

Bodegas Luis Cañas

Spain - La Rioja

Bodegas Luis Cañas is one of Rioja Alavesa's oldest family-owned wineries. The history starts with Carlos Cañas, who sold his wines in bulk, transporting them by mule and cart throughout the region. Carlos' son, Luis Cañas, born in 1928 and still active at the winery, shifted the focus from selling young bulk wines to producing bottled wines. In 1970, he launched his namesake winery. 1989 marked a new milestone in the winery's transformation when Juan Luis Cañas, the only son of Mr. Luis Cañas, took over as general manager at age 33 and brought a fresh approach. Juan Luis began to lay the foundation for what would later become a more modernized winery, AMAREN, whose first harvest was the 1995 vintage. Along the way the reputation of Luis Cañas continued to grow, and the family legacy is sealed as a major producer both in Rioja Alavesa and throughout Spain and the world.

Located in the town of Villabuena de Alava, south of the province of Álava, Bodegas Luis Cañas is one of the leading wineries in the Rioja Alavesa region. Sheltered from harsh weather extremes by the Sierra Cantabria Mountains to the north, the hillside vineyards are comprised of nutrient-poor chalky clay soil. What the soil lacks in nutrients is compensated for with small plot cultivation with low yields to produce small firm clusters of berries of excellent quality. Almost 900 plots are needed to complete the approximately 400 hectares of estate-owned or cellar-controlled vineyards, some with vines more than 100 years in age. Annual production is around 222,200 cases.

Vines are 30-80 years old, and almost completely located on steep slopes and terraces.

All of the grapes undergo a manual selection process, and grapes destined for Reservas and premium wines undergo a second selection based on their weight. Luis Cañas was the first winery in Spain to employ this type of selection process.

Sustainable farming practices are honored and overseen by a team of specialists in this area. Luis Cañas was the first winery in Spain to obtain the BRC Protocol with AENOR, the ISO 14.000, the ISO 9.002 quality certification, and inaugurated its own waste water treatment plant.

The second winery, AMAREN, is a 52-hectare winery also located in Villabuena. Amaren, with means "of the mother" in Basque, began with the 1995 vintage as a tribute to Ángeles, the mother of Juan Luis Cañas & wife to Luis Cañas. Juan Luis says, "Ángeles was a tireless worker, right up to her death, who devoted her whole life to working on the land and in the winery alongside her husband, and her enthusiastic, kind character is present in every one of our wines."

Luis Cañas' caring approach to producing wines that respect the environment and the process also extends to its workers. In 2006, the winery built and opened a facility to house 40 vineyard workers on the property. This initiative received the prestigious 2008 Caring Company Award given by the magazine Dato.