

Northern Spain: Campo di Borja, Toro, Ribera del Duero and Rioja
Château Barrejat, Madiran
Fincas Rewen, San Juan, Argentina
Chilean Coastal Sauvignon Blanc
French Whites



STONE, VINE & SUN

WINE MERCHANTS

Northern Spain: Campo di Borja, Toro, Ribera del Duero and Rioja

In this list we cover Bodegas lying in an inland band across northern Spain, from up-and-coming Toro in the west to Campo di Borja, just south of Rioja, in the east. When one thinks of Spain one thinks of heat, and that summer heat engendering hearty red wines - yet in much of northern Spain the climate is Continental, and in addition the heat of summer is tempered by altitude. There spring arrives late and the chill of autumn early. During my visit to Rioja in mid-October the harvest was continuing whilst temperatures were already dropping below freezing at night. As a result, many wines from Rioja and Ribera del Duero in particular are often of only moderate alcohol and exhibit considerable finesse.

Here the principal red grape is Tempranillo – with numerous different names used in the regions for its local variants. In the light of Spain's well-publicised economic woes, prices have remained very fair, enabling us to absorb the latest VAT increase and keep prices flat on most wines. Do try the newly shipped Riojas of Lar de Paula – the Vendimia Seleccionada and Cepas Viejas, both from the superb 2005 vintage are outstanding wines, the latter given the Spanish Red Trophy at last year's International Wine Challenge.

Mixed Spanish Cases

all reds, each case containing three bottles of each of the four wines listed, and all with a discount of at least 10% on the bottle prices.

Spanish Values £74.50 Code SPA111

Bodegas Borsao, Garnacha, Campo de Borja, 2009
Bodegas Torreduro, Quinta el Refugio, Toro, 2008
El Lagar de Isilla, Ribera Del Duero, Joven, 2009
Vega del Rayo, Rioja, Vendimia Seleccionada, 2008

Top Tempranillos £145.50 Code SPA311

El Lagar de Isilla, Ribera Del Duero, Roble, 2008
El Lagar de Isilla, Ribera Del Duero, Crianza, 2007
Lar De Paula, Rioja, Reserva, 2005
Lar De Paula, Rioja, Vendimia Seleccionada, 2005

Rioja and Ribera del Duero £98.95 Code SPA211

El Lagar de Isilla, Ribera Del Duero, Joven, 2009,
El Lagar de Isilla, Ribera Del Duero, Roble, 2008
Vega del Rayo, Rioja, Vendimia Seleccionada, 2008
Lar De Paula, Rioja Crianza, 2007

Bodegas Borsao, Campo di Borja

Bodegas Borsao is a remarkable co-operative. Probably the biggest winery we ship from, it vinifies and markets wines from over 600 growers, whose land undulates across the Moncayo hills. Despite this scale it turns out a splendid range, with Garnacha (Grenache), the workhorse grape of the south of France, dominant, occupying some 70% of plantings. The young vine Grenache listed below is not a complicated wine – but it's so reliable, and always juicy and soft enough to enjoy on its own.

We sell a lot less of the white, but Macabeo (Maccabeu in France) is an excellent grape, which delivers good weight and retains its freshness in the summer heat.

Macabeo, Campo de Borja, 2009, 12.5° [Screwcap]

Bottle £5.50 Case £62.70 Code BOR609

Open scent of ripe pears and red apples. Well textured for a wine at this price, with ripe citrus and pear balanced by a nutty, almondy hint. Intriguingly different. Drink this year.

Garnacha, Campo de Borja, 2009, 13.5° [Screwcap]

Bottle £5.50 Case £62.70 Code BOR309

Includes just a little Tempranillo. Red fruit aromas with a hint of thyme. A sweet, soft, juicy gulp of fresh raspberries, smooth and easy-drinking, and perfect for parties. Now-2012

Bodegas Torreduero, Toro

Bodegas Torreduero, a small and neat modern winery in the town of Toro, is part of the larger Bodegas Riojanas group, and winemaking here is overseen by Felipe Nalda. Toro is increasingly viewed as a good-value alternative to Rioja for its Tempranillo-based wines – in this region the local variant of Tempranillo is called “Tinto de Toro”. This is given just three months in barrel to round out the hearty fruit.

