



Priorat - How to reinvent the wheel

by Collin Williams

Since entering this business, I have always known (and been weary of) the famous, historic region of Spain known as Priorat. I viewed Priorat in the same manner that a freshman baseball player views his Varsity counterpart - with awe and intrigue.

Priorat, holy and mysterious, has set a bar for Spanish wine that screams quality and prestige. Everything from the incredibly steep and low yield vineyards, the unique make up of the soils which consists of a black slate known as licorella, and the interesting blends that are Vino Tinto Priorat, all of these allow the true wine connoisseur to stand back in appreciation.

However, now that the evil head of the global economy has reared its ugly head, these places - renowned in premium wines (like Priorat), are left wondering how to reinvent the wheel. Sure, some of these wines can warrant the \$50 plus price point. But, now these same producers are left with an empty house at the big event. The once \$50 median price point has become \$20, and people are looking for values over prestige brands.

Thus, I ask the question of many of our vendors and suppliers "where is the entry level Priorat wine at an everyday price?" I understand the business, I understand the cost of production and what factors are involved. However, be it Spec's or the most renowned Priorat Winery - if you can't sell it, all of the factors that went into the quality of the wine DON'T. What matters? Listening to our customers' wants, needs, and desires. And I do!

So the following wines are those that I have specifically sought out because you can get that incredible Priorat influence at a more reasonable price. Enjoy.

Perelada GR-174 2007 (DOCa Priorat)

\$19.73 cash

CW - "3.9 of 5"; EVD

35% Garnacha, 30% Carinena, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon. 50% of the juice was aged nine months in French Oak Barrels. This wine is beautiful in the glass with hints of cherry red. On the nose, lots of floral and sweet herbs. The great aspect of this wine is its fruitiness. Bright, juicy, and fresh fruit flavors of cherry, raspberry, and strawberry linger on the palate with a fine tannin structure wrapping everything together. Great.

Zaumau Tinto 2008 (DOCa Priorat)

\$19.25 cash

CW - "3.5 of 5"; EVD

This wine is new to us and from a brand new portfolio to the category - Jose Pastor. Referred to as the originator of fine Spanish Wine exports, Jose Pastor represents many boutique wineries from Spain that are of stellar quality and price.

This wine is made of predominately Garnacha with small amounts of Carinena (or Samsó). Interestingly, this wine sees no oak in the winemaking process. Big, fresh flavors of plum and purple fruit on the nose with bright, blackberry and plum paste on the palate. Well balanced acidity adds to the fresh "pop" in the mouth and an easy finish completes the package. Very easy and flavorful.

Buil and Gine "Gine" Tinto 2008 (DOCa Priorat)

\$18.95 cash

CW - "3 of 5"; EVD

Prodominately Grenache with some Carignan, these grapes were sourced from 50% old vines. A little bit more of the "licorella" mineral flavors show through here with the purple and wild strawberry fruit competing nicely. Smooth with generous tannins, this wine goes down easy and relays a great value. *Also, it is important to note that the producers of this wine are using a Burgundian bottle vs. the Bordeaux shape that is more typical in this region. ☺



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