

March 2016 Newsletter



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March Event: Spanish Wines

*Hosted by The Garays & Jaime Zapata
March 20, 2016, 3:00 to 5:00 pm*

We will taste a geographic and varietal cross section of superb Spanish wines, starting with a Cava aperitif, followed by the only white selection, an Albariño. We will then concentrate on the reds consisting of Tempranillo, Rioja, Garnacha, Monastrell, Priorat; and finally, as a special treat, an Amontillado (Sherry).

Each of these wines have been tasted by the hosts and selected for their quality as well as whether they typify the regions and varietals they represent. There will be a tapas selection to accompany these fabulous wines.

Attendance is limited to 40, so make sure to get your reservation in early.

The cost of this Spanish Wine tasting of these 8 wines is \$28.00

This tasting is hosted by the Garay's and Jaime Zapata at the home of Bob and Beth Garay.



*Reservation
Form on
Page 8*

*The Garay Home
209 Harborview Dr.
Madison, Alabama*

Director's Section: Robert Garay



We just had our first Board meeting of 2016 and we discussed what I hope to be are significant initiatives for the chapter. The first initiative is to work more closely with the other AWS chapters in the area; the second is to improve upon the ease and timeliness with which members can register and pay for the tastings. With regard to the former, I believe we have the ability and desire to share some tasting events throughout the year, and certainly welcome our chapters to our annual wine dinner on October. As for the latter, we are exploring the capability of allowing members to pay online, most likely through the use of PayPal; we are also looking at adding a place on our website where members can post the wineries they belong to as club members with links, and include when they might be ordering wines, in an effort to better share the advantages of club discounts on wine and shipping costs (incidentally, this was the brain child of my wife, so I can't take full credit).

Finally, if you are personally aware of members who have not attended a tasting in awhile, please reach out and remind them to review the NAAWS newsletter. We all have busy lives, so it's not always easy to remember to check. We have a vibrant and engaged membership, but we also have some members who have not attended many tasting events, so I'd like everyone to make a concerted effort to remind our friends of tasting dates and deadlines, as well as to introduce guests to the AWS by bringing them to one of the great tastings that we have scheduled for 2016.



Our North Alabama Chapter Facebook page is a "closed" group to keep it for our members only, so click on the "Join Group" button at the top and we'll add you to the group.

It's the place to be to get all the latest news about your American Wine Society chapter.

Chapter 2016 Board of Directors

Director	Bob Garay	director@naaws-hsv.com
Director Elect	Walt Collier	director.elect@naaws-hsv.com
Past Director	Tim Suttles	
Secretary	Tom Gainey	secretary@naaws-hsv.com
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Education Section: Kristen Lindelow, CWJ, CSW, FWS

Traditional Wines of Spain

España (Spain), in 2015, was the world's largest grape growing country by acreage, (2,472,000 acres) and third largest wine producer by liters (1.6 billion liters or 1.09 billion gallons). Spanish vineyards are found in approximately 57 growing regions known as “Denominaciones de Origen” or DOs that are located throughout the country. The wines from La Rioja and Priorat are the most highly acclaimed Spanish wines and their two regions have been classified as “Denominaciones de Origen Calificadas” (DOCa) for the highest quality. It could be said that northern Spain produces the finest of Spanish wines while central Spain focuses on the production of common table wines, and southern Spain is dedicated to the Jerez (Sherry) and dessert wines.



Grapes Destined for Cava

Spain has been suffering economic woes for several years and domestic wine sales have fallen drastically. What does this mean to us? As Spanish wineries work harder than ever to survive, they have found a ready market in the U.S., where we are able to find great quality wines at even better prices. With quality and price in mind, let us learn more about traditional Spanish wines.

