

# ISASTEGI

**Year Founded:** 1984

**Region:** PDO Euskal Sagardoa, Basque Country, Spain

**Cidermaker(s):** Migel Mari Lasa and Joxe Mari

**Fun Fact:** Cider has been produced at the Isastegi farm since at least the 17th century.

**-Certified Organic-**

Isastegi is an old family estate located in the town of Tolosa in the Basque Country of Spain. The estate was originally covered by pastures for cattle, with only a few apple trees for the family to make a small amount of cider for themselves and neighbors. In 1984 Migel Mari Lasa, with the help of his father Joxe Mari, decided to switch from livestock to cider and began selling their cider to the public. Pastures were



replaced by orchards planted with native Basque apple varieties and the house became dedicated to cider production. The third generation at Isastegi is innovating and advancing the quality standard of the previous generations. The ecosystem around Isastegi is made up of high-quality apple orchards and all of the apples which go into Isastegi are from orchards within a 15-kilometer radius. This is an important distinction, as less scrupulous producers making cheap cider for the bulk market often rely on frozen apple must concentrate purchased cheaply from other countries with no quality standards, fermented in their cider house, and served to unknowing tourists. There is more demand for cider in Spain than there are apple orchards, so it has created a system where the importation of foreign apple must for cider is common. This is one of many points that sets the production at Isastegi apart from the competition.

A quality designation was created in 2017 called PDO Euskal Sagardoa for natural cider. It allows the use of 115 local apple varieties grown in the Basque Autonomous Community, certifying both quality and local origin. Euskal Sagardoa designated ciders are always natural, produced from certified apples, and have to pass a tasting panel and lab analysis. Isastegi carries the red neckband of Euskal Sagardoa (there is also a gold neckband form special, limited ciders), attesting to their hard work advancing the local cider discipline.



## Isastegi 'Sagardo' Naturala Cider

Sagardo should be served cold in a wide glass and poured from great height to break up the residual carbonic gas. Only a small amount (one sip's worth) should be poured into the glass at a time. After fermentation in stainless steel the cider is blended in *kupelas* (old, large, oak cider barrels) it is bottled fresh and without filtration before each shipment. Ripe notes of apple on the nose leads to an acidic, malted apple on the palate. The finish is crisp and fresh.