

**September 2014 Newsletter
North Alabama Chapter
of the
American Wine Society (AWS)**



**Monthly Tasting
Theme: National Tasting Project
September 28, 2014, 3:00 pm**

Come join us and participate in our September AWS National tasting that this year is comprised of wines from Spain.



This will be a blind tasting of select white and red wines from Spain.

For more information on the National Tasting Project see the AWS National Newsletter @ [2014 June-July AWS News Magazine Format](#) (See Page 4). This will be a blind tasting and each wine will be scored. The scores will be sent to National AWS for compilation with other chapter scores. The National results will be published in the AWS National Newsletter.



Reservation Form is on page 10 of the newsletter

DIRECTOR'S SECTION
(Jay Wilson, Director)
North Alabama American Wine Society



**Celebrating the North Alabama Chapter of the
American Wine Society 20th Anniversary**

Congratulations us! In honor of our chapter's 20th Anniversary we are ordering commemorative wine glasses with our logo and the year of our founding (see below). The glasses are 12.75 oz and thicker and sturdier than normal glassware. The cost is \$5 per glass including shipping and tax. If you would like to order a pair (or entire set) please e-mail me.

Final Order has to be received by September 15, 2014!

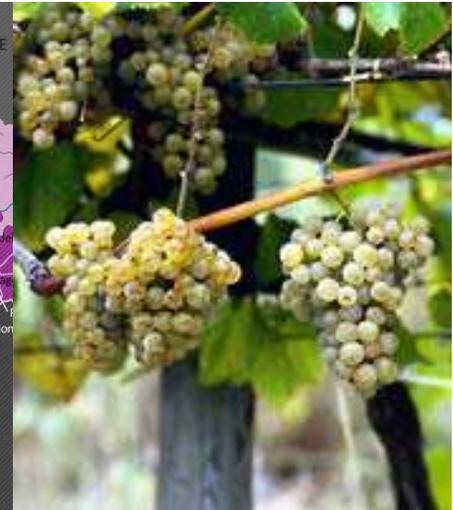


EDUCATION SECTION
(Edwin Núñez, Education Chair)

For the yearly National Tasting activity, it is customary to reproduce in our Newsletter the educational material presented by the AWS National Tasting Committee. We provide this material below with spelling corrections and small clarifications where needed.

History, Regions, Wine Making and other Tidbits about Spanish Wines

Spain has too many wines to choose from so the National Tasting Project (NTP) Team decided to select some of the more popular and well known grapes for this year's tasting experience – Albariño, Tempranillo and Tinto Fino (a Ribera del Duero variant of Tempranillo). The wines are produced in coastal regions and the hot, high plateaus of the interior. More than 2 million acres of vineyards are planted in Spain which is more than any other nation in the world. 🍷



From the west comes Rias Baixas with Albariño; in the central north Tinto Fino is grown in Ribera del Duero; and slightly northeast of Ribera del Duero is Rioja with

Tempranillo.

Rias Baixas

This region of Spain came into prominence in the 1990s by changing how white wine was made. Previously, white wine was made from vineyards with high yields and the grapes were left in a barrel to age and oxidize. Use of temperature controlled stainless steel tanks created a significant improvement in white wine quality. Since white grapes had been grown for centuries along the wind cooled coast, Rias Baixas led the way in this movement. Growing conditions are not ideal and moisture is problem so grapes are

trellised eight to ten feet above the ground to allow air circulation to minimize impact of mold and mildew. The proximity to the ocean helps mitigate temperature swings. Albariño is the primary grape and is supported by two lesser varieties, Loureia and Treixadura, which are sometimes blended to enhance aroma and body. Although white wine predominates, there is a small production red wine from several red varieties in Rias Baixas. A unique aspect is that the name of the grape is on every bottle; whereas, the other wines of Spain have a regional name. On the nose, Albariño exhibits citrus, lime, peach, honey and



kiwi aromas while the flavors range from citrus-peach to almond-honeysuckle to ginger spice. It is one of

 the best matches for seafood and is meant to be drunk young. Because of the demand for it, Albariño is one of the more expensive white wines of Spain.

