

WINES *from* SPAIN

NEWS

VOL. XIX NO. 3

**PILGRIMAGE TO
THE PENEDES**

**FRESH LOOK AT
A CLASSIC BRANDY**

**RIAS BAIXAS
SOMMELIER CONTEST**

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letter / from the editor

This issue of the *Wines from Spain News* brings us to the end of 2003 and to the start of a new year. We at the Trade Commission of Spain in New York want to wish all of our readers a very happy holiday season and joy filled 2004.

We begin with Jordan Mackay's article about the Penedès, a region in northeastern Spain that produces a variety of outstanding wines. While it is known primarily for Cava ~ Spain's sparkling wine ~ this region's reputation as a premium still wine producer is gaining ground. Will the Penedès be the next mecca for wine lovers to visit and pay homage to superb still wines? For now, we propose that you welcome in the new year with a glass of Cava and, while you are at it, make a resolution to try some of the Penedès premium still wines too. They can be found at prices you just won't believe.

When winter hits its deepest chill, treat yourself to a Brandy de Jerez, the uncommonly smooth spirit from southern Spain that undergoes a unique process of fractional blending known as the solera system. Randall Lane visited Jerez recently, and provides an eyewitness report on the region's brandy industry and producers.



In this issue, we are delighted to announce the winner of our Rías Baixas campaign-sponsored sommelier contest. Manhattanite James Clarke has already enjoyed an all-expenses paid trip for two to Rías Baixas, home of the albariño grape variety. His winning essay explores the region that many wine experts consider producer of one of the world's finest white wines.

Salud!

Lavinia B. Miró

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WINES FROM SPAIN
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Pilgrimage to the Penedès

by Jordan Mackay



Vineyard with Sierra de Montserrat beyond. © Cephias/Mick Rock

Driving out of Barcelona toward the Penedès wine region on a clear day, it's impossible not to be moved by the towering, domineering presence to the north of Montserrat. In Catalan, the words *mont serrat* mean "sawtooth mountain," for indeed its serrated edge looks like knife-sharp incisors or the misshapen prongs of a crown. Near the top of this monolith, invisible from the distance, is a Benedictine monastery to which people from the world over still make pilgrimages. They come by foot, car, gondola, and plane to stoke themselves in the power of this place.

This is all well and good, but the question in the vineyards is: Will pilgrims one day come to the Penedès to pay homage to the local vino, as they do in places such as Burgundy, Bordeaux, and the Napa Valley? While largely to this day, the international story of wine in the Penedès has been that of Cava, Spanish sparkling wine, the increasingly interesting issue is that of the region as a producer of still wines, a narrative two and half thousand years in the making that may be reaching its satisfying denouement.

Gurgling along at its merry pace, the Cava trade is upheld by Codorniu and Freixenet, the two largest producers of sparkling wines in the world. While those two titans are known for their inexpensive and industrialized bottlings of *methode-champenoise* Spanish bubbly, there exists in the Penedès a wonderful culture of artisanal Cavas that are rarely seen outside Spain. The strength of the titans is both a boon to the region and a hindrance. As the importer of fine Spanish wines Jorge Ordoñez told me, "Because of the dominance of those two companies everyone across the world thinks of Cava as a \$7 wine. But there are some very fine examples"—including ones made by Codorniu and Freixenet—"that no one will ever see or buy. Not one person can imagine spending \$25 on a bottle of Cava." One could argue that this reputation holds the region back as a fine still wine region, as well. Because of the dominance of Cava, do many on the outside even know that the Penedès produces still wines? Does anyone believe that more and

more Penedès wines have the potential to be great? And what will it take to make people believe? These are the questions facing the Penedès.

There's plenty of time to answer them, as the story of winegrowing in the Penedès is in fact much, much older than even the medieval Benedictines, predating Christ by as many as seven centuries. Excavated from local archaeological sites, Egyptian wine containers and other amphorae suggest that wine production in the Penedès may have even preceded the Phoenicians. From the ocean flats to the gently rolling hills inland, which gradually give way to steeper natural terraces and ridges, this was a favored land for the Romans. While wine was most certainly being produced, its story in the Penedès is largely lost for an eon, as it seemed exports dried up and most wine was consumed locally. A post-Roman international wine trade didn't resurface in the records until the seventeenth century when, export logs report, it was shipped to many parts of Europe and even Latin America. These wouldn't have been Penedès wines as we know them today, but sweet fortified wines prized more for strength than for aromatic nuance.

