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 to Friday at 11:00 am and 4:00 pm, Saturdays and Sundays at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm, by reservations only. The 60-minute guided tours include visits to the vineyards and workshops, a visit to the winery and wine tasting. There are also hiking tours combined with food and wine. Email pilar@bodegasamadorgarcia.com, or call (+34) 945 290 385, 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 of vineyards divided into 64 plots in Baños de Ebro.

Visits to the winery include a 90-minute tour and tasting (minimum of 6 people) for 15€/person, with tapas. The standard tour with a minimum of 4, is 8€/person. A tour and tasting course is 25€/person with a minimum of 8. Call (+34) 945 609 292 or email info@bodegashpm.com. You can also [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, Viura and Graciano, and Mazuelo, Garnacha and Malvasía grapes, are collected from the family-owned 50 hectares of vineyards surrounding the village.

Check online regarding tours, by email at info@dominioberzal.com or call (+34) 945 623 368 to arrange a tour and tasting.

Bodega Viña Artuke

This is a small winery and is all about small scale. In 1991, Roberto de Miguel decided to take the leap and move away from bulk wine, producing his own bottled wine. The twenty-two hectares of vineyards are spread out over 32 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 2015, a group of young producers who are committed to making singular wines which reflect their origins and terroir. The wines are made primarily from Tempranillo grapes with a much smaller mix of Graciano, Palomino, and Garnacha Tinta grapes, then aged for 16 months in foudres (large wooden vats). The 2020 *Artuke La Condenada* received 100 points

in the Tim Atkin Special Rioja Report 2023, becoming the first Rioja red wine to obtain a perfect 100-point score. Guín Peñín awarded 100 points to the 2023 *Artuke La Condenada*, one of only eight wines to receive 100 points for 2026.

You can email the brothers at artuke@artuke.com or call (+34) 945 623 323 for additional information, or to request a private visit. Artuke is another member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja, the Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja.

Clos Ibai

“*Clos*” is from the French for a unique vineyard surrounded by a stone wall. “*Ibai*” means river in Basque. The area around Baños de Ebro has an abundance of old vineyards, many that 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.

“This project will never be a large winery, nor will it put millions of bottles on the market”.

With less than 10 hectares of vineyards; Laguna de Carralogroño 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. Their first vintage was released in 2015.

You can contact Daniel Frías Ruiz at info@closibai.com or call (+34) 691 652 341 for additional information.



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-phylloxera vineyard in the Rioja.

From the Torre de Torremontalbo you can see the line of defensive towers and fortifications that parallel the Sierra de Cantabria and Ebro river. The other defensive towers 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..

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Amézola de la Mora

This is a beautiful sandstone French chateau-style winery surrounded by 60 hectares of estate vineyards, and whose ancestral subterranean cellars date from 1816. The phylloxera blight halted production from the late 1800s until 1987 when the great grandsons, Iñigo 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.

The winery is open for tours daily and offerers several experiences. 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 Iñigo 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* is the estate's second label, produced from vines 80 to 140+ years old, and is only made when the flagship *Conde de Hervías* is not produced. Their third label, *Trinidad del Conde de Hervías* is from the hand-picked grapes of three bush-trained vineyards planted with the original clone of tempranillo, aged for 12 months in American and French oak.

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.

They also own La Bodega Fuente Reina, Constantina, Sevilla.



The medieval village of San Vicente de la Sonsierra

San Vicente de la Sonsierra

After a visit to Torremontalbo, head north crossing the bridge over the Ebro to another medieval fortress town, San Vicente de la Sonsierra. At one time it was part of the ancient Kingdom of Navarra and where you will find more than 20 wineries. If 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, were 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 incrustated 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 Cruces 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 2025, at Calle de Zumalacárregui, 27, except on Mondays when it's closed. Also recommend in the Repsol Guide in 2025. Bodegas Contador has a modern wine bar, La Tercera Estación, Calle el Remedio, 12A, the main street running through the village, open daily. La Cofradía del Renegado is also another option, open late on Fridays and Saturdays, closed Mondays.

Wineries of interest

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 Raú 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 Crianza is one of our favorite everyday wines.

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 for 25€/person. The 2-hour visit to the vineyard and winery is 35€/person for a minimum group of 6, maximum of 14. There is a tour of the surroundings with a visit to the vineyards, winery, wine tasting and lunch for 60€/person. The wine bar is also open where you can do a special tasting. Email comunicacion@vintae.com, or call (+34) 941 271 217 to arrange a tour and tasting at Bodega Classica. There is also the possibility of visiting during the fall harvest.

Heredad de Tejada

Named in honor of the legendary 9th-century hero of the Reconquest in the Battle of Clavijo, Don Sancho, "*el de Tejada*", the one of the yew branch, it is part of the [Vintae Group](#). It is part of Bodega Hacienda López de Haro (above) and where the wine is made in large vats imitating the traditional winemaking method in "*lagos abiertos*", where whole grapes are deposited in open vats and the carbonic maceration takes place.

You should email info@heredadde tejada.com, or call (+34) 941 271 217 for additional information regarding the wines.

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.

Wine maker Pedro Peciña Crespo keeps the doors open for free guided tours of the winery during regular opening hours. He also offers a tasting of three wines for 5€/person after the visit. Call Pedro at (+34) 941 334 366, or you can email him at marketing@bodegashermanospecina.com, to request a reservation. The dining room that can accommodate groups from 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, Cecilio, Julio and Pilar, took over from their father Julio in 1980, creating the new brand *Ramírez de la Piscina* in 1987 and opened the new modern facilities in 2001.

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

Bodega Teodoro Ruiz Monge

Founded in 1870, the forth generation of the family remains committed to their 10 hectares of vineyards, with an average age of 50 years, set in the foothills of the Sierra de Cantabria mountain range where the cold winters and hot summers produce high quality grapes for their artisanal wines using the traditional carbonic maceration technique. The winery is managed by Teodoro Ruiz and Isabel Bañares, along with their sone José Luis, and produced their first white in 2020 from a small plot in Peciña.

Arrange a visit to the vineyards and a tasting at the winery online, by emailing José Luis (Itu) at bodegateodororm@hotmail.com, or by calling Isabel at (+34) 941 334 221 / 669 136 144. The 2-hour tour and tasting is 22€/person. The 3-hour tour, for a minimum of 2, maximum of 7, is 40€/person. The includes a walk through the village, a visit to the 14th-century family cave in the heart of the castle, and a 4x4 excursion to discover the family vineyards. For wine lovers, weather permitting, there is a tasing of three of wines accompanied by a platter of Iberian cured meats on the cellar's outdoor terrace with winemaker José Luis Ruiz.

Sierra Cantabria

The Eguren family, with a total of six wineries; Sierra Cantabria, Viñedos Sierra Cantabria, Señorío de San Vicente, Viñedos de Páganos, Teso La Monja (Toro) and Dominio de Eguren, each with their own individual style, has been producing premium wines for five generations. Their El Puntido Restaurant was awarded the Best of Wine Tourism 2023, and Marcos Eguren was recognized as “Winemaker of the Year 2023” by Tim Atkin.

Their bodega Señorío de San Vicente is located in the village at Calle Amorebieta, 3, and is open in the summer, Monday to Friday, from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm. The rest of the year you’ll find it open Monday to 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

This outstanding winery started in 1995 when Benjamin Romeo, winemaker, vine-grower and rock star of wine making, 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.

The winery is open for visits lasting from 90-minutes to all day, with three options: a basic visit with a tasting for red and white wines, the “Cueva del Contador” which includes a visit to the vineyards in the morning or afternoon, and at tasting of four wines, and finally, the “a la cate” visit for the most discerning enthusiasts, which includes a hot air balloon flight over the vineyards (depending on the weather). Call (+34) 941 334 228, or email visitas@bodegacontador.com to request a tour and tasting. It’s worth the effort.

Bodega Carlos Moro

Carlos Moro, viticulturist and 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. The newest winery, with 20 hectares of their own vineyards and another 40 managed by Matarromera, is located on a hill on the north side of the N-232a, with views of the village.

The winery is currently not open to the public, but you can call (+34) 941 334 093 for additional 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-Bastida. Wines are aged in American and French oak. The winery is also on the north side of the N-232a at Camino de San Martín, just behind Bodega Carlos Moro.

José Gil, a member of the generation of young, brave, new-wave winegrowers (Martes of Wine) making an impact in the Rioja and Spain, is producing his own wine from the 10 hectares in the villages of San Vicente, Labastida, and Briones. Vicky Fernández, his partner, has joined the project (Vignerons de la Sonsierra). They also belong to Viticultores Independientes en Rioja.

Private visits are available during the week and on weekends by request only. Contact them online, email info@bodegasolmaza.com, or call (+34) 941 334 472 / 647 682 032 / 647 682 033.

Bodegas Castillo de Mendoza

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

A 90-minute tour in Spanish, English and French is available for 20€/person, Monday to Saturday at 11:30 am and includes a tasting of two wines. The 3-1/2 hour premium tour is 100€/person. The wine bar is open Monday to Friday from 11:00 am until 2:30 pm and from 11:00 am until 2:00 pm on Saturday. Contact the winery online, call (+34) 941 334 496, or email bodegas@castillodemendoza.com to arrange a visit.

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 there is 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 were awarded 90 points or more in February 2020 by two of the most famous “influencers” in the industry today, James Suckling and Guía Peñín.

Contact the winery online, call (+34) 941 334 031 / 621 276 290, or email them at enoturismo@sonsierra.com to arrange a 90-minute visit where you can taste three premium wines for 20€. Their Experiencia Sonsierra is a 2-hour visit for 30€ with a tasting of three wines. Or take a 4-hour journey down the Ebro in a Kayak before

tasting their premium wines, 65€/person. The wine bar is open Monday to Saturday from 11:00 am until 3:00 pm.

Bodegas Moraza

This small family winery, along the Golden Mile in the Rioja Alta, was totally rebuilt in concrete in 1983, and 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 Cuvée, *Viura Moraza 4 Caminos*, 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 janire@bodegasmoraza.com, or by contacting them online.

Viña Ane - 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, at the foot of Mount Toloño, where the cellar holds barely 88 barrels of French, Hungarian and American oak. These 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. Viña Ane Autor, 100% Tempranillo, is their signature wine and they now produce a sparkling wine, Pijus Magnificus (from the Life of Brian). The main vineyard, 26 hectares was planted in 1996, is used to make Viña Ane Autor. A member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja.

90-minute visits to the winery and vineyard are 20€/person, with a minimum of 4. You can call (+34) 659 167 653 for more information or to arrange a visit.

Cupani - Bodega Heredad San Andrés

The bodega is a small estate-winery belonging to the Enrique Eguiluz-Magdalena Mendoza family, which they opened in 2001 at Travesía la Concepción, 28, in San Vicente and better known as Cupani, it's main brand. Cupani is the original name for the native Tempranillo grape from the Rioja from before the phylloxera. They grow the bush-trained vines on their 17 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. 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. They are also a member of the Bodegas Familiares de Rioja and Viticultores Independientes en Rioja.

Call Enrique at (+34) 687 829 731, [make a request online](#), or email sircupani@gmail.com to arrange a tour and tasting.

Bodega Abel Mendoza Monge

Founded in 1988, the husband-and-wife team of Abel Mendoza (viticulturist) and Maite Fernández (oenologist) can be found at Paseo de Logroño, 7, and are behind some of Rioja's most intriguing, rare, and sought-after wines, partly due to their reluctance to engage with wine guides and media outlets. Their 17 hectares of prime vineyards are located in various locations in and around San Vicente.

You can contact them at (+34) 941 308 010 / 679 193 576 or email Abel at jarrarte.abelmendoza@gmail.com, for additional information. They are a member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja, Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja, and a benchmark in the world of wine.

Dani Resa Vinos

The village wine, a blend of 85% Tempranillo, 10% Garnacha, and 5% Viura, is a wine born from the blending of different plots ranging from the Ebro River to the foothills of the Sierra Cantabria, aged in 500L, 300L, and 225L used French oak barrels. Spectacular now, but which has excellent aging potential. He is a member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja.

You can contact Dani through his [Instagram page](#) or through the distributors; Vila Viniteca and Quiero Vinos.

GR99 Wines

Started in 2019, the name refers to the path that runs along the Ebro River as it passes through San Vicente de la Sonsierra, and is the project of two friends with three plots, winemaker Carlos Mendoza and economist Ana Benés. With a limited production of only 6,000 bottles, they seek to reflect fruit, freshness, elegance, and

terroir, and are members of the Independent Family Wineries and Viticultores Independientes en Rioja. Carlos also owns the Canela Wine Bar in San Vicente de la Sonsierra.

Contact Carlos and Ana at (+34) 609 137 836 or email info@gr99wines.com for additional information and to request a tour and tasting.

Clípeo Wines

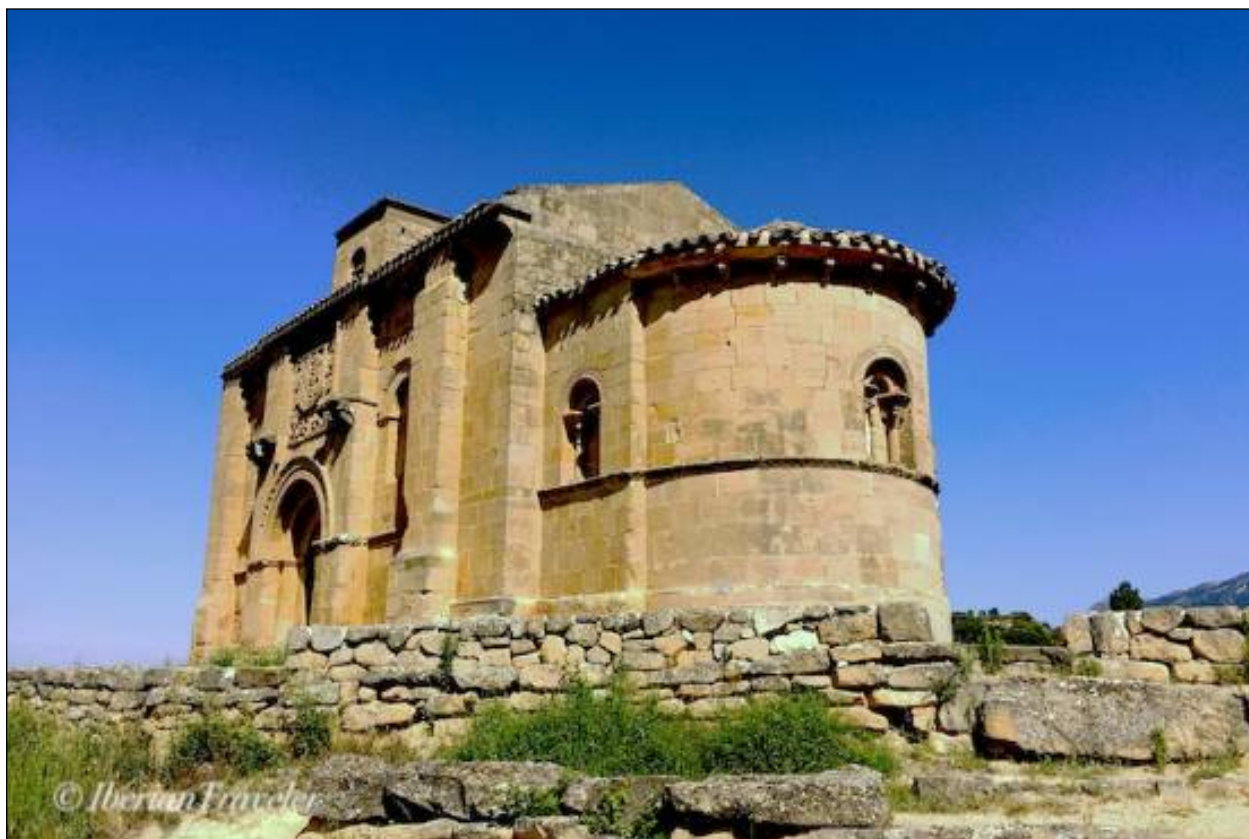
The Cueva La Alcaaldía boutique winery can be found at Calle Briones, 9, on slopes above the Ebro River. Eduardo, Miguel and Javier; together with Juan Carlos Sancha began the project in 2016. They claim to have *"a signed contract with hedonism to bring the taste of the land to the table."* The singularity of their wines stems from their drive to develop classic, high-quality wines, thanks in part to their old vines, some even centuries old, which impart a unique character to the wine.

You can contact them online, call them at (+34) 941 545 081 or email them at info@clipeowines.com for more information or to arrange a tour and tasting of their handcrafted organic wines.

Jade Gross Wines

The project began in 2019 after Jade, a Chinese American, born in Hong Kong in 1987, spent seven years immersed in the kitchen of Mugaritz. Guided by Abel Mendoza, she divides her time between Labastida and San Vicente de la Sonsierra, cultivating unique wines on her plots in Las Canteras and La Piñuela. She is a member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja.

You can contact Jade for additional information through her Instagram page or email her at info@jadegrosswines.com.



Hermitage 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 1137, 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 of the hermitage you must inquire at the city hall in San Vicente de la Sonsierra or call (+34) 941 291 260 to schedule a visit.

You will find a necropolis dating from the 10th-century next to the church.



