

August 28 2010 wine

Many who have experienced the 40 degrees of Spain will have appreciated the delicious new style white wines that are emerging from every producing area. Spanish white wine was in the past more yellow than white, and often had a strong taste of over mature grapes. New style wines such as those by the pioneering wine company Torres of Penedes in Catalonia now personify Spanish whites, epitomised in the adorable Vina Sol, wine of the sun.

A recent tasting of the Wine Society featured many of the new style Spanish white wines, and it's certain that there is a long way to go to find better value. The well known wine area of Rueda has numerous producers who are unknown in Britain. One is Bodegas Garciarevalo whose white tresolmos is made from the verdejo grape. It's a great example of tradition and technology in harmony. The wine is matured on its lees (the same as Muscadet in France) so the freshness of the grape is prominent. The vat is stirred periodically to keep the flavours mixed, a process known as batonage.

The intensity of the ripe grapes at harvest time produces a really complex wine with mineral flavours, toasty notes and freshness in harmony. It is a white wine to go with meat, particularly barbecued lamb or chicken and even casseroles of pork and game.

The lesser known area of Emporda, just across the border from Roussillon in France is a rugged hilly area where wild herbs have a stronghold. The vines hang on as the tramontane winds whip across the area mixing the aromas of the pollen. Mint, rosemary, fennel and lavender scents fill the air and the wine reflects many of these. The mean slate soil induces complex mineral flavours and few might guess the grapes are mainly Grenache and Muscat.

The vineyard of Marti Fabra on the Alberes mountains is documented back to 1305. The Verd Albera wine has spicy citrus fruit and gun flint minerals lurking amongst tropical flowers and fruit. Also aged on its lees it has exceptional class and is quite unique, perfect for full flavoured fish such as tuna, smoked salmon, monkfish or a flavoursome zarzuela. It's enough to make anyone return to Spain, but it is available here from the Wine Society.

Verd Albera – Celler Marti Fabra – Emporda, Spain £6.95

Tresolmos, Bodegas Garciarevalo, Rueda, Spain £7.50

Available from The Wine Society www.thewinesociety.com