

Wine & Cheese by TCC's April 2008 Wine Club

Wines from Spain

This month, we bring you two wines from Spain. Spain has more acres of grape vines than any other country and is the third largest producer of wine in the world. Can you guess the top two?

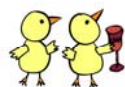
This month's first selection is called Muga Blanco from Bodegas Muga S.A. in the Rioja region of Spain. Rioja is located south of the Cantabrian Mountains which help to moderate the region's climate. They have been producing wine in Rioja since the year 873, 85% of which is red wine. Like all of Spain, wine is a large part of the region's culture and cuisine. Each year in the town of Haro, a wine festival is held that involves a Batalla de Vino (Battle of the Vine) where wine is fired from water pistols. Sounds like our kind of festival!

The second selection is Can Blau from Cellar Can Blau located in the Montsant region. Montsant is a horseshoe shaped appellation that was given official status in August 2001. It surrounds the Priorat region on three sides and is located along the Mediterranean coast south and west of Barcelona. It was decided to separate this region from Priorat due to its very different soil that is comprised mostly of loose red sands and chalk.

In the following pages, there is some information regarding your wine club selections. First, you'll find maps* showing the regions from where the wines were produced. Next, you will see a description of each wine, some technical information on the wines, and food pairing suggestions.

As always, your feedback is encouraged. Please call us or stop by with your comments regarding our selections.

Have a great month!
The Gang at TCC

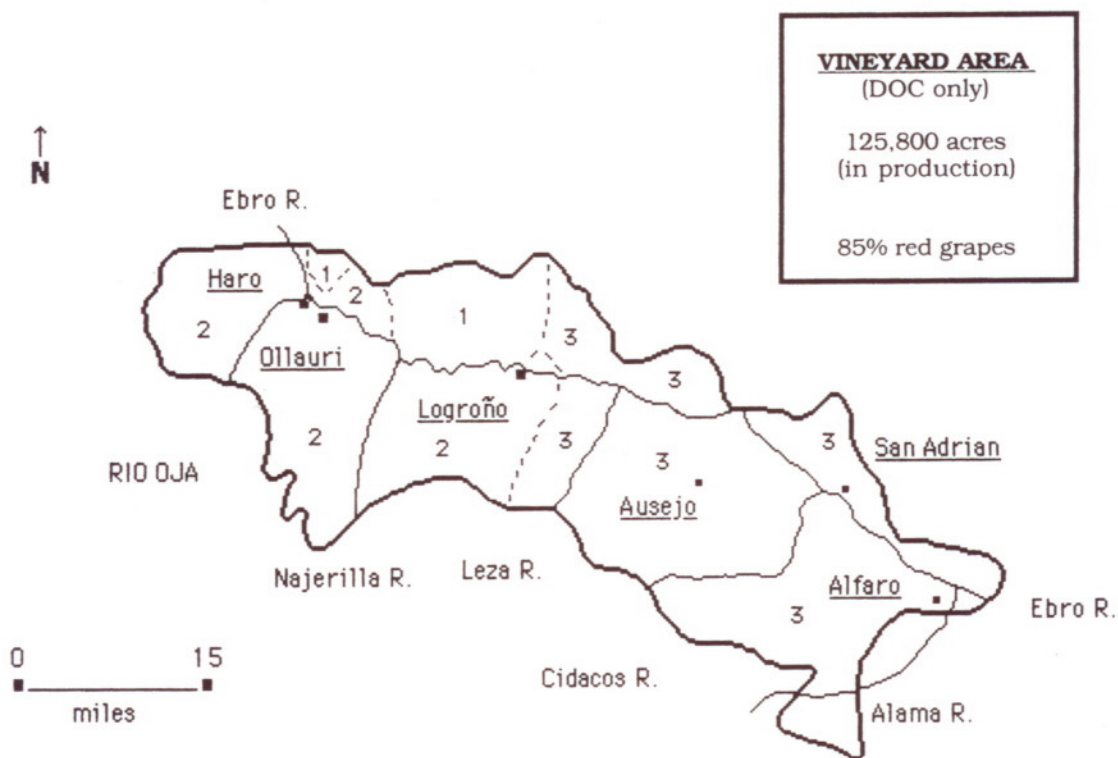


Wine & Cheese by TCC



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#93 -- RIOJA



VINEYARD AREA

(DOC only)

125,800 acres
(in production)

85% red grapes

PRODUCTION

52,000,000 gallons

90% reds, 6% white
and
4% rosés

46% Alta, 28% Baja
and 26% Alavesa

MAJOR GRAPE VARIETIES (in production)

Red: Tempranillo (aka Ull de Llebre, Cencibel, Valdepeñas among others: 76,715), Garnacha (aka Grenache, Lladoner: 22,615), Mazuelo (aka Carignane: 4,480), Graciano (aka Morrastel: 975) and Cabernet-Sauvignon (450).

