

September/October 2013

## New Releases from Spain

Josh Reynolds

Veteran IWC readers don't really need to be reminded that Spain is, in our opinion, the world's richest source of outstanding red wine values. That continues to be the case today.

As I worked my way through over 1,500 Spanish wines over the last few months, that point was driven home on pretty much a daily basis. Perhaps even more striking for me this year was tasting a larger number of world-class white wines than I expected to find.

We are long-time fans of the best wines from Rias Baixas, and the current batch of releases maintains the region's high standard. But still more intriguing was the number of terrific whites from other areas of Spain, even from zones that until recently seemed to be completely dedicated to red wines. At this point it's tempting to say that Spain's white wines are offering the same bang for the buck as her reds. That's not true in sheer numbers--at least not yet--but the consistent quality of the white wines I tasted from Rioja, Terra Alta, Valdeorras and Rueda, among other regions, was truly exciting this year. Better yet, with rare exception these are wines that retail for less than \$25 a bottle and are in wide distribution, making it relatively painless for wine lovers to check them out for themselves.

Current vintages in the marketplace. Following 2010 and 2009, both generally outstanding vintages across Spain's wine-growing regions, 2011 and 2012 presented growers and producers with a variety of challenges, beginning with cool summers during which the grapes often struggled to ripen. The upside is that the regions of Spain that most collectors follow produced plenty of red wines that are lively, focused and true to their heritage--unlike in 2009, for example, whose wines are strongly influenced by the warm weather. And that goes double for the whites.

In Rioja, 2011 was marked by a mostly cool summer followed by rising temperatures and dry weather at the end of the season. The positive spin among the producers emphasizes the clement weather leading up to the harvest, but from the first look I've had of the 2011s I'm not yet convinced that it was enough to compensate for what was essentially stalled maturity during July and the first half of August. These are still early days so it's a little premature to rush to judgment. That said, it's unlikely that any but the very best wines will match their 2010 and 2009 siblings. Those two vintages are living up to their promise, with the '09s mostly showing the best side of this ripe year and the 2010s focused, pure and balanced for a long life.

In the northwestern Galicia/Leon area, which includes Bierzo and Ribeira Sacra, 2012 gave a very short crop, off by as much as 50% in Rias Baixas, a shortfall all the more painful because the resulting wines are generally fantastic (with a caveat), showing greater concentration than usual. Most of the white Rias Baixas, Bierzo, Monterrei and Valdeorras wines I tasted display powerful pit fruit and ripe melon character, as opposed to the more typical citrus and orchard fruit qualities one usually finds here. While that heft and power can be undeniably appealing, it can also potentially obscure the mouth-watering minerality that defines the region's wines, especially with a little bottle age. That's good or bad, depending on how you like your albarinos. I visited the region in May and while most producers were thrilled with the quality of their '12s, they all made a point of describing these wines' unique character, advising that they be consumed on the younger side, just to be safe.

The Ribera del Duero/Toro/Castilla y Leon area of central Spain enjoyed a warm summer in 2011, which pushed sugar levels up, and many of the wines show the result in fleshiness and early accessibility.

Alcohol numbers are not generally as high as those of torrid years like 2003 but are in the neighborhood of those reached in 2009, 2006 and 2005. I suspect that the wines will drink well over the short to medium term and I found lots of soft tannins and forward fruit in the wines I tasted.

Two thousand twelve looks to be a fantastic vintage for red wines in Ribera del Duero and Toro, based on barrel samples I tasted from these areas in May and freshly bottled, unoaked wines that I tasted in late summer. But as with the wines of Rioja, it's still a little early to make hard judgments. The 2012 growing season produced wines with verve and focus, although without quite the intensity and depth of the 2010s and 2009s; most of the young '12s are already delicious and I imagine they'll be at their best within the decade, so don't hesitate to dive in soon.

Down in the Priorat/Montsant/Penedes area 2010 looks to be flat-out brilliant, having produced wines that are fresh, structured and focused, with plenty of fruit (though not to the extent of the opulent 2009s) to see them into old age. I continue to hear grumblings about the aging potential of wines from Priorat and, frankly, that puzzles me. Over the last few years I've had the chance to taste--and, more important, drink--some superb Priorat wines between 15 and 20 years old, and they have consistently shown the character I'd expect from wines of similar age and pedigree from anywhere else in the world. At this point I'm confident that the best 2010s from this region will reward patient wine lovers who can hold off on cracking their bottles until, say, 2020 and beyond.

### **Aalto Bodegas y Vinedos**

**2011 Ribera Del Duero**(\$55) (aged for two years in small French and American oak barrels): Opaque ruby. Assertive aromas of blackberry, bitter cherry, spicecake and floral pastilles. Sweet and expansive on entry, then tighter in the middle, with an alluringly perfumed quality to the dark berry, cherry-cola and vanilla flavors. Finishes sappy and long, with fine-grained tannins adding shape and grip. **92**  
(Eric Solomon Selections, [www.europeancellars.com](http://www.europeancellars.com))

### **Abadia de Acon**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**Bright purple. Smoky black and blue fruit scents show a slight jamminess and pick up a peppery element with air. Juicy, penetrating blueberry and bitter cherry flavors display good energy and put on weight with air. Sweet oak spices and vanilla come up on the finish, which is framed by smooth, harmonious tannins. Showing its oak right now but there's plenty of fruit to counter it. **89**  
([www.abadiadeacon.com](http://www.abadiadeacon.com))

### **Abadia de San Quirce/Bodegas Imperiales**

**2006 Finca Helena Ribera Del Duero**Deep ruby. Blackberry, licorice, dark chocolate and vanilla aromas are complemented by sexy oak spices. Plush and broad, but juicy acidity gives shape to the sweet, densely packed dark berry fruit. Very rich but lively as well, with dusty tannins giving grip to the long, spicy finish. **89**

Also recommended: 2009 Ribera del Duero Crianza (85+?). ([www.bodegasimperiales.com](http://www.bodegasimperiales.com))