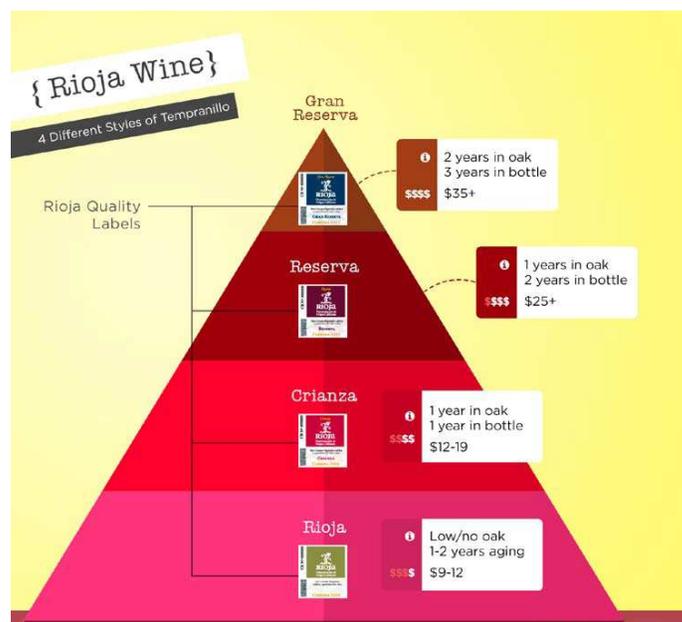
Rioja

Probably the most well-known wine growing region of Spain, Rioja is sometimes referred to as Spain’s Bordeaux. Rioja is at 1500 ft. above sea level and divided into three zones as shown on the map insert. There is evidence that the Romans made wine in the upper valley of the Ebro river that flows through the Rioja region. Viticulture flourished in Rioja from the end of the 15th century around the monasteries that were founded to serve the pilgrims en route to Santiago de Compostela. Phylloxera devastated viticulture in 1901 and along with civil war and World War II, recovery did not occur until the late sixties.

The red grape used throughout Rioja is Tempranillo which has been compared to Cabernet Sauvignon and which adds backbone to many of Spain’s most respected red wines. Blending, which is widely practiced, is permitted with Garnacha (Grenache in France), Mazuelo (Carignan in France), and Graciano (Monastrell in France, Monastrel in other parts of Spain and Mourvedre in other parts of the world). Recently Cabernet Sauvignon blending has been tolerated. Flavor wise, Tempranillo has been compared to Pinot Noir and Sangiovese. White wine is made predominantly from Viura (known as Macabeo in other Spanish regions) with Malvasia and Garnacha Blanca, blended in minor quantities. Contributions of these grapes to the wines produced are noted in the table below.

Reds	Whites
Tempranillo: <i>Aroma, flavor, delicacy and aging potential</i>	Viura: <i>Aroma, mild fruit flavors, and good acidity</i>
Garnacha: <i>Body and alcohol</i>	Malvasia: <i>Aroma</i>
Mazuelo: <i>A seasoning grape</i>	Garnacha Blanca: <i>Body</i>
Graciano: <i>Aroma and flavor</i>	

Rioja has four levels of wine quality shown in the diagram below. The small labels shown below will be found on the back of the bottle. The bottom level is sometimes referred to a “joven” or young. Minimum aging times, as required by Law, are shown.



Traditionally, winemaking included long (four or more years) aging in oak barrels which has been criticized. Traditionalists believe that wines made from Tempranillo only begin to develop their range of earthy, sophisticated flavors after long aging. However, wine stored in poor conditions or kept in the barrel too long becomes dried out and thin. Aging is accomplished using 225 liter (59 gal) barrels. American oak is favored but some French oak is also used. Used barrels have been preferred but new oak is coming into favor with some winemakers. White wine has also been aged in oak barrels which resulted in an oxidized product because of the long aging traditions. Most white wine is now produced in stainless steel at temperature controlled conditions.