Quinta el Refugio, Toro, 2008, 14.5°

Bottle £6.95 Case £79.23 Code QUR108

Deep purple. Scent of cooked black fruit and spice. This is a vigorous, powerful wine, all briary and damson fruit, slightly bittersweet, just smoothed by the moderate oak influence, and offering bags of personality. Would be great with game or grilled lamb. Now-2013

El Lagar de Isilla, La Vid

El Lagar de Isilla, a bodega established in 1995 in La Vid, just east of Aranda de Duero, owns about 40 hectares of vines - half fairly recently planted and half 60-90 years old - on largely sand and clay soils.

We have offered their wines for several years now, and these, which win numerous accolades within Spain, offer remarkable value from the deeply fashionable region of Ribera del Duero. In this area the local name for Tempranillo is Tinto Fino or Tinta del País.

Ribera del Duero, Rosado, Spain, 2009, 14.5°

Bottle £7.95 Case £90.63 Code LAH509

100% Tempranillo. Bright pink. Strong and youthful scents of ripe red fruits and rose petals. A full-bodied style, showing red fruit with dark cherries and a herbal accent. A rosé for winter? Drink this year

Ribera Del Duero, Joven, 2009, 13.5°

Bottle £7.95 Case £90.63 Code LAH209

100% Tempranillo, unoaked. Vivid purple. Ripe and juicy fruit, summer-pudding in character. Would be perfect with coarse sausages. Lively wine. Now-2013

Ribera Del Duero, Roble, 2008, 13°

Bottle £10.50 Case £119.70 Code LAH108

93% Tempranillo with 7% Cabernet Sauvignon, given just four months in French and American oak: open, lifted scents of hedgerow fruit – blackberries and damsons. That same briary fruit dominates, rich, not sweet, and with a lovely creamy and velvety texture. A winner. Now-2014

Ribera Del Duero, Crianza, 2007, 13.5°

Bottle £14.50 Case £165.30 Code LAH407

2007 was a top vintage in Ribera del Duero, giving powerful, long-lasting wines. At El Lagar de Isilla the Crianza is 100% Tempranillo from 40-70 year old vines, given about fourteen months in half French and half American oak barrels. Rich scents of cooked mulberries, cloves and mint; but on the palate this appears more youthful, with concentrated, vigorous cooked raspberries, blackberries and blackcurrant spiced by chocolate and vanilla. Impressive and long. Now-2015

Ribera Del Duero, Reserva, 2001, 14.5°

Bottle £16.50 Case £188.10 Code LAH301

Really appealing perfumed and textured fruit. Open forest fruits, plum and dark chocolate flavours with hints of violet. Such an expressive, pleasing wine, made exclusively from old vines. Now-2012 Limited stock

Rioja

A brief trip to Rioja last October was, at times, dispiriting. I came across plenty of dull wine there, as if too many people in this region are complacently relying on the name Rioja as a brand to sell their wine. Secondly, I was at times puzzled by the wines: I thought I knew what to expect from Rioja: a friendly, supple bottle full of ripe strawberry fruit with, usually, a pleasant vanilla note from ageing in American oak barrels. However, on this trip I tasted bottles of confected juice (one wine tasted exactly like pink Haribo sweets), made with carbonic maceration; as well as blackish, chocolatey wine made wholly in the international style, using 100% new French oak barrels, and lacking any discernible local character at all. I also gawped at the architectural excesses of some of the Bodegas: these are like modern-day cathedrals, monuments to the new religion of wine. They may attract lots of tourists, and get written up in glossy magazines, but who finances these brutalist ego-trips? Even the softest of loans from the Spanish government will have to be repaid, and I can't help but feel that the consumer is ultimately being asked to finance them.

By contrast, one winery I visited in Rioja Alavesa stood out: Lar de Paula, based in simple warehouses in the small village of Elvillar, just below the rearing ridge of the Sierra Cantabrica to the north. We also continue with the latest vintage of Vega del Rayo's Rioja, which charmingly still arrives in its traditional gold wire cage.



