

## AUDREY HEPBURN WINE

Like Audrey Hepburn, Rioja wines are elegant, sophisticated and sexy even if not full bodied. The best, aged for years, have silky flavors which linger long after a meal is over making them the perfect companion to accompany a memorable repast. This week, we want to call your attention to six of our favorite red wines from Rioja.

We were fortunate to spend the afternoon last Monday afternoon in Belltown at Txori, Chef Joseba Jimenez de Jimenez' tapa bar. It was fun to see Joseba again. He was the first manager of The Spanish Table's wine department back when we opened in 1995. We were at Txori to taste wines from Vi a López de Heredia in Rioja, makers of Cubillo, Tondonia & Bosconia wines, each named after the family vineyard from which they originate. López de Heredia is Spain's most old fashioned winery, 131 years old, traditional to its core, definitely pre-Robert Parker, pre-U of Cal Davis and pre all the other influences on today's style of wine making. The barrels are old, the winery ambient temperature, the results classic in the best sense of the word.

### 1) Cubillo, 2002, \$25.99:

A blend of tempranillo, garnacha, mazuelo and graciano from their own vineyards which was aged 3 years in their barrels from their in-house cooperage. Ready to drink now, serve it with a tapa of Spanish-style dry cured sausages or grilled meats accompanied by grilled Spring vegetables served with **Ferrer Vegetable Sauce, \$4.99** (an uninteresting English translation by Ferrer of Calçot sauce used to dress grilled spring onions in Catalonia).

### 2) Salceda Reserva, 2001, \$19.99:

The wines from this Bodega have just returned to The Spanish Table after a long hiatus. And what a return: this Reserva from the remarkable 2001 Rioja vintage is spectacular! The floral nose leads into flavors of dusty blackberries with hints of licorice and rich vanilla notes and a lingering finish. Dry on the palate, it is a great wine to serve with cheese or paella. ~ *90 Points, Stephen Tanzer*

### 3) Seis de Luberri, 2005, \$15.99:

This likeable new Rioja arrived this month. Lively on the tongue with flavors of licorice and ripe plums, its earthiness would pair perfectly with dishes containing mushroom or truffle flavors (We stock **Amalur Spanish black truffles, 10 gram jars, \$8.99**)

### 4) Bordon Crianza, 2001, \$12.99:

Isn't there a song that goes "If that's old fashioned; that's just the way I want to be?" Well, this is a classic Rioja wine. Red fruit flavors of cranberry, raspberry and plum are wrapped in smoke, old leather and touches of cinnamon, cardamom and clove on this medium-bodied treat. Tannins are soft, but present and framed by superb acidity.

**5) El Coto Crianza, 2003, \$11.99:**

Cherry & herbs dominate the leather and oaky spice in this 100% tempranillo. The body is round and supple and the finish has just enough acid to balance any fats in the food it is paired with such as macaroni and cheese or pasta carbonera.

**THE COLLECTORS BOTTLE**

**6) Torre Muga Consecha 2004, \$100.00:**

This is one of the most amazing Riojas we have ever tasted! Long layers of concentrated chocolate give way to notes of fig, coffee, ripe blackberry, and dusty roads. The 2 minute finish wraps up with smoke, flint and vanilla. 96 points Robert Parker's Wine Advocate

**JAZZ CDS**

*Elegant Wine & Spring Nights call for Smooth Music*

*Paz, Ni o Josele,*

\$19.99: Many decades ago when I was in college, we alternated playing the Beatles and Rolling Stones with Bill Evans depending on our mental state, allowing jazz piano and rock and roll guitar to coexist. Jazz infiltrated Spain's flamenco community first by trumpeter Jerry González on the CD *Los Piratas del Flamenco* (\$16.99). Pianist Bebo Valdés, the father of Chucho Valdés, recorded the grammy winning *Lagrimas Negras* (\$22.99) with flamenco singer Diego el Cigala. Flamenco guitarist Ni o Josele has now become enchanted by Bill Evans' music and lovingly reinterprets it on Paz.

**NEW ARRIVALS IN THE REFER CASES**

**Gem Basque Chorizo, \$8.99:**

Last Saturday, with arrival the first warm day of the year, our West Seattle neighborhood suddenly smelled of charcoal. We have just restocked the Gem Basque chorizo from Boise which is our softest cooking chorizo. It is grilled every year at the Seattle Basque Club's annual picnic and served on buns. You can serve it with the condiment of your choice but for a really heady experience, try a smear of **Gaicho Ranch Chimmicuirri, \$5.99**. This is the real thing, chunky green and garlicky.

**Aurelia's Chorizo, \$9.99:**

These little packs of cured chorizos are the sleeper in our refer case where we display them even though they do not require refrigeration (which makes them perfect for travelers, hikers & campers). Made with chunks of pork and fat, their texture and smoky taste remind me of the local chorizos I buy in villages when we are traveling the back roads of Spain.

### **Zamoraono Raw Sheep's Milk Cheese**

produced in Zamora Province (the area where Toro wines are made), this area is located in the Northwest part of Spain where the country's largest sheep herds are found.

Produced in the same way as Manchego, the Picos de Espana Zamorano has a stronger more piquant taste as a result of the high fat content of the milk from the Churra sheep. This Artisan production Zamorano is full-bodied, moist and tangy almost like a dense feta. Enjoy Zamorano with a glass of Rioja!

### **XINGU BLACK BEER, \$9.99/six pack:**

From Brazil, "The Heart of Darkness."

### **SPRING WINES**

In honor of our one Spring like day, here are three Spring wines,

- 1) **Ochoa Rosado 2007, \$11.99:** The first of the new vintage Spanish rosé wines to arrive. Made from garnacha, this lively rosado offers a bunch of fruit balanced by firm acidity. Serve it with salad, seafood or a paella!
- 2) **Famega, Vinho Verde 2007, \$6.99:** Just off the boat from Porto and fresh as a Portuguese daisy!
- 3) **Tondonia Blanco Reserva, \$41.00:** At López de Heredia, whites and rosados are barrel aged for years, a practice now unheard of. For example their Tondonia 1997 Rosado (\$24.99) spent four years in barrel being raked twice a year, fined with egg whites and bottled unfiltered. It is satin smooth, complex, persistent. This white wine spent six years in barrel while being raked twice a year. It emerged a golden amber color, with what the Spanish call a developed nose, and buttery smooth. It has developed quite a following among The Spanish Table customers who like to indulge themselves.