

CALLA LILIES: With warmer weather, great bunches of Calla Lilies are now for sale in the low stalls at the market. Last Friday, we filled our favorite Talavera vase with a beautiful bunch of Calla Lilies in honor of Sharon's birthday. Even though they are a South African swamp flower, they have been forever linked in my mind with Mexico by the paintings of Diego Rivera. On this subject, have you noticed the Frida Kahlo cards we now carry which include a refrigerator magnet? They are made by a customer of our store in Santa Fe and retail for only \$4.95.

1. *Shopping tip: Vegetable & Fruit Farmers focus on Wed, Fri & Sun to sell in the Market*

AJVAR: If you haven't tried this "Serbian Salsa" you should. Start by tasting a spoonful, savoring its mellow flavors and chunky texture. Made from roasted, ripe sweet red peppers and eggplant spiced up with garlic and chili pepper, Ajvar can be consumed as a spread on bread or crackers or as a condiment for grilled foods from meat to fish. For a quick side dish, it can be tossed with couscous or pasta and then topped with grated cheese. We stock both hot and mild versions. For more about Ajvar, check out this NPR program from November 2006:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6430271>

URBAN ACCENTS GLOBAL SPICE MIXES: These stylishly packaged spice blends promise to bring exotic flavors into your kitchen. I have been experimenting with them and particularly on weeknights, I find that they quickly and efficiently introduce some new flavors and aromas into our home cooking. There are several good suggestions and recipes on each jar plus a website to help launch you. We are introducing all these products at \$5.99. Three of them are:

Spanish Smoked Sea Salt: The addition of smoked pimentón, garlic and chives to this finishing salt has had me sprinkling it on everything from salad to pasta to meat (5oz).

Moroccan Road Seasoning: This roughly crushed blend of coriander, cumin, cinnamon & mint really adds flavor to dishes from couscous to chicken. It's even great sprinkled on toast (2oz).

La Mancha Saffron Rice: This pre-seasoned yellow rice inspired by the cuisine of Spain provides you with an instant side-dish leaving you free to concentrate on the entree and salad (15oz).

VALUE WINES FROM SPAIN

1999 Partal Crianza, Bullas, \$6.99: Last August after a visit to the Casa de Ermita winery in Jumilla, we stopped in Bullas for lunch. There, over a bottle of local wine, we discovered that Bullas is a little known wine region. So when this wine showed up in Seattle, we jumped at a chance to taste it. We think it is currently the biggest bargain in the store. A blend of 60% low yielding old vine monastrell, syrah, cabernet sauvignon, tempranillo and merlot, this wine is produced from the small estate's own vines. With flavors of blueberries, plums and black currants, aromas of licorice and spice with smooth tannins, this is a balanced wine with an enjoyable finish.

2005 Falset, Montsant, \$9.99: It comes with a screw cap but inside the bottle is an explosion of rich berry fruit with food-pairing acidity and a spicy finish. A blend of old vines Garnacha, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cariñena, this zippy wine is great with grilled hamburgers. Also perfect for a summer party!

2005 Flor de Montgo, Yecla, \$10.99: Producer Vinnico Exports specializes in producing wines from underutilized, old growth vineyards. This is a perfect example of their extraordinary quality at a competitive price. Made from vines averaging at least 30 years old, from a blend of 85% monastrell, 15% syrah and 5% Shiraz, we love its ripe, concentrated black fruit flavors. With silky tannins and excellent length, this is a wine that is guaranteed to please!

2007 Muga Rosado, Rioja, \$13.99: The 2004 Muga Tinto Reserva is one of the most elegant wines currently available at The Spanish Table. This, its sibling Rosado, is a beautiful salmon color, offering up flavors of raspberry and a hint of watermelon which explodes on the pallet with a crisp acidity, making it a great food wine. Try pairing it with grilled prawns!