The next significant development in the Penedès came with the advent of Cava. Developed by Don José Raventós after a visit to Champagne in the 1860s, Cava was origi-



Bodegas of Raventos i Blanc, Sant Sadurn d'Anoia. © Cephas/Mick Rock

REGIONAL FOCUS / PENEDES



Bodega on estate of Jeon Léon near Torrelavit, Catalonia. M. Rock/Cephas

nally and still is a champagne-method wine (in which the secondary fermentation occurs in the bottle) produced mostly from native Spanish white grapes Xarello, Parellada, and Macabeo. Today, the wine can be made in six different wine regions, but 95 percent comes from the Penedès. Like Champagne, Cava ranges in degree of sweetness from brut nature (basically dry) to sweet. Despite the similarities, though, Cava is not Champagne, tending to be simpler because of its constituent grapes (though finer versions are now being made with Chardonnay and red grapes such as the native trepat) and less rigorous vineyard practices. However, Cava is always enjoyable, especially at one of Barcelona's bustling Cava bars, and virtually always less expensive than its French relative.

The biggest development on the Penedès still wine front came via the Torres winery, which was the first to import modern enological techniques and equipment (like temperature-controlled fermentation) and apply them to the production of still wines. Known for planting a prodigious number of international varieties on their property, the triumph of the Torres winery came in 1979 when their Gran Coronas wine, made from a blend of indigenous and international varieties (Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo and Monastrell), won a prestigious blind tasting over a field of heavyweight classified Bordeaux. This triumph, followed by the continuing success of that bottling with wine critics, should have been enough to establish the region as a consistent competitor with the world's best red wines. But, in fact, that hasn't happened. While the Penedès is making some lovely still wines, it continues to be known for Cava and has even been overshadowed in still red wines by its neighbor Priorat. What will it take to establish the Penedès on that scale?

It certainly won't require more conducive terroir. Located in the northeast corner of Spain in the province of Catalonia, along the Mediterranean coast southwest of Barcelona (which is less than an hour away by car from the heart of the region), the Penedès enjoys a host of excellent grape-growing conditions. Guarded from harsh and cool northern winds by the Montserrat range and warmed by the Mediterranean's humid breath from the south and east, the climate favors temperance and avoids extremes. Soils vary considerably, but the common threads of calcareous stone on top, underscored with alluvial gravel and clay underneath and scattered pockets of limestone create a superb fabric for viticulture.

The Penedès is generically divided into three climatic zones. Hottest, lowest, and wettest is the Baix Penedès. Mostly planted to Monastrell, Malvasia, Garnacha, and Cariñena, red grapes appear to be the future here, though this low-lying region is considered to have the least potential for growing high quality grapes due to its lack of day-night temperature differential. The Medio-Penedès region covers the intermediate hills, ranging from 250 to 500 meters above sea level. Thus, it tends to be hotter in the summer and cooler in the winter, a combination of maritime and continental climates. This is where most varieties do the best and the greatest range of white and red grapes



Cava cellar in the Penedès region. © Mick Rock/Cephas



The Mas Jané Estate of Miguel Torres in the Penedès. © Mick Rock/Cephas

flourish (typically Xarel-lo and Macabeo; also the best area in the Penedès for Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Monastrell). Penedès Superior, climbing between 500 and 800 meters, can reach peak heats, but in general is considered the coolest district in the region. Its potential for creating high-class white wines — Parellada, Riesling, Muscat, Chardonnay—is just beginning to be explored.

“We have all the conditions we need here,” Segura Viudas winemaker Gabriel Suberviola told me during a visit

last spring. A distinguished older gentleman in a well-tailored suit, he presides over the wines made at this venerable and ancient estate. “We have wonderful soils. We have a multitude of microclimates and suitable weather. And, most of all, we have desire.” Where the wines have fallen short in the past, he said, has been in the category of know-how. “For a long time,” Suberviola continued, “growers here didn’t understand what fine wine was or could be. For that reason, yields were always high and viticultural techniques were

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outdated. That is changing.”

