

# THE BEST NEW WINES FROM SPAIN, PART TWO

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Stephen Tanzer's  
*International Wine  
Cellar*  
Issue #159

## ERIC SOLOMON SELECTIONS

### PLACE OVER PROCESS

*"Spain continues to offer extraordinary red wine values at the low end, even in the \$8-and-under category, a price point most wine regions gave up years ago. As I tasted through hundreds of Spanish red wines this year, mostly from the often outstanding 2009 and 2010 vintages, I frequently felt I was in a time warp when I saw the prices. Most of these wines are fruit-driven, unoaked or barely oaked, and meant for immediate or short-term drinking, but many of them actually have the depth to age for at least a few years after bottling. The American market is fortunate to have a number of savvy importers here whose focus is squarely on inexpensive outperformers, which makes for an embarrassment of choices for cost-conscious consumers... Not surprisingly, **there are values galore to be had right now** as importers, wholesalers and retailers clear inventory in anticipation of the incoming 2009s and 2010s, which are anticipated to be in high demand, economic conditions permitting. **Since many top Spanish wineries produced little of their upper-tier bottlings in '08 and '07, or even none at all, this means that much of the fruit from their best sites wound up in their entry-level wines.** I highly recommend fishing around among the big names from these difficult vintages as there are a number of very pleasant surprises available at attractive prices. Even better, **most of those wines are drinking well now, which makes them ideal for the upcoming winter season.**"*

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Wine	Vintage	Score	SRP
CLOS I TERRASSES <i>Clos Erasmus Priorat 2009</i>	2009	95	\$125
TERROIR AL LIMIT <i>Les Tosses Priorat 2008</i>	2008	95	\$275
TERROIR AL LIMIT <i>Les Manyes Priorat 2008</i>	2008	94(+?)	\$275
VINOS DE BENJAMIN ROMEO <i>Contador 2008</i> (listed as <i>La Cueva Del Contador Rioja 2008</i> )	2008	94(+?)	\$300
TERROIR AL LIMIT <i>Dits Del Terra Priorat 2008</i>	2008	94	\$80
VINOS DE BENJAMIN ROMEO <i>La Vina De Andres Romeo Rioja 2008</i>	2008	94	\$170
VINOS DE BENJAMIN ROMEO <i>La Cueva Del Contador Rioja 2008</i>	2008	93(+?)	\$90
CAL RASPALLET <i>Nun Vinya Dels Taus Penedes 2009</i>	2009	93	\$70
CELLER MAS DOIX <i>Costers De Vinyes Velles Priorato 2008</i>	2008	92(+?)	\$125
CELLER MAS DOIX <i>Salanques Priorat 2008</i>	2008	92(+?)	\$125
AALTO <i>Ribera Del Duero P.S. (Pagos Seleccionados) 2008</i>	2008	92	\$115
OSSIAN VIDES Y VINOS <i>Blanco Vino De La Tierra De Castilla Y Leon 2009</i>	2009	92	\$50
TERROIR AL LIMIT <i>Vi De Vila Priorat 2008</i>	2008	92	\$55
VINOS DE BENJAMIN ROMEO <i>Predicador Rioja 2008</i>	2008	92	\$35
BODEGAS MUSTIGUILLO <i>Finca Terrerazo Vino De La Tierra El Terrerazo 2009</i>	2009	91(+?)	\$45
ADEGA PENA DAS DONAS <i>Verdes Matas Mencia Ribeira Sacra 2010</i>	2010	91	\$20
ADEGA PENA DAS DONAS <i>Almalarga Ribeira Sacra Blanco 2010</i>	2010	91	\$21
BINIGRAU <i>Obac Vi De La Terra De Mallorca 2007</i>	2007	91	\$33
BODEGAS RAFAEL PALACIOS <i>Louro Do Bolo Godello Lias Finas Valdeorras 2010</i>	2010	91	\$20
MARC RIPOLL SANS <i>Closa Batllet Black Slate Grattalops Priorat 2009</i>	2009	91	\$22
MAS D'EN COMPTE <i>Black Slate Porrera Priorat 2009</i>	2009	91	\$22
PRODUCCIONS A MODINO SAN CLODIO <i>San Clodio Ribeiro Blanco 2009</i>	2009	91	\$19
AALTO <i>Ribera Del Duero 2008</i>	2008	90(+?)	\$55
BINIGRAU <i>Nounat Vi De La Terra De Mallorca Blanco 2010</i>	2010	90	\$30
BODEGAS CASTANO <i>Hecula Monastrell Yecla 2009</i>	2009	90	\$11
BODEGAS IZADI <i>Rioja Reserva 2006</i>	2006	90	\$18
BODEGAS RAFAEL PALACIOS <i>Sabrego Valdeorras 2010</i>	2010	90	\$15
CASA CASTILLO <i>Monastrell Jumilla 2010</i>	2010	90	\$12
CELLER DE CAPCANES <i>Mas Donis Barrica Old Vines Montsant 2009</i>	2009	90	\$13
HERENCIA ALTES <i>Garnatxa Negra Terra Alta 2010</i>	2010	90	\$10
VILA VINITECA <i>El Perro Verde Verdejo Rueda 2010</i>	2010	90	\$15
ALTOVINUM <i>Evodia Old Vine Garnacha Calatayud 2010</i>	2010	89	\$9
BODEGAS MAS QUE VINOS <i>Ercavio Tempranillo Roble La Mancha 2009</i>	2009	89	\$12
CELLER GRAMONA <i>Gessami Blanco Penedes 2010</i>	2010	89	\$18
BODEGAS MUSTIGUILLO <i>Mestis Vino De La Tierra El Terrerazo 2009</i>	2009	88	\$15
HERENCIA ALTES <i>Garnatxa Blanca Terra Alta 2010</i>	2010	88	\$10
BODEGAS ALTO ALMANZORA <i>Este Almeria 2009</i>	2009	87	\$10

