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Cantiga's New Dapper Spaniard

"With wine and hope, anything is possible."

Anonymous – Spanish proverb

Apparently, an old dog *can* learn new tricks. We have added a new grape variety to our standard lineup! Inspired by a trip to Spain, we contracted with a local organic vineyard back in 2017 for a couple of tons of Tempranillo grapes. Not having any prior experience with this grape, we were not sure what to expect. Would we be able to make a Foothills Tempranillo that rivaled the rich and balanced, food-friendly wines we experienced in Northern Spain?

After patiently waiting three years for the answer as the wine rested in barrels, we finally bottled it last year. It already showed great potential, but it was still a little rough around the edges and needed some bottle age. Another year passed, and then just recently we decided to see how it was coming along. What we tasted blew us away!

At first, we debated hoarding it all for ourselves. (Just joking!) Then we realized that we had to share it with our wine club. This is a very limited vintage, but we are delighted to include it with your summer shipment. We hope you enjoy it as much as we do!

A few words about Tempranillo

The Tempranillo grape originates in Spain, and that country currently grows about 80% of Tempranillo worldwide. When you look at Spanish wines, Tempranillo isn't always called by that name. In Ribera del Duero, it is often called Tinto Fino or Tinto del Pais. In the region of Toro, it typically goes by the name Tinta de Toro. Cencibel is the name used in Central and Southern Spain. Are you a fan of Rioja wines? Tempranillo is the dominant grape in those blends!

FUN FACT: The name "Tempranillo" translates as "little early one," because it ripens earlier than Garnacha--the other dominant Spanish grape variety.

Tempranillo wines are typically medium bodied, with medium-plus tannins and moderate acidity. The dominant fruit characteristics can range from bright cherry to dried figs, depending on where it is grown. It can also display tobacco, cedar, leather, vanilla and clove notes. A very food-friendly wine, it is fabulous with Spanish and Latin-American cuisines, but can also pair nicely with smoky barbecued meats, corn-based dishes, and tomato-based Italian dishes.

In this shipment:

2017 Tempranillo, El Dorado

Harvest Brix: 23.9 pH: 3.76 TA: 5.48 Alc: 13.9% RS: 0% ML: 0%
Cases produced: 144 Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

This newcomer has already won a special place in our hearts. We sourced this classic Spanish grape from a local, organic vineyard in the Fair Play AVA. It yielded a distinctive wine with abundant plum fruit, tobacco smoke, and clove notes. Medium in body, its velvety smooth tannins prop up its generous lush fruit and savory spice.

This one will be fun to experiment with on the dinner table. Christine is eager to try it with paella. Rich is thinking of steamed mussels with Romesco sauce. For tapas, try it with Spanish jamón or Italian prosciutto, and Manchego cheese. It should also be wonderful with smoky barbequed pork ribs or lamb. The other night, we enjoyed a bottle with succotash served over polenta. Love Mexican food? This wine will shine with fajitas, tacos, and much more!

2016 Grenache, Estate (Club Reserve)

Harvest Brix: 25.6 pH: 3.80 TA: 5.15 Alc: 15.1% RS: 0.0% ML: 0%
Cases produced: 213 Barrel age: 2 years in mostly neutral European oak

Here is another Spaniard for you! Grenache (or Garnacha) is widely planted throughout Spain and in Southern France. It grows exceptionally well in our climate, and the Sierra Foothills are fast becoming known for this grape. Our Grenache is dry, medium bodied and ruby red, with abundant, lush strawberry notes. Its relatively light body and fresh fruit quality makes it a perfect warm weather wine. We first offered this vintage as a new release for our wine club two years ago. Just for fun, we held back enough for a second club offering, so you can see how it develops with age.

This wine is amazing with Spanish and Mexican dishes, as well as French country cooking. Top seasonings with this wine are smoked paprika and Herbes de Provence—but not necessarily together!

2012 Library Zinfandel, Herbert Vineyard (Club Reserve)

Harvest Brix: 24.6 pH: 3.43 TA: 6.88 Alc: 14.9% RS: 0% ML: 0%
Cases produced: 308 Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak

Finally, we have yet another special treat for you...a venerable library wine from our cellar! Made in our signature classical style, this vibrant wine has abundant raspberry and pomegranate fruit, and hints of anise and clove. It is balanced, elegant and exceedingly versatile with food. After nine years of aging, this wine has deepened into a delicate complexity while maintaining its vibrancy.

This vintage continues to shine with BBQ, as well as anything Italian. For lighter food pairings, consider prosciutto and well-aged Italian cheeses, bowls of olives, and Italian summer squash, sliced then grilled with olive oil, salt and pepper. Scatter sun-dried tomatoes and Kalamata olives on your pizzas. Preferred seasonings include garlic, anise, basil and oregano.