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Andy Booth & Catherine Reynolds

In September, Seattle Wine Manager, Catherine Reynolds, & Berkeley Wine Manager, Andy Booth, toured the wine regions of Spain with Sacramento, CA based Vince Friend who is an aficionado of Spanish food & wine as well as head of CIV, an importer of premier Spanish wines. Here is Andy's report on the trip & the wines they tasted... Steve Winston, Owner, The Spanish Table

MADRID is one of my favorite cities. Having lived & worked there definitely helped cement my fondness for the ins & outs of the various neighborhoods & their accompanying bars & restaurants. Catherine & I were wandering the streets near the Opera & went into a small *cerveceria* that specializes in *mariscos*. I ordered four *cigalas*, the sweet, meaty Dublin Bay prawn that is found throughout Spain. The bartender got our approval for four large *cigalas* before preparing them *a la plancha* & finished with a garlic, olive oil & parsley. I explained to Catherine what they were & then commented that it was unfortunate that they had gotten so expensive. Catherine's eyes widened in surprise when I told her they were about 9 Euros for 100 grams & those hefty four would be about \$45. "From here on out you are no longer in charge of ordering the food," she declared. A half hour later as she worked over the shells, she rescinded her ultimatum & we continued on our food tour of Madrid... Andy Booth, Wine Manager, Berkeley

♡ VALENTINES DAY ♡

**MARRON GLACE:** Just arrived from Spain, these chestnuts have been lovingly converted into the sweet of choice among the lovers of Galicia & elsewhere... \$7.99

**1880 TORTITAS CHOCOLATE OR TURRÓN WAFERS:** These stylish boxes of individually wrapped wafers will warm a damsel's heart. Three flavors, chocolate *crujante*, chocolate with almonds, & crisp almond candy (*turrón alicante*).... \$7.99

SOME OTHER SWEET STUFF

**TAJMAHAL SAFFRON SIROP:** This sugar syrup is richly flavored with real saffron. Use it to give a touch of Spanish taste to everything from desserts to holiday coffees & drinks. We have been drizzling it over satsuma segments & topping them off with a sprinkle of toasted *piñones*, pine nuts as well as using it basting salmon filets before baking them. Our own import... \$9.99

**COLA CAO:** Every Spanish kid wants this chocolate flavored powder mixed into his milk, hot or cold... \$3.99

**SINGLE FLOWER HONEYS:** Spain is a rich & diverse agricultural country where spring bud-break begins very early in the south, & proceeds northward, until it reaches the highest elevations of the Pyrenees. Every year, migratory beekeepers follow the blooms, placing their hives first in the eucalyptus groves of Huelva, later in the fragrant orange groves around Valencia & then on the hills of Aragón where the wild rosemary blooms. The honey is removed from the hives prior to each move & sold to the Viadiu honey firm in Catalonia. Each batch of honey is sampled by a taster & the best lots are inspected under a microscope to be certified by distinct shape of each flower's pollen. About 1% of the honey, the purest, most aromatic & distinctly flavored, is bottled as varietal, single-flower, gourmet honey. As this honey warms on your toast, the bouquet rises & you smell the forest, the orchard, tiny blooms at dawn in Spain. You should also try these honeys on yogurt or ice cream & in Moorish influenced marinades. Available from the six following flowers: ROSEMARY or THYME, Herbal delights; CHESTNUT or EUCALYPTUS, with the intense fragrance of blossoming glens & groves; LAVENDER, Light floral aroma & flavors; or ORANGE BLOSSOM, scented by the breezes that rustle the *huertas* of El Cid's Valencia. Nothing is quite like it to start your day off right... \$5.99

**STAINLESS STEEL PAELLA PAN:** Looking for a glittering gift or an addition to your cookware? Our 38cm (15 inch) stainless steel paella pan serves up to 8 healthy eaters, making it perfect for gatherings of family or friends. This time of year, crabs, clams & mussels are at their peak so it is a perfect season for assembling a big *paella de mariscos*... \$70.00

**BARCELONA:** In the morning mist, I meandered through the narrow, twisted passageways that make up the byways of the Barrio Gotica in Barcelona. I followed them at random, pausing to peer through the windows into a store, or read a menu outside a shuttered restaurant. I love early mornings in Spain. Watching as the city wakes up around you is a wonderful experience. Late nights are the rule, but the quiet stirring of the city as it rises is an equally enjoyable time & best of all, this was a day that still promised a visit to sparkling Cava makers in *Alella* & *Penedés* as well as to the rich red wine country in the mountains behind Tarragona & Falset, *Priorat* & *Montsant*.