Vega del Rayo, Rioja

The grapes for the Vega del Rayo wines are sourced from family-owned vineyards around Haro and Briones in Alta Rioja. A blend of about 70% Tempranillo, 20% Mazuelo and 10% Graciano, which goes into American and Russian oak barrels, this combines clean and fresh red fruit with traditional winemaking.

Rioja, Vendimia Seleccionada, 2008, 12.5°

Bottle £7.25 Case £82.65 Code VEG208

Open, pleasing scent of ripe red berries. Clean, raspberry, red and black cherry character, with just a subtle note of sweet oak. Well-balanced, modern style, friendly Rioja. Now-2012

Lar de Paula, Elvillar

Winemaker José Antonio Meruelo crafts one white Rioja and a range of reds, the latter all from 100% Tempranillo. Here the grapes are largely bought in from contracted growers nearby, with vines at about 600 metres, and the altitude brings real freshness to the wines. These are traditionally styled Riojas - but without any of the old-fashioned vices of overlong ageing in tired wood. The three top wines are all from 2005, a great vintage in Rioja, rightly classified by the authorities as “exceptional” . We don’t normally ship so many wines from one winery, but thought all these merited listing. This is a great find.

Rioja Blanco, 2009, 13°

Bottle £9.50 Case £108.30 Code LAR609

Largely from Viura, with some Malvasia; barrel fermented in American oak barrels, and then given about three months ageing in barrel, 80% US oak, 20% French. Open scents, honeyed and mealy. Very ripe fruit, apricots and sweet pears, with nutty and herbal accents. Generous flavour – sunny. Now-2012

Rioja Crianza, 2007, 13.5°

Bottle £10.95 Case £124.83 Code LAR207

Aged in French and American oak barrels. Soft tone. Very supple, fleshy example. Ripe berries and black cherries to the fore, with an attractive note of dried fruits, balanced by just the correct bite of red-cherry acidity. Now-2013

Rioja, Vendimia Seleccionada, 2005, 13.5°

Bottle £13.50 Case £153.90 Code LAR305

A stand-out at our tasting – a selection based on older vines. Soft purple hue, just showing a hint of age. Enticing aromas of cooked fruit, vanilla and sealing wax. This is a really ripe, delectably fat wine, but it also shows vigorous black fruit and is enlivened by the sharpness of fresh blackcurrants. The aromatics unfold so well on the palate, and there’s a plush backing of tannins too. Complete, perfectly ready to drink now, and so impressive. Now-2014

Rioja, Reserva, 2005, 14°

Bottle £15.50 Case £176.70 Code LAR305

Purple, fading to soft purple rim. Brambly fruit and spice aromas. Initially displaying youthful black cherries, blackcurrants and mulberries, still fresh and crunchy, this also shows savoury hints. With excellent weight and smooth tannins, this leaves one with the warmth and friendliness of a mature Rioja. Now-2014

Rioja, Cepas Viejas, 2005, 14°

Bottle £23.50 Case £267.90 Code LAR505

A remarkable wine, from vines around fifty years old at around 650 metres: no surprise that this won no less than three trophies at last year’s International Wine Challenge: that for Rioja Alavesa; the Tempranillo Trophy; and that for top Spanish red. 16 months in only French new barrels.

Such a seductive attack of liqueur strawberries, framed by black chocolate notes: this is crafted in a more modern, international style, than the Rioja Reserva above. *“Cedar and leather with red cherries and ripe jammy fruit underneath. Fine but expressive tannins on the palate with fresh acidity. Big, ripe and lush on the finish with a lot of potential”*, International Wine Challenge 2010. Now-2015

Château Barrejat, Maumusson

We love all Denis Capmartin's wines at Barrejat (see also his dry white Pacherenc on page 10), but his estate is best known - and much applauded in the French wine press - for his red Madirans. Madiran is an appellation in France's south-west which carries all sorts of baggage: on the plus side, it's the source of a red wine which contains among the highest levels in wine of procyanidins, a type of anti-oxydant polyphenol which reduces the threat of heart disease (how else can they live so long in the Gers on a diet so rich in foie gras!). On the less positive side, Madiran, based as it is on the Tannat grape, with the support of Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc, has a reputation for being hard as nails: too tannic to drink young, and then fruitless and drying out if left long enough for the tannins to soften. Denis Capmartin, however, has a light touch, and whilst his Madirans retain a mild rusticity, he is careful not to extract too much tannin. For the first time we have shipped his cuvée named Séduction, almost New World-like in its overt fruit and kiss of sweet oak.

