

# COLLIN'S COLUMN



# SPAIN

## The Wine Journeyman's Travel Log

by Collin Williams



I find it amusing the reaction I get from people when I tell them that I will be traveling to a foreign country to meet with winemakers and winery owners. The normal response is "I'm jealous" or "You have the best job in the world" or my favorite "Must be nice!" However, unbeknownst to these people is what is in store for us as "wine buyers" once we get to our travel destination.

When traveling, seldom do we stay in one location for more than a day. And, during the time spent in any one place we are constantly moving from meetings to winery visits to business lunches to more meetings. Yes, it's fantastic that we get to see these amazing locales and sights that are rare for most people. But that is just the window dressing. Our main objective on these trips is work!

Just like any other buying outfit, we need to inspect the point of manufacturing to ensure the quality is consistent from inception to the end product you see on the shelves. Can we see every winery that we represent at Spec's? No. But, we sure try!

And now for the continuation of my recent journey to Spain . . .



### Day 2 (2/20) - La Mancha

#### Lunch at Santelone

*La Mancha is an interesting place for the wine journeyman. Sure you have the stereotypical things here that are reminiscent from the old "Don Quixote" tales. But, what I*

*find interesting is the amazing restaurants that are hidden amongst these little sleepy towns. Literally, there may be 100 residents in a town that survives on farming from the vineyards. However, this same town will be the location where you will find a three star Michelin restaurant that could easily be missed if you were not made aware.*

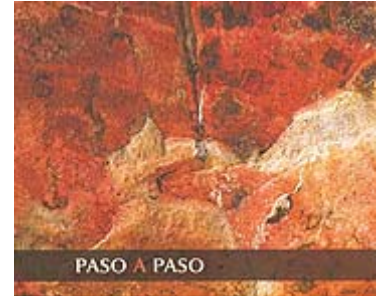
#### Lunch - Las Rejas

*Once again, I was stunned by the culinary prowess of the Spanish. This restaurant is small, but had a welcoming atmosphere about it. The dishes here were as imaginative as they were decadent. One dish featured a foie gras-like pudding inside a jar that was filled with smoke! Incredible!*

#### Paso a Paso La Mancha 2008

**\$7.74 cash**  
**CW - "2.5 of 5"; EVD**

This wine is made of 100% Tempranillo. A fruity nose up front full of blackberry notes. Full bodied with simple fruit and spice notes resembling more of a concentrated Kool-Aid mixture. Easy finish. Upon second taste, this wine revealed a nice floral note.



#### Paso a Paso Verdejo 2008 (DO La Mancha)

**\$7.62 cash**  
**CW - "2.5 of 5"; EVD**

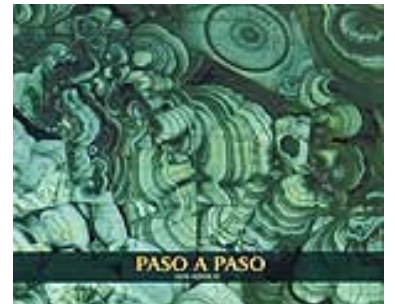
Generous lemon and lime notes on the nose. Good acidity throughout brings a freshness to the tropical and citrus flavors. Easy and crowd-pleasing.



#### Paso a Paso Volver 2005 (DO La Mancha)

**\$11.24 cash**  
**CW - "3 of 5"; EVD/WW**

100% Tempranillo. Sweet nose of stewed fruit. Good acidity on the palate showcases the blueberry juice flavors. Easy finish with smooth tannins. Very complex for the price! Note: Pairs great with Chorizo!



#### Finca Sandoval 2006 (DO Manchuela)

**\$29.32 cash**  
**CW - "4 of 5"; WW**

DO Manchuela is an interesting Spanish wine producing region. While fairly large in size, there are very few wines being exported to Texas from here. However, the producers in this DO are making some great wines that are usually heavy with Syrah. Made with 76% Syrah, 13% Mourvedre, and 11% Bobal. Aged 11 months in French and American oak. On the nose, the oak shows nicely with a combo of dark berry and chocolate. Great mouth feel emphasizing the cranberry and wild blackberry notes. Big finish with juicy tannins. Excellent and unique. 93pts Wine Advocate. 🍷



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with feedback.