White: Viura (aka Maccabeo: 18,750), Malvasia de Rioja (aka Subirat Parent: 315) and Garnacha blanca (110).

Sales by Category

53% of wines are sold as Sin Crianzas, 36% as Crianzas, 8% as Reservas and 3% as Gran Reservas

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ZONES WITH RESPECT TO GRAPE VARIETY

Alavesa: the highest percentage of Tempranillo (83%-- the average: 60%); and the least Garnacha tinta (2%);

Alta: the highest percentage (21%) of white grapes --- the average (15%); and

Baja: the highest percentage of Garnacha tinta (38%--the average: 18%) and the highest percentage overall of red grapes (91%) as well as the highest percentage of Mazuelo (7% as opposed to 4% for the region as a whole).

SUB-REGIONS

(% of acreage)

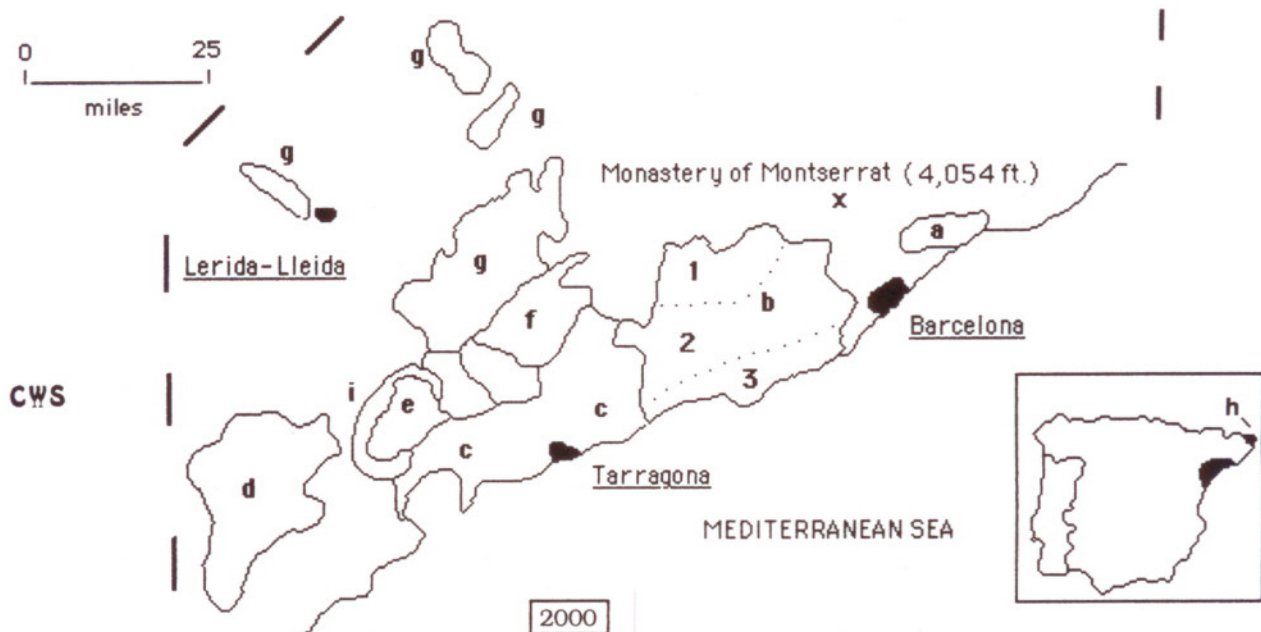
2001

1. Alavesa (23%)
2. Alta (41%)
3. Baja (36%)

CWS



#95 -- PENEDES AND ENVIRONS



Denomination	Vyds(*)	Production (G)	Major Varieties (% of Total Acres **)
a. Alella	835	96,600	Xarello (white & pink) & Garnacha blanca.
b. Penedès --1) Alto --2) Medio --3) Bajo	68,000	32,000,000	Xarello (36%), Macabeo (26%), Parellada (25%), Cabernet-Sauvignon (3.5%), Chardonnay (3%), Ull de Llebre *** (2.9%).
c. Tarragona	27,900	11,979,200	Macabeo (59%), Parellada (26%), Xarello (3%); Tempranillo (7%).
d. Terra Alta	22,800	7,957,000	77% Garnaxta blanca, 10% Macabeo, 5% Mazuelo/Carignane, 2% Garnaxta tinta.
e. Priorato	3,600	492,500	Garnaxta (38%), Mazuelo (37%), Cabernet-Sauvignon (10%), Syrah (4%), Merlot, Garnaxta blanca & Macabeu (3% each).
f. Conca de Barberá	14,650	2,082,000	Macabeo & Parellada; Trepat & Tempranillo.
g. Costers del Segre	10,350	3,477,000	Garnacha Tempranillo, C-S & Merlot, Macabeo, Xarello, Parellada, Chardonnay;
h. Empordà-Costa Brava ##	6,115	1,257,800	Carignane, Garnaxta negra, Macabeu, Xarello, Garnaxta blanca, Cabernet-Sauvignon
i. Montsant	4,200	NA	Garnaxta tinta, Mazuelo, Garnaxta blanca.
TOTALS	157,950	58,084,300 #	Est. based on above: Maccabeo (24%), Parellada & Xarello (15% each), Garnacha blanca (11%)

* acres of land planted, not necessarily producing; **includes land for non-DO wines within DO;
 *** synonym for Tempranillo

represents c. 16% of Spain's DO total

see inset (aka Ampurdan-Costa Brava)

Note: all of these DO's are within the umbrella DO "Catalunya" which extends west and north to the French border. In addition, the DO "Cava" applies to all of Penedès, eastern Tarragona and most of Conca de Barberá.

Bodegas Muga S.A.

Muga Blanco

Type:	White Wine
Varietal composition:	90% Viura, 10% Malvasia
Vineyard Location:	Rioja
Vintage:	2006
Country:	Spain
Alcohol:	13.5%
Age-ability:	Drink now or cellar for 2 years