2001 Marqués de Cáceres Reserva, Rioja \$24.99: Living in Bordeaux as exiles during the Franco years, the Forner family rose in prominence as proprietors of a gran crux winery, Chateaux Camensac. In the sixties, they returned to Spain and established this well known winery in Rioja. 2001 was a great year in Rioja and this wine exemplifies the best qualities of the vintage. Their reservas are only produced in excellent to very good years, and the 2001 is made from 85% Tempranillo and 15% Mazuelo and Graciano grapes. Aged in French oak casks for 22 months, this unctuous wine has beautifully concentrated plum and blackberry flavors, with notes of leather and spice and a long toast finish. ~ 94 points Wine and Spirits

2001 Beronia Reserva, Rioja, \$17.99: Another lost love from Rioja is back in stock! "Ripe plum and black cherry flavors are supplemented by tobacco, spice and vanilla notes in this round, supple, red. It has traditional character. Fresh and clean." ~ 89 points Wine Spectator.

2005 Beronia Crianza, Rioja, \$12.99: Flavors of pie cherry, leather and smoke with silky tannins make this a supple wine that is a great food wine.

VINHO VERDE TASTING: Friday June 20th is the first day of summer, which is vinho verde season! Containing low alcohol (ranging from 9% to 10.5%) and high acidity, these white wines are super refreshing on a hot day and pair well with clams or rich cows milk cheeses. Our side by side tasting of all of the Vinho Verdes in the shop revealed these differences in style:

Twin Vines: Our favorite, it had the most complex citrus flavors, effervescence, a slight minerality and a pleasing finish.

Arca Nova: Flavors of spritzzy grapefruit and green apple, tart and clean.

Aveleda: A bit sweeter than Twin Vines or Arca Nova, it has a pleasing minerality with stone fruit flavors.

Broadbent: Intense lime flavors, refreshing acidity and effervescence.

Campo da Vinha: The sweetest of all, with floral notes, flavors of honey and lime and lots of effervescence.

Aliança: Flavors of chalk and spritzly citrus, almost like drinking a light lime soda.

Casal Garcia: A lighter blend of citrus with fruit notes.

San Joanne: Made from a blend of Avesso and Loureiro grapes, it has tropical fruit and lemon flavors. Very dry and without any noticeable spritziness, it has the character of an elegant white table wine.

2002 Post Scriptum, Douro, \$19.99: The Symington port family and Bordeaux winemaker Bruno Prats have teamed up with the conviction that a top quality table wine can be made from port grapes. This wine is the result - full and rich on the palate, with a flavorful plummy character, structured, well balanced and held together by full tannins. Aged nine months in new French oak, it has the complex flavors of a good port but without the sweetness. Structured to drink now, it is excellent for pairing with savory dishes or game.

DESSERT WINES

2007 Santa Julia Tardio, Late Harvest Torrontés, Argentina, \$12.99: This late harvest dessert wine brings out all the rich flavors of the Torrontés white wine grape. A fragrant nose smells of sun ripened peaches. The flavors are light honey and citrus, with a satisfying but not overpowering sweetness. With only 9% alcohol, it can be mixed with club soda for a light cocktail, or enjoyed with a fruit plate.

2006 Sinols Moscatell, Costa Brava, \$21.99: This is sweet summer fruit in a bottle! Its floral aromas give way to intense apricot flavors. A well balanced acidity gives it structure and backbone. A staff favorite, we will be serving it with fruit tarts all summer!

Moroccan Lamb & Chana Dal

4 tablespoons Olive Oil

½ lb Ground lamb

1 teaspoon Miguel & Valentino Chopped Purple Spanish Garlic

2 teaspoons Moroccan Road Seasoning

2 cups Cooked chana dal (split, small garbanzo beans)

1 cup Yogurt

½ teaspoon Ground Aleppo Pepper

Brown the lamb in the oil using a medium cazuela, breaking it up with a spatula. When crisp, stir in the garlic and cook for a minute. Then stir in the seasoning mix and warm until aromas fill the kitchen. Stir in the chana dal and heat through. Stir in yogurt. Dust with Aleppo pepper.

EVENTS: Here's a good reason to head out of town: **Dulce Plate** in La Conner is featuring an Argentinean wine dinner on June 21 from 6-9 p.m. For reservations or more information, contact thedulceplate@aol.com or call (360) 466-1630.

Txori in Belltown is throwing a San Fermin Fest on Monday, July 7. Modeled after the famed celebration in Pamplona Spain, Seattle will have its own "running of the bulls." All proceeds benefit the Puget Sound Blood Bank. Contact Txori for a full list of events or to register: (206) 204-9771. Registration deadline is July 1.