ERIC SOLOMON  
SELECTIONS

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	Vintage	Score	SRP
<b>AALTO</b>			
Ribera Del Duero P.S. (Pagos Seleccionados) 2008	2008	<b>92</b>	\$115
<i>(\$115) Opaque purple. Explosive aromas of black and blue fruit liqueurs, smoky Indian spices, mocha and minerals, with a sexy floral quality in the background. Fleshy and smooth, with excellent clarity and spicy lift to its cassis and mulberry flavors. Repeats the blue fruit note on the very long, sweet, focused finish. This is delicious now but has the depth to age as well.</i>			
Ribera Del Duero 2008	2008	<b>90(+?)</b>	\$55
<i>(\$55) Bright purple. Pungent, intensely perfumed nose displays black and blue fruits, violet, Indian spices and a lively, peppery note. Sweet and lush on entry, then smoky and intense in the middle, offering brawny blackberry and mulberry flavors and suggestions of bitter chocolate and cracked pepper. Ripe but fresh, with a juicy, long finish that features notes of smoke and blackberry. This is pretty powerful for the vintage and deserves some patience.</i>			
<b>ADEGA PENA DAS DONAS</b>			
Verdes Matas Mencia Ribeira Sacra 2010	2010	<b>91</b>	\$20
<i>(\$20) (100% mencia): Bright violet. Spicy, incisive aromas of blackberry, cola, licorice and cracked pepper. Intensely flavored and vibrant, with black and blue fruit flavors lifted by zesty minerals and spices. Gently creamy in the middle, but quite firm and focused on the finish, with fine-grained tannins and excellent length.</i>			
Almalarga Ribeira Sacra Blanco 2010	2010	<b>91</b>	\$21
<i>(\$21) (100% godello): Light gold. Vibrant, mineral-accented bouquet evokes honey, pear skin, jasmine and beeswax. Racy and dry, with strong lemon and pear flavors and an exotic hint of anise on the back end. The long finish is stony and focused, with a lingering note of talc.</i>			
<b>ALTOVINUM</b>			
Evodia Old Vine Garnacha Calatayud 2010	2010	<b>89</b>	\$9
<i>(\$9) (made from vines that are reportedly up to 100 years of age; raised in concrete): Bright ruby. Raspberry and cherry on the intensely fragrant nose, with a smoky quality adding complexity. Fleshy, round red berry and spice flavors show impressive clarity and energy, especially for the price. Silky tannins add shape to the long, spicy, appealingly sweet finish. This is a great value.</i>			
<b>BINIGRAU</b>			
Obac Vi De La Terra De Mallorca 2007	2007	<b>91</b>	\$33
<i>(\$33) (made from 80% mantonegro and callet, which are indigenous varieties, with the rest merlot, cabernet sauvignon and syrah): Inky ruby. Dark berries and cherry on the spicy, mineral-accented nose. Juicy dark berry and bitter cherry flavors are underscored by zesty minerality, picking up notes of licorice and candied flowers with air. Smoothly combines richness and vivacity and finishes with bright mineral and floral character.</i>			
Nounat Vi De La Terra De Mallorca Blanco 2010	2010	<b>90</b>	\$30
<i>(\$30) (85% prensal and 15% chardonnay): Bright gold. Ripe peach and pear aromas are complemented by notes of candied ginger and honey. Broad, sappy pit fruit flavors show a smoky, leesy quality and are lifted by a spicy note. Shows good energy and cut for a rich wine and finishes with an echo of honey and very good length.</i>			

