



Latest news from DOCa Rioja



Saber quién eres. **RIOJA**



In a process of continuous improvement, DOCa Rioja is enriching its current offer and incorporates new indications alongside the traditional barrel ageing categories, its main bulwark.

Coinciding with the last period of the Rioja 2005-2020 Strategic Plan, the region is entering a new era in **search of value arguments** to consolidate and reinforce its leading position in Spain and as a world-class quality wine region.

A review of the definitions of the traditional Reserva and Gran Reserva categories, new whites and rosés and the push provided by **new geographical indications**, initiatives that are major contributors to continuous qualitative improvement while reconciling the interests of operators in valorising their wines and those of consumers in having a more precise identification on the label that reflects the complex reality of today's Rioja.

1. 1. *First news*

Rioja promoted the definition of the traditional 'Crianza', 'Reserva' and 'Gran Reserva' categories in 1979. Since then, its back labels and seals have certified ageing processes together with the vintage year.

2. 2. *The revolution continues:*

'Vino de Zona'

Designation Regulations recognise the existence of three sub-areas or sub-zones: Rioja Alavesa, Rioja Alta and Rioja Baja. Under the new 'zona' name, the Control Board has updated the regulations and visibility in wine labels of this indication which was implemented in 1998.

'Vino de Municipio'

As in the case of wines from a specific zone, the right to use the name of the town in the label has been recognised for almost 20 years; more precisely, since 1999. The new regulation will provide more visibility to this geographical indication.

'Viñedo Singular'

The new 'Viñedo Singular' geographical indication designates wines from particular vineyards or estates and is directly linked to the terroir, which it aims to identify and valorise on the label, tied to the quality requirement that they be excellent wines.

'Espumoso de calidad de Rioja'

The DOCa Rioja is going to include white and rosé sparkling wines with a view to extending the region's portfolio with a high quality product.

1. First news.

The current categories are the key to the success of Rioja. Today, Rioja is immersed in a process of continuous improvement, reviewing its definitions and enriching its current offer with new geographical indications. The goal is to valorise the unique origin of the terroir, to recognise its diversity and to continue establishing qualitative requirements that assure the quality of its wines.

Reservas and Gran Reservas

The first milestone was the **review of the definitions of the traditional Reserva and Gran Reserva categories**, with new requirements that came into force in July 2017 and will be enforceable from 1 January 2019. **Red wines in the Reserva category now have a mandatory requirement of at least six months' bottle ageing before marketing. This is how the category is now defined: "ageing in oak barrels and in the bottle for a total period of at least thirty-six months, with a minimum twelve months' barrel ageing, followed and complemented by a minimum six months in the bottle."**

Reds in the **Gran Reserva** category are to be aged a minimum of five years between barrels and the bottle as before (two years at least in each), allowing the winemaker to choose between both containers to meet the remaining year required. The new definition reads as follows: ***“ageing in oak barrels and in the bottle for a total period of at least sixty months, with a minimum twenty-four months’ barrel ageing, followed and complemented by a minimum twenty-four months in the bottle.”***

News in whites and rosés

Rosé wines have been reviewed with regard to **colour intensity** with the aim of offering the wine industry the opportunity to cover a **greater spectrum** of current market demand with innovative products. The new Designation Specifications set out that “certified rosé wines should have a colour intensity between 0.1 (formerly 0.2) and 1.8 AU/cm, resulting from the sum of parameters A420 + A520 + A620.”

2.2. The revolution continues:

New geographical indications to valorise the terroir and recognise its diversity.

The DOCa Rioja has created the new geographical indication 'Viñedo Singular' to identify the origin of wines from a specific place and has updated the regulation of the indications of wines from a particular 'zona' (zone) and 'municipio' (municipality) or 'pueblo' (village) with the objective of giving greater visibility in the labelling to these minor geographical entities.

The new geographical indications respect and complement the **traditional and successful range of wines made by blending** and they come to join the **traditional ageing categories** that identify and give prestige to Rioja wines, offering consumers from all over the world an

unsurpassed sustained quality. They will undoubtedly contribute not only to valorise the terroir and recognise its diversity, but also to increase the prestige of the wine region and enrich its goodwill.



The new organisation of wines sets specific requirements to guarantee the quality of the wines and the veracity of the indications on labels, as required by Regulations.

In order to pilot the implementation of these changes and promote their development, a specific Commission has been set up within the Control Board so these wines and their particular traits can be showcased and properly publicised.

