

WINE

THE CHRONICLE RECOMMENDS *By Jon Bonné*

Great deals in Spanish reds

Spanish wines have been in boom times of late, even as most of the rest of the wine industry sits in the doldrums. Why? Because the vineyards are well established, and often decades old, the farming is cheap and the range of styles verges from supertraditional to ultramodern.

For our latest survey of Spain, we skipped some familiar categories (Rioja, Ribera del Duero) in favor of emergent Denominations d'Origen (DOs). Some have had time to establish themselves — Priorat and Toro, for instance — while others like Ribeira Sacra and the Canary Islands are still at that point of discovery.

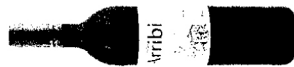
With a cap of \$50 per bottle, our lineup of 41 wines showed astounding diversity — from gobbs of oak (not doing anyone any favors) to fresh, mineral-packed bottles that showed why Spain's combination of legacy vineyards and modern enology have made it a success story.

Amid the debates about style and substance what emerged was a good representative snapshot of where modern Spain sits today.

Jon Bonné is The Chronicle's wine editor. Find him at jbonne@sfgchronicle.com or twitter.com/jbonne. To clip all wines, use XNIP code: T6RGQ



2007 Bodegas Abanico Eternum Viti Toro (\$24): Big, sleek Toro, with at least 50 percent new oak for this 100 percent Tinta de Toro (Tempranillo). That sweet oak character is in full effect; it's opulent and cocoa-edged, flashy and made for impact and enjoyment. Toro is determined to make stylish wines, and this is a fine example of accomplishing just that. (Importer: Grapes of Spain) **XNIP code: PTC9**



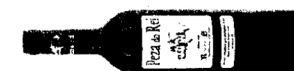
2007 Bodegas Adria Pazo de Arribi Bierzo (\$19): From the Mencia grape, the Arribi is on the stylish side for a Bierzo, with pretty paprika and licorice edges, and robust black cherry fruit. It feels just a touch rounded, one of those Bierzo efforts meant to be hewn into modern shape. (Importer: Classical Wines) **XNIP code: 7EHQF**



2007 Bull & Giné Gine Gine Priorat (\$20): The Bull & Giné family returned to Priorat to make wine in 1996, and this mix of Garnacha and Carignane is a mix of younger and older vines grown on slate. Robust, with licorice-edged black fruit with a roasted celery-seed bite. Seamless, savory and with lots of bright gutsiness. (Importer: Winewise) **XNIP code: KH3ET**



2008 Joan d'Anguera Planella Montsant (\$20): The d'Anguera family not only pioneered Spanish Syrah but helped establish the reputation of Montsant. This blend (Mazuelo, Syrah, Grenache and Cabernet Sauvignon) shows cinnamon-stick and vanilla notes from ample oak, with deeply extracted black fruit and rambunctious tannins. (Importer: De Maison Selections) **XNIP code: K7FFP**



2008 Cesar Enriquez Dieguez Peza do Rei Ribeira Sacra (\$22): This tiny bodega in the Ribeira Sacra region of Galicia harnesses its acres of terraced vines above the river Sil. This is a subtle, violet-edged take on Mencia, with pretty huckleberry fruit and an herby kick — think celery leaves. A bit lighter in style, but very generous. (Importer: Classical Wines) **XNIP code: KYQY9**



2007 Numanthia Termes Toro (\$30): Numanthia's more affordable bottle from Tinta de Toro (Tempranillo), aged in 20 percent new oak, is subtly wooded and showing a flawless structure. Graphite and toasted fig edges to subtly extracted, mineral-tinged berry fruit. A deep, masterful wine. (Importer: Moët Hennessy USA) **XNIP code: A3TFK**



2008 Bodegas Ochoa Navarra Garnacha-Tempranillo (\$13): Ochoa has been a presence in Navarra for centuries. This young blend is sweetly smoky, like roasted pimenton and chewy currants. Full of freshness and food-friendly tannins, packed with mineral energy, it's one to enjoy by the grill. (Importer: Frontier Wine Imports) **XNIP code: XGKY6**



2008 Pedro M. Rodriguez Perez Guimaro Ribeira Sacra (\$15): Given the price, this has been my red wine of the summer. This Mencia-based bottle from Pedro Rodriguez is packed with the smoky chile and celery-seed punch that make Ribeira Sacra so unique. The aromas are unmistakable, but there's also tart cherry and plum skin, with a lovely complexity and depth. (Importer: Vinos & Gourmet) **XNIP code: KHXX9**



2007 Bodegas y Vinedos Preto Tiera de Leon (\$22): Gregory Perez has become one of Spain's hot winemaking commodities. The Prieto Picudo grape has a particular affinity for rosé, but this red comes off with a lovely cola, floral and strawberry blossom profile. Vibrant, soft-edged and juicy, without hard corners. (Importer: Vinos & Gourmet) **XNIP code: XF4YG**



2008 Tajinaste Tinto Tradicional Valle de la Orotava (\$22): This bodega near Tenerife, in the Canary Islands, has been run by the García Farrás family since 1977. From the Listan Negro grape (thought to be the same as Mission), this shows the potential of the islands' volcanic soils for creating the sort of subtlety similar to that in the best Syrah. Subtle ground black pepper, with dried fennel and racy, juicy beautiful blueberry and blackberry fruit. (Importer: Vinos & Gourmet) **XNIP code: KCE9H**



2009 D. Ventura Vino do Burato



2007 Bodegas Abanico Eternum Viti Toro (\$24): Big, sleek Toro, with at least 50 percent new oak for this 100 percent Tinta de Toro (Tempranillo). That sweet oak character is in full effect; it's opulent and cocoa-edged, flashy and made for impact and enjoyment. Toro is determined to make stylish wines, and this is a fine example of accomplishing just that. (Importer: Grapes of Spain) **XNIP code: PTC9**