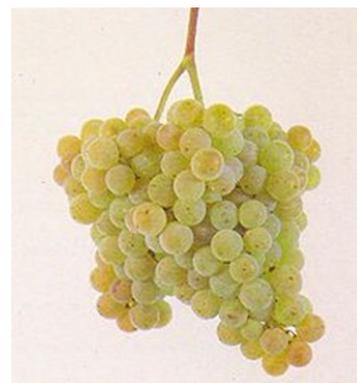
Spain's Sparkling Wine: Cava

Most countries have a traditional sparkling wine and Spain is no exception. Spanish winemakers have been producing *cava* for over 300 years, and, in fact, by the 18th century, manufacturers from the areas of La Selva and the Ampordà were the primary suppliers or

corks to Champagne, France! Cava may be produced in several regions in Spain, but is primarily from the northeastern region of Catalonia, specifically in Penedès. This is where the traditional grapes of cava, Xarel-lo, Macabeo, and Parellada, grow best. Modern winemakers may add Chardonnay or traditional French Champagne grapes to their cava for a more French-style taste. In order to be labeled as *cava*, the sparkling wine must be made in le méthode champenoise –the same way Champagne is made. Cava is very popular for its great price-to-quality ratio.

The Pride of Rías Baixas: Albariño

The Albariño grape grows in many areas but is primarily in the far northwest of Spain in the region known as Rías Baixas. One popular legend says the Albariño is derived from the Riesling grape and was brought to the region by German pilgrims. Another legend says, no, it was the Cistercian monks from Burgundy who brought the grape. Many believe the grape may be related to Petit Manseng, another variety grown in France around the same time. Either way, Albariño has been growing and being made into delightful wines since the 12th or 13th century. The flavor profile for Albariño can be compared to Riesling because of its minerality and high acidity, to Viognier thanks to its peach or apricot aromas, and/or to Pinot Gris for the lovely floral bouquet. Most wineries ferment this wine in stainless steel and it is ready to drink young. Many, however, are experimenting with barrel fermentation and malolactic fermentation to increase its aging potential. Portugal also grows a lot of Albariño but goes by the synonym *Alvarinho*.



Albariño Grapes

Education Section Continued



Spain's "Noble" Grape: Tempranillo

Jancis Robinson, the author of the "Oxford Companion to Wine," calls Tempranillo "Spain's answer to Cabernet Sauvignon." This is the grape of La Rioja, Spain's most celebrated and well-known wine region, though Tempranillo grows well in many regions of Spain (and Portugal). If you find a bottle of red "Rioja" in your hand, it's going to be Tempranillo. In other parts of Spain, you will see the varietal name on the label. The word itself refers to the fact that this grape will ripen as much as two weeks earlier than other traditional Spanish grapes: *Temprano* is the Spanish word for early. Young (*joven*) wines made from this black grape will have fresh, juicy strawberry aromas and

flavors while those that have been aged present tobacco, spices, and herbal characteristics along with plum and cherry aromas. Historically, Spanish winemakers have aged Tempranillo for years in smaller, American-oak barrels which often allowed the vanilla aromas of the oak to overwhelm the wine. Winemakers today have moved to aging Tempranillo in a combination of French- and American-oak barrels and the results are rich, powerful wines with more complexity and harmony that can age for many years. Spain is one of the few countries in the world where the word "reserve" on a wine label is legally defined. (See N. AL-AWS newsletter article, May 2015) Interestingly, while Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon are known throughout France and, indeed, the rest of the wine world as Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo has many synonyms in its home country. In Cataluña, it is called *Ull de Llebre* (eye of the hare); in Ribera del Duero it is *Tinta de País* or *Tinto Fino*; in Toro, it is *Tinta de Toro*; in Madrid, *Tinto de Madrid* (most unimaginative, I think); and in La Mancha and Valdepeñas it is called *Cencibel*. And why, when it was brought to California it was called (and often still is) *Valdepeñas* is a mystery!