Mural in Labastida- boy with grapes in his hand

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 has, 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. You can also try Hotel Asador Jatorrena, offering traditional Basque and Riojan cuisine.

Wineries of interest

Nuestra Señora Granja de Remelluri

This distinguished family winery, an enchanting wine estate, is located northeast of the Labastida 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 latest project being worked on at the winery is a white wine made from Viuras vines over 80 years of age in old López de Heredia barrels using the solera system.

The winery is only open for professional visits at this time, but you can email comunicacion@telmorodriguez.com, or call (+34) 945 331 801 / 636 284 217, for additional information.

Bodegas Manuel Quintano 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. A modern cellar holds 6000 Bordeaux oak casks. One of their best-known wines, Bodegas Manuel Quintano, is named in honor of the clergyman who revolutionized wine making in the Rioja at the end of the 18th-century. Javier Cereceda from Logroño, who had worked with Telmo Rodríguez in Toro and Rueda, was made winemaker in 2017, and the winery was named cooperative of the year by Tim Atkin for 2025. They produce 13 different wines that are sold under four brands; Castillo Labastida and Montebuena are for export. Solagüen is for the more traditional wines. Manuel Quintano is the newest, and the most interesting wines for aficionados.

This modern winery at Avenida Diputación, 53, in the forefront of Rioja wineries, is open to visitors every day of the week with guided tours starting with the Pioneer Tour at 20€/person and the Cruces Tour is 40€. Wine tasting and lunch is also available. Contact them online, call (+34) 945 331 161 / 657 797 043, or email visitas@manuelquintano.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 in use today to make the young wines, there is a modern winery, opened in 1992 that houses 900 oak barrels. Their Cubaneгра is aged for 18 months in 50% French oak 50% American oak barrels, while Faula, harvested from a vineyard over one hundred years in age, 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. Member of ABRA, Asociación de Bodegas de Rioja Alavesa.

The winery is open for visits Monday to Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm, and Monday to Friday afternoons from 4:00 to 6:00 pm. Book your visit online. A tasting of the three youngest wines is 18€/person with a minimum group of 4. The 90-minute Barrel Tasting of four wines is 25€. The 2-hour Plot Tasting of five wines is 40€. You can also email bodegas@mitarte.com to arrange a visit, or call (+34) 662 430 030 / 607 343 289.

Bodegas Tierra

With century-old vineyards covering 30 hectares facing the slopes of the Toloño mountain, the winery consists of four stone 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. In March 2021 Tim Atkin proclaimed Carlos Fernández "Viticultor 2021", "Winegrower of the Year".

There are three tours available; a 90-minute Viva Express for 25€, the 2-1/2 hour Visita Provisiones for 40€ and the 4-hour Desde el Origen for 60€. The wine bar is now open daily from 8:00 pm until midnight. Contact them online, by email at enoturismo@tierrayvino.com, or call Carlos at (+34) 945 331 257 / 605 672 313 to request a visit to the winery in Labastida's old Jewish neighborhood.

Bodega González Teso

This is another small family winery (Bodegas Gontés) 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 Gontés Expresión. Member of ABRA, Asociación de Bodegas de Rioja Alavesa.

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 in 34 plots with an average age of 45 years. Their El Nómada is aged 15 months in French oak before being bottled. Las Cabezadas de Matadula is aged in French oak for 18 months.

Contact them online or call (+34) 628 833 065 / 628 56 831 / 941 509 406 for more information, or to arrange a visit to the winery.

Bodega El Hombre Orquesta

The Bodega el Hombre Orquesta was created in Labastida in 2016 by two friends who are passionate about wine, Rodrigo Fernandez and Mikel Mujika. Rodrigo is the winery's winemaker. He has a long experience making wines and advising other viticulturists in the area. Mikel is responsible for management; Together, they decided to take their passion to another level and create a unique and authentic wine cellar. They produced their first vintage in 2017.

Private tours are available by calling (+34) 606 526 649 / 656 734 113 or emailing them at elhombreorquestasl@gmail.com for additional information.

Zuzaran Viñedos y Vinos

Iñigo Rubio and Javier Cereceda, director and winemaker respectively at Bodegas y Viñedos Labastida (Solagüen), founded in the 1960s by a group of winegrowers from Labastida, helped start the small winery of José María Álvarez, a member of the cooperative, which practices organic viticulture farmed organically.

You can contact them online or call (+34) 678 939 064 for additional information.

Bodegas Área Pequeña

In 2018 the brothers Joseba and Koldo took over the small family vineyards below the Toloño mountains. They belong to Subsierra, a group of winemakers and grape growers from Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Alta and are also members of the group of Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja.

Contact them at (+34) 647 793 889 (Koldo) or (+34) 620 662 093 (Joseba), or email info@areapequena.com for additional information.

Bodegas Familia Quintana

The history of this family bodega dates back to the 17th-century, 12 generations of winemakers. Alain Quintana, a winemaker by birth, crafted his first wine in 2015 at age 18, completing his studies in Oenology and Viticulture in 2019. Alain is also a member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja.

Contact Alain at (+34) 627 147 357 or email him at info@bodegasquintana.com for additional information or to arrange a tour and tasting.



Solana de Ramirez Ruiz vineyards during the harvest

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 15 minutes drive from Haro, 12 minutes from Logroño, is surrounded by a vineyard-filled landscape, home to some of the best Tempranillos in the 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 Iglesia de San Esteban Protomártir, 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.

Wineries of interest

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 its limited production is exported. Private visits are available on weekends only.

Email realdivisa@fer.es or call (+34) 941 334 118 for more information, or to arrange a private tour and tasting.

Bodegas Puelles

This lovely boutique winery-estate, which includes six double rooms, heated pool and spa (whole house rental only), 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 the family acquired in the mid-1800s. The Puelles 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.

A 2-hour tour given in Spanish or English is available for 20€, while a special guided tour of the winery and vineyards, lasting approximately 3 hours, is available for 45€/person. The tasting room and shop, where you can have a tasting of six different estate wines for 6€, is open during regular winery hours. You can email the brothers at informacion@bodegaspuelles.com or call (+34) 941 334 415 to request a tour and tasting. The tasting room is open to walk-ins.

Solana de Ramirez Ruiz

The Ramírez de la Piscina 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” with 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 Cantabrian 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 French and American oak, 48 months in a bottle.

Located at Calle de Arana, 24, the winery is open for tours and tastings Monday to Friday from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, in the afternoons from 4:30 to 6:00 pm, and on Saturdays and Sundays from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm for tours and tastings. There is also a wine bar and tasting room where you can sample their wines if you don't want to do a tour with the winemaker. [Book your tour online](#) or mail the three winemaking brothers at 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. Their patrimonial (heritage) wine, produced from Tempranillo grapes hand picked from the oldest vineyards (90-100 years), is 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. Israel joined his father after finishing his studies in Enology. 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. Member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja and the Independent Family Wineries. Ranked among the top three wineries in the Tim Atkin 2026 Rioja Report, and named Young Winemaker of the Year 2026.

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

Fernández Eguíluz Peña La Rosa

This small family winery, founded in 1989, bottling their first wines a year later, sits on the site where the sanctuary of the Patron Saint of Ábalos was once located, Calle Los Morales, 7, inside the village. Their 13 hectares, small old-vine plots of mostly Tempranillo grapes, growing at 580 to 600 meters elevations, 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. Originally selling their grapes in bulk to well-known Rioja producers, today Pilar takes care of the winemaking, while Carmelo looks after the vineyards.

You can email info@penalarosa.com, or call (+34) 941 334 166 for more information or to request a tour and tasting.

Bodegas Abeica

Also located near Bodega Solabal at Camino San Roque, 8, the 5th generation family winery, founded by Julián Fernández, a wine skin maker by trade, is producing excellent organically grown artisan wines off of their 30 hectares of vineyards at an elevation from 450 and 590 meters. *Abeica* is the ancient name of Ábalos dating from the 8th-century. Visits to the winery are available in English or Spanish. The four brothers, Pachi, Ricardo, Isabel and Raúl, offer three types of visits including the standard visit with a tasting of 3 wines (15€), a walk in the vineyards (25€) and a mini-course on wine tasting (20€). They are a member of the small group of Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja. Ricardo Fernández was

the only winemaker on the Basque Culinary Center's list of 100 Young Talents in Gastronomy (under 30) in 2022.

Call (+34) 941 308 009, Whatsapp them at (+34) 633 381 690, email abeica@abeicabodegas.es, or [contact them online](#) to arrange a visit.

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, who, along with her father, runs the winery. 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, and is another member of the group Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja. They are also only a few minutes walk from our favorite small hotel in the Rioja, Villa de Ábalos.

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

Bodegas Cantauri

Bodegas Alonso González-Cantauri is a family winery begun in 1977 when the grandparents of the present generation, Juaquin Zuñeda and Maria Nieves Estibaliz, began making wine. The current winery 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. Their Abelo de Noa, 100% Tempranillo from 40 year old vines is aged in French and American oak with a limited production of only 1500 bottles.

Visits with the oenologist are available, as are a master tasting. The standard tour is 15€, while the premium tour is 30€/person. There is also a small dining room for families or friends where you can taste the traditional cuisine. 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 its doors to the public in 2006. It's located just across the N-232a highway from [Bodegas Baigorri](#), sitting on the dividing line between the Rioja Alta and Alavesa. Oenologist Juan Carlos Martínez oversees the production of the wines, which are from small plots surrounding the winery. Their Obalo Rosé is produced from grapes growing in a high-altitude vineyard, 700 meters above sea level, with the Obalo La Encina being produced from 45-70 year old vineyards in the heart of the Riojan “sonsierra” at an altitude of between 700-1000 meters, then aged 12 months in French oak.

Premium visits with winemaker Andrew Halliwell are available by appointment only Monday to Friday for 45€/person, minimum of 2, maximum of 15. [Book your visit online](#), or WhatsApp (+34) 690 726 728 to request your visit. There is a wine bar and terrace where you can taste their wines without a reservation.



Village of Samaniego

Samaniego

The tiny golden sandstone village of 300 residents, a picturesque Riojan winemaking village, Samaniego 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 has 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 gather to 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 few 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 the 7th and 11th of 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.

For lunch in Samaniego, you can book a table at [Tierra y Vino](#), open daily, [Restaurant Baigorri](#), closed Sundays and Mondays, [Héctor Oribe](#) in Páganos, closed Mondays and Tuesdays, [Casa Toni](#), a Bib Gourmand in San Vicente de la Sonsierra, closed Mondays. Or for something more casual, yet a gastronomic destination in itself, the [Kitchen of Merche](#) in the Hotel Villa de Ábalos in the nearby village of Ábalos.

Wineries of interest

[Bodegas Baigorri](#)

This spectacular, avant-garde winery, designed by the late Basque architect Iñaki Aspiazú, 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.

90-minute tours and tastings are available Tuesday to Saturday at 10:30 am and 1:00 pm for 25€/person, in Spanish, English, French and Basque. There is also the possibility of taking a tour through the vineyards with brunch in the vineyards on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays for 55€/person. Or you can have a visit with a tasting menu for 70€/person, available Tuesday to Saturday. Highly recommended. For reservations [book your visit online](#), 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. It sits just across the Vitoria-Logroño highway from Bodegas Baigorri and is your chance to visit a great winery and be given a tour by the winemakers themselves rather than a member of the PR staff. It’s also among our favorite small wineries in the Rioja.

The winery is open for tours and tastings, in Spanish, English and Basque, Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Saturdays from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. On Sundays and holidays they are open from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm. The 90-minute visit and tasting of two wines with an appetizer is 25€/person. A 2-hour Premium Tasting of four wines is 40€/person, while the 2-hour Vineyard Tour is 40€/person, the Premium tasting without the tour is 30€. Single Vineyard Tasting of three wines is 25€/person. The Wine Bar and Shop are also open during the week and is where you can sample any of the wines in the patio or courtyard. To schedule a visit, contact them online, call (+34) 945 609 133, WhatsApp (+34) 688 641 322, or email Ainhoa at comunicacion@ostatu.com.

The family also offers two comfortable apartments; ‘La Venta de Ostatu’, where you can stay during your time in the Rioja Alavesa and Alta.

Bodegas Alútiz

Just around the corner from Bodegas Ostatu, at Calle Matarredo de Abajo, 8, is another interesting small 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 located in the Matarredo neighborhood, are 12 meters deep.

You can visit the three bodegas and have a tasting of three wines at 11:30 am, or take a walk through the vineyards in the late afternoon before the tasting, is 18€/person. A tasting with wine and cheese is 26€/person. Or have a picnic (2 hours)

for 46€/person. Call (+34) 945 623 337 or email info@alutiz.com to arrange a visit. There is also a wine bar open Saturdays from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Bodegas Amaren

Located on the road to Villabuena, this family winery opened in 2016 and was named in honor of the wife of Luis Cañas, Ángeles, mother of Juan Luis, 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 40 and 115 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 herself worked in the vineyards.

The 90-minute Armaren Experience, with a tasting of 4 wines, two from the barrel, is 25€/person. The Armaren 60 Single Experience is 40€/person. The 2-hour Single Plot wine tour, which includes a visit to the El Regollar vineyard, is 70€/person, while the premium 2-hour Armaren Private Tour is 120€/person. Make your reservations online, contact Natialia by email at info@bodegasamaren.com, or call (+34) 945 175 240. These tours here are always interesting.

Remírez de Ganuza

Established in 1989 by Fernando Remírez de Ganuza, this family run winery is located in the center of Samaniego. Fernando 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 *2004 Ramírez de Ganuza Gran Reserva* a score of 100, the highest possible rating given by any publication, and the first Gran Reserva to receive 100 points. Winemaker Jesús Mendoza, named Rioja Winemaker of the Year in 2023 and 2024, is a “*knight-errant of oenology*”. He is also a member of the VIR - Viticultores Independientes en Rioja, producing his own wine, Our Hands, in San Vicente de la Sonsierra.

Guided tours with a tasting of three wines are currently available Monday to Saturday for 40€/person. 2-hour private tours with a tasting of three wines is 85€/person, or 65€ without the tour. Reservations can be made online, by calling (+34) 945 609 022 / 689 441 811, or email visitas@remirezdeganuza.com.

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. A member of ABRA; Association of Bodegas de la Cuadrilla de Laguardia-Rioja Alavesa.

Request a guided tour and tasting or a tour of the vineyards online, by email bodegas@heredadaduna.com or call (+34) 945 623 343, or WhatsApp them at (+34) 650 006 571 for more information.

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.

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 Marino Bello and his wife Isabel Berganzo, who started it all. Send an email to info@bodegabelloberganzo.com or call (+34) 945 609 299 to arrange a tour and tasting.

Bodega Pascual Larrieta

This small, unpretentious, traditional artisan family winery, with 21 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.

A tour with a tasting of two wines is 15€/person, or 25€ with an aperitivo. Reserve your visit online or call (+34) 945 609 059 / 638 958 294, or contact them at info@pascuallarrieta.com for additional information. The wine bar, with views of the Sierra de Cantabria, is open from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm.



In the vineyards around Leza

Leza

The small Riojan village with a multitude of Renaissance-style houses and a population of some 220, dates from the Copper Age, and is located between Samaniego and the tiny hamlet of Páganos. Nearby you'll find the "El Sotillo" dolmen, which wasn't discovered until 1955.

If you find yourself in the village and need a bite to eat, there is a gastrobar, Gaztetxe Leza, open daily year around from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, 8:00 pm to 11:00 pm, Tuesday to Sunday.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Aiurri

Renovation of the ancient winery began in the summer of 2020 during the pandemic along with a project by the owner/winemaker Alma Carraovejas to restore the area's old vineyards; small plots dating back to 1911. The first harvest taking place that October. The first vintage, the 2021 of Landua, Aiurri and Salas,

was bottled in 2023 and on the market in 2024. Alma is a finalist for the Old Vine Hero Awards, awards that raise awareness and understanding of the work being done to care for old vines around the world. The name AIURRI comes from the Basque language and its meaning is character, strength, identity.

The winery is open Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. You can call them at (+34) 983 878 020, or [contact them online](#) to arrange a tour and tasting.

[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](#). This modern winery, opened in 2005, is located along the road between Samaniego and Páganos, Ctra A-124 Vitoria – Logroño, Km 60, just before the road to Leza.

The winery is open daily. Email them at enoturismo@bodegas-lozano.com, call (+34) 945 605 197 or WhatsApp (+34) 647 982 470 to reserve one of their guided visits, or book your tour [online](#). The [wine bar](#), with views of the Sierra de Cantabria, is daily open for selected tastings. There is also a restaurant that offers Basque-Riojan cuisine. Email info@bodegas-lozano.com for additional information.



Bodegas De La Marquesa - Valserrano

Villabuena de Álava-Eskuernaga

This small village situated along both the banks of the Herrera River has currently a collection of some 34 bodegas, more than one for every six of its residents. The village of 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, its 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. The village now has a Villanueva Wine Fest in early May which brings together the villages wineries for a celebration, several of which joined in this year.

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. Here you will also find avant-garde architecture, the [Hotel Viura](#), which sits next to the 17th-century Iglesia de San Andrés, one of the oldest churches in the Álavesa. The Hotel Viura, with 35-rooms, has unobstructed views of the Cantabrian mountains to the north.

The [Dolmen de El Montecillo](#), located in the vineyards of Bodegas Badiola, was only discovered in 2009 while plowing a field. Next to the dolmen you’ll find the [Ibaola Harriak](#), an atheist cemetery, one of the most curious private sites in Rioja Alavesa.