Andy Booth, Berkeley Wine Manager who worked as a chef in Spain, is teaching a class on Basque pintxos (tapas) called A Night in San Sebastian at Sur la Table. Monday Feb. 9th at the Los Gatos store & Monday, March 22 at the Berkeley store. Andy will be in Spain again the first week of February 2004 tasting the newest vintages. Watch for his report this Spring!

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA: The bars & restaurants in Santiago have refrigerated windows filled with displays featuring mounds of cockles, mussels, shrimp, prawns & best of all *percebes*, goose neck barnacles.

"I love seafood. I could eat 25 dozen oysters," Rob mused.

"I could eat 30", I replied & Rob laughed.

Hence our competition was born; which of us could eat more of the wonderful bounty pulled from the sea off the northwest corner of Spain.

The next day, on our way from Santiago to Cambados to visit Conde de Albarei, we stopped in a small town for lunch. Chilled bottles of Conde de Albarei Albariño & plates laden with piles of *cigalas* awaited our arrival & were soon joined by others overflowing with shrimp, clams, razor clams & *percebes*. I eyed Rob, & he lifted an eyebrow.

Over an hour later we pushed back from the table, our plates strewn with an assortment of discarded shells. We eyed each other's plates & agreed it looked like a tie. Then someone pointed out that our host's pile greatly exceeded ours.

"He's a professional. He's had a lifetime of training," Rob pointed out, "We're still in the amateur ranks."

Aaahh, but to make the effort . . . Andy

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#### CAVAS

When shopping at The Spanish Table, don't forget the Cava! For me, Cava is a great all year drink. It's perfect with a leisurely Sunday brunch at home. Who can't help but feel happy when you hear the cork pop. But right now, remember that Cava, roses & chocolate work very well together on Valentine's Day. Take it from a newlywed!

**CRISTALINO CAVAS:** This is good enough to have every night! The New York Times called the Brut their favorite Cava, giving it 3 stars & a best value. ". . . richness of a blanc de noirs. . . delicious with herbal, tea flavors." These are the months that bring a us Winter's freshest seafood from Dungeness crab to oysters. Take a tip from Barcelona natives who pair seafood with glasses of sparkling Cava. Cristalino Cava is available in Brut (dry), Semi Dry (off-dry) or Brut Rose (a charming blush color perfect for your Valentine). On our trip, we dined at this bodega, sipping Cava with a giant paella topped with *cigalas*...\$8.99  
**PARXET CUVÉE 21 BRUT:** This cava from Parxet in Alella bubbles with great, yeasty ginger, apple & pear flavors. Try this to accompany a simple baked fish dinner or Paula Wolfert's *Panade* (see "Books on page 4). You won't be disappointed...\$9.99

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#### WINTER WHITE SALE

**SALNEVAL 2002, Rias Baixas:** We love Albariños but they have been creeping up in price. This is brand new bottling from the vintners of Condes de Albarei comes in at a great value. Bright apricot & refreshing minerality make this a winner...\$9.99

**MARQUES DE ALELLA:** This wine captures all the rich, natural flavor of Xarello, the predominate grape in Cava. From the region of Alella which is literally disappearing under the sprawl of Barcelona, this fruity white is only...\$10.99

**NEBLINA VINHO VERDE, Portugal:** A great example of this traditional style. Hints of flowers & refreshing citrus flavors...\$7.99

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#### ROSADO

Dry Spanish Rosé is an underappreciated alternative to white

**CONDE DE VALDEMAR ROSADO 2002, Rioja:** A staff favorite. Full, refreshing dry, wild strawberries, a clean finish...\$7.99

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#### RIDICULOUSLY REASONABLE REDS

On our recent trips to Spain I came across several stellar new wine values & rediscovered some others.