2.1. 'Vino de Zona'

Rioja Regulations, first set up in 1925 at the request of the *Asociación General de Vitivinicultores de la Rioja*, which allowed the use of a seal proving the legitimate origin of wines from the Rioja region, required a board to determine the territory that could use the collective brand and manage the registration of such brand. The 1976 Regulations listed all the municipalities in Rioja and recognised a subdivision into three areas: Rioja Alavesa, Rioja Alta and Rioja Baja.

Denominación de Origen Calificada Rioja

VINO DE ZONA / REQUIREMENTS

1. Grapes coming exclusively from the zone.
2. Vinification, ageing and bottling within the zone.

EXCEPTION: Max. 15% municipal land bordering the zone and accrediting having at least 10 years of exclusive disposal.

DOCUMENTARY CONTROL

1. Prior communication to CB
2. Statement of wine made
3. Specific rating
4. Differentiated wine movement
5. Back label with specific code

PHYSICAL CONTROL

1. Traceability
2. Specific wine stocks
3. Specific rating verification
4. Control of wine movements
5. Control of labelling and use of back labels
6. Control of batches of approved wine

RIGHT TO USE 'VINO DE ZONA'

The current Designation Specifications describe it in the following way: *"The zone for production and ageing is constituted by the lands located in the municipalities mentioned below, which constitute the sub-areas designated as 'Rioja Alta', 'Rioja Baja' and 'Rioja Alavesa'(...) with marked viticultural and oenological differences: in Rioja Alavesa an Atlantic climate dominates, with mainly clay-limestone soils and vines planted in small, terraced plots; Rioja Alta also has an Atlantic climate, while the soils are clay-limestone, ferrous clay and alluvial; and Rioja Baja has a dry, warm climate influenced by the Mediterranean, with mainly ferrous clay and alluvial soils. The following table summarizes the link between the climate and soil characteristics of the area and the characteristics of the wine:"*

In 1998, the Control Board defined a traceability procedure that allowed the labels to bear the names Rioja Alta, Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Baja, **now called 'zones'** instead of 'sub-areas', a change of name that best expresses the philosophy of what Rioja wants to convey and also coincides with the change of name of Rioja Baja to **Rioja Oriental** or Eastern Rioja. Since then, more than a hundred wineries have been using the sub-area indication on labels. These are mostly small winegrower wineries in Rioja Alavesa, with their wines protected by the new regulations starting with the 2017 vintage. A total of 143 wineries in Rioja Alavesa, 31 in Rioja Alta and 2 in Rioja Oriental have requested the use of the zone indication.

Although the main requirement to use the zone indication on the label is that the grapes used to make it come exclusively from that particular zone, the regulations do envisage growers with vineyards in borderline areas, and **allow for up to 15% of grapes** on land bordering the zone in question. This is in line with EU regulations. The requirement will be a long-standing link to the vineyard of no less than 10 years, which will have to be a permanent project in order to prevent speculation. It is also required that the vinification and ageing of the wine be carried out within the zone mentioned on the label.

Another of the most important new aspects with respect to the previous regulations is the **increase in size** for representing the zones on the labels, which up to now was limited to a maximum of two-thirds of the size of the word 'Rioja'.

From now on, the zone indications can be represented on **equal terms**, the only requirement being that they cannot stand out more than the name of the wine region and that they appear under 'Denominación de Origen Calificada Rioja.' The 'Vinos de Zona' will also be differentiated on back labels with specific codes.

As regards the controls carried out by the Control Board to guarantee the traceability of the wine labelled with the name of the zone of origin, the winery has to notify the Control Board in advance of its intention, the wine has to be certified separately and checked later. Volumes and movements will also be monitored.



2.2. 'Vino de Municipio'

As indicated in the DOCa Rioja Designation Specifications, the protected geographical area is delimited: *"With few modifications in the last thirty years, the region has 144 municipalities (118 in La Rioja, 18 in Álava and 8 in Navarre) where the Control Board deems that there is land suitable for growing grapes of the required quality."*

Denominación de Origen Calificada Rioja

VINO DE MUNICIPIO / REQUIREMENTS

1. Grapes coming exclusively from the municipality.
2. Vinification, ageing and bottling within the municipality.

EXCEPTION: Max. 15% municipal land bordering the municipality and accrediting having at least 10 years of exclusive disposal.

