

Tasting Notes
August 2021 Pick-up
Wines of Spain



Welcome to your August 2021 Smart Wine Club pickup. The theme this quarter is Spain, which we haven't visited for several years. As I lived in Spain for a time in college, I always love revisiting the region and tasting more of their wonderful wines. For this pickup, we are travelling to practically every corner of Spain to explore all they have to offer. I've chosen a couple of lighter wines for the hot weather that is currently with us, plus four bolder wines that should carry you into the fall.

Don't forget, you can always return your wine club red bags to the store when you come in to pick up. We are happy to re-use them and reduce waste!

- **2019 Bodega Javier Sanz "Rey Santo" Verdejo, DO Rueda** – This white is made from 100% Verdejo grapes, which are truly the classic white wine of Spain. Chances are if you visit a bar in Spain and ask for a glass of white, you will get a Verdejo from Rueda. Verdejo in general is crisp and refreshing, and this one doesn't disappoint. You will enjoy aromas of tropical pineapple and lychee with hints of melon, citrus and grass. The wine is medium-bodied and well-balanced with good acidity. A great choice for hot weather.
Reg retail: \$10.99 Smart price: \$9

Pairing: Verdejo would be a great pairing with Baja-style fish tacos. I hear the ones at Beehive Station food carts are pretty tasty! The acidity will contrast nicely with the fat of the fried fish, and citrus notes will echo the lime in the tacos.

- **2019 L'Olivera Cooperativa "Blanc de Serè", Costers del Segre, Catalunya** – L'Olivera Cooperativa is an amazing producer that grows certified organic, dry-farmed grapes and also employs people of all abilities. This white blend is named for the Serè, a dry northwesterly wind that blows through the region. It is a blend of 70% Macabeo, 10% Parellada, 7% Xarel-lo, 7% Chardonnay, 5% Garnacha Blanca, and 1% Malvasia. Intense fresh citrus aromas with hints of piney green mango. Reg retail: \$16.99 Smart price: \$15

Pairing: The producer suggests this with peas and bacon, which immediately makes me think of pasta carbonara! Give it a try.

- **2019 Descendientes de J. Palacios "Pétalos", Bierzo** – This elegant, light red is made from 95% Mencía plus 5% blended local red and white grapes. The winery is located in Bierzo, in the cooler northwestern corner of Spain. Mencía is typical of the region and is believed to have been carried to the region by French pilgrims during the Middle Ages. Very well-balanced with red berry notes, hints of herbs, and fine tannins. Robert Parker rated this vintage 93 points! Reg retail: \$23.99 Smart price: \$22

Pairing: Mencía pairs well with earthy flavors and well-spiced foods. Think roast pork, mushrooms, lamb or other game meats, and bold spice rubs. Sheep's milk cheeses such as Manchego are also a classic pairing.

- **2015 Ego Bodegas “Fuerza”, DOP Jumilla** – This tasty red is a blend of Monastrell (the classic red grape of Jumilla) plus Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Ego Bodegas is a contemporary maker that combines traditional and modern methods. Monastrell is perhaps better known as the grape Mourvèdre in France. The wine is a gorgeous cherry-red with hints of violet. You’ll discover delicate black fruit aromas with noticeable toasty, smoky flavors. The wine is ripe and well-structured with pleasant tannins.
Reg retail: \$13.99 Smart price: \$12

Pairing: Big and full-bodied, this wine will pair well with grilled meats and hearty stews. This recipe for a Spanish-style stew with rich pork, spicy sausage, and hearty chickpeas would be a treat with this one:

https://www.simplyrecipes.com/recipes/spicy_pork_stew_with_chickpeas_and_sausage/

- **2015 Bodegas LAN Rioja Reserva, DOC Rioja** – Lastly, we have two lovely Tempranillos from Rioja for you to compare and contrast. The first is a Reserva bottling from 25-year-old vines which is 92% Tempranillo plus 8% Mazuelo. It features intense, complex aromas of ripe red fruit, white flowers, cinnamon and resin. The texture is velvety smooth with an elegant, long finish. The wine was aged in mixed (French and American oak) barrels for 18 months followed by 21 months in bottle before release.
Reg retail: \$16.99 Smart price: \$15

Pairing: A Reserva Rioja is well-suited to bold flavors. For the perfect late-summer harvest dinner, try a ratatouille made from all the seasonal garden produce, paired with your favorite meat from the grill. Lamb is an absolutely classic choice, but anything from chicken thighs to beef brisket would be great.

- **2018 Sierra Cantabria Rioja Selección, DOC Rioja** – This 100% Tempranillo is an excellent value. It is produced from 100% estate-owned vineyards (very unusual for an entry-level Rioja). The vines are organically dry-farmed with all vine training and harvesting done completely by hand. The wine is aged 14 months in used mixed barrels, followed by 8 months in 80-year-old 10,000 liter foudre (extremely large aging barrels) which the winemakers believe greatly limits the oxidation rate. Aromas of cherry, raspberry and vanilla with hints of spice and floral notes. The texture is silky and almost sweet with ripe red fruit and a hint of white pepper. Reg retail: \$14.99 Smart price: \$13

Pairing: Rioja pairs exceptionally well with a nice cheese board, and especially the flavors of various hard cheeses. In addition to classic Manchego and Idiazabal from Spain, think good quality Cheddars, Parmesan, Gruyère, aged Gouda and more!