

Hello Spanish Table wine friends!

Quite a few of you Spanish Table fans heard [Greg Atkinson](#)'s in-store interview on KUOW's "The Beat" program, but for those of you who missed Greg's culinary forecast, Spain reigns in 2008! So to give you a flavor for sunny Iberia during these cold winter months, grab a pencil because there's lots to look forward to:

Our second Spanish wine tasting at Gaudi!

North to South: Wines of the Spanish Mediterranean Coast

Tuesday, January 29th @ 7 pm

\$25 per person (not including tax & gratuity)

The first tasting was such a hit, we had to do it again! Once again I'll be pairing up with Jo & Joan Luna of [Gaudi](#), a sweet tapas spot east of Ravenna for an educational evening of wine & small plates. The Luna's ran a restaurant in Barcelona for years before transporting their culinary chops to the States, & the result is a traditionally-styled neighborhood bistro with non-fussed up dishes (like their heavenly airy *croquetas* which are to-die-for.) We will be pouring nine wines to go with eight Spanish classic dishes such as *Lomo Adobado* (their own house-cured pork loin), *Mejillones Vinagreta* (chilled mussels), *Papas Bravas* (classic spicy fried potatoes), & *Paella Mixta* of course. This is not a formal sit-down dinner, but a chance to do some serious tasting amongst friends. If you'd like to join me, RSVP with your name, contact info, & number of people attending by emailing seattlewine@spanishtable.com, or call me at The Spanish Table at 206-682-2827. **A limited number of seats means this sells out fast!!!**

Wines of Spain dinner at Madison Park Cafe!

Monday, January 21st @ 6:30 pm

\$90 per person (not including tax & gratuity)

Join host Karen Binder & the ever-knowledgeable Marshall Jorgensen of Classical Wines from Spain for a special tasting dinner at one of Seattle's quintessential neighborhood restaurants, the [Madison Park Cafe](#). This chef's menu showcases five courses of Iberian fare including *Pulpo* (octopus), Rabbit Paella, Scallops with a Huckleberry Gastrique, Roasted Lamb, & a Cabrales Flan to top things off. There are only **eight seats left for this event** in their wonderfully cozy dining room, so make your reservations *pronto* at 206-324-2626 or email Karen at Madisonparkcafe@aol.com!

Salud!

Catherine

PS- Save the date, Flamenco fans...

Heads up flamenco aficionados! On Feb 26 and 27, flamenco guitarist Juan Manuel Canizares will be performing at Seattle's Jazz Alley. Canizares toured with Paco de Lucia in the early 90's and is one the most accomplished flamenco guitarists on the scene today. This is a rare opportunity to see Canizares in a truly intimate setting. For more information, follow this link to Jazz Alley's website: <http://www.jazzalley.com/artist.asp?artistid=548>

CHICKPEAS WITH POMEGRANATE MOLASSES from **Casa Moro: The Second Cookbook** by Sam & Sam Clark

Serves 4

450g home-cooked chickpeas (200g dry weight) or 800g canned or bottled chickpeas, drained & rinsed
4 Tbs olive oil
3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
3 Tbs pomegranate molasses

200ml cold water, or a mixture of chickpea liquor & water
about 60 threads saffron, infused in 4 Tbs boiling water
3 Tbs roughly chopped fresh coriander
seeds of 1 pomegranate
sea salt & black pepper

Place a large saucepan over a medium heat & add the olive oil. When hot but not smoking, add the garlic & fry until nutty brown. Now add the drained chickpeas, pomegranate molasses, water & saffron infusion & simmer for 10 minutes. Stir in the coriander & season with salt & pepper. Finally sprinkle in the pomegranate seeds. Taste & serve with fish or on its own as part of a selection of mezze.

HOT NEW WINES, FRESH VINTAGES!

January doldrums? No way! Some of our most popular wines are back & boy are there some great values to be had. **I have limited quantities on hand, so please let me know if you would like me to hold any of these fast movers...** Think of these as "cellar protectors"--great wines to be had any day of the week, but ones that certainly will impress your most discerning dinner guests. Put together an assortment to taste & we can run your order right out to our loading zone--shopping at the market can be as easy as that!