DOCUMENTARY CONTROL

1. Prior communication to CB
2. Statement of wine made
3. Specific rating
4. Differentiated wine movement
5. Back label with specific code

PHYSICAL CONTROL

1. Traceability
2. Specific wine stocks
3. Specific rating verification
4. Control of wine movements
5. Control of labelling and use of back labels

DERECHO AL USO “VINO DE MUNICIPIO”

The 1998 regulation that allowed the names of the **sub-areas** to be included on the labels was extended in 1999 to the use of the name of municipalities that are part of the production and ageing area of the DOCa Rioja. The same requirements and conditions established in the specific control system for wines mentioning a specific sub-area on the label applied. However, during the 18 years that have elapsed since then, the notion of wines from a specific municipality has not been developed further until now, in response to demands both from producers and the market. In fact, the first wines with this indication on their labels have already appeared on the market with the last vintage 2017.

As in the case of wine from a particular zone, the right to use the name of the municipality on the label requires that the grapes used come exclusively from that **municipality** and that vinification and ageing also take place within its borders. There is also an exception of up to 15% of grapes for growers who have adjacent vineyards in **bordering municipalities although they must again demonstrate links with the vineyard dating back at least ten years.**

The Control Board will have to carry out the appropriate checks before the name of the municipality can be used on the label. The said verification shall include a favourable report, signed by the Control Body of the Board, which verifies compliance with the different requirements established to pass both documentary controls and physical controls, all identical to those required for the ‘vino de zona’ (prior notification by the winery to the Control Board, separate rating and subsequent verification, traceability, specific capacity and control of all movements, etc.). In the 2017-2018 season, there have been a total of 37 wineries that have requested permission to use this indication for a total of 17 municipalities.

The label must include the words “VINO DE” before to the name of the municipality under the term “Denominación de Origen Calificada”, possibly mentioning the zone where the municipality is, and the text size, thickness and colour may not be greater than that used for the word ‘RIOJA’. In any case, the name of the municipality cannot stand out more than the name ‘RIOJA’ on the label. If the zone is also mentioned on the label, the name

of the municipality should appear under it. Wineries must submit a statement of exclusive use of the brands used in the label that include the name of a municipality or make the labels for that particular municipality different in order to avoid confusion.



2.3. 'Viñedo Singular'

The new geographical indication 'Viñedo Singular' is a geographical entity of **smaller in size** than the municipality, located within the protected territory of the Denominación de Origen Calificada Rioja and identified with a name. It consists of a location (it can comprise a single cadastral plot or several different ones) with **agro-geological and climatological characteristics that distinguish it** from others in the area, from which wines with unique traits and qualities are obtained, their uniformity and characteristics being justified by a technical report that will be submitted to the DOCa Rioja Control Board.

The new 'Viñedo Singular' indication is directly **linked to the terroir**, which it aims to identify and valorise **on the label**. The new mention seeks to set specific vineyards apart from their surroundings, with requirements in line with the Control Board **quality and authenticity** policy. The mention is to be included in the guarantee documents (back labels and seals) of the Rioja Wine categories (Young, Crianza, Reserva and Gran Reserva), which continue as basis for regulation and are reinforced by this additional information.

During the last years, winemakers' interest in in this type of wine has been evident. They have been increasingly featured by Rioja wineries and do have a long track record. In fact, some of the renowned, century-old brands are named after specific vineyards whence they came. The new regulations do not only **regulate** this ample offer that already exists in the market, but also regulate the **credibility** that the Control Board has for consumers in this certification.

Denominación de Origen Calificada Rioja

VIÑEDO SINGULAR / REQUIREMENTS

1. Grapes coming exclusively from a plot or plots that constitute the Viñedo Singular.
2. Vinification, ageing, storage and bottling within the same winery.
1. Minor geographical unit that can comprise a single or several cadastral plots.
2. Minimum age of the vineyard: 35 years.
3. Maximum production: 5.000 kg/ha for red varieties and 6.922 kg/ha for white varieties.
4. Maximum grape-to-wine ratio: 65%
5. Specific Grape Grower's Card.

GROWING PRACTICES

- 1- The Viñedo Singular must be balanced and have limited vigour. During the grape ripening stage, canopy growth should cease completely
2. Only a single tipping permitted.
- 3- Manual harvest.

DOCUMENTARY CONTROL

1. Before 30 June a statement of intention to make a Viñedo Singular wine.
2. Statement of amount of wine made.
3. Specific rating.
4. Differentiated wine movement.
5. Differentiated back label.

PHYSICAL CONTROL

1. Traceability.
2. Specific production controls in all vineyards from 1 July to harvest, production changes not being allowed later.
3. Canopy development controls.
4. Specific wine stocks
5. Specific rating verification
6. Control of wine movements.
7. Control of labels and use of back labels
8. Control of batches of approved wine Excellent rating.