### **Bodegas y Vinedos Acena**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Roble**(\$14) Opaque ruby. Cherry pit, licorice and woodsmoke on the nose. Deep dark berry flavors are slightly clenched but show good energy. Unwinds a bit with air and finishes with good spicy cut and length. This wine benefits quite a bit from decanting. **88**  
(Pilot's Exports Spain Corp, Miami, FL)

### **Aderezo**

**2011 Ribera Del Duero Roble**(\$16) Brilliant ruby. Fresh blackberry and vanilla on the nose. The palate offers sweet dark fruit flavors, a touch of mocha and slow-building spiciness. Soft tannins give shape to the finish, which leaves a touch of cracked pepper behind. **88**  
(Spanish Vines, [www.spanishvines.com](http://www.spanishvines.com))

## **Adrada Ecologica**

**2008 Kirios De Adrada Todo Ribera Del Duero**(made from certified organic tempranillo): Dark ruby. Zesty dark berry and cherry scents are complemented by deeper notes of licorice and pipe tobacco. The palate offers bitter cherry and cassis flavors plus a touch of dark chocolate. Finishes smooth and sweet, with soft tannins and an exotic note of black cardamom. **88**

**2008 Kirios De Adrada Noche Ribera Del Duero**Glass-staining ruby. Smoky dark berries, dried flowers and mocha on the nose and in the mouth. Smooth, sweet and expansive, finishing with strong thrust, sneaky tannins and a lingering note of candied lavender. This is ready to drink, especially with a little aeration. **89**

(www.kiriosdeadrada.com)

## **Bodegas y Vinos Alion**

**2009 Reserva Ribera Del Duero**(\$94) Opaque ruby. Ripe cherry, dark berries and oak spice on the highly perfumed nose. Fleshy and sweet, offering intense blackberry and cherry-cola flavors that put on weight and become spicier with air. Finishes smooth and expansive, with a smoky nuance and youthfully chewy tannins. This powerful yet lithe wine boasts excellent focus and dark fruit intensity. **93**  
(Europvin USA, www.europvin .com)

## **Bodegas y Vinos Arbas**

**2009 Rond De Jambe Ribera Del Duero**Full ruby. Dark berries, woodsmoke and vanilla on the perfumed nose. Fresh and sweet in the mouth, offering light-bodied blackberry and cherry-vanilla flavors that become spicier with air. Finishes with good tangy cut and length, leaving a peppery note behind. **88**  
(www.bodegasarbas.com)

## **Vina Arnaiz**

**2011 Ribera Del Duero Roble**(\$12) Brilliant ruby. Black and blue fruits on the nose and palate. On the jammy side but shows good energy and finishes smooth, gently sweet and persistent. I'd drink this wine on the young side for its fruitiness. **88**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero Roble**(\$18) Dark ruby. Musky cherry and dark berries on the nose. Chewy and a touch bitter, offering focused cherry pit and cassis flavors and a smoky nuance. Closes with good tannic grip and a spicy note of black pepper. **88**

**2008 Ribera Del Duero Reserva**(\$29) Deep ruby. Smoky cherry and dark berry aromas are brightened by peppery spices and fresh flowers. Fleshy and smooth in texture, offering sweet blackberry and cocoa powder flavors that betray a touch of warmth. This round, supple wine finishes with good breadth and cling. **89**  
(CIV USA, www.civusa.com)

## **Bodegas Arrocal**

**2012 Rosa De Arrocal Ribera Del Duero**(\$19) (aged in 80% French and 20% American oak): Deep ruby. Deeply pitched dark berry and spicecake aromas are complemented by a smoky nuance and a touch of vanilla. Sweet and expansive, offering fleshy blackberry and cherry-vanilla flavors and a touch of cracked pepper. Closes sweet and long, with soft tannins and lingering spiciness. **90**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Passion**(\$21) (aged in French oak for 12 months): Vivid ruby. Sexy, oak-spiced red and dark berries on the perfumed nose. Shows very good energy and power in the mouth, offering sweet black raspberry and cherry-cola flavors plus a strong note of candied flowers. Closes silky and long, with resonating spiciness and soft, even tannins. This sexy wine is drinking well now and offers superb value. **91**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero Seleccion**(\$42) (aged in French oak for 15 months): Glass-staining ruby. Smoky, expansive aromas of dark fruit compote, licorice and toasty oak. Round and velvety in the mouth, offering warm blueberry and cherry-vanilla flavors lifted by juicy acidity. Shows a spicy nuance on the clinging finish, which is firmed by ripe, well-integrated tannins. **91**

**2009 Angel Ribera Del Duero**(\$55) (made from 70-year-old vines and raised for 20 months in new French oak): Vivid ruby. Seductively perfumed bouquet displays spicy dark berries and flowers complicated by smoky minerals, vanilla and allspice. Pliant blackberry and cherry-cola flavors are

impressively fresh, becoming denser and spicier in the glass. At once rich and vivacious, finishing with excellent clarity and gently tannic persistence. **92**  
(Grapes of Spain, [www.grapesofspain.com](http://www.grapesofspain.com))

## **Bodegas Arzuaga Navarro**

**2011 Ribera Del Duero La Planta**(\$10) Deep ruby. Dark berry liqueur and cherry-cola on the perfumed nose. Lush, smoky and broad, offering blackberry and cherry compote flavors with hints of cola, vanilla and licorice. Finishes smooth and sweet, with slow-building tannins and lingering floral character. **88**

**2010 Arzuaga Vino Elaborado Con Uvas Ecologicas Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$32) (all certified organic tempranillo that was aged in new French oak for 17 months): Saturated ruby. A heady, complex bouquet evokes candied dark berries, cola, vanilla and smoky Indian spices. Fleshy, palate-staining blackberry and cherry-vanilla flavors show very good depth and focus, with the smoky note coming back up with aeration. Sweet and supple on the finish, which features smooth tannins and a sexy floral pastille flourish.