If you are in Villabuena at lunch time, the Hotel Viura’s Bistró Barrica restaurant is an excellent choice. [Hector Oribe](#) in Paganos (lunch only, closed Mondays) is just under a 15-minute drive away and offers two degustación menus. [Amelibia](#) in Laguardia is only a few minutes further away. The Michelin-starred Marqués de Riscal Restaurant, closed Sunday and Monday, and it’s less formal [1860 Tradición](#) in Elciego is only a 10-minute drive, as is [La Cocina de Merche](#) in the Hotel de Ábalos. [Restaurante Alboroque](#) in Haro, closed Mondays, and [Restaurante Alameda](#) in Fuenmayor, closed Sunday nights, Monday and all of August, are both a little over a 20-minute drive.

Wineries of interest

[Bodegas De La Marquesa](#)

We first visited this family winery, now with its 5th-generation, a little over 23 years ago when Rioja wine tourism was still in its infancy. Although they were not open for actual 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 wines, and of course some pintxos, in traditional Basque style. This is always a must stop for us when visiting the Rioja to see the family and enjoy some of their excellent vintages.

A private tour and tasting of three wines, starting in the ancient underground cellars, can take 90 minutes to two hours. Tours are available in Spanish, French or English, Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. The cost of the tour will depend on the options you choose. 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 to Friday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, on Saturdays by appointment only. The bodega is located a few minutes walk from the [Hotel Viura](#), or a 10-minute drive from the [Hotel Villa de Ábalos](#). Parking is available at the winery.

[Bodegas Izadi](#)

The winery first came into being in 1987 when a group of friends from Vitoria-Gasteiz, 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](#) (Rioja), [Finca Villacreces](#) (Ribera del Douro, Valladolid) and [Bodegas Vetus](#) (Zamora). They own 100 hectares and control another 80 in the villages of Villabuena, Samaniego and Ábalos.

The standard tour, in Spanish and English, is 25€/person for a tasting of three wines with cheese and chorizo, available daily at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm. A 90-minute tour of the “El Regalo” vineyard by e-bike is 35€/person and available during the spring, summer and early fall. A 2-hour guided tour of the village of Villabuena de Álava is available starting in October for 45€/person. The wine bar, where you enjoy wine by the glass and a pintxo, is open Tuesday to Saturday from 12:30 to 3:00 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 and which we have been visiting for over twenty years, 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.

The wine bar and tours are by reservation only; Monday to Thursday from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm, Fridays from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm and Saturdays from 10:30 am to 2:30 pm. The 90-minute Glass Of Wine In Hand Tour, available in English, Spanish or French, is priced at 25€/person, with a maximum group size of 12. The 90-minute Guided Tour Through An Old Vineyard Tour is 40€/person. A 2-hour Private Tour of the winery and vineyards, including a tasting of 4 wines at El Mirador de Luis,

is 100€/person. 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 was opened in 1990 by three Alava families to market their own wines produced from their 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 cellar holds 600 barrels of American and French oak and will be expanded. Their first vintage of Bodegas Badiola was awarded 90 points by both Guía Peñín and Tim Atkin in 2020.

The [Discover Bideona](#) tour, with a tasting of 3 wines, is in Spanish or English only, and is available Thursday to Sunday at 11:00 am for 28€/person. You can also do a unique walk through the surrounding vineyards with their [Meet Our Villages](#) tour for 40€/person. Or [join in the harvest](#) (October-November) for 28€. The wine bar is open Thursday to Sunday from 12:30 to 4:00 pm, the store is also open Monday to Friday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm and on Saturdays and Sundays from 12:30 to 4:00 pm upon request. You can [book your experience online](#), email reservas@bideona.wine, 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 1970s they built a small winery and became one of the first Villabuena growers to market their own bottled wines. In the 1980s 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', putting it on the market for the first time in 2011.

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 1988, 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 2007 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. Their limited production Goren 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 contacta@benetakoa.com or call (+34) 945 609 098 to request a visit, or for additional information.

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 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. There is also a dining room at the bodega should you be interested.

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. We were introduced to their Viña El Flako, a Malvasía blend during the Villabuena Wine Fest this past spring. Excellent! We had the pleasure of meeting the wine maker at this year's festival in Villabuena de Álava.

Private tours with a tasting of four wines are available for 12€/person. Contact the winery online, 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 its 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. They are also another member of ABRA.

The winery is at Calle La Hoya, 5, just off the A-3214, and 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 90 minutes and includes a tasting of three premium wines. They also offer an interactive tour for families with children priced at only 24€. Request your visit online, by emailing info@bodegasaraico.com or calling (+34) 945 623 366 / 619 661 772.

Bodegas Beltxuri

The family winery at Calle Mayor, 29, officially opened in 1982, with plots of Viura, Tempranillo, Garnacha, and Mazuelo in Villabuena, Samaniego, Navaridas, and Leza from which they produce artisanal and traditional wines.

Email bodegasbeltxuri@gmail.com, or call Miren Gil at (+34) 945 60 92 04 / 639 74 56 29 for information, or to request a private visit to the winery. It's well worth the visit.

Bodegas Berrueco

Winemaker Juan Pedro began harvesting and selling his grapes from his 14 hectares to large producers much like others in the Rioja, but some pioneers including Juan Pedro, started selling his own wine in the early 1970s, creating a new way of life in Rioja Alavesa. They were referred to as *cosecheros*, harvesters.

The winery, at Calle Herreria, Travesai, 2, in the village, is open for visits. Call (+34) 619 864 497 / 945 62 33 74 for additional information, or email bodegasberrueco@gmail.com to arrange a tour and tasting.

Sierra de Toloño

This is one of the more interesting wineries in the Rioja. 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. She is a member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja

You can email Sandra at info@sierradetolono.com, or call (+34) 626 233 085 for more information.

Bodegas Molina Pérez

This family winery at Calle El Monte, 8, is now in its third generation with Héctor Molina Pérez, who took over in 2010, overseeing the operation. He decided to launch his own brand under the name Molina Pérez and won his first silver medal at the IWCC in Barcelona in 2012. Their vineyards, aged between 15 and 100 years old, are located in the villages of Villabuena de Álava, Baños de Ebro, Samaniego and Ábalos. The bodega was the first in the village to market olive oil under their own brand. There is also a Txoko where you can do a meet and eat.

Call Hector at (+34) 628 825 728, or email info@bodegasmolinaperez.com for additional information and to arrange a tour and tasting.

Berarte Viñedos y Bodegas S.L.

Another family owned winery in Villabuena de Álava is at San Torcuato 8, in the heart of the D.O.C.. In 2012 the father José Antonio Berrueco handed over the operation to his children, the third generation of family wine makers. Inmaculada Berrueco, the oldest daughter, oversees the wineries 14 hectares of vineyards from which they make quality organic wines. She is also an associate professor at the University of La Rioja.

The winery is open for visits daily by reservations only. A tour and tasting is 20€. You can [contact them online](#) or call (+34) 945 60 90 34 to schedule a tour and tasting or for additional information.

Bodegas Pérez Maestresala

This small family winery with 30 hectares was finally opened in 1981, and specializes in producing fine wines. It is now in the hands of the brothers, Iñaki (winemaker) and Andoni Pérez Berrueco. The winery, Bodegas Besa Maestresala, S.C., is located at La Colina Kalea, 7. Most of their wines can be found in the bars and some restaurants in Lekeitio, and other points in Euskadi, as well as Granada.

You can contact them at bodegasperezmaestresala@hotmail.com or call (+34) 945 609 076 / 618 706 075 for additional information.



Looking north across the vineyards at Viñedos de Páganos after the fall harvest.

Páganos

This tiny hamlet of maybe 80 people 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 así*”, “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. You'll also find the 16th-century church of La Asunción with its Renaissance façade. If your family would like to spend a few nights in Páganos, there is the possibility of renting the manor house at Torre de Oña.

This is also where you will find one of our favorite Riojan chefs, Héctor Oribe, at his restaurant in the center of the hamlet (two tasting menus only). Bodegas Viñedos De Paganos has opened a restaurant, El Puntido, offering two seasonal tasting menus; “El Puntido” and “Calados del Puntido”. Restaurante Martin Cendoya is located in bodega-hotel Eguren Ugarte.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Torre de Oña

You'll find this small winery, once only open to club members, at the entrance to Párganos. 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. The winemaker Julio Sáñez. The beautiful Manor House, 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.

The winery is open for private tours Monday to 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 and costs 15€/person. Includes a tasting of 3 wines and a snack. Two-hour premium guided tours are 50€/person, or do a 3-hour picnic in the vineyard, Monday to Friday, for 55€/person. Guided tours are in Spanish and English. The wine bar and shop are open Monday to Friday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm. You can book your tour online or call (+34) 941 310 346 for more information.

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. We try to always 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 Párganos 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 tour and tasting is priced at 18€/person. 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.

Tours and tastings are available by reservation for 15€/person with a tasting of 4 wines, available Monday to Saturday at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm, Sundays and holiday at noon. Or arrange a tour and lunch in their dining room for 50€/person on Saturdays at 11:00 am and 1:00 pm, with a minimum group size of 15. For smaller groups, call. Email info@garciadeolano.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.

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.

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

Bodegas Lozano Rioja

Just down the road from Eguren Ugarte, halfway between Paganos and Samaniego you'll find this modern bodega with 36.5 hectares of vineyards belonging to the 4th-generation of the Lozano family in Villarrobledo (Albacete). Their award winning Oristan Gran Reserva is aged for 24 months in French and American oak barrels.

Guided tours in Spanish and English are available Monday through Friday at 11:00 am and 12:30 pm (plus 5:30 pm during the summer) and on Saturday and bank holidays at 11:00 am and 5:00 pm. You can book your tour online, call/WhatsApp them at (+34) 647 982 470, or email enoturismo@bodegas-lozano.com. Well worth a visit. The wine bar is open Monday to Friday from 10:00 am to 3:00 pm and on Saturdays and holidays from 12:30 to 3:00 pm.



The medieval hilltop village of Laguardia-Biasteri, original work by riojan Manual Romero.

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 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.

The tourist office in Laguardia can be found at Calle Mayor, 52, in “*Casa Garcetas*”. It is open Monday to Saturday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm and after lunch from 4:00 to 7:00 pm, except on Saturday afternoon when it opens at 5:00 pm. On Sundays and holidays it's open from 10:45 am to 2:00 pm only.

Lunch in Laguardia

There are a few options for lunch in Laguardia including chef Patxi Amelibia's Restaurante Amelibia, located at the south end of the village beyond the walls at La Barbacana Errepidea, 14, with views looking out over the vineyards. It has a Solete

from Guía Repsol. Closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays. Restaurante SVGAR, which means flame in Basque and has a Solete from Guía Repsol, is located within the medieval walls at Calle Páganos, 35. Aitor and Adriana offer a 35€ Menú Pueblo. Opens for lunch at 1:30 and dinner on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 8:30 pm. Closed on Tuesdays. The restaurants "Los Parajes" and "Las Duellas" are both in the Hospedería de Los Parajes within the village walls and where you will find a 35€ menú del día available Monday to Friday. Villa-Lucía Rotisserie is located outside the walls at the north end of the village on the road to Logroño. Open daily for lunch at 1:30 pm. There is also a wine bar and is good for children. El Medoc Alavés is in the Hotel Silken Villa de Laguardia, next to Villa-Lucia. Open daily for lunch and dinner. Restaurant La Huerta Vieja, with a Solete from Guía Repsol, is just off the N-232a, in the direction of Samaniego.

For pintxos in Laguardia you can try Batzoki, Cueva de Lobos and Cafeteria Hiruko, as well as Capricho de Baco, Gastro Bar Doña Blanca, El portico, Bar Arbulu, Bar Chakal, Biazteri, Taberna Ansan, El Jubilado, Hiruko and Velar, all on the *ruta de pintxos*.

Lunch near Laguardia

Hector Oribe can be found next door in the small village of Páganos, a 2-minute drive, while Restaurante Martin Cendoya is located along the highway in the bodega-hotel Eguren Ugarte, popular with the locals. Bodegas Viñedos De Paganos has opened their upscale restaurant in Páganos, El Puntido, offering two seasonal tasting menus; “El Puntido” and “Calados del Puntido”. 1860 Tradición and La Florida are a few minutes down the road in Elciego. There is also the Taberna Gastronómica 1583 in Elciego (closed Tuesdays).

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 and its own bodega. Posada Mayor de Migueloa is an antique-filled 17th-century stone mansion, 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. Legado de 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, on the outside of the walls, and 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. Note that there is no parking within the walls of the village.

Wineries of interest

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 where the writer Felix María de Samaniego was born. The bodega, located seven meters below amid the 300 underground cellars, combining four different cellars, is one of the largest in the village.

Guided tours (14€ and 17€) are available Sunday to Thursday at 11:30 am, 1:00, 4:00 and 5:30 pm, Friday at 11:30 am, 1:00, 5:30 and 7:30 pm, Saturday at 11:30 am and 1:00 pm. The Fable Guided Tour (in Spanish only) is available Saturdays only at 5:30 pm and 7:00 pm. You can contact them online, by email at info@bodegaelfabulista.com, or call (+34) 945 621 192 to book your tour. Tours are also available through Villa-Lucía.

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.

Tours are available in Spanish Monday to Friday at 12:30 pm and 3:30 pm, Saturdays at 11:30 am, 12:30, 1:30 and 5:30 pm, and Sundays at 11:30 am, 12:30 and 13:30 pm. Tours in English are by appointment only. The cost of the standard tour is 7,50€/person for a tasting of two wines, 10€/person for a tasting of three wines, and lasts about 35 minutes. Guided tours with the winemaker for small groups are also available. Email info@bodegascarlossampedro.com to book your tour.

Bodegas Casa Primicia

The winery, founded by Teresa Castaña and Julian Madrid, is located in Casa de la Primicia (11th-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 range 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.

The Casa Primicia Tour, with a tasting of two wines from the cellar is 17€/person. The rest of the tours require a minimum group of 4; Varietal Tour, with a tasting four wines, is 24€. Eco Tour, with a tasting of four Carravalseca Organic Wines is 28€/person. The 5-star Tour, with a tasting of 5 wines, is 33€/person. The Trio of Aces tour, with a tasting of the three of the, most special wines from Bodegas Casa Primicia, is 40€/person. The Pensante Vertical Tasting of the vintages of Pensante Maturana Tinta Autor, is 50€/person. Tours are available in Spanish and English. Have lunch in the oldest building in Laguardia; Carravalseca Menu is 72€, Menú Graciano 62€, Tempranillo Menu 62€ (minimum group of 12). Wines and the guided tour are included in the lunch. Closed Sunday afternoon and Mondays.

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 Guided Experience Tour (49€/person) breaks the mold regarding wine touring with a tasting of 8 wines paired with 6 gastronomic preparations in collaboration with chefs Iñaki Murua (one Michelin star) and Carolina Sánchez (two Repsol Suns). You will find "quick-guided tastings" of all the vintages served by the glass and a selection of "tapas" in the wine bar. The 45-minute tour can be reserved by email. The wine bar is open daily, but you need to reserve a place by email. Contact Javier at info@bodegasjaviersanpedro.com, or call (+34) 689 690 212 to arrange a tour and tasting. Open daily from 11:00 am to 7:00 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. Their *2019 Finca La Reñana Tinto* was recently awarded 97 points by Decanter.

A visit and tasting of four wines is 25€, available Saturdays only. The wine bar and terrace are open following the tour and tasting. Call them at (+34) 689 021 69, or contact them at enoturismo@luisalegre.com.

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, the 5th-generation, 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 0°* 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. A member of VIR - Viticultores Independientes en Rioja.

Tours of the winery are available at 11:30 and 4:30 pm and last between 60 and 90 minutes. The Gil Berzal tasting is 25€/person. The Single Vineyards Tasting is 40€, while the Exceptional Single Vineyards Tasting is 80€. Tastings can be booked online. You can also email info@gilberzal.com or call (+34) 945 600 735 for more information or to reserve a tasting.

Bodegas Cosme 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.. The winery controls some 200 hectares of vineyards in the Rioja and has a cellar that holds an amazing 12,000 American and French oak barrels.

Today the winery belongs to the Entrecanales Domecq family. Conzalo Entrecanales, the 3rd-generation, took over the project in 2021. You can request a visit or additional information by calling (+34) 945 600 057 or by emailing bodegadirecta@entrecanalesdomecq.com.

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.

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 family also owns Bodegas Durón in Roa (Burgos).

Tours without lunch are available Thursday to Sunday for 25€/person. Visits with lunch are available on Fridays and Saturdays for 65€/person and includes a tasting of three wines with an aperitif and lunch at the winery. Lunch only is 40€. Call (+34) 618 122 460 or [reserve online](#).

Bodegas Orube

The original winery was founded in 1937 in the underground cellar of one of the emblematic manor houses within the walls of Laguardia but was moved to its 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). The Bodegas Solar Viejo name was changed in 2024. “Orube,” which means “solar” in Basque.

A guided tour and tasting is 18€. A stroll through the "Los Molinos" vineyard with a taste of their signature wines is 29€, with a minimum of 6. The winery is open Monday to 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 store and wine bar are open Monday through Friday from 11:00 am until 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, Páganos, Navaridas, Elciego and Laguardia.