Madiran, Tradition, 2007, 13°

Bottle £7.95 Case £90.63 Code BAJ107

From 60% Tannat, with 20% Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc, this is an unoaked and supple wine – lighter than usual in this vintage. Scent of berries, earth and roses. Soft berried fruit, with some guts and texture. This is an honest wine, a perfect foil for sausages or charcuterie. Now-2012

Madiran, Séduction, 2008, 13°

Bottle £9.50 Case £108.30 Code BAJ208

60% Tannat, with 20% Cabernets Sauvignon and Franc, given a year in barrel. The oak makes this wine seductive indeed. Scent of blueberries and coffee. Ripe, smooth, supple and deliciously bittersweet. Merest pinch of palate-cleansing tannin. Engagingly refined for a Madiran. Now-2013

Madiran, Cuvée des Vieux Ceps, 2007, 13.5°

Bottle £11.75 Case £133.95 Code BAJ307

80% Tannat plus the Cabernets, and very old vines indeed - over 80 years old (and Denis claims some are up to 200 years old!), given a long *cuvaison* for maximum concentration. Dense youthful purple. This has so much more texture and grip than the wines above. Intense blackberry and cassis heart, balanced by firm oak and acid. A traditionally framed Madiran, a keeper. Now-2015

Madiran, Tradition, 2008 (5 litre Jeroboam)

£69.50 (N.B. Counts as one case for delivery) Code BAJ508

The 2008 vintage has given us a more structured wine which demands time in bottle: this wax-sealed 5 litre bottle, with a splendidly pretty label, can be profitably laid down for years, and as such makes a very good present, especially for 18 or 21 year olds! 2012-2017

Fincas Rewen, San Juan, Argentina

One of the tasks we set ourselves on last year's visit to Argentina was to find our own source of good value wines without compromising quality. We really struck gold in the splendid medium-sized (only about 40,000 cases a year) newish winery of Fincas Rewen in San Juan. Rewen owns vineyards at Huanacache, about 20 kilometres south of the city, and began planting in 1999. This area is less fashionable than Mendoza, so vineyard land is cheaper, but Huanacache is already establishing a reputation for Syrah in particular, with Petit Verdot also emerging as a potential winner. Winemaker Rafael Perez is a smart young man. With experience making wines for the international marketplace, he uses modern techniques such as micro-oxygenation to good effect. All four wines show oak influence: part of the 25 Lagunas wines are barrel-fermented; and a higher proportion of the two Rewen wines also enjoy fermentation in barrel, which softens and rounds the wines out without imparting undue oak flavour. There's a consistent style in the wines here – deep colour; generous, smooth fruit; medium alcohol, at least by New World standards; and all are supple enough to drink on their own. Furthermore they all represent splendid value, even before the 10% case discounts, and we hope you will try the mixed case before settling on your daily drinking this spring!

25 Lagunas, Malbec, 2009, 12.4°

Bottle £6.75 Case with 10% discount £72.90 Code LAF109

Deep purple. Open, brambly nose with the merest hint of cedar. Supple, ripe, juicily attractive briary fruit. Plenty of guts. Perfumed finish. Now-2012

25 Lagunas, Cabernet/Syrah, 2009, 12.4°

Bottle £6.75 Case with 10% discount £72.90 Code LAF309

About 60% Cabernet and 40% Syrah. Bursting with fruit - blackcurrants, raspberries and redcurrants - and surprisingly creamy and voluptuous, it also benefits from an attractive smoky note. *“Ripe, perfumed, punchy and bright, this is a good value for money red from South America made from 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Syrah. While the nose is alive and exciting, the palate is soft and mellow with a good core of red fruit that's makes it an excellent everyday wine. 89/100. One of this month's Bunch of Five Best Value Wines”, thewinegang.com, January 2011. Now-2012*

