

We are just back from a *Tour de Tiendas*, visiting our stores in Santa Fe and San Francisco. Sunny weather welcomed us everywhere and it felt sooo great.

At 7000 feet, the high desert air of Santa Fe was crisp and invigorating. Always captivated by this city's mix of Spanish, Native American and Mexican history and the natural beauty of the landscape, we're also addicted to the New Mexican red and green chiles. Our manager, Karen Squires, hosted the whole staff for an awesome New Mexican potluck. Carne adovado marinated and slow cooked in red chile sauce made by chef and employee, Adrian Perez with peppers from his own garden. Red and green New Mexican style tamales, posole, pinto beans and chicos rounded out the menu. Dessert was sweet tamales filled with native pine nuts, raisins and local honey.

We loved the food at *La Boca*, Chef James Campbell Caruso's tapas restaurant. Former chef at El Farol, he wrote the cookbook that we still recommend to customers looking for a contemporary interpretation of tapas. James is a customer of The Spanish Table and his menu reflects several of our new products, many with a Moroccan influence. But our favorite tapa was all Spanish: Asparagus spears dressed with **Casa Pons White Truffle Olive Oil**, dusted with **Matiz Smoked Sea Salt** and topped with shavings of aged manchego cheese.

WINES WE TASTED ON OUR TRIP:

The **Alto Moncayo Veraton (Campo de Borja) \$23.99** paired wonderfully with our picante New Mexican potluck. Its spicy and ripe red fruit with a deep mineral and white pepper finish was absolutely delicious.

Limited quantities available 91 points Stephen Tanzer

We sampled wines by the glass at *La Boca*, pairing them with rich flavors of James' tapas.

Portuguese wine **2001 Ardosino Douro (\$15.99)** was fantastic with grilled artichoke hearts and goat cheese. Ardosino has an earthy minerality with flavors of currant, real elegance and bright acidity that makes it a great combination with any grilled foods.

2003 Loriñon Rioja Reserva (\$18.99) was terrific with spicy lamb meatballs in yogurt-mint sauce. From a less than stellar vintage, the 2003 Loriñon sings with red cherry, black tea and sweet spice notes integrated with a toasty balsamic finish. Delicious!

ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE: 50 under \$10:

These are frugal times and after a lot of tasting, we have selected 50 wines under \$10 that will allow you to enjoy life without breaking your budget. Stop by, pick out a dozen of them and get a 10% case discount. That brings you price down to only \$9 a bottle!

NEW VALUE WINES THIS WEEK:

2007 Garnacha de Fuego Old Vines (Calatayud) \$7.99 Big and powerful, the grapes for this wine are grown in a desolate, arid area which produces ripe and concentrated fruit. With intense aromas of sweet cherries and dark plums, Garnacha de Fuego has considerable depth and finesse. With an exotic spicy finish reminiscent of white pepper, it is great with taco truck fare.

2007 Casa Gualda Tempranillo (La Mancha) \$8.99 Think fruity pie cherry with an earthy minerality. Smoky and low in acidity, Casa Gualda is easy drinking and great for the pocketbook!

SHERRY ARTICLE

Here at The Spanish Table, our appreciation of unique Sherries is evident by our selection – the largest outside of Spain. Vastly underappreciated, and one of wine's greatest values (how many wines are available for \$45.00 that have been barrel aged for at least 20 years?), sherry is finally getting its due. If you'd like to learn more about sherry, check out the recent comprehensive article from the San Francisco Chronicle: <http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/c/a/2009/01/15/WINR159ONQ.DTL&hw=gonzalez+byass+alfonso&sn=001&sc=1000>

INGREDIENTS: In Jan 11th The New York Times travel section, Paula Wolfert singled out Moroccan cumin as something she brings back in her suitcase. Luckily, it is easy to get just by visiting The Spanish Table, thanks to Mustapha Haddouch who buys his directly from the farmer in Morocco. He also deals directly with the farmer for his saffron.

TWO CHEESES SPECIALS: We were able to make a special purchase on these two cheeses:

Veigadarte Sometimes referred to as Humbolt Fog on Steroids, Veigadarte is rolled in oak ash and covered by a thick bloomy white rind. Beautiful on a cheese platter with its black and white outline and soft texture, this artisanal cheese uses the milk of two different goat breeds. With a high butterfat content and the characteristic tang of a goat's milk, it is distinctive and delicious. Was: \$7.00; Now \$5.75/quarter lb.

Drap Made of 100% cow's milk, Drap has all of its characteristic butteriness with the herbaceous nuances of a goats milk cheese. Was 9.00/quarter lb; Now 5.75/quarter lb.

TWO NEW CHEESES:

Cantell Goat Cheese This compact, crumbly and granular goat cheese is aged roughly 4 months. Its fully developed, complex flavor has hints of dry fruits with a herbaceous tangy finish. This rare goat cheese from Catalonia is one of the finest cheeses made by Nevat cheese maker, Joseph. We are offering this cheese only for a limited time. Now \$9.99/quarter lb.

Idiazabal This unpasteurized sheep's' milk cheese is the absolute best Idiazabal on the market. Traditionally, Basque shepherds lived in small mountain huts and due to lack of space, stored and aged their cheese inside stone chimneys. Lana, producer of this Gran Reserva Idiazabal maintain these cheese making traditions, and it reveals itself with wonderfully buttery, lightly smoked, aromatic and tangy flavors. Now \$6.50/quarter lb.