You can contact Javier online, by email at vallobera@vallobera.com, or call (+34) 945 621 204 for additional information or to request a private 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.

Visit the underground ‘calado’ in the center of Laguardia at Casa Garabitero is available for a tasting of wines; Color Tasting, Crianza Tasting, Vertical Tasting. There is also a tasting of a pairing of four wines. Only open Friday (evening), Saturday and Sundays. Book your tour and tasting online.

You can contact them online, by email enotour@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, avant-garde bodega, an ultramodern design of the famed Valencia architect, Santiago de Calatrava. Look for the undulating titanium roof “waving” in the distance. Rated one of the world’s best vineyards 2024. Ysios is part of the Allied Domecq wine empire.

There are sever tours and tastings available. The Ysios wine bar in the barrel cellar is open daily from 10:00 am until 4:30 pm, reservations not required. 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.

Guided visits to the winery, which include a tasting of two wines, are available Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 3:00 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. Send an email to info@bodegaruizdevinaspre.com, ainhoa@bodegaruizdevinaspre.com, or call (+34) 945 600 626 to request a tour and tasting.

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 Ibarondo Fraguela. The winery belongs to the family-owned Faustino Group and was named after the families first estate. They celebrated its 35th anniversary this year (2025).

The ‘Masters of the Essence’ tour is costs 25€ for adults, and is available for the whole family. The 2-hour Aroma Masterclass tour is 45€/person. The 90-minute Passion for the Origin Tour for up to 10 people, is 600€. Reserve online, email at visitas@familiamartinezzabala.es, or, call Campillo at (+34) 945 600 826.

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).

We enjoyed our last visit to the winery, which sits below the village across the roadway from Bodegas Campillo, but visits are now available only to members of ARTADI Collectors. Email comunicacion@artadi.com, or call (+34) 945 600 119 for additional information.

Bodegas Laukote

With only 8.5 hectares of vines, this is one of the smaller premium wineries in the Rioja Alavesa. Founded in 2004 by Norberto Miguel and Josune Biurrarena, both descendants of a long line of wine makers from Laguardia, they 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.

If you need information or would like to arrange a private tour and tasting, [contact them online](#), call (+34) 945 600 815 / 686 392 238, or email info@bodegaslaukote.com.

[Bodegas Exopto](#)

Tom Puyaubert, the noted French cooperage salesman and winemaker, has a project to produce different wines within the historical context, all blends of the three principal Rioja grape varieties. The winery was founded in 2003 to recover old vineyards in the Sierra Cantabria and Monte Yerga mountains, and 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 of his wines received over 90 points from Robert Parker in February 2025. A member of [VIR - Viticultores Independientes en Rioja](#)

Email Tom at info@exopto.net, or call (+34) 650 213 993 for additional information.

[Bodegas Lopez Oria](#)

The winery on the road to Elvillar was originally built by the grandfather Ángel Lopez, and is now in the hands of the 4th generation of the family, Isabel and Jose Antonio.

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

Bodega 202

This is a personal family endeavor of Francis and Kathleen Rooney that started in 2014 after walking the Camino de Santiago and falling in love with the Rioja; producing handcraft small batch vintages from old mountain plots, focusing on quality over quantity. Their oldest vines are from 80 to 100 years old. 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 boutique winery, which is along the A-3228, the road to Elvillar.

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

El Sacramento - Viña Leizaola

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 (president) 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 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 player in Rioja since 2005, producing his first wines in 2009, Oxer Bastegieta is a Basque producer who divides his time between the family winery in the Bizkaiko Txakolina appellation in the small village of Kortezubi on the Basque Coast, and his highly personal wines in the Rioja. He currently has 4.8 hectares of vineyards (nearly 100 years old) divided in 16 plots in the villages of Leza, Navaridas, Elciego, San Vicente de la Sonsierra, Laguardia and Elvillar. The wines are aged in French oak, Austrian fudres, clay jars from Padilla and concrete eggs. The result is fruity wines and not 'woody'.

The winery is 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, and was the Technical Director and head of research and development at C.V.N.E. for more than 30 years, starting 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.

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

Bodegas Las Orcas

This winery, officially founded in 1900, and belonging to Raimundo Abando and Cristina San Pedro Rández, a 5th generation wine maker, along with their daughter Lucía Abando San Pedro, the sixth generation San Pedro winemaker, is a small family winery where they work 10 hectares of their own vineyards, plus another 12 hectares they control, all in the village of Laguardia. They opened the new winery in 1999 outside the walls of the medieval village. Included in the Decanter Rioja Guide 2025. They are a member of the group of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja, Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja.

Located on the A-3210, the road from Laguardia to Elciego, km 2,5, the wine bar is open weekdays and holidays from 11:30 am to 3:00 pm, while the shop is open weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 pm. You can call (+34) 677 501 791 / 677 501 792 / 677 501 790, or email the family at lasorcas@lasorcas.com to arrange a tour and tasting.

Residence Wines

This newer bodega, named for its two residences, with their first harvest in 2022, is located in Laguardia, having moved from a rented winery in Lapuebla de Labarca. The vineyards, one of which dates back more than a 130 years, are located near the

villages of Elvillar/Bilar and Laserna. The operation is in the hands cofounders and winemakers César León (former Creative Director of Solar de Samaniego), Laura Ogando and Ernesto Funes, and Elena Corzana, winemaker. Their wines are truly exceptional.

You can book a personalized visit to the winery and vineyards with the founders. The visits, which last most of the morning or afternoon, includes a wine tasting and a creative gastronomic proposal based on the heights of Sonsierra and can conclude a visit to a historic cellar in San Vicente de la Sonsierra or Elvillar, with a lunch/dinner based on local recipes. The cost of a visit is a minimum of 120€/person. Contact them online to arrange a visit or email cesar@residencewines.com.

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 modern winery is located at Camino de la Hoya, s/n, across the road from Bodegas Javier San Pedro Ortega and next to Bodegas Ruiz De Viñaspre S L..

Email them at info@bodegaszintzo.com, call (+34) 945 609 186 or book you visit online. The winery is open for tastings Monday to Sunday from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm, and Monday to Saturday from 4:00 to 5:00 pm. On Sunday they are open from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. Tastings are 20€/person, maximum group size of 16.



Frank Gehry designed City of Wine and La Iglesia de San Andrés

Elciego-Elziego

If you make your home base in Laguardia you'll be able to hop back and forth from there to Gehry/Riscal-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 (995 population) 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 Tourist Office is at Calle Norte, 26, in the "*Casa de los Maestros*", and offers guided visits of the village.

The village celebrates the *Viegen de la Plaza* on September 8, the festival of San Andrés on November 30, Santa Isabel Festival is on July 2, San Gregorio on May 9, San Roque on Aug 16 and San Vicente on the last Saturday of August. The *Día de Gracias*, thanksgiving day, originally had set date, but followed the end of the wine harvest, and is now celebrated on the last Saturday of November.

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 a cheese or a charcuterie platter at Vinoteca Berri (reopened by Iñaki Dominguez de Vicente, *Pikatxa*, on 31 July after being closed for 5 long years), in Plaza Mayor, across from city hall.

Lunch in Elciego

For lunch in the village 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), Capitán Gallarza, 1. Offers a menú del día for only 17€ during the week. Have pintxos or lunch at Taberna Gastronómica 1583, Calle Extramuros sur, 5. Closed on Tuesdays. Bar Restaurante La Caprichosa can be found at Calle Norte, 1, near Plaza Mayor, and is open every day. For pintxos you can try Pub Cafetería Gure. Closed Mondays.

Staying in Elciego

The Hotel-Bodega Marqués de Riscal is the obvious choice for staying in Elciego if you are a Marriott member and what to stay in the 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 center of 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 before finally ending up in Oyón/Oion, a distance of 25,5 km, which should take about 6 hours, without stops.

Wineries of interest

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 starred 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. Two of their wines received 100 points from Guía Proensa 2025; the 2021 Tapias de Marqués de Riscal and the 2019 de Barón de Chirel.

The winery is open for visits Monday to Friday from 10:00 am to 7:00 pm, and Saturdays from 9:00 pm to 5:00 pm, with tours beginning at 26€/person. The tours are conducted in Spanish, English, French, Italian and German. Private tastings are also available. You can call (+34) 945 180 888, book you visit online, or email marquesderiscal@marquesderiscal.com for additional information.

Bodegas Murúa

You'll find this classic family winery on your 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. Their 51 plots make up a total of 80 hectares of vineyards in Elciego, Laguardia, Villabuena de Álava, Leza, Lanciego and Navaridas.

Their “Discovering Murua” tour is 35€/person, available Tuesday-Saturday at 11:00 am and 4:00 pm. For reservations call (+34) 671 483 542 / 945 606 260, email enoturismo@bodegas.masaveu.com, or reserve your visit online. Or if you are looking for a unique wine experience, there is also a 2-1/2 hour premium wine

tour/tasting for 80€/person. The wine bar is open Monday to Saturday from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

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.

You can contact the winery online, email info@murielwines.com or contacto@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 museum located in its 15th-century underground cellar at Puente Barrihuelo, 67-69.

Winemaker Juan Valdelana oversees the 67 plots covering 100 hectares including the 100-year-old vines from their Santa Cruz plot found on a small slope to the east of Elciego.

The standard visit to the winery (Ethnographic Museum, Wine Museum, Tunnel of senses, and a tasting of four wines and olive oil) is 20€ for adults, 10€ for children between 6 and 17, and is available Monday-Thursday from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm, Friday and Saturday until 7:00 pm and Sundays until 3:00 pm. The 4-hour Fusion Visit is 38€/person. The 4-hour Stellar Marriage visit in the “The Garden of the Varieties” along the Ebro river (July and August only) is 78€/person. Or have Lunch in the Cellar or at the Vineyard for a minimum group of 10. The 3-hour Wine Tasting Courses, with oenologist Juan Valdelana, are 75€/person. Email

reservas@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 and where recognized by LUXlife Magazine as the best winery of 2024 in its “Resorts And Retreats Awards 2024”.

Bodegas Diez-Caballero

This family estate winery with 25 hectares of tempranillo grapes is under the direction of Antonio Diez-Caballero and oenologist Manuel Ruiz Hernandez. Its concrete tanks produce a traditional Bordeaux Châteaux-style wine not common in the Rioja. The 40-year old winery was updated with new buildings and a wine tasting room.

You can [request a visit online](#), email info@diez-caballero.es, or call (+34) 944 630 938 / 679 968 007 for additional information. Visits are 15€/person. The winery is located at Calle Barrihuelo, 73, in the historic *Barrio de bodegas*, where wine has been produced for over 400 years.

Bodegas Fos

Founded in 2006, the winery, surrounded by 20 hectares of Tempranillo, Graciano and Viura vineyards (El Roble, Portalada, Rioseco), is a couple of minutes drive south of Elciego just off the A-4208 on Término de Vialba. The beautifully refurbished winery, renovated both inside and out. The former Bodegas Palacios Sáez was designed by architect Enrique Muga Francisco of Donostia-San Sebastian. They are a member of the ABRA Asociación de Bodegas de Rioja Alavesa.

The winery is open Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 6:00 pm. You can call (+34) 945 606 681, or [contact them online](#), for additional information or 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 under the direction of winemaker David González Marcos.

The winery is open for visits Monday to 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 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.

A one-hour visit to the winery with a tasting of 3 wines is 18€, or try a tasting in the vineyard for 30€/person with a minimum group of 4. A 90-minute guided blind tasting is 25€. 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'.

Contact Andoni Godoy by email at lur@elconjurodelciego.com, 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 - Monje Amestoy

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. Guín Peñín has awarded five of their wines 90 points or more for 2026.

The tasting room is open, so you can request a 90-minute tour of the winery and tasting (15€) by emailing luberri@luberri.com, or by calling (+34) 945 606 010 or [book your tour online](#).



Bodega Don Balbino vineyards

Lapuebla de Labarca

If you are driving from Laguardia to Fuenmayor, you cross the Ebro river from the Álavesa to La Rioja Alta through the historic village of Lapuebla de Labarca 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, there are a couple of places for pintxos/tapas, Bar Zubia and Bar Maite, but not much else. You should consider reserving a table at one of our recommended restaurants in Fuenmayor or in Elciego.

Wineries of interest

Bodega Córdoba Martínez

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 EVOO 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 is now in the hands of José Carlos.

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 first introduced in 2005, as well as an EEOV, *Loli Casado AOVE*, made from Arroniz olives.

The standard 90-minute tour at noon with a tasting of four wines is 18€/adults for a minimum of 2 and maximum of 20 people. The premium tasting of five wines and

olive oil is 25€/person for groups of 2-20 people. The 2-1/2 hour premium experience, beginning at 11:00 am, is 40€/person. [Book online](#). Call or WhatsApp them at (+34) 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 winery was founded in 1924, but the family has farmed their land since their great-grandfather José Fernández started 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 winery at Camino de la Poveda, 34, with 40 hectares of vineyards, was built in 1973, the year Balbino Fernández was born.

You can [request a tour online](#), call Mila Fernández at (+34) 945 607 018, 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, with a traditional lunch, is available Monday to Friday for 50€/person, or 60€ on Saturdays. The quick tour is 18€ and is available Monday to Saturday at 11:00 am.

They also own [Casa Rural Ikustieder](#), overlooking the Ebro river and 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.

The winery at Camino del Soto, 26, is open Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, Saturdays from noon until 2:00 pm. The 90-minute tours are 12€/person. Contact them at (+34) 945 627 232, or email bodegas@covila.es to arrange a visit with a tour and tasting.

Bodegas Harresi

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, which means 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. In 2024, after deciding to retire, Txutxi Muro leased the winery to [winemaker Carmen Uriarte](#).

Bodegas Larchago SA

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 fourth-generation winemaker. A fifth generation is now in the wings.

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 its 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.

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 them at 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.

The winery is open for visits Monday to Saturday by appointment only. 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, it 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 are also a member of ABRA, the 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. Fermented with dry ice, it's aged in new French oak for 12 months.

Email info@bodegagarridomedrano.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 reservation only. 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 to 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 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.

Guided tours of the vineyards and winery are available by calling (+ 34) 627 434 726, or emailing info@bodegasmuro.es.

The family also owns a small 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.

Contact Ion López de Lacalle at ion@bodegaspavoni.com, or email bodegaspavoni@gmail.com. You can also call Juan Carlos at (+34) 609 905 871, Ion López at (+34) 660 577 966 or Marta López at (+34) 609 905 874 to arrange a guided tour and tasting of their small family winery. Small groups only.



La Estación Fuenmayor

La Estación (Fuenmayor)

The forgotten neighborhood is located just three kilometers from Fuenmayor on the road to Lapuebla de Labarca, close to the Ebro River. The Fuenmayor Station neighborhood today houses the railway station itself, the AGE Wineries, and a silo built in the 1960s, when it had nearly 150 inhabitants. The neighborhood began with the construction of the Castejón-Bilbao railway, opened in 1863, and gradually developed after Félix Azpilicueta recovered the family vineyards and founded Bodegas del Romeral in 1881, and workers moved to live in the "Colonia del Romeral". Cruz García and Félix Azpilicueta join forces with Bodegas Entrena de Navarrete in the 1960s to form AGE, an acronym for Azpilicueta, García y Entrena, and became one of the largest wineries in Rioja.

Our thanks to Juan Carlos Pulgar, Columnista de Diario LA RIOJA.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Azpilicueta AGE

Founded in 1881 as Bodegas El Romeral in Barrio de la Estación (Fuenmayor), Félix Azpilicueta recovered the family vineyard and opened branches in Logroño, Santander, Bilbao, and San Sebastián-Donostia. 40 years later he built a new bodega El Romeral. In the early 1990s the family recovered the style of the old crianza and reservas. Their vineyards cover some 800 hectares in and around Fuenmayor. Ignacio López of Mendoza, Argentina, leads the team and has been the chief winemaker since 2023. The winery is part of Pernod Ricard group of wineries (1997) which include the Ignacio Quemada designed Campo Viejo in the Santa Cruz neighborhood of Logroño, the avant-garde designed Bodegas Ysios in Laguardia and Tarsus, a French chateau in Anguix (Burgos) in the Ribera del Duero. Bodegas Azpilicueta was founded in 1990 by Felix Azpilicueta Martínez.

The winery offers private tours which include a visit to the vineyards and the winery along with a wine tasting. Contact them online, email them at info@azpilicueta.com, or call (+34) 941 279 900 for additional information, or to arrange a private tasting.



Vineyards south of Cenicero

Cenicero

If you continue south on the A-3210/LR-211 from Elciego, past Viña Salceda (Alavesa), you will arrive at the historic village of Cenicero sitting 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, you can book a table at Bar Restaurante Olano at Calle la Victoria, 40. Closed Sundays. For something different you can try Bodega 1880, a restored cellar started by two brothers, where you can have wine, beer and tapas. Or consider reserving a table at one of our recommended restaurants in Fuenmayor or Elciego.

And if you want to stay in the area, the DWO Rioja Wine Hotel is a good option. Parking is available.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas 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 based on lessons he had learned in the Bordeaux region from Bordeaux wine pioneer Emile Peynaud, revolutionizing winemaking in the Rioja. His wines quickly rose to prominence on the international scene. The winery is now under the direction of his daughter, Cristina Forner, President Bodegas Marqués Cáceres.