**BONAL 2000, Valdepeñas:** Bright cherry & strawberry with a touch of anise in this tasty *joven* red. Great price...\$5.99

**CASA SOLAR PLATA, Aragón:** Made in Rioja with grapes from the Mondejar region, Casa Solar is a vibrant blend of 85% Tempranillo & 15% Garnacha. The wine spends 9 months in American oak, producing mature fruit aromas on the nose & subtly extracted dark plum & vanilla flavors. A terrifically well-balanced table wine produced by Martinez-Bujanda...\$5.99

**FINCA ANTIGUA TEMPRANILLO, La Mancha:** Lo & behold, here is another bargain from the Bujanda family, makers of Conde de Valdemar & Valpiedra from their newest bodega in La Mancha. This red is modern & festive with a rich hue, smoky plum & hints of licorice. Need to bring something along to a party? This is "impress your friends for less" wine!\$8.99

**FINCA ANTIGUA CABERNET SAVIGNON, La Mancha:** Cab lovers rejoice, here is a superlative bottling at a bargain basement price. You had better buy now because it was rated a best value by the Wine Spectator...\$8.99

**CONDE DE VALDEMAR CRIANZA '00, Rioja:** One of my favorite memories from our trip is sitting down to a traditional meal in Logroño in the heart of Rioja during the height of *la vendimia*, the grape harvest festival. We started with savory stuffed piquillo peppers followed by sizzling terra cotta plates piled high with *chuletónes*, little pork chops. The Valdemar Crianza married with the flavors of the food perfectly. Its rich, smooth cherry fruit & silky tannins left me instantly enamored...\$10.99

**PERGOLAS GRAN RESERVA 1996, Valdepeñas:** This is a classic, softly styled Gran Reserva. It has smooth, rounded fruit with an earthy undertone that holds it's medium-body together in a fashion that belies the price. 8 year old wine for only...\$9.99

**VEGA SINDOA CABERNET-TEMPRANILLO 2001, Navarra:** Toasty oak, highlights of cassis, & smoky black cherry is bonded together with firm tannins, all of which is balanced by lively acidity. Drink now or wait until after sunset...\$6.99

**TERROSO DE 2001, Douro (Portugal):** The new vintage has arrived & it not only lives up to, but surpasses the last by being richer & fuller on the palate. What I love is the telltale floral characteristic from the Touriga Franca. Not your usual wine...\$9.99

TORO: Having arrived in Spain only that morning & having already visited several wineries, everyone was ready for a good night's rest & rejuvenation. But I was having none of that. Dragging Catherine out to walk the town, we encountered Jaime & Chris, two of our fellow travelers who hailed from Wisconsin. As the day cooled off & the shadows stretched long, we gathered around a table at a small bar just off the Plaza Mayor. Inside locals filled the tables, offering advice to the matador in a bullfight showing on television. A tinto to start accompanied with a *tabla de embutidos* set the tone for the evening. Jamon, chorizo & lomo all washed down by a refreshing wine from Toro.

BEST CAVAS

CAN VENDRELL CAVA BRUT: Bright, crisp, with a creamy mid-palate from the addition of Chardonnay. Organic!\$13.99  
 PRIVAT OPUS EVOLUTIVUM GRAN RESERVA - This Brut Nature Cava is made from 100% Chardonnay. It is toasty, smooth & as sleek as its tall, sexy bottle. Very, very dry & very, very good...\$23.99

BEST WHITE: GALICIA

CONDES DE ALBAREL, RIAS BAIXAS: If only I could be back in Galicia right now, drinking Albariño on the coast among all the colorful little boats devouring buckets of shellfish. Albarel has mouth-watering acidity that get your taste buds flowing, fresh aromas of white blossoms, snappy citrus fruits & a creamy mid-palate. Qualities that make it the #1 Albariño in Galicia...\$13.99

