

While they are working on our house, we moved into a 1914 bungalow which is like stepping back in time. The rustic kitchen has a 20 year old electric stove with 3 functional burners. The counter top is inexplicably only 30 inches tall which makes food prep challenging. And with no dishwasher and no microwave, we've resorted to lots of barbequing, which is not a bad thing at all. And, we're rewarding our cooking by opening bottles of good wine. We hope you also reward your cooking with good wine!

New this week:

2007 ViZorro, Zamora, \$6.99: "Zorro" means fox in Spanish and this sly wine surprises with its crisp flavors of fresh lemon peel and a hint of thyme. Made from a 50-50 blend of Verdejo & Viura, on the mid-palate it has flavors of rich tropical fruits with a dry & refreshing finish. Pairs well with spicy Asian dishes.

2005 Cabriz Colheita Seleccionada, Dão, \$7.99: We snapped up cases of this wine as soon as we tasted it. Made in the traditional Dão region which is located at high elevation, it is made from a blend of Alfrocheiro, Tinto Roriz and Touriga Nacional. Aged 6 months in French oak, it has ripe black fruit flavors with notes of licorice and vanilla. Smooth bodied with light tannins, it has great food pairing acidity. The real surprise is the price – the importer even double checked that this tasty wine is really so inexpensive!

La Cigarrera Manzanilla, \$9.99 (375 ml): This family-owned bodega was founded in 1758 and produces one of the best Manzanilla in Spain. It has powerful and complex aromas, delicate flavors of sea salt with a hint of nuts and a characteristic bitter finish. Serve chilled as an accompaniment to sushi or as a refreshing aperitif.

2006 Catena Malbec, Mendoza, \$20.99: The Catena family has been growing grapes at the foot of the Andes Mountains for four generations. Made of 100% Malbec and a blend of grapes from 4 vineyards ranging in elevation from 2850 to 5000 feet, each vineyard's microclimate produces grapes with distinct aromas and flavors. Winemaker Nicolas Catena uses the "art of assemblage" to create this complex blended wine. The 2006 Malbec has juicy flavors of ripe blackberries, coffee, a hint of sage with a long, lingering finish and is super with any barbequed meats.

2005 LAN Limitada Rioja, \$50.00: Produced from the 72 hectare "Viña Lanciano" estate, the grapes are selected and harvested by hand. Aged for 5 months in new French oak casks, followed by 4 months in new Russian oak barrels. Intense, concentrated and ripe red fruit flavors are backed up by a spicy minerality. Extremely complex, the Limitada has sweet tannins and a long savory finish.

***Extremely limited quantities:* Bodegas Sierra Cantabria Finca El Bosque** is made from 100% tempranillo grapes grown in a 3.66 acre vineyard planted in 1973. This week, we received the 2001 and 2004 vintage.

2001 Finca El Bosque Rioja \$95.00 - 93 points Robert Parker, 93 points Wine Spectator "The debut release of the 100% Tempranillo cuvee, the 2001 El Bosque is spectacular. It spent 16 months in new French oak, and was bottled unfiltered. Sadly, there are only 50 cases for the USA. An opaque purple color is accompanied by a gorgeous bouquet of graphite, black currants, licorice, espresso and chocolate. This full bodied, dense, concentrated red requires another 2-3 years of cellaring because of its elevated tannin, but it should last for 10-15 years. It is very impressive."

2004 Finca El Bosque Rioja \$135.00 (1 bottle available) “The Finca El Bosque shows what Bodegas Sierra Cantabria can achieve in a great vintage. The wine was barrel fermented and then aged for 16 months in new French and Romanian Bordeaux barrels and bottled without filtration. Opaque purple, the wine gives up flamboyant aromas of lead pencil, scorched earth, vanilla, wild blueberry, licorice, and blackberry liqueur. Opulent on the palate with layer upon layer of thick black fruits, this youthful wine has great balance, beautifully delineated flavors, and a very long, pure finish.” ~ *97 points Robert Parker, 92 points Wine Spectator*

2003 La Viña de Andres Romeo, Rioja \$100.00 “A real blockbuster, the 2003 La Vina de Andres Romeo (100% Tempranillo) is exquisite, but again, only a mere 200 bottles will make it to America. Lucky readers who run across a bottle, and have the financial resources to purchase it, are in for a decadent treat.” ~ *95 points Robert Parker, 90 points Wine Spectator*

New Basque CDs: Our latest direct import from the Basque country has arrived! New titles include a remastered version of “hitaz oroit” by Benito Lertxundi, “Bilduma Bat” by Ruper Ordorika and the Christmas album “Oles ta Oles” by Peio ta Pantxo.

Remaindered Book: *A Woman Unknown*, Lucia Graves, \$7.99: A memoir of being raised in Majorca during the Franco years as the daughter of poet Robert Graves and then marrying a Spaniard. Poignant insights into the culture of that time and every day life.