## BODEGAS ALTO ALMANZORA

Este Almeria 2009	2009	<b>87</b>	\$10
<p>(\$10) (47% monastrell, 26% tempranillo, 11% garnacha, 6% syrah and 5% each of syrah and cabernet sauvignon): <i>Inky ruby. Bitter cherry and blackberry on the spice-accented nose. Juicy, fruit-driven and easy to drink, offering fresh dark fruit flavors and a hint of bitter chocolate. Finishes with good energy and length, the spicy note repeating.</i></p>			

## BODEGAS CASTANO

Hecula Monastrell Yecla 2009	2009	<b>90</b>	\$11
<p>(\$11) <i>Ruby-red. Intensely perfumed aromas of raspberry, cola and fresh flowers. Juicy and precise in the mouth, offering sweet red berry flavors and a touch of floral pastille. The floral note comes back on the long, penetrating finish, which features a spicy quality and zesty minerality. This is quite complex for the price.</i></p>			

## BODEGAS IZADI

Rioja Reserva 2006	2006	<b>90</b>	\$18
<p>(\$18) (100% tempranillo): <i>Deep ruby. Tobacco-tinged cherry, redcurrant and floral aromas, with hints of vanilla and baking spices. Taut, focused red fruit flavors show good intensity and pick up a peppery spiciness with air. Finishes brisk and clean, with lingering red fruit and spice qualities. I like this wine's nerviness.</i></p>			

## BODEGAS MAS QUE VINOS

Ercavio Tempranillo Roble La Mancha 2009	2009	<b>89</b>	\$12
<p>(\$12) <i>Opaque ruby. Pungent dark fruits, licorice and woodsmoke on the nose. Ripe and chewy, offering rich blackcurrant and bitter cherry flavors and a hint of spiciness. Distinctly rich wine with serious heft and a touch of bitter chocolate on the finish. This could handle the richest red meat preparations with ease.</i></p>			

## BODEGAS MUSTIGUILLO

Finca Terrerazo Vino De La Tierra El Terrerazo 2009	2009	<b>91(+?)</b>	\$45
<p>(\$45) (95% bobal, with tempranillo and cabernet sauvignon): <i>Opaque ruby. A wild, fragrant bouquet evokes cherry-cola, licorice and dark chocolate, with a suave floral quality that gains power with air. Powerful and deeply pitched, offering smoky dark fruit flavors underscored by zesty minerality. Finishes chewy and long, with mounting tannins; give this unevolved wine at least a few more years of bottle age.</i></p>			
Mestis Vino De La Tierra El Terrerazo 2009	2009	<b>88</b>	\$15
<p>(\$15) (70% bobal, with tempranillo, syrah and cabernet sauvignon): <i>Glass-staining ruby. Opens slowly to display aromas and flavors of dark berries and bitter chocolate, with a touch of cracked pepper. Big, chewy and dense, finishing with notes of plum and spices. This reminded me a lot of a petite sirah.</i></p>			