Eva Bertrán, Executive Vice President for Freixenet U.S.A., the American arm of one of the Penedès' largest producers, agrees, adding that winemaking has come a long way, as well. “There are many more winemaking schools, all over Spain and internationally,” she says from her home in California. “Even if it’s a family busi-

ness, a lot of children are going off to study enology before coming back to take over operations. They are not just doing things in the way their fathers did anymore.”

Marimar Torres, sister of Miguel Torres (president of the Torres operation in Spain), came to Sonoma to establish her family’s winemaking presence in California. Marimar says that the ascension of the Penedès will come over time with a change of culture. First, she notes, it’s a matter of site selection. “The region has great potential because of its variation. There are fantastic soils and fantastic climates, but the right places have to be matched to the right grapes. That’s only starting to happen with regularity now.” Following from that is the question of yields. It’s common knowledge that low yields are required to make fine wine, but, as Torres explains, convincing a traditional farming community that less is better takes time and money. “We pay our growers for the quality of their grapes, not the quantity. This has to happen more in the Penedès. But it takes time for the culture to change. It’s not easy to convince a farmer who maybe doesn’t own his own land to cut back his crop.”

That said, there are more and more encouraging signs from the Penedès that quality still wines are as possible as



Vineyard near Font-Rubi, Catalonia. © Mick Robk/Cephas

the quality Cavas that flow with such power from the region. Marimar Torres confirms that more and more winemakers are forsaking coarser and greener American oak and investing in French oak. Wineries like Jean León, Segura Viudas, Torres, Ramón Balada, and others continue to push international varieties, which in many cases are lower yielding and produce better wines

than some of the traditional varieties. And finally, winemaking continues to improve, as evinced by the emergence of an important wine like Sot Lefriec, whose inaugural 1999 vintage garnered some huge scores. A blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Cariñena, developed by Catalan winemaker Irene Alemany and Frenchman Laurent Corrio. Taken from low-yielding vineyards and aged in French oak, it’s a collaboration between Spanish and French grapes and winemakers and could indicate the future direction of Penedès still wines.

And it’s a future that looks bright. Cava has secured the Penedès as a perpetual region of great bubbles, the kind that keep nearby Barcelona hopping late into the night. And with the continued development of winemaking, winemakers, and vineyards, we might expect that pilgrims will quench their thirst in Penedès tasting rooms with a few drops of legendary wine as they make their way home from the jagged peaks of Montserrat.

Jordan Mackay is a San Francisco-based writer. He is the wine columnist for the **Austin American-Statesman (TX)**, as well as the wine editor for San Francisco’s metropolitan magazine **7x7**, and a contributing writer for **Wine and Spirits** magazine.

Sommelier Contest Winner & Journalists Tour Rías Baixas

His feet firmly planted on the granite platform at the top of Mount Tecla looking south across the Miño River, the southern boundary of the Rías Baixas region, Sommelier Contest winner, James Clarke, smiled at the cameras yet another time. The photographers this time were his fellow travelers, journalists Peter Hellman and Bryan Miller, Jill Roberts of The Harrison restaurant in New York City, and Rory Callahan and Eva Minguez for the Consejo Regulador Rías Baixas.

The winning prize of this nationwide sommelier competition was a trip for two to Rías Baixas. James Clarke, of the B.R. Guest hospitality group in New York, submitted the winning entry that included his tasting notes of a particular Albariño, an inventive wine and food pairing and a well-written essay on the region and its wines. (See pages 10-11.)

The journalists and sommeliers joined company for three days of visits to bodegas and vineyards, markets and restaurants with the occasional side tour to sites of historic interest. The Rías Baixas visit culminated in a comprehensive tasting of the wines from eight bodegas that could not be visited during this trip. Wines from a total of sixteen bodegas were sampled over the three-day period.



Above: James Clarke in Rías Baixas; below, from left, Rory Callahan, Bryan Miller, Jill Roberts, Peter Hellman, James Clarke; below left: view of ancient Celtic ruins with Monte Santa Tecla in the distance; left: tasting Albariño wines, seated from left, Bryan Miller, Jill Roberts, James Clarke, standing from left, Peter Hellman and Rory Callahan.