**90**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$29) Bright violet color. Cherry, blueberry, licorice and smoky oak on the nose. Juicy, sweet and seamless, offering light-bodied dark berry flavors and a hint of vanilla. Finishes with smooth tannins and repeating vanilla note. **89**

**2009 Amaya Arzuaga Coleccion Ribera Del Duero**(\$85) (aged in all new French oak): Opaque ruby. Sexy blackberry, cola and incense aromas display very good energy and clarity. Round and fleshy on the palate, with sweet dark berry liqueur and floral pastille flavors lifted by a mineral element. Leaves an exotic floral quality behind on the long, sappy, gently tannic finish. This suave wine is ready to drink. **92**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero Reserva Especial**(\$70) Dark purple. Flamboyant aromas of blackberry, cherry cola and dark chocolate, lifted by zesty minerals. Sweet and seamless, with a fine-grained texture and very good clarity to its crushed dark berry, violet pastille and spicecake flavors. The sweet, focused finish leaves notes of candied flowers and peppery spices behind. This is delicious now. **90**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero Reserva**(\$38) Saturated ruby. Heady smoke- and spice-accented scents of fresh dark berries and cherry-cola, with an exotic note of incense building with air. Sweet, penetrating blackberry and bitter cherry flavors become sweeter with air and pick up a sexy violet pastille nuance on the back half. Gentle tannins build through the finish, with the floral and cola notes echoing.

**91**

**2009 Gran Arzuaga Ribera Del Duero**(\$175) (75% tinto fino, 20% cabernet sauvignon and 5% albillo; aged for 22 months in new French oak): Inky ruby. Explosive aromas of dark berry preserves, cola, mocha and incense, along with a smoky nuance and a sexy floral note. Sweet, palate-staining black and blue fruit flavors are enlivened by juicy acidity and show impressive vivacity for a hot-vintage wine.

Supple and broad on the clinging finish, which features brighter red fruit and floral pastille qualities and an echo of vanilla. **92**

**2004 Ribera Del Duero Gran Reserva**(\$120) Bright ruby. Oak-spiced cherry and raspberry aromas are complicated by suggestions of pipe tobacco, licorice and vanilla. Smoky and sweet on the palate, offering smooth red fruit compote flavors and a good wallop of sweet vanillin oak. Finishes spicy and broad, with supple tannins and lingering smokiness. Aficionados of old-school Spanish wines will appreciate this wine's expression of sweet fruit and oak. **91**

Also recommended: 2011 Fan D. Oro Blanco Vino de Mesa (86). (Frederick Wildman & Sons, [www.frederickwildman.com](http://www.frederickwildman.com))

## **Bodegas Asenjo & Manso**

**2009 Manso Ribera Del Duero**(\$18) (aged in one- and two-year-old American oak barrels): Vivid ruby.

Powerfully scented aromas of red and dark berry preserves, vanilla and mocha. Plush and appealingly sweet, with slightly jammy black raspberry and cherry flavors and a touch of roasted coffee. Showing a strong oak influence for now but there's good depth of fruit here. Closes smooth and sweet, with a hint of smokiness and round tannins. **89**

**2009 A & M Ribera Del Duero**(\$180) (made from vines ranging from 80 to over 100 years old; did its malo in new American oak and was then moved into a set of new French oak barrels): Inky ruby. Heady aromas of black and blue fruits, incense and fresh flowers. Deep, palate-staining blueberry and boysenberry flavors show excellent clarity and power, with a suave violet pastille nuance gaining strength with air. Refuses to let up on the finish, which clings with outstanding tenacity and alluring sweetness. **93**

**2008 Ceres Ribera Del Duero**(\$24) (made from 50+-year-old, organically farmed vines and aged in 50% new American and 50% one-year-old French oak barrels): Deep ruby. Sexy, oak-spiced aromas of dark berries and fresh flowers. Spicy blackberry, bitter cherry and dark chocolate flavors show very good depth, with tangy acidity providing a firm underpinning. Energetic and focused on the clinging finish. **90**

**2008 Silvanus Edicion Limitada Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$38) (all new oak, 80% French and 20% American): Vivid ruby. Smoky, exotically perfumed bouquet of dark fruit compote, cherry-vanilla and potpourri. Plush and seamless in the mouth, offering sweet blackberry and cherry flavors with complicating notes of clove and mocha. Finishes broad and very long, with an echo of smoky oak and lingering sweetness. **91**

(Bon Vivant Imports, [www.bonvivantimports.com](http://www.bonvivantimports.com))

### **Vinedos y Bodegas Aster**

**2008 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$21) Deep ruby. Dried cherry, cassis and licorice on the pungently perfumed nose. Dry and linear on entry, offering bitter cherry and espresso flavors and a hint of black pepper. Turns sweeter on the gently tannic finish, which features dark berry and cherry-cola qualities. **89**

(Michael Skurnik Wines, [www.michaelskurnikwines.com](http://www.michaelskurnikwines.com))

([www.gilfamily.es](http://www.gilfamily.es))

### **Atalayas de Golban**

**2012 Viridiana Ribera Del Duero**(\$15) (fermented in stainless steel and aged for three months in two- and three-year-old French oak barrels): Ruby-red. Spicy, perfumed aromas of raspberry, cherry and smoky minerals. Juicy and precise, with firm underlying minerality bracing the red fruit preserve and floral pastille flavors. Finishes tangy and long, with sneaky tannins and lingering spiciness. **90**

**2010 Torre De Golban Crianza Ribera Del Duero**(\$17) (fermented in stainless steel and aged for a year in French oak, followed by two months in concrete tanks): Bright ruby. Delicate, high-pitched red berry and floral aromas show a pinot-like character. Juicy and precise, with very good clarity to its raspberry and rose pastille flavors. Clean and nervy on the finish, leaving spicecake and mineral notes behind. **90**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero Reserva**(\$22) (fermented in stainless steel, then aged for 15 months in French oak before being transferred to concrete for two months): Bright ruby. Smoky, floral redcurrant and cherry on the nose, with zesty minerality adding energy. Clean and brisk, offering lively red fruit flavors, tangy mineral lift and an exotic blood orange quality. Shows very good clarity on the finish, which features silky tannins and a touch of floral pastilles. **91**