## BODEGAS RAFAEL PALACIOS

Louro Do Bolo Godello Lias Finas Valdeorras 2010	2010	<b>91</b>	\$20
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(\$20) (92% godello and 8% treixadura): Light yellow-gold. Expansive, highly perfumed bouquet of tangerine, honey, jasmine and chamomile. Deeply pitched orchard and pit fruit flavors are lifted by juicy acidity and pick up notes of honey and minerals with air. A lively citrus pith note adds definition to the long, sappy finish. This wine's blend of richness and vivacity is impressive.

Sabrego Valdeorras 2010	2010	<b>90</b>	\$15
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(\$15) (100% godello): Light gold. An aromatic nose is dominated by lanolin, dried flowers and citrus peel. Quite taut and energetic on the palate, with impressive cut to the lemon, spice and mineral flavors. The sappy, dry finish shows very good clarity and lingering spiciness. This energetic wine would be great with simply prepared shellfish.

## CAL RASPALLET

Nun Vinya Dels Taus Penedes 2009	2010	<b>93</b>	\$70
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(\$70) (100% xarel-lo, from vines that are reportedly 65 to 100 years of age): Light yellow-gold. Powerfully scented, exotic aromas of ripe peach, poached pear, white flowers and honeycomb. Broad and fleshy, offering nectarine and candied orange flavors and a strong floral quality on the close. Gains energy with air, picking up spiciness and a mineral character that carry through the very long finish. This wine's blend of power and vivacity is pretty impressive.

## CASA CASTILLO

Monastrell Jumilla 2010	2010	<b>90</b>	\$12
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(\$12) Opaque purple. Aromas of blackberry, apricot, violet and smoky spices show an exotic quality. Sweet and supple on the palate, with very good clarity to the dark fruit, candied flower and spice flavors. Finishes with a strong element of exotic spices and very good chewy persistence.

## CELLER DE CAPCANES

Mas Donis Barrica Old Vines Montsant 2009	2009	<b>90</b>	\$13
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(\$13) (85% garnacha and 15% syrah, raised in French and American barrels that range from new to five years old): Vivid ruby. Explosively perfumed nose displays raspberry, fresh rose and sexy oak spices. Lush but energetic, with vivid red berry flavors and a silky, seamless texture. Turns more tangy on the finish, which clings with very good tenacity.

## CELLER GRAMONA

Gessami Blanco Penedes 2010	2010	<b>89</b>	\$18
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(\$18) (a wild blend of 30% each muscat d'Alexandria, muscat de Frontignan and sauvignon blanc, with 10% gewurztraminer): Pale, green-tinged straw. Pungent, complex aromas of pit fruits, orange zest, white flowers and honey. Expansive and pliant in texture, offering silky peach and citrus fruit flavors complicated by a hint of floral honey. Gains sweetness with air but maintains energy, finishing with gentle grip and lingering florality.

## CELLER MAS DOIX

Costers De Vinyes Velles Priorato 2008	2008	<b>92(+?)</b>	\$125
<p>(\$125) (50% carinena, 48% garnacha and 2% merlot): Bright ruby. A pungent, highly aromatic bouquet evokes blackberry, cherry-cola, incense and violet. Ripe and muscular but surprisingly lithe, offering sappy red and dark berry flavors complicated by licorice and candied flowers. Slow to open but extremely promising, finishing with serious power and length.</p>			
Salanques Priorat 2008	2008	<b>92(+?)</b>	\$125
<p>(\$30) (65% garnacha, 15% carinena, 10% syrah and 5% each of merlot and cabernet sauvignon): Vivid ruby. Sexy, intensely perfumed aromas of red and dark berry preserves, spices and minerals. Silky and sweet on the palate, with very good depth and clarity to its raspberry and mulberry flavors. Shows no rough edges and drinks very easily right now but I have no doubt that this will be even better with a few more years of bottle age. This is pretty suave for the money.</p>			