Bodegas Alto Almanzora Este 2005, Almeria \$9.99

First time available! If you love chocolate, berries, & Andalucia then this is the wine for you... Here's a sampling of Grenache, Cab, Syrah & other varietals anchored by old-vine Monastrell, all from the coast between Granada & Almeria. Substantial but with plenty of luscious fruit. "A blend based on 60% monastrell) Deep ruby. The nose offers a complex array of red and dark berries, with complicating floral and herbal qualities. Fresh cherry and cassis flavors are deep and sweet, with firm tannins adding structure. Finishes with a bright jolt of cracked pepper and impressive length. There's lots going on here for the money." **-90 points, Steven Tanzer's International Wine Cellar**

Espelt Saulo 2005, Costa Brava \$10.99

I've had the chance to enjoy this two times in a week & I just love it. This estate is down the road from famed El Bulli, & the story is that importer Eric Solomon made everyone pull over on their way to dinner when he saw these untapped vineyards. Marc Lafage who also makes Las Rocas & LaFage Grenache signed on as the talent behind the project & he brings his usual fresh, scintillating style to a wine region we rarely see here in the states. "A 50/50 blend of garnacha and carinena) Dark red. Inky, expansive aromas of pure, fresh red and dark berries. Open-knit raspberry and blackberry fruit and an absence of obvious tannins make this lush blend delicious right now. Subtle spice notes on the finish. A killer deal." **-89 points, Steven Tanzer's International Wine Cellar**

Bodegas Castano Hecula 2005, Yecla 2005 \$11.99

Thank goodness these wines are still in the budget-friendly category because I'd cry otherwise. I admire Castano's ability to keep a firm hand on terroir while still managing to wow the critics (& our customers.) A bold Monastrell that wants you to strongly consider putting a rack of lamb on your dinner table tonight! "Inky violet. Deep cherry and cassis aromas complicated by an array of floral, mineral and herbal nuances. Powerful dark fruit flavors are firmed by solid tannins and lifted by gentle minerality. Picks up smoked meat and anise notes on the long, chewy finish. This could be a Bandol. Is the average buyer at this price point ready for this? Another amazing value." **-90 points, Steven Tanzer's International Wine Cellar**

Bodegas Castano Solanera Vinas Viejas 2005, Yecla \$16.99

This is the star of Castano's line up, & the '05 vintage has a fashionable new label to boot. Fragrant, lush with gritty tannins that keep this blend on task, Solanera just keeps rocking.

"65% monastrell, 20% cabernet sauvignon and 15% tintorera. Saturated purple. Smoky raspberry and cherry on the nose, with a sexy mocha quality adding complexity. Fleshy, round dark fruit liqueur flavors caress rather than pummel the palate. Gentle tannins arrive late to add structure but this is all about silky, juicy fruit." **-90 points, Steven Tanzer's International Wine Cellar**

Celler Tomas Cusine El Vilosell 2005, Costers del Segre \$16.99

Same vintage, back in stock! This beat out two \$30 wines & was the winner in a recent blind tasting I participated in of 04/05 Spanish Rhone-varietal wines--a super price-performer.

"The 2005 El Vilosell is composed of 50% Tempranillo, 26% Cabernet Sauvignon, 10% Merlot, 9% Garnacha, and 5% Syrah aged for 9 months in new French oak. Purple-colored, it reveals a fragrant array of scents including pepper, spice box, smoke, blackberry, black currant, and blueberry pie. Plush in texture, the wine is full-bodied, with layers of spicy fruit, intense flavors, and well-concealed tannins. Drink this superb value now and over the next 6-8 years." **-91 points, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate**

Gramona Gran Cuvee Cava 2004, \$21.99

Gramona is one of the last hold-outs for cava producers that are still family run rather than operated by large companies, & this has always been my favorite cava in the store. A traditional blend of Xarello, Macabeo, Parellada, I love the exceptional elegance of this sparkling wine from Spain. Honey & beeswax aromatics float above golden apple fruit & macaroon notes--but let's talk about the bubbles, shall we? Very fine with an extremely crisp mineral side, this does become the creamy, toasty style I crave as it opens in the glass. Fantastic value.

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Closa Batllet 2004, Priorat \$50.00 Extremely limited!

"The 2004 Closa Batllet is 67% Carinena, 16% Garnacha, 11% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Merlot, and 2% Syrah aged for 15 months in French and American oak. Inky purple, the wine has a wonderful perfume of scorched earth, truffle, graphite, black cherry, and blueberry. This is followed by an opulent wine with full-body, fleshy blue fruits, and a lengthy finish in a hedonistic package. Drink this forward effort over the next 12-15 years." **-93 points, Robert Parker's Wine Advocate**

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