

**Spring
2008**
Complimentary

Wine

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The New Season

Spain: Classics & Innovations



R. Lopez de Heredia Viña Bosconia Reserva 2000 Rioja Premium

R. Lopez de Heredia was one of the three founding wine estates of Rioja in 1877. Fleeing the vineyard devastation in Bordeaux caused by the root-destroying louse phylloxera, French wine makers came to Rioja in the last quarter of the 19th century to produce wines that resembled Bordeaux's elegant, delicate reds. To this day, Lopez de Heredia is one of the few remaining estates producing wines that typify Rioja's 19th century tradition in producing elegant red wines of finesse and nuance, released when ready to drink. When one opens a Reserva bottle of Lopez de Heredia, one is in effect enjoying a bit of vinous history, an example of red wines as made in Bordeaux two centuries ago.

Heredia's wines are all taken from the estate's vineyards planted in the Alta region, long considered the source of Rioja's most delicate and beautiful wines. On these limestone and clay vineyards very much influenced by the cool Atlantic, Heredia blends 80% Tempranillo, 15% Garnacha, 3% Graciano, and 2% Mazuelo, then ages the wine in large oak vats. Never filtered, the wines are clarified by egg white after long aging in barrel. The 2000 Viña Bosconia Reserva is a classic example of this complex, elegant, delicate red wine of shimmering fruit and spicy accents that linger in a long, graceful finish.



R. Lopez de Heredia Viña Gravonia Blanco 1996 Rioja Premium

This must be among the very last of the great, unique Rioja white wines made in this all-but-forgotten style: barrel aged for four years before bottling, and not released until it's at least ten years old, ready to improve and develop for another ten years. Grown in Heredia's Tondonia vineyard, this is

100% Viura, also known in southern France as Macabeo, a mainstay in that region's whites.

On first opening, the color is a bright, medium-deep burnished coppery yellow while the bouquet expresses mineral-like wet gravel, along with a touch of lemon peel and beeswax. That bouquet is a fascinating combination of complexity from age as well as being intensely mineral from the old vines in the vineyard. On the palate this is bone-dry, medium-bodied and supple at the edges, with fascinating and subtle hints of mineral, dry white flower, and a citrus-peel tone as well as toasted almond notes. One's first reaction if one is not used to this style is to claim it's oxidized, but it isn't really. The wine is nearly endless on the finish, each moment displaying another facet of complexity. This is the sort of white to match with a richly flavored seafood casserole containing green olives, onion, perhaps a touch of saffron and tomatoes.



Campo Viejo Reserva 2002 Rioja Moderate

Campo Viejo, founded in 1959, is the largest wine producer in Rioja, with steadily increasing quality due to strict selection in the vineyard and cellar with the best lots selected for bottling under the Campo Viejo label. This is a fine example, as 2002 was not a great year, but selection shows in this lovely, ready-to-drink Reserva with its dark, wild strawberry fruit and complex spice accents of cinnamon and clove. A classic blend of 75% Tempranillo (Rioja's major grape), 15% Graciano (a high-quality, low-yielding grape grown for its aromatic complexity and tannic depth), and 10% Mazuelo (the Riojan term for Carignan).



Rívola Abadia Retuerta 2004 Sardon de Duero Moderate

Rívola has a reputation among Spanish wine aficionados as one of Spain's best values in rich, polished red wine made by Abadia Retuerta, one of Spain's finest wine-growing estates. Grown in the limestone, clay hillsides of the plateau next to Ribera del Duero, this blend of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Tempranillo captures the warm richness of indigenous Tempranillo with the classical structure and finesse of Cabernet. With its lush texture and flavor of spice and tobacco accented by rosemary, Rívola is like a hypothetical cross of red Graves and Châteauneuf-du-Pape. The wine is full-bodied, supple and round with a touch of tannin that just calls for grilled lamb chops sprinkled with olive oil and rosemary.