(Aviva Vino, [www.avivavino.com](http://www.avivavino.com))

### **Bodegas Barco de Piedra**

**2011 Ribera Del Duero**(\$17) (aged for six months in a combination of French, American and Hungarian oak): Bright ruby. Sexy aromas of fresh dark berries and floral oils, with a licorice nuance adding depth. Sappy and precise, offering lively black raspberry and cherry flavors that show a refreshingly bitter edge. Finishes sweet and long, with smooth tannins adding shape. **90**

(Ole Imports, [www.oleimports.com](http://www.oleimports.com))

### **Bodegas Benito Rodrigo**

**2009 El Callejon 6 Mesas En Barrica Ribera Del Duero**Opaque ruby. Smoky cherry and cassis on the fragrant nose and palate. Warm and supple in texture, showing good finishing cling and gentle, slow-building tannins. Drinking well right now. **88**

([www.bodegabenitorodrigo.es](http://www.bodegabenitorodrigo.es))

### **Besadien**

**2012 Ribera Del Duero Roble**(\$15) Bright violet color. Raspberry, woodsmoke and a peppery note on the nose. Supple and seamless in texture, offering lively, slightly jammy red fruit flavors and a hint of succulent herbs. Finishes with smooth tannins, decent length and good straightforward appeal. **88**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero**(\$30) Saturated ruby. Aromas of cherry, blackberry and spicy oak, plus a smoky overtone. Smooth, sweet and expansive, offering pliant dark fruit flavors and a touch of bitter chocolate. Shows good energy on the youthfully tannic finish, with the smoke and cherry notes repeating. **90**

**90**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero Reserva**(\$60) Opaque ruby. Smoky dark berries and Indian spices on the perfumed nose. Plush and open-knit, offering sweet black and blue fruit flavors and a hint of fruitcake. The smoky quality comes back on the very persistent finish, which features smooth tannins and lingering floral and berry compote notes. **91**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero Premium**(\$80) Opaque ruby. Heady, exotically perfumed aromas of dark fruit liqueur, smoky oak and incense. Then sweet and penetrating on the palate, offering intense black and blue fruit flavors and a hint of licorice. Vanillin oak and floral pastille qualities linger on the finish, which features smooth tannins and a hint of clove. **92**

(The Artisan Collection, [www.theartisancollection.us](http://www.theartisancollection.us))

### **Bodegas Bohorquez**

**2006 Mmii Ribera Del Duero Reserva**(\$28) (aged in a combination of French and American oak, much of it new): Bright violet color. Smoky cherry and dark berries on the nose, along with notes of cured meat and vanilla. Chewy and nicely concentrated, offering sweet blackcurrant and cherry flavors that show a vaguely feral character. Closes smooth and long, with lingering smokiness and a touch of bitter cherry. On the wild side. **88**

(Frank Johnson Selections, [www.frankjohnsonselections.com](http://www.frankjohnsonselections.com))

### **Bodegas Briego**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**Vivid ruby. Ripe cherry and dark berries on the nose and in the mouth. Warm and round, with good depth and slow-building smokiness. In a fleshy, generous style, finishing smooth, sweet and slightly warm. **88**

([www.bodegasbriego.com](http://www.bodegasbriego.com))

### **Bodegas Briones Baniandres**

**2011 Apricus Ribera Del Duero Roble** Deep ruby. Cherry, plum preserve and cassis aromas and flavors are complemented by vanillin oak and peppery spices. Broad and supple in texture but surprisingly energetic thanks to fresh acidity. Bitter chocolate and candied licorice notes build on the smooth, refreshingly bitter finish. Drinks easily now but should gain in sweetness over the coming year or two. **88**

([www.apricus.es](http://www.apricus.es))

### **Campos Goticos**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$47) Brilliant ruby. Sexy cherry-vanilla and dark berry scents are complicated by notes of licorice and fresh rose. Sweet and expansive on the palate, offering lively black raspberry and cola flavors and a hint of vanilla bean. A spicy note adds cut to the finish, which is shaped by silky tannins and lifted by tangy acidity. Quite lively for the vintage and drinking nicely now. **90**

(DiVinoSphere, [www.bigideasllc.com/divinosphere](http://www.bigideasllc.com/divinosphere))

[www.vilaviniteca.com](http://www.vilaviniteca.com))

### **Bodegas Carmelo Rodero**

**2009 Crianza Ribera Del Duero**(\$35) Opaque ruby. A wild, smoke- and spiced accented bouquet evokes dried cherry, cured meat, violet and vanilla. Sweet and penetrating, offering lively cherry and black raspberry flavors that take a darker turn with air. The smoke and meaty notes come back on the finish, which features supple tannins and a hint of mocha. **89**

**2009 Page De Valtarena Ribera Del Duero**(\$65) (from a single site of tempranillo vines that were planted in the late 1950s): Deep, bright ruby. Heady aromas of dark berries, rose and spicy oak, with tobacco and vanilla notes adding complexity. Fleshy, open-knit cherry-cola and blueberry flavors are given spine by juicy acidity and pick up a smoky nuance with aeration. Ripe and broad but surprisingly lively, finishing with strong thrust and slow-mounting, fine-grained tannins. **91**

**2009 Reserva Ribera Del Duero**(\$50) Inky ruby. Powerful, oak-tinged black and blue fruit aromas are complemented by notes of cola, incense and mocha. Oaky, to be sure, but there's a load of sweet dark berry fruit here as well. Fleshy and sweet, with very good finishing clarity, spiciness and smoky persistence. **90**