A VIP tour/tasting of three wines is 25€/person, paired with cheeses from the Los Cameros region, is available by reservation only Monday to Saturday. The tour with at tasting of four wines from la colección Excellens is 50€. The El Encuentro de Sabores visit, a “Gathering of Flavors”, is 100€/person, offered only on Fridays every other week, but not available during the summer months. The wine bar and store are open by reservations only. You can request a visit either 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.

Their Wine Sensations guided tour with a tasting of three wines and an aperitivo are available at 24€/person, children 12€. The Gallery Visit is 50€ with minimum

group of 4 people. There is also a wine shop where you can taste a wide selection of wines if you do not want to do a guided tour. [Reserve online](#), call (+34) 941 454 050 or email info@bodegasriojanas.com to arrange a tour and tasting.

El Legado

The Legacy project was born from the family's desire to revive part of Cenicero's history. Calado de catas, the two tasting cellars, date from the 15th-century.

A special 2-hour visit includes a tour of the vineyards and lunch paired with Legado Ancestral wine for 40€/person, minimum group of 6. The 2-hour Legacy Visit is 20€ for a minimum of 2 people and includes a visit to the winery and cellars, a tasting of three Legado Ancestral wines paired with tapas from the region. [Contact them online](#) or call or WhatsApp (+34) 627 364 648 for additional information.

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.

Visits are by appointment only and can be arranged by emailing Manuel at 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.

Tours in Spanish are available daily at 11:00 am, 1:00 pm and 4:30 pm and in English at 11:00 am, 12:30 pm and 4:00 pm. The standard tour, with a tasting of two wines and an aperitivo, is 30€/person. The Singular tour, with a tasting of four wines, is 60€. The premium tour, which includes a visit to the bodega and vineyards, is 105€/person. You can [book a tour online](#), call (+34) 629 152 822 / 627 410 801 or email reservastritium@gmail.com for reservations.

Bodegas Murillo Viteri

This small family winery is the result of six generations of love, work and passion since their 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.

Guided tours on the first Saturday of each month, with a tasting of four wines, are 20€/person and available by [reserving online](#) or by calling Andrea, Patxi, or Iñaki at (+34) 944 495 839. or 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, recently became part of Compañía Vinícola del Norte de España, C.V.N.E.

The winery is at Avenida de Fuenmayor, s/n, LR-211, open Monday to Friday from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm, closed weekends. You can contact C.V.N.E. 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.

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 of 3000 bottles; 600 bottles of *Caudum Selección Especial* and 2400 bottles of *Caudum*. They are also members of the Asociación Menudas Bodegas de Rioja.

Contact Carlos Piserra, the son, at (+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.

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

Bodegas Vergara Verde

This winery is a family tradition dating from the 15th-century. The cellar sits 15 meters underground in an environment of constant humidity and ideal temperature. The historic renovated winery was reopened after years of being neglected and all but forgotten. Today they produce only two limited production premium wines.

You can do a guided tours of the winery and vineyard followed by a tasting of wines and an appetizer. Tours are available in English and Spanish for 30€ and 60€/person and can be booked using WhatsApp (+34) 615 483 839. You can also contact them at info@bodegasvergaraverde.com or call (+34) 636 226 979 for additional information.



Wine vats in the cellar at Bodegas Contino

Laserna

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

Just down the road from Laserna, toward Logroño, you will find the Asador Restaurante Señorío Biasteri, which offers a daily menu for 18€, or 35€ on the weekends. Reservations recommended. Or head into Logroño for lunch at one of our recommended restaurants.

Wineries of interest

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 for their vineyards in Laserna and Laguardia.

Tours, with a tasting of four wines, is available for small groups for 17€/person, or 20€ for a tasting of six wines. And if you are thinking of spending a few days in the area, they also offer six double rooms in their rural guesthouse, with a pool. Email them at bodega@senoriodelasvinas.com or call (+34) 945 621 110 / 635 485 083 / 635 485 558 to arrange a tour and tasting.

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 them at 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, Finca San Rafael, 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, 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 standard visit with a walk through our vineyard and a tasting of 3 wines, is available in Spanish, English or French, Tuesday to Saturday for 50€/person. Tours during July and August are from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. The 2-hour Contino Essence Tasting visit, with a tasting of 4 wines, is 65€/person and normally only available on Saturdays. A visit with lunch is 95€/person, available on Saturdays, with a minimum group of 8. The store is open from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm. Book your reservations online or call (+34) 941 304 809. The winery is closed on December 24th and 25th.

Bodega 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.

Tours are available by reservations at 11:00 am and 3:00 pm Monday to Saturday and 10:00 am and noon on Sundays. The price is 20€ for adults, 10€ for children. Email visitas@cvne.com, call (+34) 941 304 809 to arrange your visit or for additional information.

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. A member of Bodegas Familiares de Rioja.

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. She produced her first rosado in 2022. Contact Carmen at info@vinovillota.com, or call (+34) 606 849 634 for more information, or to request a visit.

UKAN

This is a new project of the of the youngest generation of the Eguren family, Koldo Eguren and his cousin Eduardo, a small winery that follows the Bordeaux model, and focused in producing a great wine in very limited quantities. They currently produce two wines, UKAN and Senderos de UKAN.

You can contact Koldo online for additional information or to schedule a visit, or email him at info@ukanwinery.com.



Finca Mayorazgo, El Redondo de Assa

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.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Gómez de Segura

The family winery, which opened in 1948 on the left bank of the Río Assa, is 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. Ana Gómez de Segura is the winemaker, while José Antonio manages the vineyards.

Experience a trip back in time with a pre-lunch tasting in the cellar. Enjoy the outdoors working the land for a day before having lunch in the vineyard. The winery is open for visits Monday to Friday from 10:00 am to 2:30 pm and 4:00 to 8:00 pm, Saturdays from 10:00 am until 2:00 pm. Contact them online, 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 along the bank of the Ebro on a former quarry dating back some 800 years. Acquired in 1980 by Juan José Urarte Espinosa, it is now in the hands of the 4th-generation of the family. Their 40 hectares of vineyards (Tempranillo, Mazuelo and Viura) are distributed between the Ebro river and Sierra de Cantabria. They are another member of ABRA.

You can request a visit to the finca by calling (+34) 945 600 102, emailing vinaemiliano@vinaemiliano.com, or contacting them online.



Bodegas Altanza

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.

Fuenmayor 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, 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. The 4-hour walk will take you through the vineyards.

For lunch in Fuenmayor, we highly recommend Restaurante Alameda, two Repsol suns. Closed Sunday night and Mondays. If you can't reserve a table there, then try Mesón Chuchi, Mesón El Escudo, which is part of Bodegas Las Erres, Restaurante Casa Eloy, or C'Alma, listed in the Macarfi Guide. You can also try Bar Las Piscinas Fuenmayor (open daily), or Bar Restaurante El Parque (closed Sundays).

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Altanza

Opened in 1998 by a group of friends, the 200 hectare estate (13 plots of Tempranillo and Sauvignon Blanc), surrounding 8 hectares of olive groves, is located in Fuenmayor. The cellar holds 6500 French oak barrels and 9 Allier French oak vats (22,000 liters). Carlos Ferreiro, technical director, has been the winemaker since the winery opened.

Visits to this beautiful state-of-the-art winery are available in Spanish and English, Monday to Friday. The 1-hour tour, with a tasting of three wines and Extra Virgin Olive Oil, paired with a special selection of Riojan charcuterie, is 25€/person, while the Premium tasting of 4 of their top wines is 60€. Call (+34) 941 450 860 / 659 648 306, book online, or email enoturismo@bodegasaltanza.com to book your tour.

Bodegas LAN

Founded in 1972, the winery takes its 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 around 778, before the Battle of Roncevaux Pass, 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. María Barúa has been the winemaker since 2002.

LAN was acquired by Sogrape, a family-owned wine company (Fernando da Cunha Guedes), in 2012, and this year has changed its labels and marketing, renewing its brand identity; “*Date un Si*”. Tours are currently not available, but you can call (+34) 941 450 950, or email info@bodegaslan.com for additional information.

Bodegas Heredad Linares

The winery was opened in 1989 by the Asensio Saenz de Cabezón winemaking family, dating from the 18th-century and now in the 5th generation, producing their first vintage in 1997. Their vineyards are located in Fuenmayor, El Cortijo, and Navarrete.

Contact them online, by email at info@heredadlinares.com, or call them at (+34) 941 45 00 42 / 630 104 804 for additional information.

Bodegas Las Erres

This small family winery with a century-old cellar, run by the father-son team of Ramón y Ramón, was opened in 1991 and can be found in Fuenmayor at Calle San Cristóbal, 68, not far from Mesón El Escudo. The R14 is aged for 14 months in French and American oak barrels.

Private visits to the winery and the centuries-old cellar are available by calling (+34) 941 450 105 or emailing them at: laserres@bodegaslaserres.com.

Dominio de Nobleza

Another small family winery with 120 hectares of Tempranillo, Maturana Tinta and Viura grapes, founded in 1975, is just down the street at Barrio Bodegas San Cristóbal, 79, in the center of Fuenmayor.

Contact them online, email bodegas@dominiodenobleza.com, or call (+34) 941 450 507 for additional information, or to arrange a visit.

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, 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. They also have 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.

Tours, including a 4x4 tour along on the banks of the Ebro river (75€/person), are available Monday to Saturday from 9:30 am to 5:30 pm (3:30 pm in the summer). The Finca Tour, through the vineyards and a tasting of 2 wines, is 30€/person. The Cantos Tour is 20€, 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

This traditional family winery, the second oldest in the Rioja (1874), was constructed over more than 500 meters of original 16th and 17th century *calados*, underground cellars. They produce six premium wines, including a red reserva and high quality crianza from manually sorted hand picked grapes from their 45 hectares of Tempranillo, Garnacha and Graciano vineyards, most of which are located in the village of Clavijo in the Iregua Valley at 600 meters altitude.

Private guided tours of the winery (25€/person) can be arranged by calling (+34) 608 299 615, or emailing rrpp@marquesdearviza.es.

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 produces five wines; three reds and two whites, is located at Calle San Cristobal , 77.

You can contact online, by email at 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 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.

Visits to the winery and vineyards (weather permitting) are available Monday through Friday from 8:00 pm to 2:00 pm by calling (+34) 941 450 142 / 626 753 549, 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 are more than 100 years old, can be found 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 gran reservas. There is a dining room for seating up to 60 people.

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

Bodegas Heras Cordón

The original winery, opened in the 19th-century in Heras Cordón family's hometown of Lapuebla de Labarca, was across the Ebro river in the Rioja Alavesa, when the wine was meant only for local consumption. In the 1990s they obtained vineyards north of Fuenmayor and in 1995 decided to built a new winery, which opened in 1997 and managed by the three brothers. In 2005 they added a private dining room and social lounge for club members. The families 70 hectares of vineyards, plus another 60 hectares they manage, are located in the Rioja Alta in Cenicero, Fuenmayor and Navarrete, and in the Rioja Alavesa in Laguardia, Elciego and Lapuebla de Labarca.

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

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 winery was expanded in 2000 for the production of their two wine labels, Viña Zearra and Marqués de Zearra.

Visits to the winery and vineyards, with a tasting of four wines is 20€/person for the standard tasting, 30€/person for the premium tasting. You can reserve your visit online, by calling Josune at (+34) 941 450 462, or email info@zearra.com.

Minúscula Wines

This new project, which began in 2022, currently produces two wines, a young 'Instante', and another half crianza, 'Siete amigos', both fresh and fruity Tempranillos. The winery is owned by Arcjes Bodegas Y Viñedos (Logroño) and promoted by Luis Carlos Casero.

You can contact them by email at info@minusculawines.com or call (+34) 658 751 897 for additional information.



Looking across the vineyards at the snow covered peaks of Toloño, Sierra Cantabria.

Navarrete

Like many villages in the Rioja, the Camino de Santiago French Route, runs through this beautiful, small medieval village's main street, a Conjunto Histórico-Artístico of Spain. Located only 11 kilometers from Logroño, Navarrete was once an important center of winemaking and pottery and where you will find houses and palaces bearing coats of arms, a witness to its past. Be sure to visit its 16th-century Renaissance Santa María de la Asunción Church. You will find a castle on Tedeón Hill, built by Alfonso VIII to defend the Kingdom of Navarre from Castilla. The village celebrates the festival of La Virgen and San Roque on August 16. and San Miguel on September 29.

For lunch in Navarrete you can try Restaurante El Figón del Duque, dining on local cuisine with a Latin American twist in a 15th-century wine cellar. Closed Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Recommended in the Macarfi Guide. Restaurante Sala is just not for pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago. Another option would be to find a table at the Hotel-Restaurante Rey Sancho in the center of the village.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Cornelio Dinastía

Eight generations have been producing high quality organic wines from Tempranillo and Garnacha for the red and rosé wines and 80 year old Viura vines for white wines grown on the 74 hectares bush-trained vineyards in the foothills of the Toloño, Sierra Cantabria, along the golden mile between San Vicente de la Sonsierra, Briones and San Asensio. 35 hectares are at altitudes between 480 and 600 meters. The process is overseen by José María Pangua, winemaker. Their wines won several awards at the 16th Ecovino Awards, celebrating the success of organic viticulture.

Call (+34) 941 742 249 or email them at info@bodegascornelio.es for additional information.

Bodegas Montecillo

Founded in 1874, the third oldest winery in the Rioja is now part of the Osborne family. The winery is located a 5-minute drive south of Fuenmayor, just off the Fuenmayor-Navarrete road, the LR-137. Chief winemaker and director of the winery is Mercedes Garcia Rupérez from Madrid.

The winery is open daily for visits starting at noon, 10:30 am on Saturdays. The standard 2-hour guided tour is 30€/person and can be booked online. You can have a 3-hour tour and picnic in the garden from May to October and in the wine bar November to April for 60€/person, with a minimum group of 4. Workshops are also available. The wine bar is open where you can taste a flight of wines, or when the weather is nice, you can also enjoy the Wine Garden. Call (+34) 941 440 125, or email info@bodegasmontecillo.com.

Bodegas Montsalla

This family winery was started in 2005 by the decedents of D. Félix Azpilicueta Martínez, founder of Bodegas Azpilicueta and Bodegas AGE. Their vineyards, with an average age of 15 years, are in the area around Navarrete and Fuenmayor.

Visits to the historic 250-year old winery are by appointment only. You can email the winery at montsalla@gmail.com or by calling (+34) 696 461 283.

Elena Corzana

This small artisan winery in Navarrete is worth mentioning. Elena returned to her home after working in various wineries around the world, to the winemaking traditions that shaped her life. With an annual production of no more than 5,000 bottles, she focuses on crafting premium wines with personality, history, and authenticity. Her wine was profiled by Pilar Caverio, sommelier, and wine critic of ABC. Elena is also one of the members of the Asociación Menudas Bodegas de Rioja and a member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja. Her wines are excellent!

Email elena@elenacorzana.com for additional information or book a tour and tasting online for 35€/person, available Monday to Saturday.

Bodegas Corral (Don Jacobo)

It was a 127 years ago (1898) that Riojan Don Saturnino Daroca, a winegrower and winemaker, first began to plant his vineyards in Sojuela, a small village near Navarrete. The new family winery, located on the original pilgrims route, Ruta Jacobea or Way of St. James, was built in 1974. The current winemaker at Don Jacobo is Javier Martinez.

Tours are available Wednesday to Sunday only. The Corral Experience is 22€/person, including a walk through the vineyard and a tasting of three wines, is available at 11:00 am. The Corral Premium tour is 48€/person is available at 12:30 pm. Their Corral Experience Gastro for a minimum of 10, is 55€/person and available at 11:00 am with lunch at 2:00 pm. The Corral Premium Gastro is 80€/person. It starts at 12:30 pm with lunch at 3:00 pm. The Wine Bar opened on June 29 this year and will be open Friday evenings from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm, on Saturdays and Sundays from 12:00 am to 3:00 pm. Reservations are not required. You can call (+34) 941 440 193 or email info@bodegascorral.com to arrange a visit. You can also contact them online.

Bodegas Valdelacierva

Founded in 1988 and part of the Hispano Bodegas Group; Bodegas Valdelacierva (Rioja), Viñedos y Bodegas Gormaz (Ribera del Duero) and Bodegas GarciGrande (Rueda), the bodegas' viñedo singular plots of 125 hectares between 25 and 130 years old can be found in Briones, Baños de Ebro, San Vicente de la Sonsierra and

Tudelilla. The winery, until recently, was under the direction of the master winemaker, Emma Villajos Barja, who is now with Bodegas Franco-Españolas in Logroño.

Call them at (+34) 913 982 303 or email them at info@hispanobodegas.com for additional information or to arrange a tour and tasting while in the Rioja.

Bodegas Alvia

The family winery, with 30 hectares of vineyards of Tempranillo, Graciano, Garnacha, Viura and Malvasia in Leza, Labastida, San Vicente de la Sonsierra, Rivas de Tereso, up to 100 years old, is located on the Camino de Santiago, with only 593 km left to go to Santiago de Compostela.

One-hour guided tours (10€/person) with the winemaker are available Monday to Friday mornings from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and in the afternoons from 3:00 to 6:00 pm. Call (+34) 941 441 905 or e-mail them at info@bodegasalvia.es.

