

## Spain's Top 100 Wine Values

Imports of Spanish wines remain strong (particularly at the value-end of the spectrum). I did sit-down tastings with at least 40 importers and received samples from at least as many more. As one might expect given the harsh economic climate, sales of Spain's higher-end wines (to be reported upon in Part II in April) have slowed but sales of value-priced wines are booming as importers try to reposition their portfolios to reflect market trends. The good news is that there are so many remarkable values; the bad news is that with increased competition a flood of less than good Spanish wines are entering the arena. For every wine that made this report, there was at least one that could not be recommended.

Happily for Spain, they are working with a remarkable palette of regions (DOs) and grape varieties so that there is literally something for everyone. For my Top 100 list (actually 113), an amazing thirty-three DOs are represented and nearly as many grape varieties. One might guess that the more famous regions would be under-represented because of price considerations. In fact, the opposite is true; there are thirteen wines from Ribera del Duero, ten from Montsant, nine from Rioja, seven from Bierzo, and seven from Priorat. Among DOs specializing in white wines, there are six entries from Valdeorras (home of my favorite white grape, Godello), five from Rias Baixas (where Albariño thrives), and four from Ribeiro.

Wines for this report were tasted from November 2008 through January 2009. To qualify for the Top 100 list, a wine had to achieve a score of at least 90 points and cost \$25 or less.

*Jay Miller*

## Els 100 vins més ben valorats d'Espanya

MARTÍ FABRA SELECCIÓ VINYES VELLES 2005

90 PUNTS

A Proprietary Blend Dry Red Table wine from Ampurdan Costa Brava, Spain

Source: Wine Advocate # 181 Feb 2009

Maturity: Drink 2011 - 2018

Rating: 90 points

The 2005 Marti Fabra Seleccio Vinyes Velles was sourced from vines ranging in age from 50 to 80 years. It is a blend of 70% Garnacha with the balance Carinena, Tempranillo, Syrah, and Cabernet Sauvignon aged for 8 months in French oak. Deep crimson-colored, it delivers a fragrant nose of cedar, mineral, forest floor, black cherry, and blackberry. This leads to a ripe, firm, spicy, intensely flavored wine in need of 2-3 years of cellaring. This lengthy effort will offer prime drinking from 2011 to 2018.

El Martí Fabra Selecció Vinyes Velles del 2005 prové de vinyes d'entre 50 i 80 anys d'edat. És un cupatge de 70% de Garnatxa i la resta de Carinyena, Tempranillo, Syrah i Cabernet Sauvignon, envellit durant 8 mesos en roure francès. De color carmesí profund, desprèn un fragrant nas de cedre, minerals, sòl de bosc, cirera negra i móra. Això fa que sigui un vi madur, ferm, especial i intensament saborós que necessita 2-3 anys de bodega. Aquest llarg esforç oferirà un excel·lent resultat del 2011 al 2018."