Ribera del Duero

This region has a reputation for producing the greatest red wines of Spain. They are deeply concentrated, richly textured and among the longest lived of all Spanish red wines. Vega – Sicilia’s vineyard was planted in 1864 and it is the most legendary and expensive wine. This region has an ancient wine making tradition dating back 2000 years to the Roman era. Valladolid which is at the western boundary of the DO, Denominación de Origen, was the ancient capital of Spain and passed strict wine laws in the 17th century.



Ribera del Duero is a plateau dotted with mesas, near the origination of the headwaters of the Douro River of Portuguese fame and the place where Cervantes began to write Don Quixote. At 2600 ft. above sea level, days are extremely hot (104°F) and nights can be remarkably cool (43°F) which contributes to the production of exceptional wine.

Tinto Fino, a local variant of Tempranillo, is the primary grape in this region that produces mostly red wine. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Malbec and Syrah are sometimes used for blending. Garnacha is used for production of rosé. A small amount of white wine, made from the table grape Albillo, is produced for local consumption. Ribera del Duero wines are deep colored, occasionally astringent and firm flavored with amazingly soft, supple tannins. They can be full of licorice, leather, mocha, plum and dark berry aromas and flavors.

As with Rioja, the back of each bottle includes a small label that assures the consumer that every bottle bearing a numbered back label has passed strict tests before reaching the market. The levels of classification are: Rosé, Joven (Young Wine), Crianza, Reserva and Gran Reserva, each with its unique color and features that make it practically impossible to fake. The aging rules are:

- **Joven** has no oak at all; Joven Roble or Joven Barrica are aged three to six months in oak; all are released within six months after harvest. These are ready to be consumed young.
- **Crianza** is aged two years, a minimum of 12 months in oak barrels, and can be released two years after the harvest. These have well balanced tannins with a full-bodied, velvety mouth feel.

– **Reserva** is aged three years, a minimum of 12 months in oak barrels and are then laid down in bottles for further aging and can be released three years after harvest. These are elegant and intense with a rich aftertaste that is long and pleasant.

– **Gran Reserva** is made only in years of select vintage. They are aged a minimum of five years - 24 months in oak barrels, then are laid down in bottles for further aging and may be released five years after harvest.

There is a tradition in Ribera del Duero that wine is aged “as long as it takes” or until the winemaker feels that it is perfectly ready to drink. Application of this tradition can result in a wine of lower classification having extraordinary characteristics because the above rules are stated as “minimum.”

Note: The above information was excerpted from:

- MacNeil, Karen, “The Wine Bible” Workman Publishing Co, September 2001
- Johnson, Hugh and Robinson, Jancis, “The World Atlas of Wine” 2001 Ed., Octopus Publishing Group
- Robinson, Jancis, Editor, “The Oxford companion to Wine, 2nd Ed.”, Oxford University Press, 1999



Member Section: Creekside Grape Harvest Party!



On September 1, 2014, Walter and Therise Collier hosted a grape harvest party. About 30 people, including approximately 26 North Alabama AWS Chapter members, spent Labor Day helping harvest grapes from the vineyard. Paella was served for lunch with several desserts. Creekside wine from previous harvests was also served. Everyone had a great time as you can see from the event pictures. If you missed this year, save the date for next year!



NAAWS Facebook Page



Are you new to Facebook? Or do you have a page already? If so, join us on the [American Wine Society – North Alabama Chapter](#) page. Go to the page by clicking the link in the previous sentence then click the “Join Group” button and, very shortly, one of the page administrators will approve your request. We must keep the group as “closed” to keep out hackers and solicitations. Once you are a member, please remember, this is your page!



Add info for wine events, pics from wine trips, comments on a great wine you’ve just discovered, etc. Our newsletter is still our primary source of communication for the Chapter, but FB is an easy way to share more info during the rest of the month.

