



## Spain's Overlooked White Gems

Tuesday, April 8, 2014

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

Faculty Club, Univ of Toronto, 41 Willcocks Street, Toronto

Members' Fee: \$52; Guests'/Non-Members' Fee: \$52

**NOTE: Due to the start of Passover, our wine tasting will be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month - April 8<sup>th</sup>!**

Historically, Spain has been recognized more for its elegant and popular vino tinto (red wine) than for its fruity and light whites. Over the recent years however, winemakers in Spain have taken it upon themselves to change this stigma and revolutionize the white wine industry. The past several years have been paramount in qualitative terms and the character of the better-known white varieties has increased enormously. The result? Wonderful whites of international stature, many at very affordable prices. Spain is now a trove of modern white wines and in April, as we finally start to warm up after this long winter, TVC welcomes spring with an exquisite tasting of eight Spanish whites.

Spain has over 2.9mm acres of vineyards, which makes it the most widely planted wine producing country. Nevertheless, it is only the third largest wine producer in the world (after France and Italy). This is partially due to the low yields and wide spacing of the vines. Spain is located in the warmer latitudes, but 90% of its vineyards are located on altitudes higher than any French wine regions, which helps maintain sufficient acidity to keep wine fresh. The most common white grapes used in Spanish whites include Garnacha Blanca, Verdejo, Albariño, Malvasía and Pedro Ximénez, as well as the trio of Cava grapes, Xarel-lo, Macabeo and Parellada. Since 2005, the production of these white varieties has increased dramatically.

Many wines have begun to be identified with the different wine growing regions of Spain. For example, Verdejo is predominantly found on sandy and slate soils, such as in Segovia, where wines have a richer character with strong mineral notes. Macabeo thrives on limestone soils in areas such as Rioja. Garnacha Blanca, an oxidative variety, grows best in Montsant, Priorat and Terra Alta, where they are exposed to a lot of sunlight and very little rain. Pedro Ximénez has evolved into a Riesling-type white. In addition to these local varieties, Chardonnay has grown in popularity among Spanish wine makers in Navarra, Somontano and Costers del Segre.

According to Jose Penin of Decanter.com, "The elite of Spanish dry whites still come from Rueda. Here the main source is the Verdejo grape, planted on varied soils like the stony ones found near the Douro riverbanks or those richer in sand and slate in the province of Segovia at an altitude that renders vine growing almost impossible, but rewarding." Jose goes on to praise the "fabulous Albariños from Rías Baixas, which show more even quality levels than Rueda's Verdejos but less terroir expression, due to high yields from highly irrigated old granite soils in areas like Valle do Salnés."

For our April tasting, TVC has assembled a fantastic collection of Spanish whites that best reflect the diversity and quality of what Spain has to offer. Included in the event price is a reception wine and light appetizers with the main wines. This month, the price is the same whether you are a member or not so bring a friend or guest and introduce him or her to Toronto Vintners and learn more about Spanish whites! (Please refrain from wearing perfumed products to a wine event.)

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### REGISTER/ BUY TICKETS

[Register/buy tickets online](#). You must register online and then can pay by credit card or by cheque. **ALL ticket sales/reservations are final.** Cheques must be received by Friday, April 4<sup>th</sup>. The cheque-payment option will be disabled at midnight Tuesday, April 1<sup>st</sup> after which only credit card sales will be accepted until midnight Sunday April 6<sup>th</sup> or earlier if the event sells out. You will be sent an email confirmation after completing your registration. If you tried to register but did not receive your confirmation, please contact [chri@torontovintners.org](mailto:chri@torontovintners.org) before trying to register again.



## Tasting Notes and Information

### **2010 Bodega Del Abad - Abad dom Bueno Godello \$15.75**

"Bodega del Abad's 2010 Abad Dom Bueno Godello was fermented and aged in stainless steel. Pear, apple, and mineral aromas inform the nose of this intense, nicely proportioned, spicy white. This lengthy effort will provide enjoyment for another 3 years." 91 pts. Jay Miller, erobertparker.com, June 2011.

**2011 Martin Codax - Burgans Albarino \$17.95** "Pale gold. Powerful scents of pineapple, mango and white flowers, with a chalky overtone. Supple and round in the mouth, offering juicy tropical fruit flavors and a bracing note of lemon zest. The floral note comes back on the long, broad finish." 90 pts. Josh Reynolds, International Wine Cellar, Sept. 2012.

### **2012 Jean Leon Chardonnay \$18.95**

"This wine was aged in oak for two months, yet the influence is quite subtle. Pretty aromas and flavours of yellow apple, orchard blossoms and melon wrapped in a ribbon of refreshing acidity. Balanced, lip-smacking finish sports a gentle toast note. Pair with chicken or pork souvlaki, or grilled fish." VINTAGES panel, May 2013.

**2009 Celler Cal Pla, SL - Mas d'en Compte \$27** "Cellar Cal Pla was born in Porrera lands in the DOQ Priorat where the wines are made with the benefit of a strictly Mediterranean habitat. With an altitude between 300 and 500 meters and 300 liters low rainfall year. Hot days and cool nights make up a particular climate contrasts the resulting wines with character. Fermented and aged in barrels for 6 months with the Lias. 80% 20% American and French oak. Powerful white wine golden yellow. In very complex aromas, flavors of apricot, ripe peach, honey and toasted overtones. The palate is dense long and elegant."

### **2011 Bodegas La Emperatriz SI - Finca La Emperatriz Viura \$15.95**

"The 2011 Finca La Emperatriz Viura comes from a parcel of 50-year-old bush vines. It sports a crisp nose of lime, crisp green apple and a touch of dried apricot that is well-defined and as fresh as a daisy. The palate has a sorbet-like freshness on the entry, racy acidity, but there is more than enough tropical-tinged fruit to back it up. This is an excellent Viura with an excellent price. Drink now-2016." 90pts. Neal Martin, erobertparker.com, Aug. 2012.

### **2012 Torres - Vina Esmeralda Catalunya, Spain \$14.95**

"Moscatel/Gewurztraminer Blend. The 2012 reminds of the delicious 2006. The Upper Penedès white is the usual 85/15 mix of moscatel/gewurztraminer but the aromas are just that much brighter with an intense spicy, floral, lemon oil (Alsace) character with some mineral notes too. The flavours match the nose with green apple, lemon lime and litchi fruit. Fresh delicate, juicy, ripe and all under screwcap. Food friendly and a versatile sushi wine." 88pts. Anthony Gismondi, gismondionwine.com, Aug. 26, 2013.

### **2011 Fuente Elvira Verdejo Rueda Spain Verdejo \$15.75**

"Green-tinged yellow. Grapefruit, white pepper and herbs on the intensely perfumed nose and in the mouth. Dry and racy, with impressive focus and energy. Closes bright and spicy, with very good clarity and lingering citrus notes." 90pts. Josh Reynolds, International Wine Cellar, Sept. 2012.

### **2012 Beronia- Viura, Rioja \$14.95**

"Great tenacity for such entry level Rioja yin blanco. What more could you want? Freshness, grape must, tang, just a hit of spice, pepper. From my earlier note: "Exsufflates super ripe, fresh picked pear and emollient herbiage in pure, angled control. One hundred per cent, quick macerated and cold stabilized Viura of aronatics locked in tight. A pour that leads to a starburst of flavour. Complexity reaches the sea in an underlying tide of salinity." Tasted July and December 2013.