



Logroño

THE WINE FAMILY

of pests and the arrival of French winemakers to the national industries.

Since the middle of the 19th century, three plagues attack the European vineyard and will transform its location and cultivation; all of them arrive to our land from the neighboring French country. And from this state will also come solutions and innovations in vine cultivation and winemaking.

Oidium began to attack French vineyards and the destruction caused by the fungus was mitigated by the use of sulphur. In La Rioja we have news of its appearance in 1852.

Phylloxera, an insect originating in the United States, destroyed most European vineyards. From

France it reached the south of Spain, Portugal and in La Rioja it appeared at the end of the 19th century, specifically in 1899 in some vineyards in the town of Sajazarra.

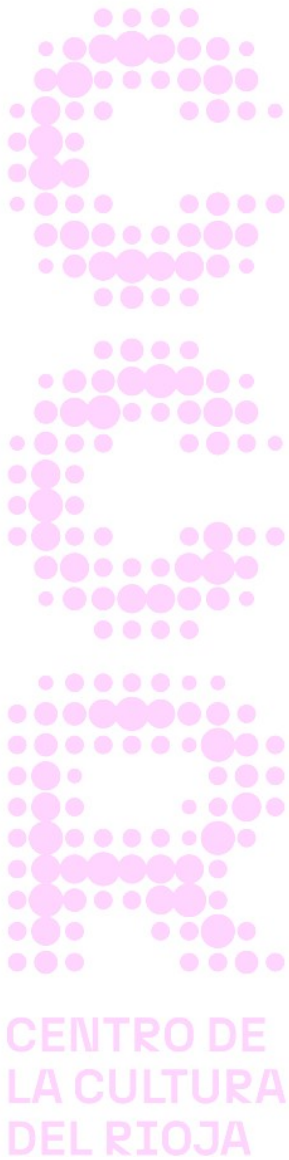
Mildew, another fungus, crowned this destructive trilogy, which destroyed thousands of hectares in Europe. A blue product known as Bordeaux mixture was used to combat this fungus by dissolving it in water and spraying it on the leaves of the vine; the first references to this fungus in our land date back to 1895.

These three threats managed to reduce grape production to historic lows and our French neighbors, great wine consumers, had to leave their country in search of this precious liquid.

From the appearance of these pests in France until their scourge reached La Rioja, more than forty years passed and our region experienced a period of splendour. New plantations were planted, deep cellars were dug and the villages saw the greening of their fields during this period. In addition, France, in need of wine, reduced tariffs, which favored exports.

Until then, Rioja wines were transported from east to west and northwards along a network of roads that were in poor condition. But an essential event was to modify the transport system, and that was the construction of the railroad that was to link Bilbao with Tudela and which was inaugurated in 1863. The need of our neighbors for wine and the ease of its transport led to the establishment of a commercial route between La Rioja and particularly Haro and Bordeaux.

Wine merchants or "negociants" came from the neighbouring country before the introduction of the train and settled in Haro, but their number increased with the arrival of the railroad. The surroundings of the recently opened



CENTRO DE
LA CULTURA
DEL RIOJA



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Haro station will receive the storekeepers who came to buy wine for export to their country.

Little by little the French surnames occupied an important role in the wine trade, and so Savignon, Lepine, Serres, Vigier, Heff, Blondeau, and others rubbed shoulders with the local producers from whom they purchased wines prepared in their "warehouses in Haro", those that the jarreros wanted to burn because of the unknown practices that the Gauls carried out with the wines before putting them on the train for shipment to

France, first from the Basque ports and then directly by train.

Economic prosperity was established in the area, which already controlled the use of sulfur and iron sulfate to combat fungal cryptogamic diseases, but the phantom of the phylloxera insect was approaching. Winegrowers knew that the plague was already in Spain but hoped that it would not reach La Rioja. But in 1899 the threat was realized. The city of Haro, concerned about the increase in the wine industry, demanded the installation of a center for the study and analysis of vines and wine, and in 1892 it managed to create an Oenological Station, which today is a center for research and control of the product.

While the French were doing their business, national entrepreneurs, mainly of Basque origin, started their activity as winemakers. In Haro, the first winery was created in 1877, taking advantage of facilities in what would later be called the Barrio de la Estación. With French influence, an earlier winery had already been created in Elciego and another one in the outskirts of the capital of the province.

During this process of initiation of the new viticulture that ended with the creation of the Denomination of Origin, a century ago, photography accompanied its evolution and some of these century-old wineries keep in their archives plates, glass and other photographic materials in which agricultural activity and winemaking were captured, this being the common thread of this exhibition.