Bodegas FYA

This is a special project of the Piérola Winery Group which includes a ceramics museum and a modern wine hotel. The project has been declared a "Historic-Artistic Site" and received the Best of Wine Tourism award in the Art and Culture category in 2024. The Ceramics Museum is the only pottery center in the Community of La Rioja.

Tours include a visit to the vineyard, winery, and Ceramics Museum. You can stay for lunch in the dining room with panoramic views of the vineyard and the Moncalvillo Mountains. The winery/museum is open for 2-hour tours on Friday, Saturday and Sundays at 1:00 pm. You will visit the winery and Ceramics Museum, with a tasting of four premium wines from the Piérola Group, accompanied by three tapas designed by the chef. The price of the tour is 30€ for adults, or 70€ with the lunch menu. Private tours for small groups is 450€. You can book your tour online, call (+34) 941 560 560 or email reservas@bodegasfya.com.



Logroño's historic Puente de Piedra bridge

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.

Dining in Logroño

Logroño is well known for its tapas bars lining Laurel Street, but it also has a great selection of restaurants. 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, Travesía del Laurel, 2, founded in 1972, is a must stop for its *champiñón a la plancha con gamba*, grilled mushroom with shrimp. Pata Negra, Calle Laurel, 24, is where you can select from 60 wines by the glass from different D.O.s. La Tavina is a three-story pinchos and wine bar, tavern and restaurant at Calle Laurel, 2. There are now some 61 tapas bars on Calles Laurel, San Agustín, and Albornoz from which to choose for your night out.

One of our favorite places in the city, Tondeluna, owned by Michelin starred chef Francis Paniego, has a terrace as well as indoor dining and a great Brunch, available everyday except Tuesday and now has a Solete from Repsol. Wine Fandango offers indoor and outdoor dining and is open's Monday to Saturday from noon to midnight and Sundays from noon to 6:00 pm. Recommended in the Repsol Guide for 2025. Juan Carlos Ferrando, recommended by Michelin and which received its first Repsol sun in 2021, is at Calle María Teresa Gil de Gárate, 7. Closed Sunday nights and Mondays. Taberna Herreras only has indoor dining and is open Monday to Saturday for lunch and dinner. Closed from December 25 until January 3. Txebiko is a newer addition to the dining scene from chef José Luis Vicente Gómez. It's open for lunch Monday to Saturday and dinner on Fridays and Saturdays, but closed the last two weeks of July.

Chef Iñaki and Carolina's Ikaró, with a Michelin star and two Repsol suns, is another great option. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays. Chef José Félix Rodríguez opened his Restaurante La Galería at Saturnino Ularqui, 5, in 2005, and is always a good bet. It received a Repsol sun in 2021. Closed Sundays. For sushi lovers there's chef Félix Jiménez's Kiro Sushi (menu only), but you may have to be on

the waiting list. Closed Sundays and Mondays. Note: they do not serve any alcoholic beverages. He was awarded his second Repsol sun on April 12, 2025. Chef Ramón Piñeiro's La Cocina de Ramón, a Michelin Bib Gourmand with one Repsol sun, is at Calle Portales, 30, in Logroño's old quarter. Closed for dinner on Sundays and all day Monday. Call to reserve. Tastavín, at Calle San Juan, 25, which opened in 2006, has been recommended in the Michelin Guide since 2015 and the Repsol Guide since 2016. Closed on Mondays.

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 from the old quarter, but an excellent business-class property.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Ontañón

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 four wine growing regions. The Gran Reserva Mitológico is from a 4 hectare parcel, some of the oldest in the region. The Tempranillo Blanco, from a 15 hectare vineyard planted in Quel, is from the original white grapes discovered on a parcel in Murillo de Río Leza in 1988.

The Temple of Wine, a tasting of 5 limited-production wines (45€/person) is available Monday to Friday at 11:00 am. The Essentials Tasting wine flight is 25€/person, while the Queirón Tasting wine flight is 50€. These tastings are in the wine bar La Sacistía, Monday to Friday. Call (+34) 941 234 200 / 690 858 519 to arrange a visit, or reserve online.

Bodegas Olarra

This unique Y-shaped bodega with its 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. The Grupo Bodegas Olarra 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.

The 90-minute long guided tours are available Monday to Friday at 11:30 am and 4:30 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 25€/person. On Saturdays you can do an introduction to wine tasting at 11:00 am (not currently available). Call (+34) 941 235 299, email info@grupobodegasolarra.es, or book your visit online.

Bodegas Franco-Españolas

Located across the iron bridge, *Puente de Hierro*, a short walk from the center of Logroño, the Eguizábal family winery 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, and racked every 6 months before resting another 30 months in the bottle before release. Production is now under the direction of oenologist Emma Villajos.

The 90-minute tour with a tasting of two wines is 27€/person. The 2-hour tour (Spanish only) with a tasting of four wines is 42€. Call (+34) 941 251 290 to find out about upcoming events at the winery.

Bodega Viña Ijalba

Also on the north side of the Ebro river, a 20-minute walk from the Puente de Piedraon, 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 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 its quality.

There are several tours available. The Premium Wine Flight, a tasting of four of their Varietal Collection wines, is 35€/person. You can reserve online, by email at vinaijalba@ijalba.com, or call (+34) 941 261 100 to schedule a tour and tasting. Closed Sundays.

Arizcuren Bodega y Viñedos

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 and one of the new generation of winemakers in the Rioja, and opened his Arizcuren Bodega in 2016, more a wine workshop in an urban space, a cellar garage, in Logroño at Calle Santa Isabel, 10. His wines are currently available in 30+ Michelin star restaurants. They are another member of the group of Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja and Bodegas de Logroño.

Visits to the Urban Cellar are available Monday to Friday 10:30 am and 12:30 pm, Saturday 10:00 am and 3:30 pm and Sundays at 10:30 am and 1:00 pm for 35€/person. The Flight Tasting of Arizcuren wines, accompanied by olive oil and mazuelo wine chocolate truffles, is 30€, available Monday to Friday from 2:15 until 3:30 pm and Saturday from 1:30 until 3:00 pm. You can call Javier at (+34) 941 233 073 / 696 880 937, 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 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*. 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 were born in Logroño.

A 90-minute ‘Uncorking The Rioja’ tour is 35€/person. The Cellar Tour with a tasting of five wines is 50€/person. Reserve online, email campoviejo@pernod-ricard.com, or call (+34) 941 279 900 to arrange a visit.

The wine bar terrace is open daily from 10:00 am until 4:30 pm. Reservations not required.

Hoplita Wines

HOPLITAS were the citizen soldiers of the ancient city-states of classical Greece. In 2004 Elvira, the viticulturist, and Julio returned to Logroño and have been producing wines on the same street where their great-grandfather Emilio produced them 80 years ago, Calle Herrerías, 21, bajos 4-5. Their barrel-fermented white wines are 50% Malvasia de Rioja/Rojas and 40% Viura, while the reds feature a blend of varieties, highlighting century-old Garnacha vineyards on the hillside of the Davalillo Castle. They also belong to the Asociación Menudas Bodegas de Rioja.

Visits to the winery, three buildings dating for the 16th-century, once part of the palace of the Count of Murillo y Bornos, are available Wednesday to Sunday at 12:30 pm and 5:00 pm for 22,50€, 25€ and 35€/person for 2 to 16 people, in Spanish or English. Call (+34) 609 922 024, or email visit@hoplitawines.com to arrange your tour and tasting.

Olivier Riviere Vinos

With small projects in the Rioja and Bordeaux, Frenchman Olivier Rivière, winemaker and oenologist, is one of the clearest representatives of the new wave of small producers that have emerged in Spain over the last decade. He arrived in Spain in 2004 to work with Telmo Rodríguez before acquiring his own vineyards in the Ribera del Arlanza region of Covarrubias (Burgos) and in the Rioja near Huércanos, producing his own wines beginning in 2009. He also consults for two

wineries: Laderas de Montejurra in Navarra and Bodegas Lacus in the Rioja Oriental. A member of the Viticultores Independientes en Rioja, you can email olivier@olivier-riviere.com or call Olivier at (+34) 690 733 541 for information on his projects.

Bodega MacRobert & Canals

A small family-owned winery established by Bryan MacRobert, a South African oenologist, and the Canals family, who have lived in the Rioja for more than 40 years. The winery started with four ‘*corros*’ (circles) in Villabuena de Álava. Since 2017 their 1.3 hectare Barranco del San Ginés vineyard (Laguardia) has been classified as a *Viñedo Singular* (Single Vineyard). Other small plots are located in Lanciego and Barranco.

Contact Bryan at (+34) 639 214 250, or María Buqueras (+34) 676 261 246. You can email bryan@macrobertandcanals.com or maria@macrobertandcanals.com for additional information or to arrange a visit to the winery located on the outskirts of Logroño.



Fall colors in the vineyards surrounding Oyón

Oyón-Oion

If staying in or around Laguardia or Logroño, you can take an easy morning drive to the small Basque village of [Oyón](#) in the Rioja Alavesa 6 kms to the north of Logroño. Although the village is dominated by an industrial zone you'll still be able to find medieval buildings and baroque palaces; Marqués del Puerto and Conde de Bureta, as well as several wineries including Bodegas Faustino and Conde Valdemar, whose products you surely have sampled. 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. In mid-September they celebrate the Día de la Fiesta de la Vendimia.

If you don't have reservations today at one of the wineries, be sure to look for the wine shop/bar Vinoteca Escudo Mayor at Plaza Mayor, 6, where you can relax, sample some of the local wines (more than 100 labels) and have some pintxos. 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. For lunch we recommend heading back to Logroño.

Wineries of interest

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 family inaugurated a new extension designed by Norman Foster, designated as a 'Planet 1.0' building, which opened in September 2024.

The new Dishes with Art tour with a tasting of two wines is 22€/person, as is the Wine and Dishes tour. The Planeta 1.0 Wine Tourism Project is 35€, and the premium Faustino I 60 Vintages tour and tasting is 90€. To visit this venerable winery, call (+34) 945 622 500, or send an email to info@bodegasfaustino.es.

Bodegas Conde Valdemar

In 2025 the family winery celebrates 137 years of winemaking in the Rioja as the 5th-generation continues the work of its founder, Joaquín Martínez Bujanda. The 275-hectare winery estate, lies a few minutes drive from Laguardia or Logroño. The Bujanda family opened the first non-American winery in Washington State; Valdemar Estates in Walla Walla, WA, in April 2019. Five of their Rioja wines scored 90 points or more from Guía Peñín in 2025.

The 90-minute visit and tasting of three wines, in Spanish, English and French, is 21€/person with a minimum group of 15. The 2-hour visit to the Altos Valdemar vineyard is 33,50€/person with a minimum group of 8. Private tours, in Spanish and English, are available for a minimum group of 8. A Visit during the grape harvest is also available where you can join in picking grapes, stomping them the

traditional Rioja way, and crafting your own fresh grape juice. The experience ends with a picnic in the vineyard, accompanied by a wine tasting. Contact the winery to reserve your tour.

The Wine Bar is open Monday to Friday from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Enjoy wines by the glass or choose one of the Tasting Flights (15€ and 17€). You can email enoturismo@valdemar.es, or call (+34) 945 622 188 / 663 334 535 for additional information.

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 current 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 Rosé is one of our go-to wines in the summer.

Call (+34) 945 622 600 or email info@elcoto.com to inquire about visiting the winery in Oyón when 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 family's 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 60-minute “Winery” Experience” tour includes a tasting of the wines and olive oils is still only 15€/person, or you can do a guided visit of family's 18th-century cellar in the old town during a 2-hour tour for 20€/person, with a minimum group of 6. A walking tour of the vineyards is also 20€/person with a minimum of 4, maximum of 20 adults. The 5-hour wine pairing experience is 40€, with a minimum group of 6. Tours can be booked online, by calling (+34) 685 787 571 / 679 231 368 or emailing 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 Oyón, 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 and Bodegas Vadillo in Oyón. The *Zuazo Gastón Reserva*, a modern-style red from the oldest and most valuable vineyards, spends 20 months in oak and 18 months in the bottle.

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.



Dolmen La Chabola de la Hechicera and the nearby village of Elvillar de Álava at sunset

Elvillar de Álava

This village with 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. Its 16th-century Gothic church, Iglesia de la Asunción de Nuestra Señora, was built on the ruins of a former castle was built by the Beaugrant family and prevails over the village. Its main Renaissance period altarpiece is one of the most outstanding in La Rioja.

You'll also find a series of palatial houses both in 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, Inside you'll discover a unique stonework depicting a sea monster. It is 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.

If you’d like to stay in the village then check out the 8-room [Casa Robla](#), a beautifully restored 18th-century manor house, once a winery and once known as El Cabaret (The Cabaret). Robla is the “food that is given as a gift at the end of a job”. The manor house was renovated under the direction of architects David D. Iriondo and Beatriz Lacasa from Logroño. You can call (+34) 945 625 119 / 678 623 672, or email info@casarobla.com for additional information.

There are two pintxos bars in Bilar, Las Piscinas and Bar Jubilados, or you might want to head north to the small village of Kanpezu (Santa Cruz de Campezo) for lunch at the farm-to-table restaurant [Arrea!](#), with [1 Michelin star](#) and [2 Repsol suns](#). Well worth the drive through the beautiful county side. Lunch only.

Wineries of interest

[Bodega Viña Laguardia](#)

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

The winery is open for visits Monday to 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, oenologist Amador Medrano, since 1995. They currently 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, opened in 2012 at the north end of the village, is part of their group.

You can contact Amador online, by emailing 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, born in Elvillar, and North 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.

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.

Etérea Kripán

Melanie Hickman and her husband David began her project with a focus on biodynamic viticulture in the ravines of Rioja Alavesa in the Kripán mountains.

Exclusive tours, available by advance reservation only. You can contact Melanie at (+34) 647 157 283 or email her at melanie@etereakripan.com for additional information or to arrange 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 in 14 different wine-growing regions.

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 directly related to his Bodegas Heredad de Baroja. An experimental winery, they carefully select 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. 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.

Contact the winery online, by email info@lardepaula.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.

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 29 local cereal, oil and grape farmers to continue 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. The original winery, at the foot of the Sierra Cantabria, was enlarged and updated in 2006. Their *COTA 585*, 100% Tempranillo, the fruit of the mountain, is a result of their reinterpretation of a way of life with the wine, spending 1000 days in French and American oak barrels, and 300 days of aging in the bottle.

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 guided tour of the winery.



Spring bloom, El Moro Wines vineyard

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 18th-century 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 Lanciego-Lantziego 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 along the Cantabrian Coast, and is still in operation. The 29th Fiesta de la Vendimia de Rioja Alavesa was held in Lanciego on 15 September 2024. For lunch you should consider

returning to Laguardia, or take a 30-minute drive north to Kanpezu (Santa Cruz de Campezo) for lunch at the farm-to-table restaurant Arrea!, 1 Michelin star and 2 Repsol suns. You won't be disappointed.

Wineries of interest

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, is now in 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. They also produce an organic EVOO from Arroniz olives. They are a member of VIR - Viticultores Independientes en Rioja.

You can contact Itxaso or Gorka Compañon by calling (+34) 658 737 625 or email them at 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.

The winery, at Camino de Elvillar, 22, is open for tours and tastings and a gastronomic event. Have lunch with views of the vineyards and the Sierra de Cantabria-Toloño. Contact them online, call (+34) 945 608 022, or email bodegas@bodegasdeluisr.com to schedule your visit or to reserve lunch.

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.

Call (+34) 605 710 348, or email bodegas@azpillagaurarte.com for additional information or to arrange a visit to the winery.

Señorio de Lanciego

Bodegas Blanco Pérez de Azpillaga, a small winery at the foot of the Sierra Cantabria (Sierra Toloño), was opened in 2013 by winemaker Cristina and her brother Diego Blanco, following in the footsteps of their family. They produce single-vineyard wines from their 23 hectares of vineyards, some over 90 years old at an altitude of between 500 and 700 meters. They are members of the ABRA.

You can contact them online for additional information, or call (+34) 678 623 672.

Tentenublo

Roberto Oliván, a determined and energetic 42-year old winemaker, has been making extraordinary artisanal 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, plots of old vines that were in danger of extinction, are found at an altitude between 450-650 meters. Viñaspre has become a benchmark for those who love wine.

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 Rodriguez 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*".

Contact Telmo by email at info@telmorodriguez.com, or call him at (+34) 945 628 315 for additional information.

Mendieta Osaba Wines

The Juanxu (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@mendietaosabawines.com to request a tour and tasting.



Bodegas Ezik vineyard

Viñaspre

The tiny hamlet of Viñaspre/Biasteri, with less than 50 residents, sits on the road between Yécora and Lanciego, a hidden corner of Álava. Most of the stately building in the village date from the 19th-century, including the Iglesia de Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, with a Renaissance façade from the 16th century, and a beautiful altarpiece, expanded in 1715 by José de Mendieta. There is also a frontón. Every August 25th the village celebrates its festival in honor of San Ginés, a 4th-century Roman martyr, with a mass, procession through the cobbled streets, a community meal, traditional games and an evening open-air dance in an intimate, authentic patron festival that extends to the closest weekend.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas EZIK

Born in a family of farmers, his great-grandfather made wine in a small wine cellar in Yécora, Enrique Jalón began acquiring small plots in 2011, launching his first bottles in the market with the Ezki trademark in 2019, a declaration of intentions to

place added-value on generations of hard work. The name of the winery was inspired by the nearby ancient village of Esquide where once a forest of lime trees existed. The vineyards are located at an average of 650 metres above sea level, and where the harvest is always done by hand in crates and small boxes.