Chapter Web Site

<http://www.naaws-hsv.com>
(Chip Boling, Webmaster)

When you have time, check out the AWS web sites for both the National (www.americanwinesociety.org) and our local chapter (www.naaws-hsv.com).

Chapter 2014 Board of Directors

- Director – **Jay Wilson**, director@naaws-hsv.com
- Director Elect – **Tim Suttles**, director.elect@naaws-hsv.com
- Secretary – **Steve Peirce**, secretary@naaws-hsv.com
- Treasurer – **Jodi Stephens**, treasurer@naaws-hsv.com
- Programs – **Bob Garay**, programs@naaws-hsv.com
- Education – **Edwin Núñez**, education@naaws-hsv.com
- Newsletter – **Dave and Kim Russell**, newsletter@naaws-hsv.com
- Webmaster – **Chip Boling**, webmaster@naaws-hsv.com



2014 - 2015 Programs **(Bob Garay, Programs Chair)**

Below is the calendar for the remainder of 2014 and for 2015: Openings for 2015 hosting are closed, but for those you who are hosting next year and have not selected a theme, please do so and let me know – or you can inform the next programs chair.

2014			
Sep	28	National Tasting	Scott’s
Oct	19	Annual Dinner: Creekside Plantation, Mooresville Al	Programs
Nov	16	Sparkling Wines	Collier’s
Dec	N/A	No Tasting: Happy Holidays	N/A
2015			

Jan	25	France's Beaujolais Region: this ain't Nouveau	Nunez's
Feb	22	Vertical of Date Night Cabernet	Young's
Mar	29	TBA	Luvender's
Apr	26	TBA	Williams's
May	17	TBA	Gainey's
Jun	28	TBA	Collier's
Jul	26	Wine Rep Event (Local Venue)	Programs
Aug	23	At the Auction Celebrating our Members	Wilson's
Sep	20	National Tasting	Hernandez's
Oct	TBS	Annual Dinner	Programs
Nov	15	Sparkling Wines	Garay's
Dec	N/A	No Tasting	N/A

August AWS Wine Auction & Tasting Notes



It was a hot and steamy day, but inside the Wilson home, it was cool, loud and a lot of fun. With over 40 members and guests gathered for our annual wine auction and tasting, there were 22 bottles on the auction block, along with a table full of wine related items (provided by Marj McCulley). Needless to say, the bidding was brisk; with the 20 year Porto being the most sought after and highest bid of the day. Indicative of the quality of the wines donated for tasting, and some delicious food pairing, the silent auction resulted in multiple bids for many of the wines. Because of this event, we took in \$687 dollars that will go toward the AWS Educational Foundation. Just a sampling of some of the wide range of wonderful accompanying food pairing members enjoyed were: crab and shrimp stuffed Portobello mushrooms; ravioli; grilled beef; tender to the bone ribs; assorted hors d'oeuvres, cheeses and desserts, to name a few. The good news is that very little was left over as this was a hungry crowd. Those who participated deserve a big pat on the back for making this event such a rousing success; with a display of generosity and participation that are indicative of NAAWS members.

We hold a raffle at every tasting



We hold a raffle at each monthly tasting to help increase our annual contribution to the AWS Educational Foundation (AWSEF). The purpose of this fund is to assist graduate students in continuing their studies that support the American wine industry. We all enjoy the fruits (well, wines) of their labors! Just bring your raffle item(s) to the tasting each month and we'll raffle them off. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 tickets for \$5!! Remember, all money we raise through the raffle goes towards the AWSEF fund. Thank you!

