

Family Values Provide Spanish Wine Values



Founded in 1982, when Julian Murua Entrena revived his father, Jose Murua's winery, which dates back to 1926 in the heart of the Rioja Alavesa (one of the three sub-regions that make up Spain's Rioja appellation). The cellars are in the quaint, historic village of Elciego, which is renowned for being surrounded by some of the best "terroir" in Rioja. The name "Muriel" comes from the combination of the family name, Murua, and the name of the town itself, Elciego.

Today, Julian and his son, Javier, run the winery with the mission to meld the long-held winemaking traditions of the region with new technologies and techniques in order to make wines that express the "best qualities" of the grapes coming from these fertile Riojan vineyards. Like most of red wines in the region, all Bodegas Muriel wines are 100% Tempranillo, the "signature" grape of the region. Due to the special micro-climate of the region, there is a triple influence from the Mediterranean, Continental and Atlantic climates, which help the vines produce very aromatic and elegant wines, whose main characteristic is the potential to age.

The **2012 Bodegas Muriel Blanco** is a selection of Viura grapes – a white wine varietal, from 30+ year old vineyards in the Rioja Alta and the Rioja Alavesa regions. Fermentation takes place in temperature controlled stainless steel vats in order to enhance the maximum aromatic freshness in the wine. Clean and bright with intense aromas of green apple and lime peel on the nose and in the mouth. It has balanced acidity, with a pleasant and persistent finish. Matches well with lighter seafood, such as halibut and shellfish dishes. **\$12**

The **2012 Real Compania Garnacha** is an entry level wine by the Murua family, but it provides a lot of fun for the money. The grapes for this wine come from 20 to 50 year old vines planted in Central Spain. This Garnacha is very fruity and bright, with an aromatic intensity that includes a wide variety of bright red fruit, including cherries, strawberries and raspberries. The nose follows through to the palate, where a touch of red licorice adds complexity to the soft and fruity finish. Great with rice casserole dishes and red-sauced pastas. **\$10**

The **2009 Bodegas Muriel Crianza** is a Tempranillo wine that is matured for one year in very large (225 liter) American oak barrels. The aroma of vanilla, coconut, roasted coffee combine with notes of ripe red berries and dark licorice on the elegant palate. The medium-bodied finish is lush and clean. It would match well with small appetizers – i.e. tapas – and hard cheeses. **\$16**

The **2008 Bodegas Muriel Reserva** is a fantastic value in a premium red wine. Hand selected, Tempranillo grapes come from vineyards with an average age of 40 years in Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Alta. The wine is aged in American and French oak barrels for 24 months and further bottle ageing for two more years prior to release. It has good intensity and balanced vanilla notes from the time in oak. The palate boasts mature red fruits along with hints of liquorice and spice on a round, velvety and elegant frame and sport a very long, satisfying finish. Ideal with a variety of grilled and roasted meats. **\$20**

The **2004 Bodegas Muriel Gran Reserva** is made with Tempranillo grapes that come from vineyards in the heart of the Rioja Alavesa and from selected areas of Rioja Alta regions. The wine is aged for 30 months in large capacity American and French oak barrels and then spends another three years before it is released to the market. This mature wine boasts an aromatic nose with scents vanilla, leather and baking spices. In the mouth, ripe fruit flavors of black cherry dominate the front of the palate while subtle notes of roasted coffee, caramel and tobacco glide over the tongue on a smooth and silky frame. This is a great classic Rioja which would pair beautifully with lamb chops or game. **\$30**