Fincas Rewen, Syrah, San Juan, 2009, 13.8°

Bottle £7.50 Case with 10% discount £81.00 Code REW209

Cedary hints of the nose. Splendid cassis, raspberry and cherry character. Juicy, but with plenty of body, and the delightful fruit enlivened by a hint of coffee, and the merest touch of leathery rusticity. A Syrah more in a European than Australian style. Now-2013

Fincas Rewen, Petit Verdot, San Juan, 2008, 13°

Bottle £7.50 Case with 10% discount £81.00 Code REW408

Winner of the trophy for 'Other Reds' in the 2009 Wines of Argentina awards. Petit Verdot, which needs plenty of heat to ripen well, excels in Argentina. Fruitcake aromas - spice, dried fruit and caramel. Core of crunchy blackcurrant, black plum and fig. Fragrant depths. Classic, dry finish. Decant and impress! Now-2012

A Fincas Rewen Tasting Case

including three bottles of each of the four wines above, with a 10% discount, £76.95 Code: REWDOZ

Chilean Coastal Sauvignon Blanc

Sauvignon Blanc from Chile's coastal vineyards, cooled dramatically by the chill Humboldt current coming up from Antarctica, is swiftly challenging New Zealand for quality. Remember that Chileans have key advantages: a drier climate, which means disease is rarely a problem; and a freely available labour force, which means (unlike the Kiwis, unless they teach the sheep to tend vines) that the Chileans can do everything in the vineyard, from pruning to picking, by hand. Here are two fine examples of zingy-fresh coastal styles, stylistically different, both with 10% discounts by the case, plus a similarly discounted mixed dozen of six of each.

Tabalí, Sauvignon Blanc Reserva Especial, Limarí Valley, 2009, 13.5° [Screwcap]

Bottle £8.75 Case with 10% discount £94.50 Code TAB209

Grown on Tabalí's newly acquired Fray Jorge vineyard, only 9 kilometres from the Pacific. When star winemaker Felipe Muller (Winemaker of the Year in the 2010 **Guía de Vinos de Chile**) went over to inspect the vines there he was knocked out to see Sauvignon Blanc growing on very calcareous marine limestone full of fossils. Is it any surprise therefore that this is a mineral, elegant Sauvignon - a Chilean Pouilly-Fumé? Juicy, finely textured, Sauvignon very much in a food-friendly Loire idiom. 93/100 in the 2010 **Desorchados** Chilean wine guide, the equal third best Chilean Sauvignon Blanc rated. Now-2012

Luis Felipe Edwards, Family Selection Sauvignon Blanc, Leyda, 2009, 14° [Screwcap]

Bottle £8.95 Case with 10% discount £96.66 Code LFE609

Leyda, a sub-region of San Antonio, a coastal zone with vineyards across rolling hills lying just south of Casablanca, is currently viewed as perhaps the single most exciting spot within Chile for cool-climate varieties. Intense, intriguing aromas: gooseberry, smoke and minerals. Powerful, vigorous style, based on green fruits, greengage and green fig, very crisp and pungent. A Chilean take on a really mineral SB, akin to Kiwi wines from one of the Marlborough sub-zones such as Wairau or Awatere. *"Pea pod and asparagus lead on the nose, with nice lemony fruit on show as well. This is a very solid production with mouthfilling flavours. Textured and grassy with some grapefruit and pineapple too. Rounded, polished and wonderfully refreshing this ticks all the boxes ****", Decanter magazine*, Coastal Chilean Sauvignon Blanc. Now-2012

Chilean Sauvignon Blanc Case

Six bottles of each of the two wines listed, with a discount of 10%, £95.58 Code CHSBDOZ

Six French Whites

A selection which celebrates the freshness, vigour and diversity of French whites, with no less than 10 grape varieties included here, in wines from the south-west, the Languedoc, Loire and Burgundy. There's 7.5% off unsplit cases, and a mixed case of two bottles of each of the six wines with the same 7.5% discount.