Silent Auction Results (Stephen R. Peirce, Secretary)

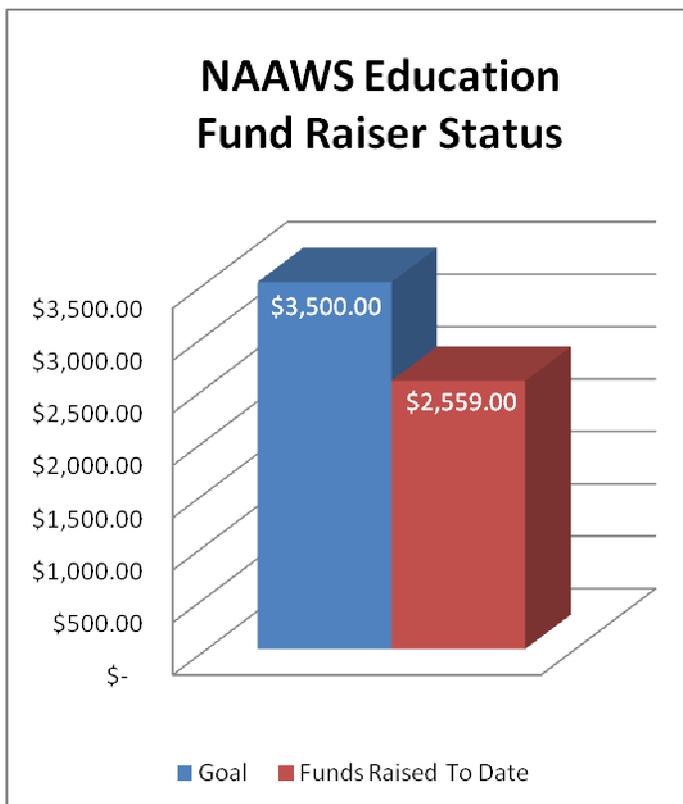
The August Silent Auction at Jay and Gisele Wilson, our Chapter Director’s home, was an absolutely wonderful and outstanding event. The attending chapter members and their guests brought two bottles of the same wine, (one to drink and one for people to bid on) and also a food pairing for the wine. We had some very good wines and some fabulous food to share. I don’t think anyone went home hungry nor pallet not quenched from this event. The bidding for the wines was fierce and very competitive. There were nineteen (19) different wines and six (6) gifts brought, tasted/viewed and bid on during the event, and they are as follows:

Dutton Valley - Rose’ 2012, Fonsfca Porto 20 Year Old, Black Saint Peter – Zinfandel 2011, Barbera D’alba – Saint Ambrogio 2012, Church Hill’s Estates – Douro 2012, Robert Mondovi – Private Selection Malbec 2012, Domaine Carneros – Pinot Noir 2012, Catena - Malbec 2011, Insoglio del Cinghiale – 2011, Domaine A. et P. de Villaine – Bouzeron Burgundy 2012, Sein – Blend 2012, 3 Steves - Ancient Vine Zinfandel 2012, La Tour de By 2011, Bethel Heights – Oregon Pinot Gris 2013, Willamette Valley Vineyards – Rose 2013, Mollydooker – Cabernet Sauvignon 2013, Merlo Family – Syrah Rose 2012, MacPhail Sonoma Coast – Pinot Noir 2010, Chehalem – Pinot Noir 2008, Meomi - Pinot Noir 2013, White Haven – Sauvignon Blanc 2012.

Gifts donated: Wine Glass Holder Appetizer Plates, Four (4) Wine Glasses, Wine Glace’, Wine Carafe, Vodka Chiller Set, and Two (2) Piece Chilling Carafe Set.

There were thirteen (13) winners of auction items with some couples bidding and winning several bottles of wine with gifts mix in.

We raised \$687 for the AWS Education Fund which is a very good amount for this fund raising activity. We all had a great time and I want to thank all who participated in this auction and again special thanks to those members who donated wine and pairing hor d’oeuvres and gifts.



Chapter AWS Educational Foundation (AWSEF)

<http://www.awsef.org>

With money raised during August, the balance in the Chapter’s AWSEF is \$2559.

Our chapter is committed to supporting the AWSEF. In August, we held a special silent auction event to support the Education Foundation. See the Section on Silent Auction Results for details.

The AWSEF scholarship award amount is \$3,500; our chapter has started raising money for our 6th scholarship.