Rías Baixas Sommelier Contest

This fall, the Rías Baixas Promotional Campaign sponsored a contest for members of the American Sommelier Association. Members of the Association were invited to sample a bottle of 2002 Albariño wine from Rías Baixas and submit a three-part answer. First, they had to describe the wine in brief but precise tasting notes. Then they had to pair the wine with food and provide a detailed rationale for this pairing. Finally, they were asked to write an essay introducing the region and its wines to a fictional person who had been hired to market the wines of Rías Baixas. The contest winner would receive an all-expenses paid trip for two to the Rías Baixas region. The program received 200 responses. The winner, James Clarke, who works with the B.R. Guest group in New York City, was able to visit the region in early December. Two contestants received honorable mentions: Elizabeth Cahill and Paul Mach. The following essay is from James Clarke's contest entry, which we are delighted to present to our readers.

You'll fly in over low green hills, and maybe that view, together with the sound of bagpipes, will convince you that you accidentally boarded a plane to Shannon instead of Galicia. There's also a good chance of rain to encourage the illusion. However, the warmth, seafood, and especially the wine will tell you otherwise.

Those hills reach out into the Atlantic, creating fjord-like inlets that give the DO of Rías Baixas its name in Gallego, the local language. The soils range from granite to chalk to clay, with lots of minerals but few nutrients,

perfect for wine-growing. While the average elevation is not tremendous, the slopes encourage good drainage so the vines still reach deep into the earth. Given the high rainfall ~ this may be the only winegrowing area of Spain that did not get



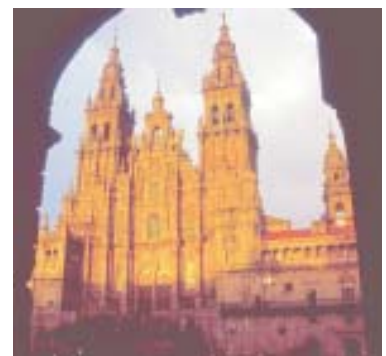
excited about the change in irrigation regulations in 1996 ~ that drainage is important. The neighboring Atlantic Ocean provides not only rain but also humidity, so growers gen-

erally favor trellising their vines with pergolas, allowing air to circulate around the grapes, thereby discouraging rot and fostering ripening. Fortunately, late summer is usually the driest part of the year, providing perfect ripening conditions for harvest in October. Grapes like it here.

The grapes! Rías Baixas boasts a number of high-quality indigenous grapes, so the monks who were probably the first wine producers here never needed to import any of the more international varieties that their Cistercian colleagues outside of Spain

were growing. Chief among them is albariño, occupying more than 90% of the DO's vineyard area. Popular blending grapes, when they are used, include treixadura, loureira,

and torrontes. The first two are often employed to heighten the aromatics of a wine, while the last can add a charge of acidity as well. These are, I might add, all white grapes; a tiny amount of red wine is produced in this region



All photos this article © J.D. Dallet

MARTKET FOCUS / RIAS BAIXAS CONTEST



that have brought Rías Baixas to the world's attention.

Single-varietal albariño wines dominate production; in keeping with EU regulations, they must consist of 100% albariño to be labeled as such. There are five subzones to the appellation, and all five are permitted to produce pure albariño wines. The largest, Valle de Salnés, and the smallest, Soutomaior, also permit production of blends of approved grapes with a minimum of 70% albariño, as does the newest subzone, Ribeira del Ulla, in the northern part of the appellation. The two southern appellations along the Miño River allow some variations on this figure; in El Rosal, albariño together with loureira must make up 70% of the blend, while Condado de Tea has the same minimum requirement for albariño and treixadura. Clearly albariño rules the roost, and plantings of this grape are on the rise throughout the DO.

What does all this taste like then? Fresh, aromatic, light. Notes of peach, melon, pear, and sometimes even apricot countered by a crystalline minerality. The vibrant acidity is occasionally smoothed out with the slightest of petillance. Some producers are experimenting with oak-aging but this is certainly the exception so far.

This is the perfect wine for demonstrating the adage that a wine matches with the cuisine of the region where it

from caiño, espadeiro, alicante, and some other varietals, but it is the refreshing white wines of the appellation

is made. Galicia's inlets make it a shellfish lover's paradise, and these wines, with their crisp character, are a natural partner. Seafood is loved throughout Spain, so it should come as no surprise that Rías Baixas has become the country's number one white wine region.