Domaine du Tariquet, Classic, Ugni Blanc-Colombard, VdP des Côtes de Gascogne, 2009, 10.5° [Screw-cap]

Bottle £6.50 Case with 7.5% discount £72.15 Code TRR109

From Ugni Blanc and Colombard (local grapes once used for Cognac), this is a well-known favourite of the south-west, and really good in the splendid 2009 vintage. A mildly tropical palate with hints of passion-fruit and guava. Clean and zippy. Drink this year



Château Barrejat, Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh Sec, 2009, 13.5°

Bottle £7.95 Case with 7.5% discount £88.25 Code BAJ609

A little known but delicious white from 85% Gros Manseng and 15% of the obscure Arrufiac grape. Pale gold. This always has an attractively herby nose. Really full flavoured palate of ripe pears, lightly honeyed and waxy, with again that sense of herbs. Mid weight but finishes crisp and dry. Now-2012

Domaine La Croix Belle, Le Champ des Lys, Grenache Blanc-Viognier, Côtes de Thongue, IGP, 2009, 13°

Bottle £7.95 Case with 7.5% discount £88.25 Code CRO709

From 2/3 Grenache Blanc and Viognier. A mildly toasty note on the nose (a tiny proportion goes into barrel) is followed by intense grapefruit, with considerable heft, and subtle notes of grape seeds and almonds. A white which could accompany all white meat, from pork to turkey. Now-2012

Château de Putille, Anjou Blanc Sec, 2009, 12.5°

Bottle £7.95 Case with 7.5% discount £88.25 Code PUT709

Just off-dry Chenin Blanc from the heart of the Loire, a lovely example which makes a splendid aperitif and is equally good with salmon or trout. Ripe pears and a touch of honey on the nose. Attractive weight and texture, with bright, pure flavours of pear and pineapple: and correctly dry on the finish. Now-2012

Domaine du Grand Arc, Veillée d'Equinoxe, Corbières, 2009, 14°

Bottle £8.50 Case with 7.5% discount £94.35 Code DGA609

Bruno Schenk's gentle, stone-fruited white, from his high and rugged vineyards in the Corbières, is from 55% Grenache Blanc, 30% Roussanne and 15% Maccabeu. This makes perfect, unflashy drinking when one wants a change from Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay. A floral scent is followed by a beautifully weighted, fragrant palate of ripe lime, white peach and ripe pear. Pure and elegant. Now-2012

Maurice Lapalus, Mâcon-Pierreclos, 2008, 12.5°

Bottle £8.95 Case with 7.5% discount £99.35 Code LAQ108

This is the 8th vintage we have bought of this consistently fresh, unoaked (and hand-picked) Chardonnay from the southern Maçonnais: Pierreclos lies a few kilometres from Fuissé. This has a Chablis-like freshness and bite. Attractive lemony scent, followed by a fresh and crisp attack, lifted by citrus blossom touches. Now-2012

Six French Whites

Two bottles of each of the six wines listed, with a discount of 7.5%, is £88.43 Code FWDOZ11

For orders and all enquiries, please contact:

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We offer a 5% discount for unmixed cases (12 bottles) except where indicated.

We offer a no quibble guarantee. If you're unhappy with any aspect of your wine we'll provide a refund or a replacement without fuss, though we reserve the right to make a small charge to cover collection and delivery.

Delivery Charges* to one address are as follows:

1-5 bottles	£8.50
6-11 bottles	£6.95
1 case of 12 bottles	£5.50
13-24 bottles	£8.50
More than 25 bottles	£10.00

Please note: free delivery for orders of £250.00 or more (to one address), or over £75 in the Winchester area.

(*Delivery prices vary for delivery to the Highlands, Islands and Northern Ireland - please ask us for a quote).

Wines are dispatched (subject to availability) within two working days of receipt of your order and should be delivered within 48 hours. We will not take payment from credit or debit cards until your goods are dispatched to you.