Viña Salceda Crianza 2004 Rioja Moderate

Founded in 1969 by local growers in Elciego, located between Rioja's two finest districts, Rioja Alavesa and Alta, Viña Salceda is a fine source of soft, rounded and perfumed reds typical of Rioja. In 1998 the Navarra wine firm Bodegas J. Chivite purchased Viña Salceda. Based on Tempranillo, this Crianza has a ripe, earthy strawberry aroma and flavor to its medium-bodied, velvety texture. The 'Crianza' quality designation means that the wine was aged in oak in the 'nursery' or cellar for at least a year; in the case of this high-quality Crianza the wine was in American wood for 15 months. The blend of 85% Tempranillo, 10% Mazuelo, and 5% Graciano is dark ruby in color with vivid fruit marked by delicate, soft tannins. Completely ready to enjoy now.

Spring 1994–2008

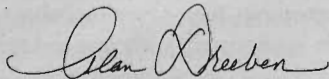
This issue marks the 14th anniversary of Wine Gazette. One of the major differences in the wine world between 1994 and 2008 is there's even more to choose from all the world's major wine regions. Our 14th anniversary issue reflects this as we pick seasonally appropriate wines from around the globe. Also, we look at classic red wines from the Stag's Leap district that will reward the collector with extraordinary wines.

For our green Texas spring we show whites from Greece to Spain, from New Zealand through Chile and California. There are exciting new flavors from these areas, not to mention California Pinot Grigio or New Zealand Riesling.

I especially want to draw your attention to our page three feature on the wines of Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, one of the world's greatest Cabernet Sauvignons. First planted in 1961 by Nathan Fay, the Stag's Leap district continues to make some of California's greatest wines.

Closer to home, Texas' oldest wine festival is being held in Austin April 10–13. The 23rd Annual Hill Country Wine and Food Festival will boast many of the state's and country's leading chefs and wineries in a range of seminars and wine & cooking demonstrations. To celebrate Texas' wine variety, in this issue we feature Texas Syrah, Meritage and Rhône-style blends, and a Cabernet Franc which won the San Antonio Wine Competition medal for Best Red of Show.

Cheers!



Alan Dreeben

23rd Annual Texas Hill Country Wine & Food Festival
Austin, Texas • April 10 – 13
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Twin Peaks



Stag's Leap Wine Cellars Cask 23 Cabernet Sauvignon 2004

Napa Valley
Luxurious

First bottled in the 1974 vintage, Cask 23 is a First Growth of Napa Valley, the finest wine made at Stag's Leap Wine Cellars, whose 1973 Cabernet Sauvignon won the famed 1976 Paris Tasting, beating a field of top red Bordeaux. Originally selected as uniquely special by owner-wine maker Warren Winiarski and the legendary André Tchelistcheff from the center of Block 4 and placed into vat number 23, after aging the character and bouquet of violets was so intense that Winiarski bottled it separately from the S.L.V. wine. Today Cask 23 is a blend of the finest lots from both S.L.V. and the adjacent Fay vineyards. Not produced every year, the selection for Cask 23 is never automatic from the range of lots made each year. Each lot is tasted throughout its aging in the cellar and only the finest lots are used for the wine. It is characterized by an extraordinary perfume, allied to flavors that are rich but balanced with finesse and structure.



R. Lopez de Heredia Viña Tondonia Gran Reserva 1987

Rioja, Spain
Luxurious

Among the few sources for fine, mature wine are the Rioja *bodegas* (wine cellars) that release their top wines when they are ready to drink. Viña Tondonia is the top vineyard bottling of R. Lopez de Heredia, one of the founders of Rioja in 1877. Taken entirely from its vineyard in Rioja Alta, the finest and coolest of Rioja's three growing regions, this is a blend of 75% Tempranillo, 15% Garnacha, 5% Graciano, and 5% Mazuelo. Aged for eight years in oak and nine in bottle, Viña Tondonia is delicate and subtle, weaving high-toned flavors in a way rarely seen in today's wine. With its coppery-edged mahogany color, the nose opens gradually to reveal a bouquet with a core of strawberry fruit developed by time in barrel and bottle into one of wine's greatest expressions of mature complexity. On the palate the wine is a whisper compared to modern wines of massive fruit and weight. Instead there are discrete touches of cedar and earth, and an ashy minerality in a fresh, crisp finish.

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