

COLLIN'S COLUMN



RIOJA, SPAIN

Rioja: Creating your own unique Rioja experience

by Collin Williams



Talking about the fantastic wines from Rioja is one thing, trying these wines with friends at home or a nice Spanish restaurant is another idea entirely. In this article, I thought it would be fun to list some interesting tidbits relating to all things Rioja. It is my hopes that you can use this insight to create your own unique Rioja experience.

Wine

While we strive to entice you with recommendations for wine based on personal accounts, descriptions of the quality, and the overall history of the wine in question, we also realize that the major publications like Wine Spectator and Robert Parker's Wine Advocate can play a key role in your wine buying decisions. So in order to heed the call, I have listed those wines from Rioja that we have scoring 90pts or better. Have at it!

97pts RP - Artadi El Pison 2006	\$227.50 cash
92pts RP - Artadi Vinas de Gain 2006	\$27.99 cash
96pts WS - Bodegas LAN Culmen 2004	\$66.55 cash
96pts WS - Bodegas LAN Edición Limitada 2004	\$54.96 cash
90pts RP - Bodegas LAN Reserva 2004	\$15.60 cash
90pts RP - Conde de Valdemar Inspiración 2005	\$18.99 cash
90pts RP - Heras Cordon Reserva 2001	\$36.99 cash
91pts WS - Izadi Espression 2000	\$72.80 cash*
90pts WS - Marques de Caceres MC 2005	\$39.69 cash*
90pts WS - Marques de Caceres Gran Reserva 2001	\$29.65 cash
90+pts RP - Marqués de Murrieta Gran Reserva "Ygay" 2000	\$48.99 cash
90pts RP - Bodegas Muga Reserva 2005	\$20.43 cash
94pts RP - Romeo La Cueva del Contador 2002	\$96.56 cash

*Smith Store ONLY



Dine

Since traveling to Spain over the last two years, I feel I have developed a better appreciation for the cuisine of the country. And, like the old saying goes "once you've had the best ..." So, it thrills me when I see more and more Spanish restaurants opening in Houston. I seek these places out with friends or my wife as though we were judges on Top Chef. Recently I discovered a new Spanish restaurant that I have become a big fan of - Tinto's on West Grey.

Tinto's is unique in its ambience, food, and overall appeal to Spanish traditionalists. A little pricey, but I felt the fare was justified in the effort to create an authentic set of recipes and overall experience. Plus, they have a great (and affordable) wine list with dozens of great Spanish wines on the list. Just remember, if you enjoy any of the wines while visiting Tinto's there is a Spec's right around the corner to supply you with your household wine needs.

*Try the Scallops cooked in Albarino sauce. Delicious!

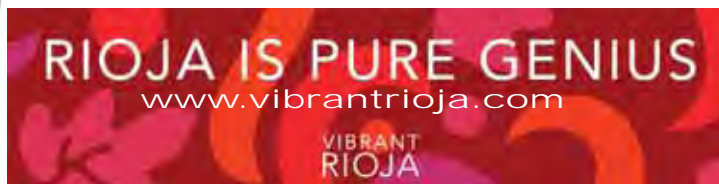
Tintos Restaurant
www.tintosrestaurant.com

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Unique Finds

Can't get enough of Rioja? Well, there is a group out of New York that will fulfill your every desire to learn more about the region, its wines, and cuisine, and will get you hooked up with the latest happenings around the country. Vibrant Rioja is a group designed to promote everything and anything that is Rioja. You can either search their website that is provided in this article, or go to the Spec's home site www.specsonline.com and click on the Vibrant Rioja banner. Check them out!



Please email me at
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