**2006 Tsm Ribera Del Duero**(\$85) (mostly tempranillo, with cabernet sauvignon and merlot, all from vines that were planted in the late 1950s; all new oak): Inky ruby. Complex, expansive scents of dark berry liqueur, potpourri and incense, with vanilla and mocha overtones. Lush, alluringly sweet dark fruit and floral pastille flavors are complemented by suave floral qualities and a touch of smokiness. Leaves spicecake and vanilla notes behind on the impressively long, sappy finish. 92  
Also recommended: 2011 9 Meses Ribera del Duero (87). (Classic Wines, [www.classicwines.us](http://www.classicwines.us))

### **Bodegas Carrasvilla**

**2011 Terralux Ribera Del Duero Crianza**Bright purple. Oak-accented dark berries on the nose. Plush, open-knit black and blue fruit flavors show good depth and pick up a floral nuance with air. At once plump and juicy, finishing with very good power and smooth, harmonious tannins. 89  
([www.carrasvilla.es](http://www.carrasvilla.es))

### **Bodegas Cillar de Silos**

**2009 Crianza Ribera Del Duero**(\$30) (sourced from tempranillo vines that are reportedly 70 to more than 100 years old; aged in older French oak for 13 months): Deep ruby. Sexy floral aromas of dark berries and cola, with a hint of minerality adding vibrancy. Sweet, penetrating black raspberry and lavender pastille flavors show very good depth and a hint of allspice. Finishes sappy and long, with suave tannins adding shape. 91  
(Spanish Vines, [www.spanishvines.com](http://www.spanishvines.com))

### **Bodegas Comenge**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero**Dark purple. Blackberry, cherry pit and licorice on the highly scented nose. Chewy black and blue fruit flavors are enlivened by juicy acidity and a hint of black pepper. Closes on a spicy note, with subtle tannins and a touch of bitter chocolate. 89  
**2009 Don Miguel Comenge Ribera Del Duero**(90% tempranillo and 10% cabernet sauvignon; aged for 18 months in French oak): Saturated ruby. Sexy, oak-spiced cherry and blackberry on the nose, with complicating notes of rose pastille, vanilla and smoky minerals. Stains the palate with ripe dark fruit flavors and an exotic hint of orange zest, with vanilla and mocha qualities adding depth. Round and fleshy in the style of the year, but with impressive clarity and energy on the supple, gently tannic finish. 92  
([www.comenge.com](http://www.comenge.com))

### **Bodegas y Vinedos Conde de San Cristobal**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero**(\$24) (80% tinto fino, 10% merlot and 10% cabernet sauvignon): Opaque ruby. Cherry-cola, blueberry and mocha on the exotically perfumed nose. Lush, appealingly sweet black and blue fruit flavors show very good energy and pick up a smoky nuance with air. The long finish features supple tannins and a late kick of peppery spices. 91  
(Steve Miles Selections, [www.smswine.com](http://www.smswine.com))

### **Bodegas Convento de las Claras**

**2012 Las Claras Ribera Del Duero**(\$20) (aged for eight months in new French oak): Saturated ruby. Smoky, expansive aromas of candied cherry, rose and pipe tobacco. Silky, sharply focused red fruit and floral pastille flavors pick up a spicy nuance with air and display impressive energy. Closes silky, sweet and very long, with fine-grained tannins adding shape. 91  
**2011 Heritage Ribera Del Duero**(\$27) (all new oak, 75% of it French and the rest American): Dark purple. Explosive aromas of black and blue fruits, incense and vanilla, with a smoky overtone and a hint of minerality. Pliant and broad on the palate, offering intense cassis and boysenberry flavors lifted by juicy acidity. Shows a distinctly spicy quality on the finish, which features smooth tannins and a hint of smokiness. 91  
(Jorge Ordóñez Selections, [www.jorgeordonez.es](http://www.jorgeordonez.es))

## **Convento de Oreja**

**2011 Roble Ribera Del Duero**(\$23) (aged in 60% American and 40% French oak for four months): Bright purple. Dark berries, violet and peppery spices on the pungent nose. Fleshy blackberry and cherry compote flavors show good energy and focus, with a hint of cola coming up with air. Silky tannins add grip to the finish, with the blackberry and floral notes strongly echoing.

**90**

(Kysela Pere et Fils, [www.kysela.com](http://www.kysela.com))

## **Bodegas Diez Llorente**

**2011 Ribera Del Duero Roble**(\$15) Dark purple. Dark berries, cherry and toasty oak on the fragrant nose. Plush and open-knit, offering sweet black and blue fruit flavors and a note of bitter chocolate. A vanilla quality comes up with air and lingers on the spicy, slightly medicinal finish. Pretty wound up, but promising. **88(+?)**

(Select Fine Wine, [www.selectfinewine.com](http://www.selectfinewine.com))

## **Dominio de Atauta**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero**(\$49) (fermented in concrete and French oak tanks, followed by 16 months in 40% new French oak): Deep ruby. Expressive aromas of black raspberry, floral oils and espresso. Lush and expansive, offering fresh red berry and spicecake flavors plus a hint of candied lavender. Finishes silky and long, with sweet, suave tannins and an echo of floral pastilles. **92**

**2009 Valdegatiles Ribera Del Duero**(\$125) Inky ruby. Sexy aromas of raspberry liqueur, potpourri and mocha, with a smoky topnote. Seamless and suave in the mouth, showing noteworthy finesse to its sappy red fruit and floral pastille flavors. This elegant, poised, extremely fresh wine finishes with fine-grained tannins and lingering sweetness. **94**

(Aviva Vino, [www.avivavino.com](http://www.avivavino.com))

## **Dominio Basconcillos**

**2011 Ecologica Ribera Del Duero Roble**Bright violet color. Red berry and cherry aromas are complemented by zesty Asian spice and floral nuances. A juicy, fruit-forward midweight that offers lively raspberry and bitter cherry flavors and a touch of bitter orange pith. Closes brisk and tangy, with soft tannins, subtle sweetness and a hint of white pepper. **88**