Winemaking Philosophy and Vinification Details

Bodegas Muga S.A. was founded by Isaac Muga in 1932. Upon his death in 1969, his sons Manuel and Isaac took over the management and winemaking of the winery. Bodegas Muga has the reputation of being the most traditional producer in Rioja.

Grapes for this wine are hand-harvested and undergo two sets of tastings which result in the elimination of 50% of the harvest. The grapes are then left to sit for 12 hours, pressed and then the juice is transferred into new French oak barrels for fermentation on its lees for four months.

Tasting Notes

This wine has lovely aromas of spring flowers, sweet perfume and tropical fruits. It has flavors of honey, pear, and apricot with a medium to full body and a long, nutty finish.

Pairing Suggestions

Pair this wine with your favorite Spanish tapas including baked goat cheese with tomato sauce, garlic potato salad, and seafood and sausage paella. Also, great with French Raclette, Spanish Manchego, and aged Gouda cheeses.

For this month's cheese club selection, pair with the Iberico. The apricot and honey notes of the wine marry nicely with the tangy creaminess of the cheese.

Cellar Can Blau Can Blau

Type:	Red Wine
Varietal composition:	40% Cariñena (also known as Mazuelo), 40% Garnacha, and 20% Syrah
Vineyard Location:	Montsant
Vintage:	2006
Country:	Spain
Alcohol:	14.5%
Age-ability:	Drinks best now or cellar for 6-8 years

Winemaking Philosophy and Vinification Details

The winery is located in the village of Mas Roig on 60 acres of vineyards that have an average age of 35 years. The Cariñena grapes are planted on sandy clay soil, the Syrah on chalky soils, and the Garnacha on slate.

The winemaking team consists of Australian winemaker, Liz Reed, and Catalan winemaker, Ricard Rofes. They released their first wine from Cellar Can Blau in November 2005. The wine is aged in 100% new French oak for 12 months.

Tasting Notes

This wine has a beautiful ruby purple color and aromas of blueberry, black cherry, and smoke. It has full, ripe flavors of blueberry, raspberry and blackberry with a long finish that has a touch of black licorice. It has a very full body with round fruit flavors yet remains completely balanced.

Pairing Suggestions

The fruit of this wine loves heartier fare. Try it with tomato soup, mushroom risotto, beef tacos, cured meats, and roast duck. Also, pair it with the Comte Saint Antoine, Morbier, and aged goat cheeses such as Garrotxa.

For this month's cheese club selection, try it with the aged Mahón. The rich fruit of the wine complements the salty butterscotch notes of the cheese.

Enjoy!