BEST REDS: RIOJA

FINCA VALPIEDRA RESERVA 1997, RIOJA: One of the only single vineyard wines from Rioja Alta, Finca Valpiedra is world class. A blend of mostly Tempranillo with just a touch of Cabernet & Graciano thrown in, this wine's firm structure, great body & forward fruit balances the tension between a classic Rioja & a more modern style Rioja perfectly. Valpiedra is rich & lush with earthy ripe plums, balsamic notes, defined acidity & noble tannins. Elegance, grace & power wrapped up into one!\$22.99  
 CONDE DE VALDEMAR 1995 GRAN RESERVA: Gran Reservas are the ultimate statement of traditional wine making in Rioja. They rely on structuring wine so that extended aging in oak barrels followed by bottle aging, results in a wine that is silky smooth with layers of flavors ranging from leather to tobacco. A gold label distinguishes this lovingly aged premium Rioja wine...\$22.99  
 VALSACRO DIORO 2001 - 2001 is considered a phenomenal year in Rioja. I tried this wine from Rioja Baja just before it bottled this past June & it is a blockbuster. 70% garnacha & unique for a Rioja, this is lush raspberry & cassis, with coffee, vanilla & pepper that all come together in a long creamy finish. Decant this, or be patient and hold it for awhile. Very limited...\$34.99

BEST REDS: DUERO/DOURO RIVER WINES - ONE RIVER TWO COUNTRIES

FINCA SOBREÑO CRIANZA 2001, Toro : Even tasting this for the first time at 10:00 am in Toro, this wine shown. Parker says "Elegant. . .fruit with with subtle notes of oak & new saddle leather in the background." 90 points...\$12.99  
 VALLADO 2001, Douro - This is from one of my favorite producers in the Douro. Their reserva is phenomenal & this regular offering is superb. Rich blackberry, cassis, black spice & chocolate are balanced so they linger on the finish beautifully...\$16.99  
 PAGO DE CARRAOVEJAS CRIANZA 1999, Ribera Del Duero: Full, luscious black fruit with mocha, smoke & earthy notes with a long, smooth finish. A favorite at a Saturday tasting in our Seattle store...\$22.99  
 EMILIO MORO MALLEOLUS 1999, Ribera del Duero: Dense, thick, sweet, chewy dark berries & toasted oak meld smoothly with rich full tannins. We got a great price on this wine...\$29.99  
 LEDA VIÑAS VIEJAS 1999: Loads of roasted coffee, bittersweet chocolate & intense, rich fruit are brought together by strong, explosive tannins. A perfect match is red-wine braised oxtail...\$58.00

PORT: THE DOURO'S TIMELESS DESSERT WINE

QUINTA DO INFANTADO 1996 LBV: A superb port from one of our favorite producers. Gorgeous, with concentrated, spicy boysenberry & licorice. "Just like real Vintage Port. Serious LBV," Wine Spectator. Available in half bottles as well...\$25.99

SHERRY/ JEREZ: SOMETHING SOUTHERN

DIOS BACO FINO: I visited this beautiful, small Bodega last April where I was totally impressed with the uniformly high quality of all of their sherries. Drink the fino chilled accompanied by a dish of olives or a platter of fried almonds...\$15.99  
 DIOS BACO OLOROSO: Oloroso means "aromatic" & this sherry has a nose so heady that you may be reluctant to sip it, preferring to savor the smell, but once you experience its long, lingering finish, you'll be hooked on it...\$15.99  
 DIOS BACO AMONTILLADO -This amontillado is smooth & round, with great toasted nut flavors. In the Summer, I sip this slightly chilled, but in the Winter, I usually serve it room temperature. You decide which you prefer...\$15.99  
 DIOS BACO CREAM: Not as sweet as many other cream sherries, this dessert wine is perfect for sipping after dinner, before a blazing wood fire, in a candlelit room or just in the company of an old flame...\$15.99

The lush, sexy wines from Catalonia's Priorat & Montsant are the focus of our new six pack offered in Berkeley.

Barranc dels Clos -\$10.99Laurona 2001 - \$19.99

Rotllan Terra Reserva 1998 - \$16.99Les Terresses 2001 - \$24.99

Capcanes Costers de Gravet - \$17.99Odysseus 2000 - \$39.99

Normally \$130.94, the six pack comes with notes on each of the wines & is only \$105.00

### Three Great Books On Cooking!

Winter brings opportunities in the kitchen to experiment with flavors & luxuriate in the pleasure of leisurely preparing comforting foods.