## CLOS I TERRASSES

Clos Erasmus Priorat 2009	2009	<b>95</b>	\$125
<p>(\$125) (60% garnacha and 40% syrah): Bright ruby. An explosively perfumed, fruit-dominated bouquet displays raspberry liqueur, cherry-cola and candied plum, with notes of violet and incense adding complexity. Deeply pitched but energetic in the mouth, offering sappy red and dark berry flavors and a smooth, seamless texture. Floral and spice notes linger on a very long, subtly smoky finish. This seductive wine is approachable now, with some decanting, but I'd give it at least another seven years of bottle age.</p>			

## HERENCIA ALTES

Garnatxa Blanca Terra Alta 2010	2010	<b>88</b>	\$10
<p>(\$10) Pale yellow. Spicy lemon pith and green apple on the nose, with white pepper and honeysuckle adding lift. Shows deeper tangerine and mango on the palate, with a bitter herbal quality adding bite. Finishes pleasantly bitter, with good lift and a touch of closing warmth. This wine reminded me of a good Chateauneuf du Pape blanc, which makes it an excellent value.</p>			
Garnatxa Negra Terra Alta 2010	2010	<b>90</b>	\$10
<p>(\$10) Bright ruby. High-pitched aromas of raspberry and floral oils, with a note of white pepper gaining strength with air. Juicy, precise red and dark berry flavors show impressive depth and clarity and gain flesh with air. Finishes sweet and long, with lingering red fruit notes and no rough edges. This is an outstanding value.</p>			

## MARC RIPOLL SANS

Closa Batllet Black Slate Gratallops Priorat 2009	2009	<b>91</b>	\$22
<p>(\$22) (50% garnacha, 25% carinena, 22% cabernet sauvignon and 3% syrah): Vivid ruby. Vibrant, mineral-accented raspberry and cherry aromas are underscored by notes of licorice and spices. Juicy and dense on entry, then nervier in the mid-palate, with sweet flavors of cherry, red berries, licorice and minerals. A nicely balanced wine whose tangy acidity adds cut to the long, focused finish.</p>			

## MAS D'EN COMPTE

Black Slate Porrera Priorat 2009	2009	<b>91</b>	\$22
<p>(\$22) (60% garnacha and 40% carinena, raised in two-year-old barriques and foudres): Deep ruby. Intense blackberry, cassis and licorice on the nose. Powerful and densely packed, with a structured impression to its dark cherry, black fruits and spices. Finishes weighty, sweet and long, with silky tannins and an echo of licorice.</p>			

## OSSIAN VIDES Y VINOS

Blanco Vino De La Tierra De Castilla Y Leon 2009	2009	<b>92</b>	\$50
<p>(\$50) (100% verdejo, from vines reportedly between 160 and 180 years of age): Bright gold. Pungent citrus and pear skin aromas, complicated by exotic melon honey and floral nuances. Concentrated, sappy and fresh, with nervy acidity buffered by a honeyed note and a almost velvety texture. Finishes deep and very long, with a lively citrus zest character and lingering spiciness.</p>			

## PRODUCCIONES A MODINO SAN CLODIO

2009 San Clodio Ribeiro Blanco	2009	<b>91</b>	\$19
<p>(\$50) (100% verdejo, from vines reportedly between 160 and 180 years of age): Bright gold. Pungent citrus and pear skin aromas, complicated by exotic melon honey and floral nuances. Concentrated, sappy and fresh, with nervy acidity buffered by a honeyed note and a almost velvety texture. Finishes deep and very long, with a lively citrus zest character and lingering spiciness.</p>			

## TERROIR AL LIMIT

Les Tosses Priorat 2008	2008	<b>95</b>	\$275
<p>(\$275) (100% carinena): Bright ruby-red. A strikingly nuanced nose features black raspberry, cherry, potpourri, cola and minerals. Offers sexy, sweet red fruit and floral pastille flavors and notes of gingerbread and licorice. Subtle, fine-grained tannins add shape to an extremely long and highly perfumed finish. This wine's clarity and vivacity are pretty remarkable.</p>			