Contact Enrique Jalón Ayala at (+34) 680 238 903 or email him at info@ezkiwines.com for additional information or to arrange a visit to the winery.

Familia Martínez Elorza

David Jimenez Martínez comes from a family of farmers with a vineyard in Viñaspre (Rioja Alavesa). A total of 15 hectares, distributed in 33 plots near Viñaspre. The vineyards are protected from the most aggressive side of the Atlantic influences by the by the Sierra de Cantabria. David's first vintage was in 2022 with just 2,650 bottles. The two vineyards are located in Viñaspre, and planted between 1992 (3 hectares) and 1975 (0.8 hectares). The wine is aged for 12 months in new 500 liter French and Hungarian oak barrels, and 225 liter barrels of French oak.

You can contact David through [Instagram](#) for additional information.



Le León Dormido, the “Sleeping Lion”, in the Sierra Cantabria

Yécora-Iekora

If you continue east on the A-4209 for another 10 minutes or so, you'll reach this small hamlet, with a population of some 266, located on a hill between two river valleys. Surrounded by vineyards and cereal fields, it is only a few steps from the border with Navarra. Just outside of Yécora-Iekora to the south you'll find the hermitage of *Santa María de Bercijana*, built between the 13th and 14th centuries, and if you happen to find yourself there 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. Their 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 take you up to León Dormido, the “Sleeping Lion”, at 1244 meters.

Wineries of interest

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.

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.

Contact bodegasjuancampinun@hotmail.com, or call them at (+34) 945 601 237 / 945 622 788 for additional information.

Bodega Cooperativa San Sixto

The cooperative, with nearly 300 hectares, began in 1954 with 75 winegrowers in the heart of the Rioja, in the foothills of the Sierra de Cantabria, with *León Dormido*, the Lion, the guardian of the valley as a backdrop. Today they are one of the leading cooperatives in Rioja Alavesa.

Contact them online, by mail sansixto@euskadi.coop or call (+34) 945 601 448 for more information or to request a visit to the winery.



Bodega Torre San Millán

Barriobusto

Originally known as Gorrebusto (1196), the village of Barriobusto 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 (the olive tree of the Basque country) survive today, and little by little are recovering due to efforts of some of the young farmers in the region.

Wineries of interest

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.

Contact them online, call (+34) 945 622 904, or email info@bodega-torresanmillan.com to arrange a tour and tasting.



Spring in the Hontza vineyard (Iker García)

Labraza

The small medieval walled village of Labraza sits on a summit in the eastern corner of the Rioja Alavesa close to the border with Navarra, about 10 km 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, Del Frontón Plaza, 11, is your only choice. It does have an outdoor terrace. Open daily.

Wineries of interest

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, by [email at info@vinedoshontza.com](mailto:info@vinedoshontza.com), or call (+34) 686 678 239 for additional information or to request a visit, where you can spend the morning or afternoon. Tours, with a minimum group of 8, in Basque, Spanish, and English, are approximately 3 hours in length, finishing with a tasting of three wines.



Village of Moreda de Álava

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. Moreda de Álava's 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 at 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 jumpers yell “¡Viva San Roque!, ¡Viva la Virgen! y ¡Viva la Calabaza!” as they leap over the bonfires. The largest bonfire can be found 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.

Wineries of interest

Bodegas Fernández de Piérola

The Piérola Family opened this small family winery in Moreda in 1996 with the aim of producing quality wines. One we like is their highly popular *Piérola Crianza*, 100 % Tempranillo, which spends 18 months in American and French oak, racked every 6 months. They also produce two sparkling wines; Espumoso Brut and Espumoso Brut Nature

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, email info@pierola.com, 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 12 unique wines. They are also a member of the ABRA.

The winery is open for visits by reservation almost anytime you want. Contact the brothers online, by email at info@bodegasanprudencio.es or you can call (+34) 945 622 451.



The Castillo de Sajazarra in the medieval farming hamlet of Sajazarra

Valle del Tirón

West of Haro, the "wine capital" of La Rioja, in the Valley of Tirón, you will find several small villages, some with castles and all with a long history of wine making; Anguciana, Ternerero (Castile-León) Sajazarra, Fonzaleche, Cuzcurrita de Río Tirón and Tirgo. 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.

This is an area popular with hikers because of its deciduous forests, streams and waterfalls, deep valleys and the northern peaks of the Sierra de la Demanda. For those up for a walk or bike ride there is a 27 km long [Río Oja Greenway](#) that runs from Casalarreina to Ezcaray, 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

Anguciana

The attractive little village of Anguciana, with its 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 village's historic quarter has been nicely restored. On April 29 they celebrate the martyr San Pedro de Verona.

For lunch in the area you will have to drive to Lumbre Restaurante, with one Repsol sun, or try La Vieja Bodega in nearby Casalarreina. Or head back to Haro where there are more options.

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 over 40 years, in what was once an abandoned horse stable on the Camino "*la Manzanera*", just 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.

Contact the bodega 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. You can even visit during the harvesting, pruning, decanting seasons and be able to experience first-hand the unique experience of "making wine".

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.

Guided tours are available Monday to 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 is 100€. Private tours with lunch are also available for a minimum of 8 people, maximum of 40. You can [contact Luis online](#), by calling (+34) 941 310 937 or by email at info@bodegasolabarri.com.

Bodegas Diez del Corral

This family winery has been producing fine wines since 1880 from vineyards which lie between the Valle del Tirón and the Montes Obarenes. Their largest vineyard, at 3.7 hectares, is located in the village of Anguciana, where the Maturana Tinta grape, genuinely Rioja, is gaining attention.

The winery is open for visit during the week. You can [request a visit online](#), email manuel@diezdelcorral.com or call (+34) 686 794 417 for additional information.

Villalba de Rioja

This small village of just over 200 inhabitants sits on the southern slopes of the Obarenes Mountains just 5 km from Haro on the LR-401. On June 26th they celebrate *San Pelayo* and on September 8th it's a celebration of the village's patron saint *la Virgen de los Remedios y Gracias*, with live music, dances. Here you'll find the 18th-century Parroquia de San Pelayo and Ermita de los Remedios. You'll also find the 8-room (5 doubles and 3 suites) [Palacio Condes de Cirac](#), a 4-star Rusticae property with a pool, sitting between the vineyards and the foothills. It was the former home of D. Pedro Ruiz del Castillo, founder of Mendoza in Argentina. For lunch you can check out Bar de Villalba de Rioja at Calle Pedro Ruiz Castillo, 3. Open daily.

Alonso & Pedrajo Viticultores

Finca La Cala is a small two-family operation which started 2011 with the first harvest in 2013 from their 3.5 hectares of prime vineyards at the easternmost part of the Obarenes Mountains, plots that had not been cultivated for years. As unusual as it sounds, Alberto Pedrajo and Javier Alonso are first generation winemakers, demonstrating that it's not necessary to have grown up among the vines to make

great wines; La Pequeñita, Sauñé, and Valdinero, aged in ancient clay jars, used barrels and concrete tanks.

Their main focus right now is acquiring more vineyards, hoping to begin construction of their own winery soon. You can email pedrajo@alonsopedrajo.com or alonso@alonsopedrajo.com for additional information.

Tenero

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

Hacienda El Tenero

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, its 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. 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) 678 534 140 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 medieval farming hamlet of Sajazarra, “Lake of Flowers” in Arabic, sits along the banks of the Ea River. With narrow, cobblestone streets and a 14th-century castle, it is one of the best preserved in the Rioja and listed as one of the most beautiful villages in all of Spain. Surrounded by vineyards, it was one of the five villages founded by the Brotherhood of Álava, a medieval institution of the rural nobility and landowners of Álava. The 12th-century Church of La Asunción sits

next to the castle, while the restored 8-room 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 plan on being in Sajazarra around lunch time, then you can try Asador Ochavo in the center of the village. It has two dining rooms, a lovely terrace and an excellent selection of local wines.

Bodegas Señorío de Libano

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 Libano family, they restored the castle damaged in the battles between the medieval kingdoms. While restoring the castle, they acquired some vineyards on the slopes of the Obarenes 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 Castillo de Sajazarra is not open to the public but the vineyards around the winery and the village, considered one of the prettiest in La Rioja, are well worth a visit. You can contact the bodega at info@senoriodelibano.com, call (+34) 941 320 066, for additional information.

Bodega Alegre Valgañón

The small urban winery of the Alegre-Valgañón family, opened in 2019, is located in the village of Sajazarra. Most of their 15 hectares of vineyards lie along the slopes of the Obarenes Mountains, *Los Montes Obarenes*, to the west of Haro, with plots centered around Fonzaleche, a small village on the LR-302, just off the road from Miranda de Ebro and other plots in Cihuri, Cellorigo and Villaseca. Both oenologist, Eva Valgañón and Oscar Alegre opened their first 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.

Alegre Valgañón is one of the least known members of Rioja & Roll and although generally not open to the public, you can call (+34) 609 886 652, or via [Instagram](#) for additional information. They are a member of [VIR - Viticultores Independientes en Rioja](#), the group of Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja.

[Bodegas Puente Del Ea](#)

Located along the bank of 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 classic and modern wines.

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

Fonzaleche

This picturesque farming community of [Fonzaleche](#), with less than 180 inhabitants, sits atop a knoll a few minutes drive west of Sajazarra on the LR-302, near where two Roman roads once crossed, and 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.

For lunch in the area you can check out [Bodegas Bohedal](#) in Cuzcurrita de Rio Tiron, [La Vasca](#) in Miranda de Ebro, a Bib Gourmand and recommended in the Repsol Guide 2024. [Alejandro Serrano](#) and [Erre de Roca](#), also in Miranda de Ebro, have one Michelin star each. [Alejandro de Bayas](#) in Miranda de Ebro is more moderately priced, offering a daily menú del día.

[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.

The winery is open for visits by reservation, including organizing tailor-made events. Tours and tastings are 30€ and 50€/person. You can email them at info@bodegasanmartindeabalos.com, call (+34) 941 300 423 / 686 942 800, or [contact them online](#) to arrange a visit.

Cuzcurrita de Río Tirón

Another important walled village during the Middle Ages, Cuzcurrita de Río Tirón belonged to the Kingdom of Navarra and is considered one of the most charming villages in the Rioja Alta; its picturesque streets lined with glorious mansions from the period, including the unique 17th-century 12-room Hotel Teatrisso, a 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. Its 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, check out 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, facing the river. Bar La Plaza can be found in the Plaza Mayor, or have lunch at Bodegas Bohedal.

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.

Tours are available from Monday to Saturday in Spanish, English and French. The classic 90-minute tours are 25€ during the week, 30€ on weekends. Premium visits are 35€ during the week, 40€ on weekends. You can call them at (+34) 941 328 022, [contact them online](#) or email your request for a tour and tasting to enoturismo@castillodecuzcurrita.com.

Bodegas Urbina

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

The winery is open daily from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm. The visit includes 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.

Berta Valgañón 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, 10 hectares and 9 plots in Villaseca and Fonzaleche, at the foot of the Obarenes mountains.

Private tours of the medieval cave-cellar and vineyards and a tasting of wines, with winemaker Berta Valgañón, are available by calling (+34) 630 591 159, or by emailing info@bertavalganon.com.

Bodegas Tobía

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

90-minute long tours exploring the cellar with the wine maker are available for 25€, or try a tasting of four wines specially selected by the sommelier and paired with a selection of gourmet tapas. You can request a visit [online](#). Or for additional information, call (+34) 941 301 789 or email tobia@bodegastobia.com.

Heredad Martínez Castillo

The brothers Miguel, Juanjo and Pedro Ángel, third generation of winegrowers, and Tamara, the fourth generation, have been marketing their own wines from their vineyards since 2002. You can find their bodega at Carretera Santander km 458.

The wine bar is open every day of the week in July and August and on weekends to rest of the year where you can taste four wines for 12€/person. Visits to the winery begin at 20€/person and are available daily from 11:00 am until 2:00 pm. Email info@heredadmartinezcastillo.com or call (+34) 606 400 053/ 662 493 391 to arrange a tour and tasting or for additional information.

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 45-minute tour of the wine cellar with a tasting of 2 wines, 2 oils and *picoteo* (aperitivo) is 20€/person. There is also a 90-minute tour and tasting for 35€/person. The wine bar is open July-September from 8:00 pm (7:30 pm on weekends) to 11:00 pm, closed Tuesdays. Call (+34) 607 214 989, or email them at labodegadeltesoro@gmail.com. You can also book your experience online.

Mayorazgo Zacarías de Bivián

The bodega first opened in 1699 when Cuzcurrita del Río Tirón was a walled stronghold, and it was the beginning of identifying specific wines from the Ebro basin as “Rioja”. The winery was renovated and updated in 1987 for the production, aging and marketing exclusively of Reservas and Grandes Reservas, wines made from “time, silence and stillness”. They are members of the Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja.

Contact the owner, Ángel López, online for additional information, or call him at (+34) 941 301 625.

Tirgo

Another small farming community of around 300 habitants sitting along the banks of the Rio Tirón, the village of Tirgo has 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 6 August 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 this area. If you would like to stay in this small hamlet, then we can recommend Solar de Febrer, a 18th-century restored mansion at Calle Salvador, 8. Built of local stone, it sits at the river's edge and 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.

If you happen to be in the area around lunch time, the owners also have a traditional grill restaurant El Pimiento, closed Mondays. The Bar Municipal de Tirgo, Plaza España, is known for its selection of craft beers, but is only open on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Mesón Lupe, at Calle Real, 29, will likely be crowded on the weekends. For lunch or dinner in nearby Cihuri you can reserve a table at El Trujal del Abuelo, a small, family-run restaurant in the heart of the wine district at Calle Bodegas, 1, offering authentic La Rioja cuisine. Recommended in the Macarfi Guide. Closed Tuesdays.

Bodegas Tarón

Across the stone 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.

One hour visits are available Tuesday to Saturday at 12 noon at the winery for 10€/person with a tasting of three 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 three wines and tapas for lunch for 30€/person at 11:00 am. The wine bar is open Tuesday to Saturday from 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm. 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 on the road to Santo Domingo de la Calzada, a few minutes from Casalarreina, the village of Castañares de Rioja 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 you have the Restaurante Bar La Balsa offering a menú del día daily, closed Mondays. It's just to the north of the village on the road to Haro. Casa Palomo and Taberna El Fuelle are your two other options in the village. Or you might want to reserve a table at Restaurante Lumbre, formally known as the *Cueva de Doña Isabela*, is in nearby Casalarreina and is open for lunch from 1:30 to 3:30 pm, one hour earlier on Saturdays and Sundays, but closed on Wednesdays and in early July. Chef Sergio Hernando Diez offers a 40€, 70€ and 100€ menus, VAT included. Or have an aperitif accompanied by a glass of wine in the cellar, the Calado.

Finca La Emperatriz

This wine-estate just south of Castañares de Rioja 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. The winery was recognized with a Solete by the Repsol Guide in 2022. There are also three air-conditioned villas on the property, Villas Finca La Emperatriz, which you can use for a get-away in La Rioja. Well worth a visit.

A 90-minute guided tour and tasting of 4 wines is available Monday-Saturday for 27€/person. Have a picnic in the vineyards with artisan cheeses and the best local

produce, with a glass of wine, for 50€/person. The wine bar and shop are open Monday-Saturday from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm. Reserve your visit online, call (+34) 941 300 705 / 620 207 971, or email them at visitas@hermanoshernaiz.com to arrange a tour and tasting, or to arrange a special event.

Hervías

Located twenty minutes drive due south of Haro on the LR-203, between the Oja and Najerilla rivers, this small farming village of around 150 inhabitants, is home to one of the smallest wineries in Rioja.

La Bodega Escondida

The small family winery began at the start of the 20th-century to make wine to pay the wages of the field workers; 4 liters of wine per day, meals and a little money. The current project is modest, harvesting from a plot of one hectare. Toño Larrea Valgañón is an economist and winemaker.

You can arrange a personal tour of the winery and cellar, in Spanish, French and English, with a taste of his artisanal wines and oils, Saturdays and Sundays at noon or 6:30 pm , or Monday to Friday, depending on the time, by calling (+34) 641 357 440, by emailing info@labodeguitaescondida.com or you can contact him online. The 2-1/2 hour tours are 20€/person, the 3 hour tour is 28€/person.



Zinio Bodegas vineyards, looking south

The Najerilla Valley

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](#).

Wineries of interest

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 [Hormilleja](#) 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 on the Camino Valpierre surrounded by vineyards with the snowy mountains of Valdezcaray, the Riojan Valley and the Basque mountains as a backdrop. The small family winery began in 2004 and today they make just four wines, two reds, a rosé of 75% Viura and 25% Tempranillo, and a white of 100% Viura.

The winery is open daily for visits beginning at 10:00 am, with the 90-minute tours with a tasting are 20€/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. The winery menu is 33€, the Riojan menu is 39€. Call Victoria Garrobo at (+34) 660 693 330 or email correo@bodegasayagar.es to arrange a tour and tasting, or a group lunch.