The DO's popularity ~ actually, the DO itself ~ is nonetheless a recent phenomenon. Created in 1988, the original fourteen producers have expanded to 164 wineries as of 2001. Total production has followed a similar trend, but because of well thought out regulations, quality has not fal-

tered the way it does in many parts of the world when a local wine makes good. The exceptional potential of the indigenous grapes has been matched by strict requirements in the winery so that no winemaker gets by with less than state-of-the-art facilities. Expect clean facilities with lots of shiny stainless steel during your visit.

I'm sure you will enjoy yourself there. In between your winery and vineyard visits, I hope you get a chance to see some of the wonderful Romanesque churches and monasteries that those monks I mentioned earlier left behind. It's the right area for a pilgrimage ~ just south of Santiago de Compostela, the most popular pilgrim's destination of Medieval Europe ~ and if your pilgrimage is more vinous than religious I don't think anyone will hold it against you.

~ Jim Clarke



Fresh Look at a Classic Brandy

Jerez de la Frontera is aptly named. First, there's the Jerez part. It doesn't take a linguist to see where Sherry got its name, and as the eastern vertex in Spain's "Sherry triangle," thousands flock to its stately bodegas. Then comes Frontera. Tucked into the tiny sliver of southern Spain between Gibraltar and Portugal that straddles the Atlantic, good 90 minutes from Seville at the closest major airport, it feels like a frontier town even today. No one simply passes through, however — visitors actually *want* to be here, and those not interested in Sherry gravitate to the majestic dancing horses at the Royal Andalusian School of Equestrian Arts.

Understandably then, even though Jerez is responsible for more than 90% of Spain's output, the town's brandy offerings sometimes get a short shrift. And market conditions are doing much to change that. World-wide Spanish brandy has been declining for 3.7 million cases, down over 10 percent since 1990, according to IWSR's Global Spirits & Drinks Record. Almost all of that decrease is due to a drop-off in domestic sales. "Brandy is suffering from an old-fashioned image in Spain," says José Luis Hermoso, who oversees IWSR's Spain coverage.

Within those statistics, however, there's an interesting bright spot. While sales of standard and bulk brandy are generally on a downslide — skyrocketing exports to the Philippines offer the only upswing in that category — global consumption of premium and super-premium brandy is up slightly over the past 10 years. Not surprisingly, the producers of Jerez are increasingly focusing their efforts on

these higher-margin categories.

In doing so, Jerez is reviving a rivalry with Cognac and, to a lesser extent, Armagnac, that's been ongoing since the 16th century, when Dutch traders, who dealt with both markets, dubbed the wine boiled down for efficiency

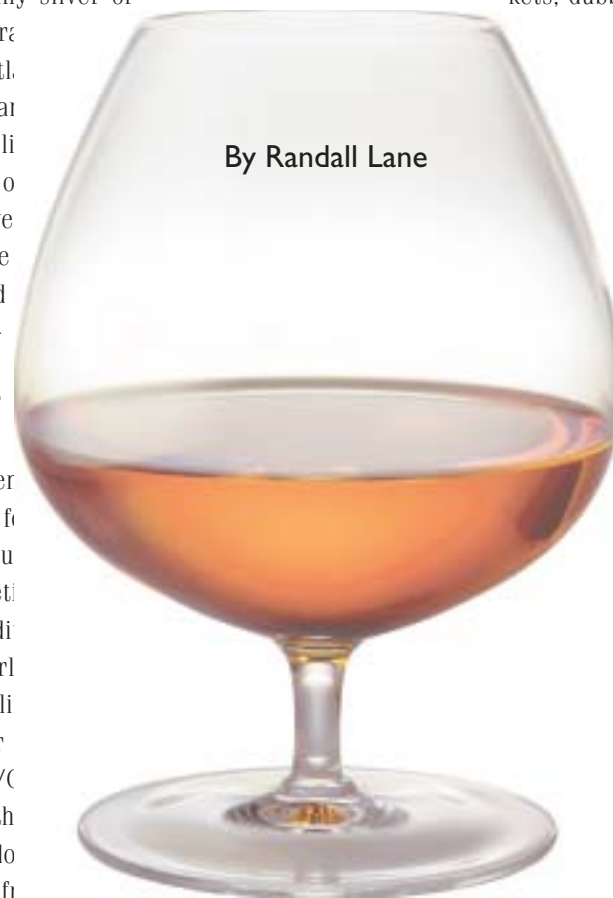
"brandewijn," or burnt wine, usually giving rise to the name. However, while both are grape products, Cognac and Brandy de Jerez are vastly different products.