Also recommended: 2009 12 Meses Ribera del Duero (85+?). ([www.dominiobasconcillos.com](http://www.dominiobasconcillos.com))

## **Dominio del Cuco**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero**(\$38) Opaque ruby. Deep plum, smoky tobacco and mocha on the nose. Full, ripe and gently tannic, with good depth and some warmth to its ripe dark fruit flavors. Finishes smooth, broad and gently sweet, with an echo of plummy dark fruit. **88**

(Select Fine Wine, [www.selectfinewine.com](http://www.selectfinewine.com))

## **Dominio d'Es**

**2011 Vinas Viejas De Soria Ribera Del Duero**(\$65) Opaque ruby. Sexy floral aromas of red berry preserves and spicecake, with a bright mineral overtone. Sappy, palate-staining black raspberry and cherry-cola flavors show impressive depth and focus, picking up a smoky nuance with aeration. Sweet red fruit and Asian spice notes cling on the strikingly persistent finish, which features silky tannins and a strong graphite quality. **93**

(The Rare Wine Company, [www.rarewineco.com](http://www.rarewineco.com))

## **Dominio de Pingus**

**2011 Psi Ribera Del Duero**(\$40) Glass-staining ruby. Dark berry, bitter chocolate and potpourri on the perfumed nose. Spicy, penetrating black and blue fruit flavors show impressive clarity and lift, with a zesty mineral nuance adding bite. Smooth and seamless on the subtly tannic finish, which leaves juicy blueberry and violet pastille notes behind.

**91**



**2011 Flor De Pingus Ribera Del Duero**(\$90) Inky ruby. Potent, mineral- and smoke-accented dark berry and violet scents show excellent clarity and lift. Silky and seamless in texture, offering sweet blackberry and boysenberry flavors and notes of spicecake and floral pastilles. Closes with strong thrust, appealing sweetness and sneaky, slow-mounting tannins. Very suave, even now, but this wine will be much better in another five to seven years. **93**

**2011 Amelia Ribera Del Duero**(\$250) Brilliant ruby. Seductive, oak-spiced aromas of black raspberry, candied violet, anise and minerals. Intense cherry and dark berry preserve flavors are brightened by smoky minerals, picking up a sexy floral pastille quality with aeration. The finish repeats the floral note and leaves a suave Asian spice quality behind. Impressively elegant wine that smoothly weds power and finesse. **93**

**2011 Pingus Ribera Del Duero**(\$950) Inky purple. An exotic, expressive bouquet displays scents of blueberry, black cherry, violet, licorice and Asian spices, with a subtle smoky nuance in the background. Offers an array of densely packed black and blue fruit and floral flavors that are enlivened by bright minerality. Shows outstanding clarity and energy on the intense, lingering finish. **94**  
(The Rare Wine Company, [www.rarewineco.com](http://www.rarewineco.com))

## **Dominio Romano**

**2011 Camino Romano Ribera Del Duero**(\$22) Bright violet color. Lively, tobacco-accented redcurrant and cherry aromas, with an earthy rhubarb quality in the background. Tart red berry and bitter cherry flavors are sharply focused; wound-up today and slow to unfold. There's good clarity here and I hope that a little bottle age will bring more silkiness and sweetness. **88(+?)**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero**(\$43) Glass-staining ruby. Spicy red fruit aromas are complicated by vanilla, black cardamom and woodsmoke. Pliant and appealingly sweet, offering fresh raspberry and cherry flavors and a touch of cola. Shows very good energy on the finish, which features gently chewy tannins and a suggestion of cherry-vanilla. In a sexy, forward style and very easy to drink right now. **90**

**2007 Rdr Ribera Del Duero**Opaque ruby. Powerful, heady aromas of dark berry preserves, vanilla, potpourri and smoky minerals. Pliant, deeply pitched blackberry and cherry-vanilla flavors are enlivened by tangy acidity and hints of allspice and fresh flowers. Closes on an oaky note, with very good length and lingering smokiness. **90**  
(Broadbent Selections, [www.broadbent.com](http://www.broadbent.com))

## **Bodegas Emilio Moro**

**2012 Finca Resalso Ribera Del Duero**(\$17) Vivid purple. Ripe boysenberry and blueberry aromas and an undercurrent of mocha on the nose, with candied licorice and vanilla qualities coming up with air. Lush, weighty and round, showing good thrust to its dark berry liqueur and cocoa flavors. Finishes creamy, round and long, with soft tannins and building notes of plum and dark chocolate. **91**

**2011 Finca Resalso Ribera Del Duero**(\$17) Vivid ruby. Heady, primary aromas of black and blue fruits, peppery spices and smoky minerals. The palate offers lively blueberry and cherry-cola flavors underscored by a strong graphite quality. Soft tannins give shape to the finish without distracting from the opulent fruit, which clings impressively to the palate. I find this extroverted wine surprisingly approachable now. **90**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero**(\$26) (aged in a 50/50 blend of French and American oak): Saturated ruby. Black raspberry, cherry-cola, vanilla and floral pastilles on the fragrant nose. Balances richness off finesse on the palate, displaying densely packed dark berry flavors and a sexy lavender pastille nuance. Lively acidity provides lift and cut to the gently tannic finish, which leaves a sweet dark berry liqueur note behind. **92**

**2009 Malleolus Ribera Del Duero**(\$53) Opaque ruby. Highly nuanced aromas of cherry compote, smoky minerals, vanilla and candied flowers. Offers seductively sweet red and dark fruit and floral pastille flavors, with exotic floral tones and sweet oak in the background. This powerful yet lively wine finishes with excellent thrust and supple tannins. **92**

**2009 Malleolus De Valderramiro Ribera Del Duero**(\$150) (raised in new French and American oak): Glass-staining ruby. Sexy, highly perfumed bouquet evokes black and blue fruits, potpourri, incense and smoky minerals. Juicy, penetrating and seamless, offering sweet blueberry and boysenberry flavors lifted by tangy minerality. Finishes sweet and very long, with resonating floral character and supple, even tannins. **93**