Garnacha /S Spanish:

Garnacha, known as Grenache outside Spain, is the second most widely-planted red grape in Spain (after Tempranillo) and is currently being grown on over 500,000 acres all over the world. Since we're in Spain, we'll refer to it only as *Garnacha*. Garnacha is believed to have originated either in Sardinia or in Catalonia. Either way, it should be considered to be of Spanish origin as both areas were under Aragon rule at the time! Garnacha is grown in almost every corner of Spain but the northern and eastern wine regions, especially Priorat, are the prime growing areas. When phylloxera arrived in Spain in the mid-1800s, most native vines were ravaged and robust Garnacha was what vigneron turned to in replanting. There are many areas in Spain that are home to 120+ year old Garnacha vines. These vines have very low yields and produce, as you can imagine, a lovely, dense, deeply-concentrated wine. Garnacha thrives in hot, dry climates and in many areas are grown on steeply terraced hillsides. For decades, Garnacha was planted as a "workhorse" grape and unimpressive wines were created with it. Recently, young winemakers rediscovered the ancient bush-trained Garnacha vines of the Priorat region and have been making aged wines that rival the famous Garnacha-based wines of Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Dominant flavors of Spanish Garnacha wines include ruby-red grapefruit, cherry, raspberry, fig, prune, licorice, and cloves. And if you find a wine you like, take heart: Garnacha can typically age for 5-15 years.



**Garnacha on hillsides
in Priorat**

Education Section Continued

Difficult Monastrell:

Spain's 4th most-planted red grape is also considered indigenous to the country and is thought to have been brought by Phoenician traders over 2500 years ago. It became known as Mourvèdre in France, likely because it was originally imported from the Spanish city of Murviedro. Other parts of the world, California included, often use the name Mataró after the Catalanian city from which it was exported. Monastrell was more popular and more widely planted before the phylloxera epidemic; when vignerons replanted their devastated vineyards with grafted vines, it was discovered Monastrell doesn't graft as easily as other varieties. Monastrell requires very hot days and lots of water in well-drained soil to produce well. Its tight clusters create the perfect milieu for mildew but its late budding often prevents late spring frost damage. Another drawback to growing Monastrell is its short harvest window: once the grapes reach their peak ripeness, they need to be picked promptly as the acid falls quickly allowing the fruit to develop "pruney" flavors. You can expect a wine made from Monastrell to be full-bodied with lots of jammy fruit aromas, high acidity, high tannins, and high alcohol. Winemakers have found using larger barrels or neutral oak produces a more pleasing Monastrell. When oak-aged, you'll find more mocha, chocolate and vanilla notes in the wine. Monastrell is grown primarily in central Spain in the DOs (*Denominación de Origen*) of [Jumilla](#), [Yecla](#), [Valencia](#), [Almansa](#), and [Alicante](#).

Classic Southern: Amontillado

Just like seeing the word "Champagne" on a product from anywhere in the world outside Champagne, France, the only SHERRY comes from Jerez (or, Xeres) Spain. The name Sherry is an anglicized version of the name of the region in southern Spain that produces this salty, nutty, highly aromatic fortified wine. Volumes have been written about the wines of Jerez and sheries have been friends to many a sailor for hundreds of years. Look at the location of Jerez on a map of Spain –it's a port at the Southern end of the Iberian Peninsula, right at the entrance to the Mediterranean Sea. Perfect stopping place for stocking up for voyages north, south, east and west! There have been volumes written about the different sherry styles but I'll try to summarize them quickly for you.

There are only three white grape varieties allowed to make Sherry: Palomino, Pedro Ximénez (PX), and Moscatel. Palomino is by far the main variety and can be used to make a table wine but they are typically pretty bland and neutral. It's this neutral-ness that makes for a good Sherry. Pedro Ximénez is added to make sweet wines and the grapes are partially sun-dried to increase this sweetness. Moscatel is similar to PX but is less commonly used.



There are two basic Sherry styles: with or without flor. Flor is a yeast that grows on top of the wine as it is aged. But not every Sherry is aged under a layer of flor. Those aged under flor are called Fino-style and include *Fino*, *Manzanilla*, or *Pale Cream*. Those Sheries aged without flor are Oloroso-style and include *Oloroso* and *Cream*. And there are the hybrid-styles of Sherry: *Palo Cortado* and *Amontillado*. Amontillado is one that started as a Fino-style but, after a few years, lost the protective layering of flor. The flor can slowly fade, or, if the wine is fortified to a high enough alcohol level, the flor yeast will die.

