

BODEGAS MUGA

Rioja, Spain



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Bodegas Muga is one of Rioja's first growths, and the Muga family is unanimously considered one of Spain's most important winemaking families. The winery's legendary reputation stems from its adherence to a strict philosophy that balances tradition with attention to detail and commitment to quality of the highest order. Few producers in the world fashion wines that have such a sense of tradition and place as Muga's, and the wines have a unique and inimitable profile. While the family has viticultural roots in northwestern Rioja dating back to the 16th century, Bodegas Muga was founded under the name "Claretes Muga" in 1932 by Isaac Muga and Aurora Cano. The winery's original name referred to their first wine - a traditional Rioja Clarete, or Rosé. At the time, the family was in the negociant business of buying, blending, aging, and selling wine in the Basque country. For the first three decades of the company's history, the family focused on producing Rosé and young red wine. In the early 1960's the family moved to the current cellars in El Barrio de la Estación and began focusing on the production of Reservas and Gran Reservas. The Muga family still owns the winery, and the family controls every aspect of its operation. From a viticultural and enological perspective, Muga is one of the most traditional wineries in the world and one of the most artisanal in Rioja. The family owns and cultivates an impressive 400 hectare holding of vineyards, primarily located in three quality subzones of Rioja - the foothills of the Montes Obarenes, the Sonsierra Riojana, and the Alta Najerilla. This estate holding accounts for 70% of the winery's production, a very high percentage in a region where 65,000 hectares are divided between 16,000 individual landowners. Bodegas Muga also pioneered the concept of own-coopered barrels and vats in Spain. They were the first winery in Spain to operate an in-house cooperage, and to this day, are the only winery in Spain to employ a master cooper and three in-house barrel makers. They are also the only winery in Spain that builds not only their own barrels, but also their own vats for fermentation and aging. The Mugas travel in the late fall and early winter to France and elsewhere to purchase oak trees for the year. The trees are processed into staves on site, transported to the winery, and seasoned at the winery's facilities in Rioja for a minimum of three years (and up to five for their more premium barrels) before being produced into barrels. The winery's barrel room is enormous, and Muga employs a team of six just for barrel management and manual rackings. The racking process is carried out by gravity to maintain the integrity of the wine, during which the wine is inspected by candlelight to evaluate the clarity and quantity of sediment in the



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wine. During their extended aging, the wines are filtered and clarified naturally without harsh pumps and filters that could otherwise strip the wine of its character. All of the winery's red wines are protein fined with freshly cracked egg whites in the winery's own-produced vats. Typically, Muga goes above and beyond Rioja's minimum aging requirements. In the late 90's, Manuel & Isaac Muga (the second generation who in many ways, took Muga to the status it enjoys today) were inspired by the wines they enjoyed drinking from Bordeaux to revolutionize and release two new wines following the production methods of the classic vin de garde of Bordeaux. Through carefully selecting old vineyard sites of Tempranillo and a vine-by-vine selection of the family's best Graciano plants, the family began the production of two of Rioja's modern classics - Torre Muga & Aro.

<https://www.bodegasmuga.com/en/>