Start with the grapes: Cognac uses Ugni Blanc, which generally produces a wine in the 8 percent alcohol range, while most Brandy de Jerez utilizes Airén, which yields a wine closer to 12 percent.

Then there's the aging process. Cognac is aged in individual casks, starting in new oak, and moving to used Cognac barrels. Not surprisingly, given the location, Brandy de Jerez is often aged in barrels used to store Sherry, and employs a unique solera system, which automatically blends newer and older brandies in order to achieve a fairly consistent taste (see sidebar). "Some of the brandy in these barrels is 100

years old," says Ricardo Rebuella, secretary general of the Brandy de Jerez Regulatory Board, as he sits in a meeting room in the organization's beautifully-renovated colonial-era office in downtown Jerez.

Indeed, the complex aging process marks a key selling point for Brandy de Jerez. Brandy de Jerez premium brandies generally age from anywhere between one to three years, but the ultra-premium Solera Gran Reserva spends at least 12 years in the solera system, yielding a brandy with an extremely smooth taste.



As with Sherry, while each house strives for a consistent style, there's no uniformity between Jerez's Solera Gran Reserva producers. At one end of the spectrum, there's Sánchez Romate Hermanos, which feels as close to a mom-and-pop operation as these bodegas can get. Its top brandy, Cardenal Mendoza, ages for 15 years and possesses a long, plum-like finish that seems to last nearly as long. At the other end of the size scale is Williams and Humbert. This producer, while tipping its cap to Jerez's history, complete with a stable of white Andalusian horses, sits in a giant industrial facility on the outskirts of town. Its Solera Gran Reserva brandy, Gran Duque de Alba, also boasts a long finish that hits notes of chocolate and citrus.

Perhaps the two grandest bodegas of Jerez, Pedro Domecq (owned by Allied Domecq) and González Byass (the family-owned giant behind Tio Pepe Sherry) also diverge. A visit to the stately Pedro Domecq campus, complete with statues and museums, feels like a walk through history, and fittingly, its tea-colored Carlos I Solera Gran Reserva is produced from a solera that's over 100 years old. This bodega, founded by a Frenchman in the 18th Century, adheres to classic Brandy de Jerez style. Meanwhile, González Byass, founded by a Spaniard, now leans toward France for its influences. This 169-year-old company is clearly not taking any chances in the Cognac-brandry battles. Their Solera Gran Reserva line, Lepanto, takes Airén and Palomino grapes, distills them twice in a pot still (like Cognac) before putting

it through a typical Jerez 15-year solera process. The result: a brandy designed to beat Cognac at its own game — and cement Jerez's reputation for brandy as solidly as its reputation for horses and Sherry.

Randall Lane is the wine and spirits columnist for *Time Out New York*. He was a 2003 National Magazine Award finalist for his wine coverage.



PRODUCTION OF BRANDY DE JEREZ

1. Airén grapes are harvested and are fermented into a bone-dry white wine.
2. This wine is distilled into a spirit.
3. The spirit is dynamically aged in American white oak barrels, all of which were formerly used for Sherry. The flavor of the brandy is greatly influenced by the type of Sherry the barrels once housed. A Fino barrel will produce a lighter, dryer brandy; a Pedro Ximénez barrel yields more rich-

ness and sweetness in the brandy.

4. The aged brandy is transferred into a solera. As in Sherry aging, this solera process mixes fixed percentages of new brandy vintages with incremental older vintages. The younger barrels are called criaderas. The final barrel is the solera, from which the brandy is drawn for bottling. Solera Gran Reserva stays in the solera system for at least 12 years.

James Beard Foundation Honors Spanish Culinary Stars

Spanish culinary giants, the three-star Michelin chefs Ferran Adrià of El Bulli in Roses and Juan Mari Arzak of Restaurante Arzak in San Sebastian, were the honored guests at The James Beard Foundation's 17th annual Holiday Auction and Dinner on November 16 at the Essex House Hotel in New York City. Attended by over 370 food and wine

enthusiasts from across the country, the event is The James Beard Foundation's largest annual fundraiser and this year raised \$400,000, an unprecedented amount. All proceeds benefit The James Beard Foundation House general fund and scholarship programs.

