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## Wine Notes

These wine notes were created on 11-May-2021.

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### Muga Rosado Rioja 2019

<b>Product Code</b>	SP15601	<b>Dominant Grape</b>	Grenache/Garnacha
<b>Product Type</b>	Rose Wine	<b>Drink Dates</b>	2020 to 2021
<b>Origin</b>	Rioja	<b>Alcohol Level</b>	13.5%
<b>Style</b>	2 (of 9): Dry	<b>Closure type</b>	Cork, natural
<b>Vintage</b>	2019	<b>Price £</b>	No longer for sale

**Producer :** Muga - See next page.




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### Producer : Muga

Muga, the most traditional of Rioja's bodegas, with not a stainless steel tank in sight, is based in the old railway quarter of Haro, capital of Rioja Alta. Founded in 1932 by Isaac Muga Martínez and his wife Auro Caño, both from winemaking families, it is run today by their three sons.

Winemaker Jorge Muga leads from the front with his meticulous attention to detail in all areas of production. The cellars not only include the usual fermentation and ageing rooms but also an in-house cooperage which makes the barrels, from a variety of oak sources, which are so key to the Muga style. At any given time, there are some 17 thousand barrels here, of which around 60% are French – mainly Allier and Tronçais – while the rest are made from American oak shipped from Kentucky and Ohio. Whatever its origins, it is all air-dried here for two years before being profiled, compressed, shaped and toasted by the Muga coopering team.

Visiting tastebuds will limber up, in preparation for the bodega's classic reds, with a refreshing modern white or mouth-watering *rosado*. Muga Blanco is a creamy 90% viura with 10% malvasia, three months in Allier barrels giving just a subtle dash of oak. Muga Rosado, harvested from specific plots is a *saigné* blend of grenache, viura and tempranillo – is fermented in small wooden vats.

The reds are overwhelmingly tempranillo-based, deriving additional complexity from smaller amounts of garnacha, mazuelo (aka carignan) and graciano to complete the house style. Even a fairly straightforward *crianza* from Muga can take 3 years to evolve and can easily last for a decade. *Reserva* wines and *Reserva Selección Especial*, made from roughly similar blends of around 75% tempranillo, with garnacha, graciano and, mazuelo but using older vines and longer ageing for the latter, display classic mellow rounded characters but retain a rich fruit quality and structure. They hit their stride in 4-5 years and can last for twenty,

The Gran Reserva, Prado Enea, with around 80% tempranillo is an impressive, traditionally-framed Rioja which is understated yet intensely flavoured from its extended period of cask ageing, and three years in bottle. Approachable at ten years of age it lasts, says Juan Muga, grandson of the founder, "forever".

Muga also produces two high-profile wines in the Alta Expression category – a new-wave interpretation of Rioja ("at its highest expression") made in a glossy, non-traditional style with no regard for the usual rules of engagement on, for example, ageing. This development, as topical in Rioja as the outbreak of cutting-edge, architect-designed winery buildings, is a move to secure the attention of American *über*-critics hitherto unmoved by the region's classic offerings and to use the resultant "Parker Points" and Wine Spectator world rankings to raise the profile of the traditional wines in the USA. Torre de Muga, of which 50,000 bottles are made has 75% tempranillo with mazuelo and graciano in support, and two years in wood, of which 18 months are Allier barrels, followed by a year in bottle.



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Áro Muga is the result of draconian selection, from very old vines, including 30% graciano, also aged for 24 months in barrel, 18 of them in new Tronçais barriques, and at least 12 months in bottle. Only 5000 bottles are made. Not surprisingly, it carries a hefty price tag, is half the battle in this particular war.

