

COLLIN'S COLUMN



SPAIN

The Wine Journeyman's Travel Log

by Collin Williams



Well, a new year brings about new opportunities for great deals, more possibilities for new wines, and maybe even a few new exciting wine experiences. Also, for the wine buyer, a new year means more travelling in search of that next great Wine or to reconfirm the purchases made in the past through firsthand accounts of the wine's quality.

I am beginning to think of myself as the "Wine Journeyman" nowadays due to the amount of traveling I have been doing over the last three years. Traveling to the different wine locals around the world and

experiencing those cultures is an eye-opening experience that I hope each of you will be able to take part in during your travels.

Recently, I returned back from a 10 day business trip to Spain where I met up with the legendary importer/marketer Jorge Ordonez. While this is my 3rd trip to the country, I am still in awe with each experience involving the journeys in Spain.

Wine Journeyman's Travel Log – Part 1

Traveling to Spain has become a joy in my life. Not only is it exciting to be able to travel in a country so steeped in history and culture, but there has always been a very welcoming aura surrounding these people and their way of life.

The flight is not too bad either. From Houston, a quick stop in New York will then prompt a 6 ½ hour flight into Madrid. With these types of journeys I try to put the time into quantitative terms: 6 ½ hrs = 1 movie, dinner, and a good nap!

The first couple of days was spent traveling southbound from Madrid through La Mancha, Jumilla, and finally all the way down to Malaga.

Here's a listing of the current vintages of the wines we tried during the trip:

Day 1 (2-19) Madrid

Lunch at Santelone

Lunch was great here as it was an upscale restaurant that has become famous in Madrid. Most interesting during the meal was the huge display of cheeses stationed outside the dining room. Possibly 100 cheeses on display each contributing their intoxicating aromas to the "would be admirer".



Wines tasted

Marques de Gelida Brut Cava 2005
CW – "2.5 of 5"; EVD
\$13.85 cash



What's interesting about this Cava producer is that they will designate vintages on their wines where other houses will simply use the non-vintage label.

Fairly simple on the nose with straight forward citrus aromas. The palate is nice and smooth showing good acidity with a slightly dry finish. Perfect as a pairing bubbles.

Can Blau (DO Montsant) 2008

\$11.40 cash
CW – "2.5 of 5"; EVD



Interesting note: Some vintages of this wine will barrel age all the juice in blended form while other vintages will barrel aged separately.

Syrah, Carignan, Grenache. Big cocoa and mocha notes on the nose followed by some currant and dried cranberries. Medium body with juicy dark fruit flavors and an easy finish.

Dinner at Sergio Arola

This chef is making waves with his innovative way of preparing dishes as well as his attention to detail. Usually, fairly difficult to make reservations here. However, we were treated this night and the meal lived up to the fame.

Wines tasted

Garnacha de Fuego 2008 (DO Calatayud)
\$6.76 cash
CW – "3 of 5"; EVD



30 – 60yr old vine Grenache grown on slate soils. Lots of good red fruit on the nose with easy tannins lingering on the palate. Straightforward fruit with balanced acidity. Simple, but very easy to drink.

Bodegas Atteca 2008 (DO Calatayud)

\$11.82 cash
CW – "3.2 of 5"; EVD



Old vine Grenache. Big purple and blueberry fruit with underlying spicy oaky notes (not overpowering). The black and blue fruit is up front and nicely focused. Smooth finish with silky tannins.

Join me next week with another edition of The Wine Journeyman's Travel Log where we venture into a quaint little part of DO La Mancha and DO Almansa. ☺



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