



SPAIN'S 'NEW WORLD' WINES

Wednesday, April 22, 2009

Reception Wine: 6:00 PM, Formal Tasting: 6:20 PM

Faculty Club, Univ of Toronto, 41 Willcocks Street

Toronto, Ontario M5S 1C7

Members' Fee: \$65

Guests/Non-Members Fee: \$80

While the Spanish wine regions of Rioja, Penedes, Navarra and Jerex-Sherry tended to dominate the market for quality wine for many decades, the country has now shown it can produce fantastic, long-lived wines in other areas. And that's the focus of this month's tasting - to explore newer, up-and-coming regions that are at the forefront of the qualitative push to rival the best of Rioja, Penedes, etc. We will feature 4 wines from Priorat, 2 from Toro, and one each from Yecla and Ribera del Duero. As you can see overleaf, these wines fetch quite high prices but promise to evolve for many years to come. This will provide you with an opportunity to sample these winemakers' products and then buy and cellar - if you decide - wines from more recent vintages. These wines promise to deliver pleasure for many years to come at a fraction of the cost of wines from Bordeaux.

The Catalans call it **Priorat**, most others in Spain say Priorato - however it's pronounced, it has become an up-and-coming region for Spain, sparking envy among collectors. The region has become something of a cult wine producer, creating wines that cost up to 5 times that of a quality Rioja. The region has a special soil, called *llicorella* made of a brown slate mixed together with rocks. Mountains surround the area and the vines are tended by hand. As a historic winemaking area **Toro** has made a huge comeback in the last fifteen years. Its rich, ripe and powerful red wines, based on the native Tinta del Toro grape, began to show their potential after a new generation of trained oenologists began work here and the necessary investment was made in stainless steel equipment. In the last decade there has also been a continuous upgrading of harvesting methods. What makes Toro's red wines of value - and has given them fame since medieval times - is their combination of top-range strength, full fruit, freshness and acidity as well as the ability to age well. **Yecla** is one of Spain's smallest wine regions. Established in 1975, the Yecla DO surrounds the city that shares its name. Like many small wine regions, Yecla has survived because of a fierce dedication to its traditions and heritage. Bodegas Castano (Yecla) is pioneering more ambitious wines adding Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo and Merlot to the Monastrell which represents 85% of all the grapes grown in the region. Only a DO since 1982, **Ribera del Duero** has been making wine for centuries, and some of the bodegas there have been family-run for generations. The most famous wine of the region is Vega Sicilia, possibly the most expensive and sought-after wine in Spain. Ribera del Duero reds come primarily from a variation of Tempranillo, called Tinto Fino or Tinto del Pais in this region. Garnacha and Cabernet Sauvignon are also used, but not so often. The best wines of the area are refreshing yet sturdy and complex, with an ability to age and mature gracefully.

PLEASE NOTE! We move to the U of Toronto Faculty Club for April and appetizers will be served with the wines. The tasting is expected to be popular so reserve / buy your tickets early.

REGISTER / BUY TICKETS

Register/buy tickets online at <http://www.onlineregistrations.ca/tvcevent4/> You must register online and then can pay by credit card or by cheque. **ALL ticket sales/reservations are final whether paid by credit card or cheque.** Cheques must be received by Friday, April 17. The cheque-payment option will be disabled at midnight Tues, April 14 after which only credit card sales will be accepted until 5 pm Sunday April 19 or earlier if the event sells out. You will be sent an email confirmation once you have completed your registration. If you tried to register but did not receive your confirmation, please contact torontovintners@onlineregistrations.ca. Processing may take up to a minute or two so be patient. Be careful not to register twice.

TORONTO VINTNERS CLUB INC.

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2004 Bodegas Castano, Casa Cisca Monastrell (Yecla) \$65

the estate's flagship wine, is 100% old-vine Monastrell (70+ years of age) aged for 14 months in American oak. Dark ruby/purple-colored, it emits an attractive array of Asian spice, tobacco, cedar, and blueberry pie aromas. On the palate additional flavors of cherry and chocolate emerge. The wine has a firm structure, excellent balance, and a long finish. It should evolve for several years and drink well through 2022. Jay Miller: 92.

2004 Alion (Ribera del Duero) \$93

Bodegas Alion was started by the renowned estate of Vega Sicilia in 1991. Grapes are sourced from vineyards next to the winery and from Vega Sicilia's own vineyards at Valbuena. Eighteen hectares of Tinto Fino (Tempranillo) form the actual Alion estate. The 2004 Alion is inky purple-colored with an alluring perfume of toasty oak, lavender, violets, mineral, blackberry, and blueberry compote. This is followed by a full-bodied, rich, opulent, wine with incipient complexity, and notes of licorice, mocha, and espresso emerging on the palate. The lengthy finish is pure and persistent. Give it 3-5 years in the cellar and drink it through 2025. Jay Miller: 96.

2004, Bodegas Maurodos, San Roman Tinto (Toro) \$55

100% Tinta de Toro, was aged for 22 months in French and American oak, mostly new, prior to bottling without filtration. It is purple-colored with a lovely perfume of toasty oak, mineral, spice box, violet, lavender, and blackberry. Sweet, layered, and structured, this muscular effort will evolve for 5-7 years in the cellar and drink well through 2025. Jay Miller (Wine Advocate): 92/100.

2004 Tardencuba Valnuevo Seleccion (Toro) \$52

Fermented with native yeasts and bottled without fining or filtration. The 2004 spent 16 months in new French oak. Aromatics include wood smoke, toast, saddle leather, scorched earth, and blackberry. Opulent, spicy, rich, and structured, it will become more complex with 6-8 years of additional cellaring and drink well through 2030. Jay Miller: 93+/100.

2004 Cesca Vicent Abat Domenech (Priorat) \$59

Family owned since the 13th century. 50% Garnacha and 50% Cabernet Sauvignon grown in slate and gravel soils. Aged for 12 months in French oak. Saturated purple in color, the nose offers an array of elements including violets, mineral, spice box, vanilla, black cherry and black currants that is quite bewitching (beautiful perfume is a trademark of the top 2004 Priorats). On the palate the wine is full-bodied, opulent, and beautifully delineated. It has enough structure to evolve for 4-6 years (or more) and provide pleasure through 2020. Jay Miller: 93+.

2004 Costers del Siurana Clos de L'Obac (Priorat) \$85

The purple-colored 2004 Clos de l'Obac exhibits a beautiful perfume of spice box, mineral, kirsch, red and black currants, and black cherry. Intensely fruity on the palate, it is already complex, sweet, and layered. The oak, tannin, and acidity are nicely integrated and the finish is long and pure. Give this stylish wine 3-5 years of cellaring and drink it through 2022. Jay Miller: 95.

2005 Mas Doix, Salanques (Priorat) \$88

Blend of 65% Garnacha, 20% Carinena, and the balance Syrah, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon, is aged in French oak for 14 months. It has a glass-coating purple-hue with an alluring bouquet of cedar, smoke, slate, blueberry, and black cherry. Youthful and structured on the palate, this potentially complex effort will profit from 5-7 years of additional cellaring. It will be at its best from 2015 to 2030. J. Miller: 93.

2006 Alvaro Palacios, Les Terrasses (Priorat) \$40

[Alvaro] Palacios who comes from a famous Rioja winemaking family (owners of the Bodegas Palacios Remondo), apprenticed with Christian Moueix at Château Pétrus and Château Trotanoy. The wine has ripe fresh flavors of black cherries, blackberries and plums with coffee accents. Smooth and graceful with a long and fruity finish. Collectors know that Les Terrasses is highly scored and highly sought-after year after year.