

Hello Spanish Table wine friends!

Why is it that I'm hopelessly addicted to Spain? Last weekend I went away on a short vacation in Oregon swearing that I would not eat Spanish food, & once again I failed to keep my vow... For those of you who are in the same boat, I highly recommend [La Rambla](#) in McMinnville if you're ever hungry while wandering through Oregon wine country. Their wine list was not only jam packed with every Pinot in the region, but they have an extensive & reasonably priced Spanish wine selection as well, with helpful regional maps & explanations. Cool!

As for things back here at Spanish Table, we got some great new products this week like giant 5 Liter tins of [Nunez de Prado](#) & [Merula](#) olive oil, & Tunisian treats like M'hamsa couscous (hand-rolled couscous from Tebourba stored with red peppers) & Teboursouk couscous & pasta sauce in four different exotic flavors such as tomatoes, *green olives*, *pickled lemon & capers* and *tomatoes, artichokes, harissa & black olives*. Yum! Now I'm inspired to break out my tagine & do some serious cooking after eating out all weekend... Fun stuff.

Salud!
Catherine

MONKFISH CHOWDER WITH CATALAN GARLIC MAYONNAISE (*Gazpachuelo con Allioli*)
from *The Essential Mediterranean* by Nancy Harmon Jenkins

Makes 6 servings

6 cups water
2 large yellow-fleshed potatoes, such as Yukon Gold, thickly sliced
2 medium yellow onions, coarsely chopped
Sea salt
Freshly ground black pepper
3 bay leaves
1 Tbs fresh thyme leaves
1 lb monkfish, cut into chunks
1 tsp crushed red nora peppers, or use New Mexican or ancho peppers
2/3 cup Allioli or homemade mayonnaise
3 or 4 small scallions, coarsely chopped
1 hard-cooked egg, chopped for garnish
1 garlic clove, finely minced, for garnish
2 Tbs finely minced flat-leaf parsley, for garnish

Bring the water to a simmer in a soup kettle. Add potatoes, onions, a big pinch of salt, pepper, bay leaves, & thyme. Cook gently over low heat until the potatoes are just barely tender, about 15 minutes. Add the fish & crushed red peppers & continue cooking until the fish is done--about 6 to 8 minutes.

Remove the soup from the heat. Stir about a Tbs of hot soup stock into the mayonnaise & keep adding tablespoons of the stock until the mayonnaise is close to the temperature of the soup. (If you add the hot stock all at once, you risk curdling the mayonnaise). When the mayonnaise is quite hot, stir it into the soup, using a wooden spoon to blend it in thoroughly. Return the soup to the stove over very low heat & gradually, stirring frequently, heat the soup until it is very hot. Watch the soup carefully & do not let it come to a boil as the egg will curdle. Keep cooking the soup, stirring constantly, until it has thickened to a smooth cream.

Serve immediately, garnished with the hard-cooked eggs, garlic, & parsley.

Variation: Instead of allioli or mayonnaise, add 2/3 cup Romesco sauce.

NEW & NOTABLE

Antano Crianza 2002, Rioja \$7.99 (reg. \$9.99)

Bodegas Antano is situated in the picturesque town of Briones in the Rioja Alta, which houses many of Rioja's top estates. This is your chance to A.) find a Rioja under \$10, & B.) it's even a Crianza! This has all the traditional character of Spain with a little barnyard & bandaid on the nose (those are good things!), spicy & earthy dried plums, black pepper & a leathery finish. Pair this with **Juan Mari's Basque Red Bean Stew** from **La Cocina de Mama** by Penelope Casas & you'll feel like you're dining somewhere far off in the Spanish countryside.

Septima Malbec 2006, Mendoza \$8.99 This favorite goes up to \$11.99 in February!

Cava giant Cordoniu fulfilled their dream of buying a winery in Argentina in 1999, & they are getting rave reviews for an \$8 wine! The new label represents the unique architecture of the bodega, built with hand-stacked stones from the Andes. This vintage is a spicy one, with boysenberry & plum fruit plus a licorice finish that lets you know it could handle a steak, but would be budget-friendly on burger night. **-90 points, Wine Enthusiast**

Cono Sur Pinot Noir Sustainable Agriculture 2007, Colchagua Valley \$10.99

Go green! Cono Sur is a clever play on words, but it also derives its name from the shape of South America--the "Southern Cone." Their label features a sweet old-fashioned bicycle which "carries the spirit of our farm workers pedaling their way to the Cono Sur vineyards every day," & one of their main means of controlling pests is a voracious gaggle of geese! Their Pinot Noir strives to be true to Burgundian roots while expressing New World ambition & (Chilean value.) Spiced earth & dried leaves aromatics mingle with wild plums & white pepper, and the pleasantly rounded tannins make this an extra versatile wine. When do you ever see Pinot at this price?

Altos de Luzon 2005, Jumilla \$15.99 (reg. \$19.99)

This snuck in without me even noticing that it had changed vintages...until today! I've been waiting for the 2005, & am glad to see that we're still being offered a great price on it. "50% monastrell and 25% each of cabernet sauvignon and tempranillo) Dark red. Suave, oak-spiced cherry and cassis on the nose, with a gentle vanilla undertone. Sweet dark fruit flavors are round and supple, with soft tannins building on the back. Picks up a spicy quality on the long, juicy finish. The fruit and oak work very well together."

-90 points, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar

BenMarco Malbec 2005, Mendoza \$19.99

"Bright red-ruby. Musky black raspberry, cocoa, mocha and minerals on the nose. Supple, pliant and deep, with good freshness to its dark fruit and spice flavors. A seriously mouthfilling wine that's not a bit heavy; in fact, this is a moderate 13.5% alcohol. The suave finish features insidious persistence."

-90 points, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar

COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Les Brugueres 2006, Priorat \$32.00 Extremely limited!!!

"A rare white wine from Priorat, the 2006 Les Brugueres is produced from 100% Garnacha Blanca. It comes from a single vineyard with 100+-year-old vines planted on the licorella (schist) soil for which Priorat is famous. Light gold-colored, it emits pleasant aromas of mineral and melon. This is followed by a full-bodied wine with good ripeness, balancing acidity, and medium length. It is an intellectually pleasing wine that lacks that extra dimension of excitement. Drink it over the next 2 years."

Catherine Reynolds
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