Chefs Adrià and Arzak represent the leading edge of the Spanish culinary revolution, and have been tremendously influential not only in Spanish cuisine, but also in world cuisine. Juan Mari Arzak, beginning in the 1970s, initiated the New Basque Cuisine movement, which influenced countless chefs throughout Spain. And since the late 1980s, Ferran Adrià has changed perspectives around the world on how food should taste, feel, look and smell, producing a fearless, surprising and controversial cuisine.

The evening featured a team of chefs from Spain, the U.S. and Mexico City, who prepared a tribute dinner to chefs Adrià and Arzak. Each dinner table was hosted and cre-



atively decorated by leading New York City chefs and food industry professionals. Restaurant Daniel was voted "Best Decorated" table for its luscious "tree" design.

Spanish wine and food expert Gerry Dawes was the 2003 auction dinner chair. Participating guest chefs included: James Beard Foundation Award recipients; Adrià protégé and Best Chef Mid-Atlantic Region in 2003

José Ramón Andrés, Jaleo and Café Atlántico, Washington, D.C., and two-time Best Chef (California 1998 and Southwest 2002) Julian Serrano, Picasso at the Bellagio Hotel,

Las Vegas. Joining them were Teresa Barrenechea, Marichu, New York City; Enrique Sánchez, Taberna del Alabardero, Washington, D.C.; and Arzak protégé Bruno Oteiza, Restaurante Tezka, Mexico City. From Barcelona, renowned dessert chef Jordi Butrón, who serves



From left: Gerry Dawes, Ferran Adrià, Len Pickell, Martha Stewart, Juan Mari Arzak.

all-dessert menus at his Espai Sucre restaurant and cooking school, presented the evening's dessert course. In addition, a Spanish artisan cheese course was featured and selected by Terrance Brennan's Artisanal Cheese Center, New York City.

The menu was paired with a selection of Spanish wines, starting with a Cava and Sherry tapas reception, continuing with specially chosen white wines and elegant reds from Catalonia, Rioja and Ribera del Duero, followed by a selection of Brandy de Jerez Solera Gran Reserva.

The James Beard Foundation is a not-for-profit culinary organization dedicated to furthering the appreciation and practice of the culinary arts. For further information call 212-675-4984 or log onto www.jamesbeard.org.



From left: José Ramón Andrés, Juan Mari Arzak, friend of James Beard Foundation, and Ferran Adrià.



Spanish Wine Cellar Inaugurated

Wines from Spain, a division of the Trade Commission of Spain in New York, has designed a new program to increase imports of Spanish wines and spirits in the U.S. The recently inaugurated Spanish Wine Cellar already includes 158 wines from approximately 30 of Spain's Denominaciones de Origin. This program services all of those Spanish producers of alcoholic beverages interested in introducing or increasing distribution of their product in this market.



The Spanish Wine Cellar is a brochure containing information on specific product lines seeking U.S. representation. It will be mailed to approximately 1,000 prospective U.S. importers, distributors and reps throughout the country.

The brochure will be supported by an interactive web site, www.spanishwinecellar.com, where interested parties can obtain detailed information on the participating product lines. Both the brochure mailing and web site are scheduled to launch in late December 2003. For further information, please contact bony@mcx.es

First Release of New Toro Wine Set for 2004



From left: Jacques Lurton, Dany & Michel Rolland and Francois Lurton.

Jacques and Francois Lurton and Dany and Michel Rolland have been working together since 2000 to produce **Campo Eliseo DO Toro**, made from 100% Tinto del Toro. 2001 is the first vintage of Campo Eliseo to be released, with a production of 9,100 bottles. In early 2004 the wine will be available in the United States. For further information (including state availability and prices) readers may contact **HG Marketing** of New York City at 718-403-0097 or email: helen.gregory@mindspring.com.



Trade and Press Trip to Brandy Region of Spain

This fall, the Brandy de Jerez Promotional Campaign brought key members of trade and press from New York and Miami to Jerez. From September 12-17 they visited major architectural and historic landmarks in Sevilla and Jerez as well as many Brandy bodegas. They also enjoyed artistic and cultural events. But most of all, they experienced some of the finest spirits, wine and food of Spain in their place of origin. For further information contact Aileen Robbins at arobbins@dunrobbinsgroup.com.



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