Amontillado has the benefit of having started out as one style of Sherry and ending up as the other, therefore displaying characteristics of both Sherry styles. An Amontillado will be similar to a Fino but with a bit of saltiness, it will be darker and nuttier. Enjoy! It's memorable enough for Edgar Allen Poe to make it an important element in his 1846 short story, *The Cask of Amontillado*.

February Raffle Winners: Tom Gainey, Secretary

This month's tasting theme was "The French Connection" co-hosted by Kristen Lindelow and Susan Coddington. Our tasting was held at the Church Street Wine Shoppe with some great food pairings served to us all and the wines were available for sale on site after the tasting. This month's raffle had 3 donations. A special thanks to the following members who donated items for the raffle:



Steve & Beth Young – Brown Mountain White from Lake James Cellars Winery - Glen Alpine, NC
 Tom & Suzanne Gainey – Brut Reserva Heredad Cava from Segura Viudas - Spain
 Paula & Dan Laurita – 2012 Rioja Crianza, from Gran Vendema – Spain

Winners this month were: Lane Fabby, Beth Garay, and Liz Williams.

We raised \$90.00 for the AWS Education Fund which continues to grow rapidly this year due to the generosity of our members – both those who donate and all of you that purchase raffle tickets. A great time was had by all and thanks again to all who participated in this raffle and a special thanks to those members who donated wine or gifts for the raffle.



February Tasting: Augie Hernandez, Programs

Thank you to our co-hosts Susan Coddington and Kristen Lindelow for organizing this month's tasting, "The French Connection", at Church Street Wine Shoppe. The service provided by both the Church Street Wine Shoppe staff and those great young ladies that served the great food pairings was outstanding. There were seven wines served and categorized into three separate categories. Here are the categorized wines with prices for each and the favorite for each category denoted in bold:

Champagne

Piillot Pere et Fils, Cuvee de Reserve, Extra Brut, NV (\$48.48)

Whites

Domaine Octavie, Sauvignon Blanc, Touraine AOC, 2014, Loire Valley (\$16.48)

Ampelidae Marigny-Neuf, Chardonnay, 2014, Loire Valley (\$14.98)

Domaine de la Croix Senaillet, Macon Davaye, 2014, Burgundy (\$20.48)

Reds

Domaine Chaune-Arnaud, "La Petit Coquet", 2014, Cotes du Rhone (\$14.98)

Chateau Peybonhomme-Les-Tours, 2011, Cotes de Bourdeaux, Blaye (\$16.48)

La Reserve d'O, Terrasses deLarzac, 2012, Languedoc (\$31.48)

Overall favorite: Domaine Octavie, Sauvignon Blanc, Touraine AOC, 2014, Loire Valley

Programs: *Augie Hernandez*

Included here is the list of 2016 and 2017 Programs so that you can see what is available for a month that you would like to host. Please consider hosting a month in 2017 in order to support our mission to provide scholarships for those that seek to educate themselves about wine. If you have never hosted a tasting, there are members that are willing to co-host and help you get through the entire process.



2016 & 2017 Programs Calendars

<i>2016</i>			Capacity
March 20	Wines From Spain	Garay/Zappata	40
April 17	Grenache Wines – Old & New World	Suttles/Russell	40
May 15		Wilson	40
June 19		Garza	40
July 17	Wine Rep Event (Local Venue)	Programs	40
August 21	At the Auction Celebrating our Members	Williams	40
September 18	National Tasting	Hernandez	60
October 16	Annual Dinner	Programs	50
November 20	Sparkling Wines	Kilbeys	40
December	No Tasting	N/A	

<i>2017</i>			Capacity
January	Cider	Minor	40
February	Bulgarian Wines	Starklof	40
March	Portuguese Wines	Collier	40
April			40
May			40
June			40
July	Wine Rep Event (Local Venue)	Programs	40
August	At the Auction Celebrating our Members	Wilson	40
September	National Tasting		40
October	Annual Dinner	Programs	60
November	Sparkling Wines		40
December	No Tasting	N/A	