

If you have stopped in The Spanish Table to pick up a bottle of wine the past two weeks, you have probably found my wife, Sharon Baden, busily organizing the wine section. After a couple of dozen trips to Spain, Portugal and Argentina punctuated with a good many winery visits (and long winery lunches), she is overjoyed to be applying her cumulative knowledge to helping customers pick out exciting wines to drink. If you haven't met her, stop in.

Uruguay was a garnish on our already full plate when Sharon and I visited Argentina. Following too-short stops in Mendoza, Salta and Patagonia, we reached Buenos Aires at last. Impulsively, we got up at dawn and caught the hydrofoil to Colonia, Uruguay. The hydrofoil was a multi-decked car ferry that lumbered onto its struts like a hippo rising to its legs. Once at speed, it glided across the Rio de la Plata (more pewter than silver), too wide to see across, before descending on the tiny port of Colonia. We wandered the quaint streets along the river bank until it was time for lunch and a glass of Uruguay's signature red wine: tannat.

Like the hydrofoil, wines made from the tannat grape can be huge and clumsy but in the right winemaker's hands, they become elegant and supple. We're now carrying a delicious Uruguayan tannat in addition to our Argentinean wines.

**Bouza Tannat, 2006 , \$19.99:**

**New!** Inky in color with a floral nose, this full bodied wine has hints of blueberry, vanilla and black licorice wrapped up with a long, dry finish. Aged 15 months in oak barrel, it is perfect with grilled steak or rich meat dishes.

**Argentine Reggianito Cheese:**

Argentina is home to endless miles of grazing pastures some of which are home to farmers who migrated from Italy and make a local version of Parmigiano Reggiano using traditional methods.

Reggianito means *little Reggiano* because the wheel has been reduced to 15 lbs. from the enormous 80 lb. drum the Italians produce. The Argentinian wheels are smaller because it was too difficult for oxen to move enormous wheels great distances. Reggianito is cured longer than any other South American hard cheese, resulting in a rich, bountiful flavor. This cheese is slightly saltier than its namesake, but the white crystals in the cheese are not salt grains; they are crystallized free amino acids, which give the cheese its lovely grainy texture. Reggianito is perfect for cooking or grating over pasta. If you like Parmigiano Reggiano, be sure to try the Argentinian version.

**Flor de Pingus, 2005, \$69.00:**

We have not tasted this highly allocated wine yet but per Robert Parker: "...100% Tempranillo...The wine spends 14 months in new French oak. Purple-colored, it offers an alluring bouquet of pain grille, crushed stone, violets, black raspberry, and blueberry. Already complex on the palate, it has gobs of sweet fruit, excellent intensity, perfect balance, and a 60-second finish. In the price/quality sweepstakes, this might be Spain's finest wine. Kudos to Peter Sisseck for a brilliant and enthralling set of wines'

**Font de la Figuera Priorat, 2003,\$31.00:**

A new priorat wine arrives this week at a great price! Made by esteemed winemaking pioneer Rene Barbier, this lush blend of grenache, carinane, cabernet sauvignon and syrah is approachable and ready to drink now. Layers of dry fig and red berry, coffee and chocolate notes are finished with toast which lingers long on the palate.

**Cucos Cabernet Jumilla 2006, \$9.99:**

One of the only Cabernet Sauvignons produced in Jumilla, this wine is vinified in clay amphorae and oak. Juicy ripe fruit from old vines gives a rich smoothness on the palate and with a backbone of acid and tannin, it's a great value wine.

**Lar de Barros Crianza 2004 Ribuera de Guadiana, \$12.99:**

Back in stock after a long absence! This is the wine served all over Extramadura with heaping plates of migas and platters of baby lamb chops. 100% tempranillo, medium body with nicely aged fruit, this is an easy drinking wine, perfect with jamón iberico or Ibores goat cheese.

**Peppadews Peppers:**

This new sweet hot little red pepper from South Africa is the latest rage. Perfect for Tapas! Stuff them with cheese, put them in a salad or plop one in your martini.

**MUSIC:**

The Feria de Sevilla, the scenic and social event of the year in Sevilla runs from April 8-13, 2008. If you can't afford a trip to Spain right now, put on some sevillana music, lay in some manzanilla sherry and throw a party! A must for any feria party is the dancing of sevillanas, which originally was a folk dance from the city of Sevilla (thus its name) and is characterized by its distinctive 3 beat rhythm. We have a full selection of sevillana CDs to compliment any age group: For example: *Brumas: 20 anos por Sevillanas* is a fun-priced collection of traditional sevillanas for only \$13.99.