

COLLIN'S COLUMN

Journeyman's Travel Log: Ribera del Duero by Collin Williams

I recently traveled to the DOCa of Ribera del Duero in the Northern part of Spain to visit some suppliers, meet with friends, and seek out a few new wines to bring to Spec's. I have been to this region of Spain many times before, but this trip was a little more extensive and I was able to spend a lot more attention in the vineyards and with the winemakers versus just a pass by.

Tempranillo is king in Ribera del Duero and nearly all of the production here uses 100% of this grape in their bottling. You may be asking "If every producer uses the same grape with the same percentages then what is the difference among examples of wine from the region?" Great question! I'm glad you asked.

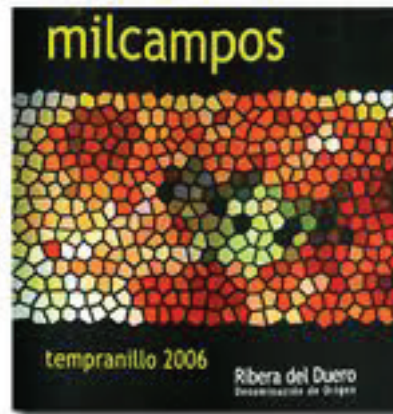
Ribera del Duero is one of the highest altitudes for planting vines in the country of Spain. This high altitude lends to a unique microclimate in which the Tempranillo grapes develop their truly incredible flavors. Also, the soils vary throughout the winegrowing area. Similar to the way Shiraz can produce different results from each individual part of Australia, Tempranillo takes on aspects of the particular soil and environment in which it is grown.

Soils vary here just as the styles of wine. While traveling there last month, I viewed vines grown in river beds saturated with large rounded stones, others in hard clay soils, and also those vines grown in soft sandy soils that backed up against forests of pine trees. All of these factors are something you must experience versus reading about in order to truly appreciate the different nuances in viticulture.



*In fact: I was able to take a video while walking through one of the sandy vineyards near Arandas del Duero and was able to showcase how the vines grow there. To check it out for yourself, go to YouTube and type in the key words "specs1962 Ribera del Duero vineyards". *

Also, here are a few recommendations of the wines I tasted while there.



Milcampos 2008
\$10.99 cash
(includes \$2 key discount through Sept. 1, 2011)

Milcampos is Spanish for "one thousand fields". The 2008 vintage is made of 100% Tempranillo which sees no oak, enabling the fresh fruity character to shine through to the finish. The flavorful red wine shows

bright red fruit on the nose and a solid core of black cherry flavor on the palate. Juicy and plump, coffee flavors combine with the fruit to establish a complex wine.

[*Also, check out our Spec's Wine Down video blog of this wine at YouTube "specs1962 Milcampos"*](#)

Casajus Vendimia Seleccion 2006
\$20.79 cash (includes \$2 key discount through Sept. 1, 2011)
91pts – Robert Parker

The 2006 Vendimia Seleccion is a bit more expressive aromatically with floral and mineral notes than the 2005. However, it is less dense and structured. It will evolve for 1-2 years and drink well through 2020. It is an excellent value in age-worthy Tempranillo. 🍷



Please email me at collinwilliams@specsonline.com with feedback.