2007 Bodegas Adria Pazo de Arribi Bierzo (\$19): From the Mencia grape, the Arribi is on the stylish side for a Bierzo, with pretty paprika and licorice edges, and robust black cherry fruit. It feels just a touch rounded, one of those Bierzo efforts meant to be hewn into modern shape. (Importer: Classical Wines) **XNIP code: 7EHQF**



2007 Bull & Giné Gine Gine Priorat (\$20): The Bull & Giné family returned to Priorat to make wine in 1996, and this mix of Garnacha and Carignane is a mix of younger and older vines grown on slate. Robust, with licorice-edged black fruit with a roasted celery-seed bite. Seamless, savory and with lots of bright gutsiness. (Importer: Winewise) **XNIP code: KH3ET**



2008 Joan d'Anguera Planella Montsant (\$20): The d'Anguera family not only pioneered Spanish Syrah but helped establish the reputation of Montsant. This blend (Mazuelo, Syrah, Grenache and Cabernet Sauvignon) shows cinnamon-stick and vanilla notes from ample oak, with deeply extracted black fruit and rambunctious tannins. (Importer: De Maison Selections) **XNIP code: K7FFP**



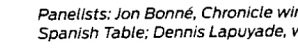
2008 Cesar Enriquez Dieguez Peza do Rei Ribeira Sacra (\$22): This tiny bodega in the Ribeira Sacra region of Galicia harnesses its acres of terraced vines above the river Sil. This is a subtle, violet-edged take on Mencia, with pretty huckleberry fruit and an herby kick — think celery leaves. A bit lighter in style, but very generous. (Importer: Classical Wines) **XNIP code: KYQY9**



2008 Bodegas Fontana Mesta Ucles Tempranillo (\$6): This large winery near Toledo has found an astonishingly affordable, young steel-fermented expression of ripe Tempranillo from the Ucles growing region. Slightly peppery and light but with pretty huckleberry and chile flavors. (Importer: Winebow) **XNIP code: C4AXK**



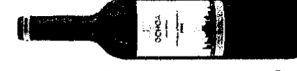
2008 Bodegas Silvano Garcia Vina Honda Jumilla (\$14): Silvano Garcia is among the winemakers pushing Jumilla to the front of the line of contenders among emergent Spanish DOs. Leathery and a bit raw in its dark stone and tree-bark accents, this is gutsy and complex, with a savory edge and chewy depth. (Importer: Grapes of Spain) **XNIP code: G7EKG**



Panelists: Jon Bonné, Chronicle wine editor; Kevin Hogan, Berkeley wine buyer, the Spanish Table; Dennis Lapuyade, wine buyer and consultant.



2007 Numanthia Termes Toro (\$30): Numanthia's more affordable bottle from Tinta de Toro (Tempranillo), aged in 20 percent new oak, is subtly wooded and showing a flawless structure. Graphite and toasted fig edges to subtly extracted, mineral-tinged berry fruit. A deep, masterful wine. (Importer: Moët Hennessy USA) **XNIP code: A3TFK**



2008 Bodegas Ochoa Navarra Garnacha-Tempranillo (\$13): Ochoa has been a presence in Navarra for centuries. This young blend is sweetly smoky, like roasted pimenton and chewy currants. Full of freshness and food-friendly tannins, packed with mineral energy, it's one to enjoy by the grill. (Importer: Frontier Wine Imports) **XNIP code: XGKY6**



2008 Pedro M. Rodriguez Perez Guimaro Ribeira Sacra (\$15): Given the price, this has been my red wine of the summer. This Mencia-based bottle from Pedro Rodriguez is packed with the smoky chile and celery-seed punch that make Ribeira Sacra so unique. The aromas are unmistakable, but there's also tart cherry and plum skin, with a lovely complexity and depth. (Importer: Vinos & Gourmet) **XNIP code: KHXX9**



2007 Bodegas y Vinedos Preto Tiera de Leon (\$22): Gregory Perez has become one of Spain's hot winemaking commodities. The Prieto Picudo grape has a particular affinity for rosé, but this red comes off with a lovely cola, floral and strawberry blossom profile. Vibrant, soft-edged and juicy, without hard corners. (Importer: Vinos & Gourmet) **XNIP code: XF4YG**



2008 Tajinaste Tinto Tradicional Valle de la Orotava (\$22): This bodega near Tenerife, in the Canary Islands, has been run by the García Farrás family since 1977. From the Listan Negro grape (thought to be the same as Mission), this shows the potential of the islands' volcanic soils for creating the sort of subtlety similar to that in the best Syrah. Subtle ground black pepper, with dried fennel and racy, juicy beautiful blueberry and blackberry fruit. (Importer: Vinos & Gourmet) **XNIP code: KCE9H**



2009 D. Ventura Vino do Burato (\$20): Ramon Losada — a veterinarian by day and winemaker by weekends — and his family have created one of the most rewarding labels in the tiny Ribeira Sacra region. The Burato is clearly sanguine, with wild strawberry and dark plum edging around a deep mineral core and unashamedly herbal tones. Perhaps more unruly as Ribera's go, but it's heady, rewarding stuff. (Importer: De Maison Selections) **XNIP code: YA3FE**



2008 Vinedos de Ithaca Akyles Priorat (\$26): Restaurateur Joseph Puig and his daughter Sylvia pay tribute to the myth of Odysseus with their Priorat winery, and this mix of grapes is ripe and showing plenty of oak influence. Lots of lacquered cherry fruit to round it out, and with time its freshness evolves. Big and impactful. (Importer: Vinos Unicos) **XNIP code: XHQ9F**