Les Manyes Priorat 2008	2008	<b>94(+?)</b>	\$275
<p>(\$275) (100% garnacha): Dark red. Deeply pitched aromas of cherry, blackberry and musky flowers. Gains vivacity with air, picking up exotic spice notes that carry onto the palate and lift the sweet, densely packed red and dark berry preserve flavors. Supple tannins add shape to the long, juicy, alluringly perfumed finish. By all means give this wine some air or bottle age.</p>			

Dits Del Terra Priorat 2008	2008	<b>94</b>	\$80
<p>(\$80) (100% carinena): Vibrant red. Assertive, mineral-accented red berry and cherry aromas are complicated by blood orange and fresh rose. Silky, palate-coating red fruit preserve flavors deliver solid punch and pick up a sexy spicecake character with air. The finish echoes the blood orange and leaves vibrant mineral and floral traces behind, eventually. This wine is balanced to age but is awfully delicious right now.</p>			

Vi De Vila Priorat 2008	2008	<b>92</b>	\$55
<p>(\$55) (a 50/50 blend of garnacha and carinena, raised in 500-liter casks and foudres): Bright ruby-red. Vibrant raspberry and candied cherry aromas are complicated by notes of potpourri and smoky minerals. Juicy red flavors show impressive clarity and energy, picking up deeper licorice and black tea notes with air. Fresh, balanced and refreshingly brisk on the finish, which leaves notes of minerals and spices behind.</p>			

## VILA VINITECA

El Perro Verde Verdejo Rueda 2010	2010	<b>90</b>	\$15
<p><i>(\$15) Pale yellow. Pungent aromas of citrus pith, lemongrass and herbs, with a touch of honeysuckle. Dry and tightly wound, with very good depth and intensity to its lemon and green apple flavors. The herbal quality repeats on the silky finish, which shows impressive clarity and energy.</i></p>			

## VINOS DE BENJAMIN ROMEO

La Vina De Andres Romeo Rioja 2008	2008	<b>94</b>	\$170
<p><i>(\$170) (100% tempranillo): Vivid ruby. Highly complex, mineral-driven bouquet of raspberry, candied cherry, rose and Asian spices. Very fresh, palate-staining red berry flavors are supported by a vibrant underpinning of tangy minerals and pick up smokiness and florality with air. Juicy, focused and extremely pure, finishing with outstanding cut and spicy persistence. This wine's exotic character makes it very easy to drink right now but I'd give it at least another five years of bottle age.</i></p>			
Contador 2008 (listed as La Cueva Del Contador Rioja 2008)	2008	<b>94(+?)</b>	\$300
<p><i>(\$300) (86% tempranillo and 14% garnacha): Inky violet color. Powerful, brooding aromas of black and blue fruits, violet, dark chocolate and anise. Dense, chewy and sweet, with strong dark berry and cherry compote flavors and an exotic floral quality that gains strength with air. Shows serious concentration and extract and finishes sappy and very long. This big boy demands patience.</i></p>			
La Cueva Del Contador Rioja 2008	2008	<b>93(+?)</b>	\$90
<p><i>(\$90) (100% tempranillo): Glass-staining ruby. Deep dark berry and cherry liqueur aromas are strongly marked by sexy vanillin oak and potpourri. The palate offers intense blackberry and boysenberry flavors, with energetic mineral and floral pastille notes and sweet mocha on the back end. Powerful, impressively concentrated and lively to boot, finishing with strong thrust and sappy persistence. This is still a baby.</i></p>			
Predicador Rioja 2008	2008	<b>92</b>	\$35
<p><i>(\$35) (96% tempranillo, 3% garnacha and 1% viura): Bright ruby. Seductively perfumed bouquet evokes black raspberry, cherry-cola, incense and Asian spices. Juicy, energetic red and dark berry flavors possess serious power but carry no excess fat and show no rough edges. Finishes spicy and very long, echoing the dark berry notes. This is already delicious.</i></p>			