

PADRÓN PEPPERS First of the season! Last May, padrón peppers were already piled high in the tapas bars of Santiago de Compostela. The Spanish never tire of them (for good reason!) and now raise them year-round. Happily, today our first fresh shipment from California came in the door! To serve the traditional way, fry them in olive oil, sprinkle them with Spanish sea salt and enjoy. Or, to recreate a tapa we scarfed down in Santiago, rub a slice of baguette with tomato, top with two thin slices of chorizo; place a fried padrón pepper on top and secure with a toothpick. 4 oz bag, \$6.99

COOKBOOK: Artichoke to Za'atar, Greg Malouf and Lucy Malouf, \$29.95: Greg Malouf is an influential chef of Lebanese heritage. This book of "Modern Middle Eastern Food" arises from his work in the 1990's as a chef in Australia. The result is a savory fusion of cuisines which extend from Lebanon to Spain and Portugal. With beautiful accompanying photos, recipes include *Spring Vegetable Paella to Lebanese Pizza with Pine Nuts and Pomegranate Molasses*.

SPICE: Urban Accents Marrakesh Za'atar, \$5.99: This traditional mix of thyme, sesame seeds, salt and sumac is more closely associated with Syria and Lebanon than Morocco. The flavor of the dust-red dried sumac berries provides a rich contrast to the green thyme leaves. To use it traditionally: Brush pita bread with olive oil, dust it with the spice blend and bake in 350° oven for 8 minutes. Or, sprinkle Za'atar over a dish of olives and serve. For a great side dish, mix a big scoop of it with a spoonful of Miguel & Valentino Spanish Garlic into a pot of white beans.

TAPA: Athena Stuffed Vine Leaves, \$2.99: From Turkey, these rice stuffed grape vine leaves are one of the best food bargains in The Spanish Table. About ten per tin, ready to eat and very tasty.

Mid East Pitted Dates, \$7.99: In Middle Eastern and North African cuisines, dates show up in tagines and other savory dishes as well as baked goods. For a Spanish tapa, wrap them in thin slices of jamón serrano, spear them with a toothpick and sauté them in butter until crispy.

WINES: The July 2008 issue of Food & Wine is chock-a-block with Spanish wine recommendations. We have all of the following great wines in stock! If you are inspired to cook, the recipes for pairings are all in Food & Wine.

2006 Marques de Irún Verdejo, Rueda, \$11.99: The nose is fresh and aromatic, with delicate hints of pear and white peach. Light and dry with a crisp finish, and a slight prickle that refreshes on a hot day. *Paired with Seafood and Chicken Paella (recipe from Brasa's Chef Tamara Murphy)*.

2006 Torres Viña Esmeralda, Catalonia, \$11.99: Made from 85% Muscat de Alexandria and 15% Gewürztraminer, this full bodied white wine with aromas of rose and flavors of tropical fruits has a satisfying dry finish. *Paired with a fresh chilled cucumber and shrimp soup*.

2007 Viña Godeval, Valdeorras, \$18.99: This is one of the best white wines I have ever tasted! Aromas of sweet hay and white peaches meld with complex flavors of lychee, mineral and dried pear. The peach finish goes on and on and on... ~ 90 points Robert Parker

2006 Castaño Monastrell, Yecla, \$8.99: Made from old vine Monastrell, this is a big wine with layers of jam and spice, plums and currants. *Paired with Grilled Steak with Warm Shallot Vinaigrette.*

2005 Atteca Armas, Calatayud, \$42.00: Ancient vines with tiny clusters of grapes, hand harvested, result in a wine with red cherry fruit and spice notes that is "large-scaled and full-flavored, this powerful effort conceals enough structure to support 3-5 years of cellaring." ~ 93 points Jay Miller, Wine Advocate

2004 Loriñon Crianza, Rioja, \$13.99: This week, Seattle Post Intelligencer's wine critic Richard Kinssies, made this wine his **Pick Of The Week:**

http://seattlepi.nwsource.com/food/368213_winepick25.html It has always been a favorite of ours too and this 2004 vintage is extraordinary.

PREMIUM SPECIALTIES:

2003 Chryseia, Douro, \$75.00: This is the big brother of Post Scriptum which we wrote about last week. It is only produced when harvest conditions permit and truly is fantastic: layers of blackberry, nutmeg, licorice, and tobacco flavors blend into notes of chocolate, herbs and tar on the long satisfying finish. A complex, unforgettable wine ~ 92 points Wine Advocate

The sun is finally out in Seattle!

Our cooler is stocked with chilled Vinho Verde, crisp Rosados & Beer from Spain.