

Church of Santa María

**Town:**

Mañaria.

Location:

C/ Andra Mari, 3.

Access:

On arriving in Mañaria from Durango, a signpost on the right, just past the quarries, directs you to the church.

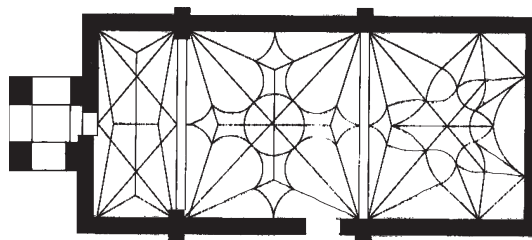
Other places of interest nearby:

Arana palace.
Izurtza.

Torre (tower) of Etxaburu and Bekotorre.
Izurtza.

Church of San Nicolás.
Izurtza.

Sanctuary of Urkiola.
Abadiño.



On the other side of the river, just across from the centre of the parish of Mañaria, which runs along the road (the old wagon track to Durango), stands the Church of Our Lady of the Assumption, one of the most interesting in the Duranguesado area.

Among its most valuable features are the wooded vaulting, the respect shown for the original Renaissance work when the church was extended and enlarged in neo-classical times, and the richness of the church furniture. All of them help to set the church apart from its peers.

A three sectioned nave ends in an octagonal chevet. At the opposite end stands a slender tower connected to a completely renewed external porch. The complex wooden vaulting, starred with curved ribbing and a number of keystones, mimics Gothic stone vaulting to perfection. Although not unique in Bizkaia, this example is certainly one of the most interesting of its kind. Dating from between 1586 and 1590, it is the work of Pedro de Mázaga, a respected carpenter and reredos maker in the region. The vaulting performs in exactly the same way as normal stone vaulting and was for a long time actually thought to be executed in stone, a

confusion encouraged by the original plastering.

In 1850, an academic architect from Durango, Francisco María de Aguirre, was entrusted with the task of extending and enlarging the church, through the addition of an extra section and a tower. Aguirre proposed a formula that was surprisingly respectful of the original Renaissance work as far as the windows and the design of the vaults were concerned. Such respect was most unusual at the time and certainly deserves our attention. Financial problems delayed the work until 1862, but it was worth the wait, as the results were excellent.

Reredoses and organ

Five Baroque reredoses and the organ are the main pieces of furniture in the church at Mañaria. The high reredos is a substantial piece of work in polychromed wood distributed in two sections with an attic and five lanes. Although in the Baroque style, it is not over-ornamented and provides a wealth of iconographic

information in its reliefs depicting sacred Marian scenes and the display of images of saints. According to the surviving documents, it is the work of reredos-maker and sculptor Antonio de Alloitz, from Forua, one of the finest followers in the region of Gregorio Fernández's Castilian naturalism. Alloitz executed the entire work from 1641 on, although the brilliant gilt polychrome dates from some time later, in 1673, and is the work of another local man, Martín de Elorriaga.

The lateral reredoses of the Rosary and Calvary also have some features of special interest, in particular the carving of the Rosary, a very fine Rococo piece surrounded by female reliquary busts and a number of small, rather older sculptures. The reredoses themselves date from 1684 and are the work of reredos-maker Domingo de Barraicúa, from Garai.

Barraicúa was also responsible for the rather less interesting, in terms of its icons at least, reredoses of the Immaculate and Our Lady of Sorrows.

Particularly important to the church is the organ in the choir, a piece of high quality and one of the oldest of its kind in Bizkaia. The organ casing is executed in the Rococo style in unpolychromed wood, and came from the workshop of Durango-based reredos-maker and carver Juan de Urquiza. It was in use before the church was enlarged and is connected to thirteen modest ashlar seats with some severe backs in unpolychromed wood.



Bizkaiko Foru
Aldundia

Kultura Saila
Ondare Historikoko
Zerbitzua

Diputación Foral
de Bizkaia

Departamento de Cultura
Servicio de Patrimonio
Histórico