

SPANISH FRESH PEPPER HARVEST “*Growing for gastronomes*” is Viridian Farm’s motto. These innovative folks have gathered heirloom seeds from southern Europe and grow over 100 specialty fruits and vegetables on their sustainable Oregon farm. They picked pounds of peppers for us this week, including the popular padron and four other Spanish heritage varieties. The fresh peppers are hand selected for quality, picked and shipped that day and delivered to us the next day. So fresh that when we sauteéd them last night, our house smelled like a pepper harvest.

Guindillas (*piparra vasca*): Long and skinny, these peppers are typically used in flavorful stews and soups. When we were in the Basque country, they were often served on the side to be chopped and sprinkled over beans. When preserved, they are medium hot. When fresh, they are mild and sweet. Fry them and eat whole.

Basque Frying Peppers (also called *Piment d’Ánglet*, *piment doux ong des landes*, or *chipparras*): Sweet, tender and often twisted in wild shapes. Commonly used in green sauces, *piperade*, or salads. Sauteéd, this pepper makes a great side dish with chops or steaks.

Green Piquillo Peppers: The red piquillos are justly famous for their intense and slightly tangy flavor. With our cool northwest summer, red piquillos aren’t available yet so last night we stuffed the green piquillos with cheese and they were delicious! Green piquillos can also be stuffed with ground turkey, or sauteéd and served with grilled morcilla, buttifarra or chorizo sausage.

Pimientos Andaluz: A big, thin-skinned green pepper, this is used in gazpacho in Andalucia. Juicy and sweet with a lighter flavor than a bell pepper they are great in mixed salads. Last night, we fried them with halibut steak in garlic and olive oil for a tasty and easy weeknight dish.

WINE THIS WEEK

Hartley & Gibson Amontillado, Jerez de la Frontera \$10.99 This medium dry sherry is a knock out! Mahogany colored, it has enticing aromas of apricot and caramel. With intense flavors of roasted walnuts, orange and nutmeg, and a persistent dry finish, this amontillado is fantastic for sipping and would also be great with any chicken recipe.

2006 Martin Codax ERGO Rioja \$12.99 Famed maker of albariños in the Rias Baixas region, Martin Codax also makes this modern, fruit forward Rioja. With dark, robust and plush flavors of fresh berry and plums, it is medium bodied. Well structured with agreeable light tannins, it has a layered finish with notes of spice.

2004 Teofilo Reyes Crianza Ribera del Duero \$29.99 I still remember tasting Teofilo Reyes’s 1994 phenomenal first vintage. Reyes was Pesquera’s legendary winemaker for 20 years and first produced his own wine at the age of 72. The 2004 Crianza is one sexy wine! Lush, sleek and concentrated, its flavors of blackberry liqueur, cassis and tobacco explode on the palate. Full bodied, it has layered hints of chocolate, a complex minerality and notes of buttered toast on the long expressive finish. This fantastic wine is a must for fans of Ribera del Duero wines!

BASQUE JAZZ: Gonzalo Tejada is an upright bass player from the Basque Country who is a major influence of contemporary European jazz. Pieces on the CD include piano and trumpet. You’ll need a Txakoli to go with this one. Gonzalo Tejada, \$17.99

CATALAN CHEESE - Ros: So many customers have been asking for this cheese and we are so pleased to be able to say that now it is back! An absolutely delicious, though obscure, Catalan sheeps' milk cheese hand molded in the mountains outside of Barcelona. Ros has a granular texture and a caramel, nutty flavor with notes of brown sugar and a citrus finish.