



# The International Wine Review

June 2010

## Report # 23: The Wines of Ribera del Duero Revisited

### Introduction



Ribera del Duero is one of Spain's outstanding wine regions. Since it acquired DO (Denominación de Origen) status with just 8 wineries in 1982, the wine industry has grown dramatically and the quality of its wines has steadily improved. As of 2009, Ribera del Duero counted more than 250 wineries

and had more than tripled its vineyard acreage to almost 21 thousand hectares. Likewise, the quality of Ribera del Duero wines has steadily improved due to the introduction of modern vineyard management and winemaking techniques and the skills of a new generation of producers and winemakers. There is little question that Ribera del Duero has come a long way in a relatively short period and its future as a winemaking region looks bright, although there remain some important challenges on the horizon.

This report is an update to the International Wine Review's report # 8, *The Wines of Ribera del Duero*, published in September 2007. In that report, we took measure of the region and the quality of its wines and analyzed the key factors contributing to its success. We also examined the special qualities of the Tempranillo grape and looked closely at the viticulture and winemaking practices that were being introduced and discussed the challenges facing the region in the US marketplace. In that report we also identified the challenges resulting from the spectacular growth of the wine industry and recommended measures for dealing with them.

The current report updates and expands upon our previous analysis of the Ribera del Duero and some of the key wineries adjoining the DO. While much of what we wrote almost three years ago remains valid, we have expanded upon and deepened our analysis on certain topics while also providing new material on the wines and winemakers. We have also added a new section on wine tourism, an exciting and relatively recent development in the region, and updated our analysis of the challenges in the market place for Ribera del Duero wines. Finally, we include reviews and ratings of 100 wines currently on the market and an additional 200 wines from producers whose wines are available for import to the US market. The latter group of reviews and ratings, which the International Wine Review carried out for the Consejo Regulador of

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Ribera del Duero, are made available to readers in a special supplement to the main report. Our readers in the trade may wish to take special note of the large number of very good wines from producers seeking importers.

We are pleased to report that we have found notable improvements in the wines tasted for this report. Even taking account of differences between the current vintages and previous ones, we believe that most of the wines today are better balanced with friendlier tannins than was true just a few years ago. We also find that today's wines are better value than those we tasted for our last report. This reflects both improved quality and the stagnant demand for good wine resulting from the worldwide economic recession. Following is a listing of the wines which received a rating of 90 points and above in our tastings.

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Donald Winkler, Editor



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