

### Spanish Wine Values



Nothing sends wine shivers down my spine faster than someone who thinks that the definition of Spanish Wine is Sangria! Ugh! It's like fingernails on a chalkboard. But if you're looking for delicious wines for a very good price, then right now, the best place to find them is Spain.

Spain is a hot, dry, mountainous country with more vineyard land than any other nation on earth. It ranks third in the world in wine production, after France and Italy. For decades, only Spain's most famous red wine region, Rioja, had any international presence for fine wines. But today, wine programs from other regions throughout the country have awakened from a long slumber to showcase some of the best values on the world wine stage.

Here are four stunning examples that please the palate and ease the pocketbook.

Located in Labastida, a beautiful old village in the foothills of the Sierra Cantabria in Rioja is the La Perla winery, producer of the **2014 La Perla White**, a blend of 90% Viura and 10% Malvasia. The altitude there is higher and the climate cooler than most of Rioja, which results in wines of stunning freshness. The nose features scents of white peach with just a hint of honey. In the mouth, the wine is characterized by enticing flavors of lemon and fresh apple, with white floral notes dancing on the bright, well-balanced finish. **\$10**

As the weather heats up, my go-to starter wine is Rosé. The **2014 Arrocal Rosa** hails from Ribera del Duero regions – one of Spain's most dynamic wine regions and just a short two-hour drive north of Madrid. Made from 100 percent Tempranillo, this medium pink-colored beauty exudes aromas of strawberry and rhubarb on the nose and flavors of strawberries, dark raspberries and cherries in the mouth. The finish is crisp and dry, so it will pair well beautifully with grilled or roasted chicken. **\$15**

Grenache has claims to have originated in Spain, where it is known as Garnacha and quickly spread around the world. The **2013 Stylo Old Vine Grenache by QUO** is a fine example of the quality of wine being produced in the Campo de Borja region. Made from 100 percent Garnacha, the fruit is sourced from 77 year old vines and produces a dark ruby-colored wine that exudes a splendid nose with aromas of cherry and spice box. The palate overflows with flavors of blackberry, dark plum and cherry that dominates on the front of the tongue. Lovely notes of licorice and tobacco mingle with soft tannins and bright acidity to provide remarkable balance and structure on the lingering finish. This is a spectacular value! **\$15**

And for a bit of a splurge, hunt down a bottle of the **2008 Bodegas Muriel Reserva**. This is a fantastic value in a premium red wine. Hand selected Tempranillo grapes come from vineyards located in Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Alta and are an average age of 40 years old. The wine is aged in American and French oak barrels for 24 months and then undergoes further bottle aging for two more years prior to release. The palate boasts mature red fruits such as dark cherry and black plum. Notes of chocolate, licorice and baking spices mingle on a round, velvety and elegant frame, supported by soft, supple tannins on the long, satisfying finish. Ideal with a variety of grilled and roasted meats. **\$20**