To sum up, the **recognition of a place** as 'Viñedo Singular' needs to go through the following steps:

- **Technical report** according to the description guide of the climatic, agrogeological and viticultural characteristics approved by the Control Board.
- **Assessment Report** by Control Board
- The name of the "Viñedo Singular" should be **registered as a brand**, at least in the Spanish Patents and Trade Marks Office, by the natural or legal persons owning the plot or those in charge of vinifying the grapes in registered premises.
- Statement undertaking to make **exclusive use** of the brand for DOCa Rioja wines.
- Recognition by Ministerial Order to be published on the **BOE** official gazette as a Viñedo Singular Minor Geographical Entity.

RIGHT TO USE 'VIÑEDO SINGULAR'

One of the requirements of a Viñedo Singular in addition to defining its borders is that the grapevines be **no less than 35 years old**. The wine obtained from grapes from a Viñedo Singular will be vinified and bottled by natural or legal persons with winemaking and bottling facilities registered in their name within the DOCa Rioja, and prove they have the exclusive right to the production of the vineyard in question for a minimum uninterrupted period of **10 years**.

The growing practices in the 'Viñedo Singular' should focus on sustainability and care for the environment. It must be a **balanced vineyard of limited vigour**, in which only a single crop will be admitted, except for an exception expressly authorised by the Control Board, and canopy growth should cease completely during the grape ripening stage. **Yields** per hectare should be at least **20% lower** than those authorised for the whole of the D.O. and the maximum grape-to-wine ratio will be 65%. The **grape harvest is to be carried out by hand**, and notified to the Control Board on the starting date. The techniques used to transport and handle the grapes,

in pressing and controlling fermentation, and the oenological practices throughout the winemaking processes and ageing processes too, as the case may be, should seek to produce **wines of the highest quality**.

The wines will be subjected to a **double qualitative evaluation** the initial rating and another valuation prior to market launch and will require an **'Excellent'** mark in the sensory analysis carried out in accordance with the Technical Verification Instruction of the 'Viñedo Singular'.

The term 'Viñedo Singular' is to appear on the label under the registered trademark, and the text size, thickness and colour may not be greater than that used for the word 'Rioja'.

As of 31 December 2017, almost fifty owners had applied to the Control Board for recognition as 'Viñedo Singular' for a total of 111 plots, with a total surface area of 172.3 hectares. This is proof of the excellent feedback from the industry, which is going to be able to launch the first wines with this mention in late 2018.



2.4. 'Espumoso de Rioja'

Rioja is allowing, for the first time, production of quality white and rosé sparkling wines bearing the region's name, as an initiative to extend its portfolio.

The DOCa Rioja has adapted its regulations to take advantage of a business opportunity and include **quality white and rosé sparkling wines**. This complements the range of still wines traditionally protected by the Designation (reds, rosés and whites) with a quality product of renown, obtained employing traditional methods and limiting in sugar content (Brut, Extra Brut and Brut Nature). This new mention will be incorporated in the bottle **back labels and seals** issued by the Control Board and will be specifically reflected on the label as well.

The production of sparkling wines in Rioja is small but has a **history spanning well over a century** in some wineries, like CVNE and Bodegas Bilbaínas, which were joined in the second half of the twentieth century by Bodegas Muga, Bodegas Escudero, Bodegas Faustino and Bodegas Ondarre. Since the creation of the Cava Designation of Origin in 1972 it covered the sparkling wine production of these Rioja wineries. As of 31 December 2017, eight wineries had already submitted their request to make 'Espumoso de Rioja'.

All the **grape varieties** authorised by Rioja Regulations may be used to make 'Espumoso de Rioja' and, in the case of sparkling rosé wines, they must use at least 25% red grapes. The **vintage** application must be submitted prior to the beginning of harvest, which must be by hand and grape-to-wine ratio should be limited compared to that generally permitted.