**2009 Malleolus De Sanchomartin Ribera Del Duero**(\$180) (100% new French oak): Dark purple. Sexy black and blue fruit aromas are complicated by vanilla, incense and cola qualities. Fleshy cassis and blueberry preserve flavors are sharpened by tangy acidity and given depth by notes of licorice and bitter chocolate. Gains sweetness and depth with air, finishing on a sweet black raspberry note, with slow-building tannins. This wine is shockingly elegant for its level of concentration and power. **94**

**2009 Emilio Moro Clon De La Familia Ribera Del Duero**(made from vines ranging up to 75 years old and aged for 22 months in new French oak): Inky purple. Heady, oak-spiced aromas of dark berry compote, licorice, vanilla and mocha. Broad, fleshy and sweet, offering intense black and blue fruit flavors that are lifted and sharpened by juicy acidity. Becomes smokier and spicier with air, finishing with velvety tannins, a whiplash of vanillin oak and outstanding persistence. **94**  
(Michael Skurnik Wines, [www.skurnikwines.com](http://www.skurnikwines.com))

## **Bodega Emina**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$15) Dark purple. Dark berries on the nose, with a strong overtone of spicy, vanillin oak. Smooth, seamless and sweet in the mouth, offering cherry-vanilla and dark berry liqueur flavors that show a hint of bitterness. Closes smoky, warm and long, with an echo of vanilla and velvety, even tannins. **89**

**2006 Prestigio Ribera Del Duero**(\$32) Dark ruby. Sexy aromas of dark berries, spicy oak and fresh flowers, with slow-building vanilla and woodsmoke notes. Fleshy and open-knit, offering sweet black raspberry and cherry flavors and a touch of coconut. Finishes smooth and long, with lingering smokiness and a hint of dusty tannins. **90**

**2005 Tempranillo Atio Ribera Del Duero**(\$52) Opaque ruby. Oak-spiced cherry and dark berries on the nose and in the mouth. Lush, sweet and smoky, with very good depth and power. Clings with excellent tenacity on the finish, which features pliant black and blue fruit qualities and supple, fully integrated tannins. **91**  
([www.emina.es/en](http://www.emina.es/en))

## **Bodegas Felix Callejo**

**2011 Flores De Callejo Ribera Del Duero**(\$25) Bright purple. Fresh spice-accented black and blue fruits on the nose and palate. Smooth, sweet and expansive, picking up a hint of lavender with aeration. Fine-grained tannins give shape and grip to the finish, which features subtle floral and cracked pepper qualities. **89**

**2010 Seleccion De Vinedos De La Familia Ribera Del Duero**(\$150) Inky ruby. Explosive scents of blueberry, cherry-vanilla and cassis, with a floral pastille topnote. Broad, deep and concentrated, offering sweet black and blue fruit flavors complemented by Indian spices, vanilla and bitter chocolate. Really stains the palate, with bright acidity contributing lift and clarity. This rich, dense but surprisingly lively wine finishes with superb power and lingering sweetness. **94**

**2010 Majuelos De Callejo Ribera Del Duero**(\$55) Bright purple. Sexy dark berry and violet pastille scents, along with notes of cola, spicy oak and mocha. Sweet and expansive on entry, then tighter in the middle, offering intense blackberry and cherry-vanilla flavors with a hint of allspice. A smoky nuance comes up on the seamless, sweet, very long finish. **92**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$36) (all French oak): Bright violet color. Ripe cherry and blackcurrant scents are brightened by peppery spices and smoky minerals. Juicy, penetrating, appealingly sweet black raspberry and cherry flavors show very good energy and pick up a floral quality with air. Finishes with slow-mounting tannins and lingering rose and dark berry qualities. **91**  
(The Artisan Collection, [www.theartisancollection.us](http://www.theartisancollection.us))

## **Finca Villacreces**

**2009 Reserva Ribera Del Duero**(\$45) (86% tempranillo, 7% cabernet sauvignon and 7% merlot): Opaque ruby. Sexy aromas of red berry preserves, Indian spices and pipe tobacco, with a floral topnote. The palate offers sappy raspberry and cherry-cola flavors, with suggestions of candied flowers and mocha. Finishes sweet and long, with resonating floral notes and smooth, even tannins. **92**  
(Eric Solomon Selections, [www.europeancellars.com](http://www.europeancellars.com))

## **Bodega y Vinedo Fuentecen**

**2011 Hemar 7 Meses Ribera Del Duero**(aged for seven months in a combination of French and American oak): Opaque ruby. Ripe dark fruits and licorice on the pungent nose and in the mouth. Broad, warm and supple, with soft tannins and a hint of sweet blueberry compote lingering on the finish. This is drinking well now. **88**  
(www.bodegahemar.com)

### **Bodegas Fuentespina**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$18) (raised in American oak): Bright violet color. Ripe cherry and cassis aromas, with notes of woodsmoke and licorice adding complexity. Fleshy and smooth on the palate, offering slightly warm dark fruit flavors and a hint of cracked pepper. Finishes on a tangy note of berry skin, with good cut and length. **88**

**2009 Fuentespina Seleccion Ribera Del Duero**(\$24) Bright ruby. Smoky aromas of dark berries, cherry pit and licorice. Vanilla and mocha nuances emerge with air and carry onto the palate, which offers plump cassis and cherry flavors and a bracing note of cracked pepper. Finishes sweet and expansive, with smooth tannins and a hint of cola. **90**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$88) Opaque ruby. A highly perfumed bouquet displays scents of ripe dark berries, incense, pipe tobacco and Indian spices. Lush, expansive black and blue fruit flavors stain the palate, picking up spicecake and floral pastille notes with air. Surprisingly energetic for its richness, finishing with excellent clarity, power and length. Dusty tannins make a late appearance but fade away quickly, suggesting that this wine will reward patience without requiring it. **91**