Uruñuela

Across the Yalde river valley from Hormilleja, the small village of [Uruñuela](#) was founded in the 10th-century by [Najerino García Sánchez](#), king of Pamplona during the repopulation of La Rioja. Life here 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 is 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 Mountains and to the south by the Sierra de la Demanda. We stopped by this past July and were quite impressed with their wines and the new gastrobar.

Visits with a tasting of three wines and an aperitivo are available Tuesday-Friday between 10:30 am and 12:30 pm and on Saturday at 11:30 am and 1:30 pm for 16€/person, and children 9-17 for 7€. 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. You can [request a visit online](#), 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 by Jesús Amor Artacho as a family project, 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, a minimum group of 10, maximum of 25, 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 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 were 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.

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.

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

Sínodo Vitivinícola

This is the project of Juan Antonio Blanco, Roberto Monforte and Gorka Etxebarria, who met while studying Oenology in Logroño in 2014, through which they convey their passion for wine and for La Rioja. The family-owned vineyards, Raposeras, the oldest vineyard and Los Tollos (located in Villamediana De Iregua), and Centales de Uruñuela, are small, allowing for the production of only a limited number of bottles each vintage. They also work with other family vineyards located in Sotés and in Cenicero.

You can contact them at info@sinodovitivinicola.com or call (+34) 627 837 611 for additional information.

Nájera

The noble town of Nájera, 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. Take a walk around the town’s historic district and visit its historic monastery, the Monastery of Santa María la Real (1032), a majestic landmark. The town was occupied by the Moors in the 8th-century, who called it *Naxara*, “the place between rocks”. Be sure to visit the Nájera caves, open Saturday, Sunday and Wednesdays. 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.

For lunch in Nájera you can check out the Meraki Gastrobar, Mesón Jamonero or La Mercería Restaurante. Or if you are up for something a bit more upscale today, then reserve a table at Venta Moncalvillo, 2 Michelin stars and 2 Repsol suns, plus one Verde star from Michelin for 2025, about 20-minutes away in Daroca de Rioja.

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, as well as 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.

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, 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.

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.

Bodega Real de Nájera, SC

Originally 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. They produce 7 wines including a 100% Garnacha Crianza aged in French and American oak for 14 months.

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.

Badarán

The small village of Badarán, with 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. Badarán 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 also a weekly market on Fridays at the Plaza Conde. While there be sure to visit Almazara Villasante to pick up some of their excellent olive oils.

For lunch in Badarán there is Restaurante Comercio, La Taberna, Cantinflas 2 and the Mesón Conde de Badarán.

Bodegas Pedro Martinez 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.

The winery, at Calle Jose García, 20, is now in the hands of Angela Martínez Alesanco and is open daily for guided tours and tastings from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and in the afternoon 4:00 to 7:00 pm for 8 people maximum per group. Closed in the afternoons in August. Reservations are not required, but you can contact them online, email them at info@bodegasmartinezalesanco.com, call (+34) 941 367 075 or message them at (+34) 686 024 185.

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, the 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.

The bodega is open all year for visits on Saturdays at 10:30 am. The 2 hour visits, for a maximum of 24 people, 24€ for adults, 6€ for children up to 17 years old and include a tasting of 4 wines. Private tours in English are also available. There is also a restaurant that is open daily from 1:00 to 4:30 pm for lunch for a minimum of 10 people. Picnic lunches are, including a visit to the winery, are available Monday-Friday during the Spring, Summer and Fall, depending on the weather. 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.

Bodegas Jairos

Three family organically cultivated vineyards of just under one hectare allows winemaker/journalist Jairo Morga Manzanares to produce small batches of "garage" wine like he did with his grandfather before 1988. He took over the vineyards in 2006. They became certified organic in 2015. The 2022 vintage marked the debut of his own small winery in Badarán. A member of Asociación Menudas Bodegas de Rioja.

Visits to the winer and vineyards are 20€/person and includes a bottle of wine. Call (+34) 606 997 672 to arrange a tour and tasting.

Bodegas Rulei

Adrián Moreno Llorente, architect and winemaker, has been producing wines from two family vineyards since 2011, following in his father's footsteps. The vineyards are a unique, century-old Garnacha vineyard in Badarán, and Viña Barracallo, a 40-year-old vineyard in Castañares de Rioja. The name RULEI comes from a medieval legend, a ruby that was in the crown of the Virgin of the Monastery of Santa María la Real in Nájera. Known as the "Black Prince's Ruby", which since 1838 is the center piece of the Imperial Crown of the British State, forged for Queen Victoria. The winery was listed as one of the Top 10 Spanish fine wines of 2021 by Sarah Jane Evans MW and is another member of the Asociación Menudas Bodegas de Rioja.

You can contact Adrián online, email him at bodega@rulei.es or call (+34) 679 266 837 for additional information, or to request a tour and tasting.

Cárdenas

Around the small village of Cárdenas in the Alto Najerilla Valley, dating from the 10th-century, is where you will find fields for hunting partridge, rabbit and hare and fresh trout from the Cárdenas river. The Alto Najerilla Valley, located at the foot of the Sierra de la Demanda and crowned by the San Lorenzo peak at an elevation of 2,200 meters and is one of the Rioja's best-kept secrets. Climate change and rising average temperatures have driven a change in the vineyards above 600 meters.

Viñedos El Pacto

Here is where you will find the roots of centuries-old vines contain the essence of Rioja's freshest Garnacha, Valdechuecas, from a plot of 0.875 hectares (2.16 acres) with 4,000 old vines grown between 595 and 620 meters. The family has a second winery, El Pacto de la Sonsierra, with vineyards in Baños de Ebro, Villabuena de Álava, Navaridas, and San Vicente de la Sonsierra, for a total of 27 plots of old organic vines. Viñedos El Pacto is a return to the origins with a clear goal in mind: to prevent true village wines from becoming extinct. A handful of old vines, unscathed by the industrialization maelstrom, have preserved the value of small-scale, manual labor, and respect for natural cycles. This pact of gratitude and continuity is born in the heart of Rioja, in the Sonsierra and the Alto Najerilla, uniting past and present to ensure the future.

You can contact them at comunicacion@vintae.com by email or through [Vintae](#) in Logroño.

Bodegas Gama

This family winery, completely updated and reopened in 2011 and is the smallest winery in the Rioja. It's located on the eastern edge of the village and produces Garnacha from their 80+ year old bush-trained vines planted by the grandfather. The winery is named for its owners, Antonio García and Carlos Manzanares. The winery consists of three floors; the basement where the wine is made, the first floor which is the tasting and meeting area and finally, the second floor, where the storage and bottling area is located. They are a member of the [Asociación Menudas Bodegas de Rioja](#).

Visits to this unique small winery at Calle Mayor, 33, in Cárdenas, are available by calling/Whatsapp José at (+34) 678 917 234 or Lorea at (+34) 606 813 279, or email contacto@octogenarius.es.

Cordovín

The tiny hamlet of Cordovín, 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 patron 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. For lunch in the area you should head to Badarán.

Bodegas 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 the Monasteries 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 Cordovin area with an average age of 30 years. Their 2020 *Liberatus La Aguzadera Garnacha* is a limited bottling of only 855 bottles.

Paired tastings are available by appointment only on Saturdays from 11:00 am until 2:00 pm and included paired tastings and a tour of the vineyards. Call (+34) 941 367 061 or email info@bodegascesardelrio.com for additional information or to request a tour and tasting.

Bodegas Trodos Quattro

This 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 who were passionate about the world of wine had 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 2015 *Trodos IV Vendimia Seleccionada*, limited edition (6000), of 100% Tempranillo, is aged for 27 months in French and American oak in a centuries-old cellar.

Tim Atkins rated the 2015 '*Trodos IV*' *Vendimia Seleccionada*, 100% Tempranillo, 89 points. It also received a Gold Medal at the International Bacchus 2021.

Visits to the winery are available by reservations only by contacting them online, by calling (+34) 941 367 283 / 610 262 182 or emailing 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 aged in oak barrels and the harvest is 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.

Bodega Reditus

This is a project created by two brothers who, after a long journey away from home, decided to return to their roots and revive the family winery with the help of Flavia Elias, the project's winemaker.

You can contact them online, by email reditus@reditusbodega.com for additional information.

Bodegas Y Viñedos Valcuerna

After more than five generations of winegrowers working the land, the Arturo Benés family is currently undertaking a project to capture the unique character and yield of their 40 plus hectares of century-old vineyards, with limited production. They are a member of Viticultores Independientes en Rioja.

Visits to the winery at Calle Valdecañas 20, are “à la carte”. You can contact Alexia Gómez, viticulturist, at bodega@bodegasvalcuerna.com, or call (+34) 650 577 737 to arrange a tour and tasting.

Arenzana de Abajo

Another small farming village, this one dating from the year 1020, Arenzana de Abajo has less than 300 inhabitants but 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, opened in 1981, 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 hold 2,500 oak barrels.

You can email najerilla@bodegasnajerilla.es for additional information, or call them at (+34) 941 362 783.

Baños de Río Tobía-Bañuelos

This 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 Baños de Río Tobía-Bañuelos 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. Next year will mark the 52nd Festival del Chorizo, which begins the Sunday before San Mateo. Market day is every Wednesday.

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 *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 *Horola MIL*, 100% Tempranillo, was aged for 12 months in 225-liter French Oak and finished with 6 months in the bottle. They are member of the Asociación Menudas Bodegas de Rioja.

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, or email javier@bodegashorola.com. 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 and worked at 13 wineries in Spain, from north to south, after making wine in Chile and traveling the world to study winemaking. His small winery sits on 5 hectares of vineyards just to the north of the village. The remaining 24 hectares are at an altitude of between 565 and 750 meters above sea level. Here 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. He is a member of the Bodegas Familiares de Rioja.

Contact Juan Carlos at (+34) 941 232 160 / 639 216 011, or email him at juancarlosanacha@yahoo.es for information or to arrange a unique tour and tasting with the winemaker himself.



Bodegas Marqués de Murrieta

The Iregua Valley

The area of Logroño and Villamediana de Iregua calls to mind the splendid past of what was once 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 Iregua valley, which runs south from the Ebro river to the village of Nalda, into two separate wine regions. The valley, 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, is home to some important wineries, including the legendary Marqués de Murrieta and Bodegas del Marqués de Vargas.

If you plan on being in the area around lunchtime, we highly recommend the Echapresto brothers Venta Moncalvillo in Daroca de Rioja, now with two Michelin stars to match its two Repsol suns. It was also awarded one Verde Michelin star in 2024 and is about a 10-minute drive southwest the village of Entrena on the

LR-341. The Loro sisters restaurant [El Arriero](#), recommended in the Repsol Guide, is another great option you will find in the hamlet of Sorzano, not far from Albelda de Iregua. You also have the option of having lunch at [Restaurante Abantos](#) at the Sojuela Golf Club. Another top option with two Repsol suns and recommended in the Michelin Guide is [Restaurante Alameda](#) in Fuenmayor at Plaza Felix Azpilicueta 1.

For lunch in Albelda de Iregua you can try [La Tapiada](#), in a residential area near the N-111. To the east of Albelda de Iregua you'll find [Restaurante Casa Tila](#) in the village of Clavijo, a Repsol Solete. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday. The [Castillo de Clavijo](#) overlooks the village. Open for lunch only. Between Albelda de Iregua and Nalda you'll find Óscar Palacios' [Asador Sidrería Palacios](#) for red meat lovers. [Restaurante El Figón de Duque](#) is in nearby Navarrete. Closed Monday and Tuesday. Recommend in the MACARFI Guide.

Or return to Logroño for lunch at chef Ramón Piñeiro's [La Cocina de Ramón](#), Calle Portales 30. It has one Repsol sun and a Michelin Bib Gourmand. Chef José Félix Rodríguez's [La Galería](#), one Repsol sun in 2024, is at Calle Saturnino Ulargui, 5. Or you can try [Restaurante Juan Carlos Ferrando](#), Calle María Teresa Gil de Gárate 7, bajo, where chef Juan Carlos picked up his first Repsol sun in 2021 and is recommended in the Michelin Guide for 2024.

Wineries of interest

Logroño

[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. In July 2025 Guía Peñín awarded the *2012 Castillo Ygay Gran Reserva* 100 points,

making it one of only 8 wines to receive 100 points for 2026, two of which are in the Rioja.

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 most of August. You can request a visit by emailing visits@marquesdemurrieta.com, or call (+34) 941 271 380, or [book your visit online](#). Standard visits and tasting are 70€ (3 wines) and 215€ (6 wines). The Wine Bar (9€) is open Monday to Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm, reservations 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 winery is normally open Monday to 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. You can [request a visit online](#), call (+34) 941 261 401, or email info@marquesdevargas.com.

Alberite

Your first stop heading south of Logroño on the east side of the Iregua Valley, in the heart of the Rioja will be the farming village of Alberite, from the Arabic word Al-bareid, filled with mansions and palaces. They celebrate their most important festival, the Fiestas de Nuestra Señora de La Antigua, on September 8. The festival covers several days.

For lunch you can try La Moncloa, a few minutes away at Calle Bodegas, 96, in Villamediana de Iregua.

Bodegas Castillo Clavijo

The winery, which opened in 2000 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 some 500 local wine growers, producing several brands, including El Guardian and [Alegro](#).

Visits to the winery are available by reservation. Call (+34) 941 436 702 or email info@castilloclavijo.com for additional information.

Victor Ausejo Viticultor

What began as a small micro project of artisan wines arose with the idea of making wine in Alberite, a municipality where people have traditionally dedicated themselves to viticulture but not to making their own wines, only for family consumption. The vineyards are located within a 10 km radius of the winery in the Iregua Valley area. The micro winery is located at Calle del Pintor Moreda, 32, in Alberite, in a garage.

Email info@victorauszejoviticultor.com or call (+34) 665 984 613 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](#), 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 Vinícola Real

Founded in 1989 by Miguel Ángel Rodríguez, the spectacular family winery has an underground cellar measuring nearly 800 meters long carved out of the mountain. The 200 Monges Wine Hotel, the 18 room Casa del Cofrade, is the first hotel in La Rioja intergraded into a winery. There is also a restaurant and wine bar. With views to the mountains and valley, the hotel/winery you can use as a base to tour the immediate area.

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 to 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@vinicolareal200mongeshotel.com to arrange a tour and tasting.

Entrena

A 15-minute drive from Albelda de Iregua will put you in the hilltop village of Entrena at the foot of the Sierra del Moncalvillo, or 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, which 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

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

There are regular visits on Saturdays and Sundays at 11:30 am with a tasting of two wines, or on Fridays and Saturdays you can take a tour with the winemaker, with a tasting of two wines. Special visits to the winery mix with gastronomy, art and culture. The Tierra Restaurant is available for lunch, offering a tasting menu for 75€. Request your visit [online](#), email welcome@fincadelosarandinos.com, or call (+34) 941 446 126.

Ventosa

This small village, with some 200 inhabitants, lies 17 km south of Logroño, in foothills of the Sierra de Moncalvillo, and dates from the 11th-century. The festival of la Virgen Blanca takes place the first weekend of July with dancers. After the dance, there is a bacalada, a Riojan-style cod tasting. In late August there is a cultural week and trade market, Mercado del Trato. The patron saint is celebrated on 28 November. The 16th-century Iglesia parroquial de San Saturnino is located at the top of the village and is noted for its beautiful Gothic doorway.

Bodegas Alvia

You'll find the "Boutique Winery" located on the Camino de Santiago, 593 km from Santiago de Compostela. Their 30 hectares of vineyards of Tempranillo, Graciano Garnacha, Viura and Malvasia are located in Leza, Labastida, San Vicente de la Sonsierra and Rivas of Tereso, in high areas influenced by an Atlantic climate. They are a member of the Independent Family Wineries of the Rioja.

The winery is open for 1 hour guided tours Monday to Friday from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm and in the afternoon from 3:00 to 6:00 pm. E-mail info@bodegasalvia.es or call (+34) 941 441 917 to arrange a tour and tasting.

Nalda

The village, with its medieval castle, Castillo de Nalda, sits at the foot of the Moncalvillo Mountain surrounded by spectacular scenery some 4 kms south of Albelda de Iregua on the LR-255. Restoration of the castle began in 2012 and continues today. The "Fiesta del Ciruelo en Flor" (Festival of the Plum Blossom) is normally celebrated Sunday in April, while the Claudia Plum Festival is celebrated on the first Sunday in August. In December they celebrate “La Fiesta de la Ciruela Pasa en Nalda”, the annual Prune Festival, “la Jornada de la Ciruela Pasa”, a gastronomic and cultural celebration.

Bodegas y viñedos 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 is managed by the 2nd and 3rd generations after his premature death. The winemaker is Ricardo Cantera.

The winery is now associated with C.V.N.E., Compañía Vinícola del Norte de España.

Bodegas Proelio - Palacios Vinos de Finca

Established in 1999, the modern winery at Camino Nalda a Viguera, 46, in Nalda, is open Monday to Saturday for tours and tastings. It is part of the group that includes Trus (Ribera del Duero) and Nivarius (Rioja), which only produces white wines.

Tours begin at 29€/person. There is also a wine bar, open Wednesday to Sunday at 11:30 am and Friday evenings from 8:00 to 11:00 pm. You can book your visit online, call (+34) 608 740 768 or email visitas@palaciosvinosdefinca.com.

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