

KNOTS: Spanish Table alumni were busy tying knots in August. Nikki Crevey's wanderlust took her to Berkeley to be our wine manager, and then back to Seattle to be store manager. Finally she returned to school for a master's degree and was married on Ocracoke Island, in the North Carolina. Sarah Wolfe, lover of all things Iberian-Latino, was married on Beacon Hill with a reception at Alki Salty's, complete with a Mariachi band. And finally our very first employee, the slim Brazilian, Patricia Garcia Zunz, remarried at a ceremony conducted at the end of a Philadelphia pier, and then went off to a tapa bar for a Cava toast (or two). We wish all three of them years of happiness!

NEW WINES THIS WEEK:

2005 Altos del Duraton, Castilla y Leon (\$14.99) This wine was a big hit when we picnicked on Magnolia bluff last week with some old friends. With a winemaker trained at Petrus, Altos del Duraton has a bit of French style with a decidedly Spanish character. Full bodied and modern, it's a blend of 75% tempranillo and 25% syrah with nine months aging in French oak. Complex dusty flavors of black fruit and flint, underlined by sweet vanilla and spice from the toasted oak, it is tightly woven with a lingering dry finish. It was fantastic with grilled flank steak -90 points Robert Parker

2004 Pedro Martinez Alesanco Crianza Rioja (\$12.99) New to the Seattle market, we snapped up this Crianza as soon as we tasted it. The 2004 Crianza is 80% tempranillo and 20% garnacha with aromas of smoke and cedar. Its traditional flavors of plum, berry and currants have a woody earthiness. We took it to a friends' housewarming party and it didn't last long. With a persistent finish, this is a must try for Rioja lovers!

2004 Singularis, Alentejo (\$14.99) A wave of modern-style, moderately priced Portuguese wines has been washing up on our shore lately. Singularis is the latest arrival and was a unanimous staff favorite during our weekly tasting. With inviting floral aromas, this wine from Alentejo has flavors of ripe cherry, black fruit and nuances of smoke. Notes of coffee and an earthy spiciness are balanced by smooth tannins with a long and dry finish. This easily has the complexity of a \$25.00 wine!

2003 El Coto Crianza Rioja is back and on sale for \$9.99! A 100% unblended Tempranillo in the traditional Rioja style, look for both fruitiness and earthiness throughout. Nice and concentrated, with lots of cherry, herbal flavors and a bit of leather and oaky spice. The body is round and supple, due largely to the American oak barrel influence. A short finish, but with enough acidity to cut the fattiness of any meat it might be paired with.

2006 Paso A Paso Tempranillo La Mancha (\$9.99) Called Mano a Mano in prior vintages, this Spanish Table favorite is back, clad in an artistic label. The new vintage is the best yet, produced from hand harvested grapes and lightly oaked for 6 months in French oak. With aromas of toast, rich blackberry and blueberry fruit overlap with medium weight tannins and just a hint of black pepper. Paso a Paso has a rich and satisfying finish, making it a great partner for barbequed meats or smoky chorizo sausage.

NV Marques de Geldia Brut Reserva Organic Cava (\$17.99)

One of the few organic cavas available on the market from Spain, it is terrific! Dry on the palate with mouthfilling flavors of apple and pear, it has distinctive slate notes. With long-lasting tiny bubbles and a long, crisp finish, this is a lively and refreshing cava.

2006 Vale da Torre Bin 717, Alentejo (\$9.99) Aged in stainless steel tanks, a blend of Aragones and Trincadeira grapes, Bin 717 combines sweet tannins, juicy fruit and currant flavors with a bit of black pepper. Perfect for those who are looking for a low tannin wine, it has the acidity to pair with well spicy dishes such as chicken in piri piri sauce.

We're always excited by the opening of a new Spanish restaurant. Chefs often stop here to scout for ingredients and we're fortunate to have met Chef Philippe Thomelin who just opened **Olivar**. We celebrated our anniversary at Olivar by eagerly sharing 5 plates (all we could handle with dessert). Authentic flavors hit every high note and we highly recommend getting there before it's reviewed! For more details, check the link: <http://www.olivarrestaurant.com/olivar.html>

Agour Piment d' Espelette Doves of customers have been coming in asking for the spicy cheese they had at Txori. A semi-soft young sheep's milk cheese from the Basque region, it is infused with Pimente d' Espelette. The smooth, firm texture of the sheep's milk gives way to a warm bite of heat, due to the inclusion of this special Basque pepper. This is a full-flavored, nuanced cheese, so enjoy it simply without any heavy spreads or overly-sweet fruits.

LINKS: Lynne Kasper, host of Splendid Table, grills chicken with Aleppo pepper:

http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com/food/375588_table20.html

New York Times on cooking paella on the grill: (our question: why mess up your kitchen cooking the chicken and chorizo indoors? That's very New York.)

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/31/magazine/31food-recipes.html?_r=2&scp=1&sq=paella%20&st=cse&oref=slogin&oref=slogin

Padrón Peppers: <http://www.sanfranmag.com/story/spanish-roulette>