Only healthy grapes can be employed in the vinification of quality sparkling wines having a minimum natural potential alcohol content of 9.5% vol. for both red grapes and white grapes. Red and white grapes should be delivered separately for each partial delivery or weighing

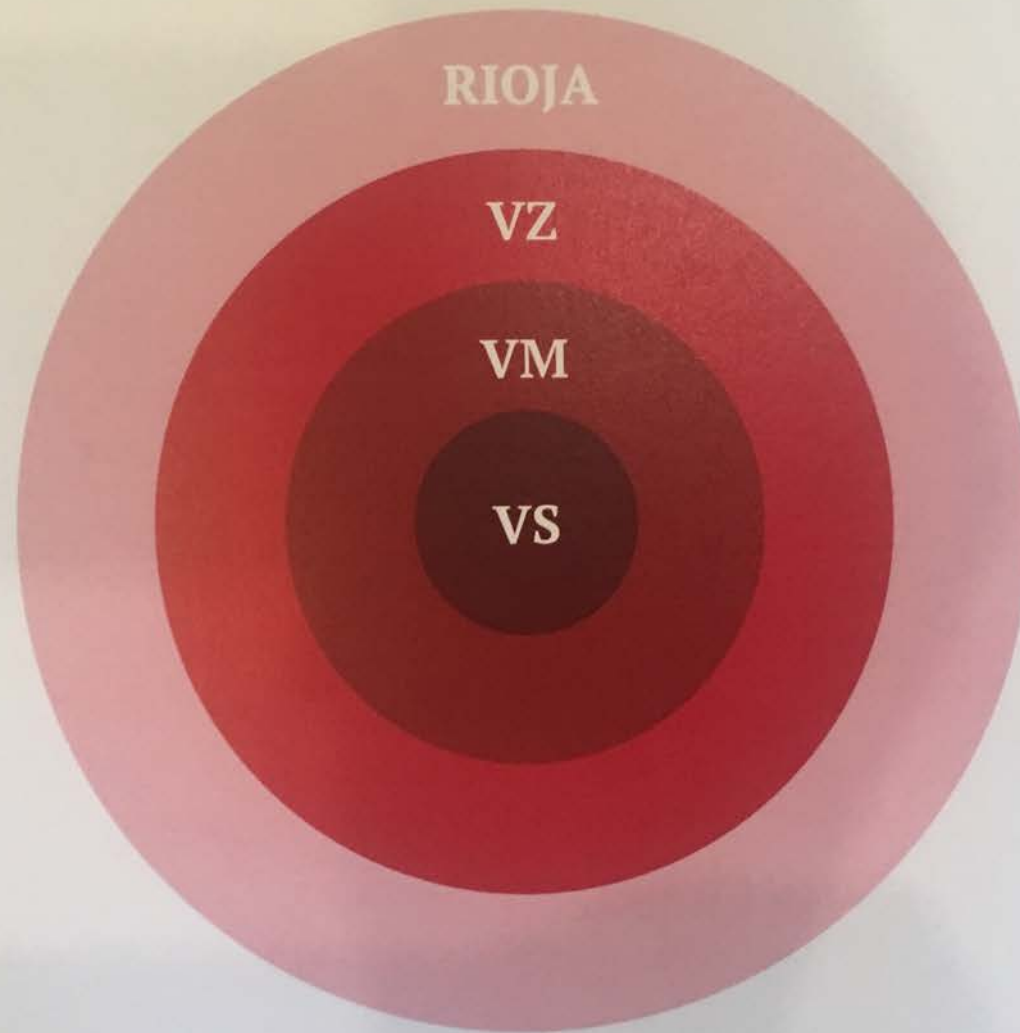
In summary, the ready-to-drink 'Espumoso de Rioja' must meet the following technical requirements:

- Minimum acquired alcohol content of 11% vol. and maximum 13% vol.
- Colour intensity of rosés should be between 0.10 and 1.8 AU/cm, resulting from the sum of parameters A420 + A520 + A620.
- Maximum total sulphur dioxide: 140 mg/l
- Maximum volatile acidity: 0.65 g/l
- Minimum total acidity: 5.9 g/l
- pH between 2.8 and 3.3.

The minimum second fermentation period required for 'Espumoso de Rioja' is 15 months, 24 months in the Reserva category and 36 months in the Gran Añada category. Finally, the product will be subject to a **double qualitative evaluation**, with a physical-chemical and sensory evaluation prior to market launch, requiring good/very good rating.

All these demands illustrate the **high level of quality** of the type of sparkling wine that is intended to be offered to the market under the Rioja label, something that consumers will not be able to enjoy at least until Christmas 2019.

Geographical Location 2018



Mentions table 2018



MÁS INFORMACIÓN

D.O. Calificada Rioja Regulations

- Rioja Protected Designation of Origin on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and the Environment
- Minimum requirements to be met by the labels of wines protected by the Denominación de Origen Calificada RIOJA pursuant to its Designation Specifications
- Circular 8/2017. Conditions for the designation of wines from a given municipality Circular 7/2017. Conditions for the designation of wines from a given zone
- Circular 5/2017. Changes in the Designation Specifications for Reservas, Gran Reservas and Whites