Here are some books to inspire you:

**KITCHENS OF CASTILE:** This is an interesting view of Segovia from a British author who volunteered to work inside the kitchen of *Duques* one of those *cochinillo* restaurants where on any given day there may be 400 customers or 40 arriving for lunch...\$17.99

**SLOW MEDITERRANEAN KITCHEN: RECIPES FOR THE PASSIONATE COOK,** Paula Wolfert: This cookbook has been on everyone's Best 10 list. Paula's recipes make you itch to cook. The

Spanish Table contributed a recipe & also gets listed in the appendices as a source for among other things, the jars of Ybarra

Borage Stems used in *Chilled Green Pea & Borage Soup*. We successfully used our Ybarra preserved *puerros* (leeks), *brotes de ajos verdes* (green garlic shoots) & *acelgas* (swiss chard) with *tetilla* cheese in her recipe for *Panade* (p 88), a great baked dish...\$34.95

**EL BULLI, 1998-2002:** Not exactly like a cookbook, but Ferran Adrià's food at Catalonia's *El Bulli* is not exactly like anyone else's. A detailed presentation of the leading edge of cuisine...\$200.00

#### ✦ Dry Legumes in Cloth Kilo (2.2#) Bags ✦

**SPANISH DRY GARBANZOS** (chickpeas): These premium garbanzos have superior flavor & texture. Add Spanish style chorizo or smoked *pimentón de La Vera* for a hearty winter stew..\$5.99

**PARDINA** ("Duff Colored") **LENTILS:** I never get tired of finding new ways to use these little lentils that cook quickly & hold their shape & texture in everything from soup to salad...\$4.99



The Spanish Table<sup>2</sup>  
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Store Hours:

Mon - Sat 10:00 am - 6:00 pm

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La Hacienda de Ybarra preserved vegetables are great short cuts on busy nights or anytime a dish incorporates prepared vegetables, or uses pureed vegetable such as in soups. Our own import, *La Hacienda de Ybarra* vegetables from Navarra are picked at their peak & quickly preserved to capture all their flavor. Here are three ideas using these premium Spanish vegetables imported from Navarra by The Spanish

Table. Also try experimenting with our *Brotes de Ajos Verdes*, green garlic stems, adding them to casseroles, soups, stews, rice or scrambled eggs. And don't forget to pick up some Ybarra premium artichoke hearts and some Ybarra Habitas, baby fava beans in olive oil.

#### Chestnut & Cardo (Cardoon) Soup

2 cups chicken stock  
1jar Spanish chestnuts (24 nuts)  
1jar Ybarra cardos (750 ml)  
2tablespoons Spanish olive oil

Grind chestnuts to a rough powder in a food processor. Puree Cardos. Mix with chicken stock & heat, adding olive oil just before serving.

#### Acelgas (Swiss Chard) & Lentils

1jar Ybarra *alcegas*, Swiss Chard  
1cup Pardina lentils  
2cups chicken stock

Place the chicken stock, chard stems & lentils in a 25 cm cazuela & bring to a boil. When the lentils have cooked (20-30 minutes) add the Swiss chard. Cook until heated through & serve. For an even faster preparation, you can also use our pre-cooked Pardina lentils.

#### Rice with Borraja (Borage Stems)

1cup rice  
2cups water  
1pinch salt  
2tablespoons Spanish olive oil  
1jar (720ml) Ybarra borage stems

Bring water & salt to a boil in a 10 inch cazuela. Add rice. Cook for 15 minutes. Add olive oil & borage including liquid.

Cook another 5-10 minutes until rice is done. Serve in the cazuela.

**LEMON STUFFED OLIVES:** These delicious green olives are pitted and stuffed with rich lemon pulp. Try adding them to salads or martinis! THE SPANISH TABLE brand Spanish olives are also available in five unique varieties:

MORADA CORNICABRA, NEGRA ARAGON, CUQUILLO, MALLORQUINA, or ARBEQUINA...\$3.99