**2008 Ribera Del Duero Reserva**(\$29) (aged for 12 months in French and American oak): Ruby-red. Smoky cherry and floral aromas, along with notes of vanilla and sassafras. Sweet red fruit flavors show good energy and become more tangy with air. Tightens up on the finish, leaving behind notes of vanilla and roasted coffee. I'd drink this now while the fruit is keeping pace with the oak. **88**

Also recommended: 2012 Granate Ribera del Duero Roble (87). (Spanish Wine Imports, www.spanishwineimports.com)

### **Bodegas y Vinedos Gallego Zapatero**

**2007 Yotuel Finca De Valdepalacios Ribera Del Duero**(sourced from 75-year-old bush vines; did its malolactic fermentation in new French oak and was aged in the same barrels for 14 months): Bright ruby. Sexy dark berries, licorice and spicy oak on the perfumed nose. Fleshy and sweet, offering cherry-vanilla and cola flavors complicated by cracked pepper and smoky herbs. Closes smooth, sweet and broad, with subtle tannins and lingering smokiness. Very appealing and round, especially for a wine from an often austere vintage. **91**

Also recommended: 2010 Ribera del Duero Joven (86). Other wines tasted: 2010 Ribera del Duero Roble\*. (www.bodegasgallegozapatero.com)

### **Vinedos y Bodegas Garcia Figuero**

**2009 Tinus Ribera Del Duero**(\$600) (made from fruit drawn from a single vineyard of tempranillo vines planted in the 1920s; aged in new 500-liter French oak casks): Opaque ruby. An explosively perfumed bouquet displays scents of ripe dark berries, cherry-cola, potpourri and licorice, with vanilla and mineral accents gaining power with air. Stains the palate with intense blackberry, cherry compote and blueberry flavors lifted by a spicy element. Velvety, sweet and expansive on the persistent finish, which features smooth tannins and lingering florality. I wish that the retail price was a typo. **93**

**2009 Tinto Figuero 12 Meses En Barrica Crianza Ribera Del Duero**(\$29) Bright ruby. Pungent aromas of cherry, blackberry, mocha and vanilla. Supple, concentrated and gently sweet, with an appealing juiciness to its dark fruit and licorice pastille flavors. Long and smooth on the sweet, spicy finish, with gentle tannins adding shape and grip. **90**

**2009 Tinto Figuero Noble Ribera Del Duero**(\$132) (from vines reportedly over 70 years old; 50% French and 50% American oak, all new): Inky ruby. Oak-spicy scents of dark fruit compote, mocha, vanilla and incense, with a bright mineral overtone. On the palate, sweet black raspberry and cherry-vanilla flavors pick up notes of licorice and cola with air. The oak notes slowly recede with air and are absorbed by the wine's lush fruit on the long, smoky, gently tannic finish. **92**

**2006 Tinto Figuero Vendimia Seleccionada**(\$69) (aged for 15 months in new oak, 90% American): Ruby-red. Aromas of dark berries, vanilla and mocha, with a spicy topnote. Plush and sweet, offering

broad blackberry and cherry-vanilla flavors lifted by juicy acidity. Closes smooth and long, with a hint of woodsmoke and lingering dark fruit compote and vanilla qualities. This wine is ready to roll. **90**  
(Quintessential Wines, [www.quintessentialwines.com](http://www.quintessentialwines.com))

### **Vina Gormaz**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$21) (sourced from tempranillo vines that are reportedly over 70 years old and aged in a combination of French and American oak for 14 months): Bright ruby. Cassis, cherry, mocha and cola on the fragrant nose and in the mouth. Sappy and incisive, with very good energy to its dark berry and spicecake flavors. A hint of vanilla builds through a long, smooth, gently tannic finish. This wine drinks very nicely now with some aeration. **90**

**2010 Anier Vendimia Seleccionada Ribera Del Duero** Saturated ruby. Powerful dark berry, cola and floral scents are enlivened by a zesty, peppery nuance. Sappy, penetrating and appealingly sweet, offering smoky blackberry and cherry-vanilla flavors and a touch of licorice. Offers plenty of upfront appeal and finishes smooth, sweet and very long, with repeating vanilla and smoke notes. **91**

**2010 Catania Tinto Crianza Ribera Del Duero** (sourced from vines that are reportedly over 70 years old and raised in a combination of new and used French and American oak): Vivid purple. Aromas and flavors of blueberry and cherry compote, with a peppery note adding vivacity. Shows a bit of heat on the finish, which is firmed by fine-grained, integrated tannins. **88**

**2008 12 Linajes Roble Ribera Del Duero** Opaque ruby. Dark berry compote, spicy oak and floral scents, with a strong vanilla quality that builds with air. Fleshy and expansive, offering sweet blueberry and cherry-vanilla flavors and a touch of smokiness. Closes sweet and supple, with good cut and spicy lift. **88**

**2008 12 Linajes Reserva Ribera Del Duero** (aged for 14 months in French and American oak): Deep ruby. Fragrant aromas of cassis, mocha, dried flowers and dark chocolate. Sweet and open-knit, with good power and depth to the blackcurrant, cherry and vanilla flavors. Soft tannins come on late and give shape to the long, gently sweet finish. **90**

(Classical Wines, [www.classicalwines.com](http://www.classicalwines.com))

### **Vina Gumiel**

**2011 Gumizan Ribera Del Duero** Dark purple. Dark berries and candied flowers on the nose. Primary black and blue fruit flavors show a slightly jammy character but are enlivened by a hint of white pepper. Finishes with good tangy cut and length, leaving a bitter berry skin note behind. **88**  
([www.vinagumiel.com](http://www.vinagumiel.com))

### **Hacienda Monasterio**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$55) (80% tempranillo, 15% cabernet sauvignon and 5% merlot; aged for 17 months in French oak): Inky ruby. Powerful, expansive aromas of dark berry preserves, potpourri, mocha and smoky minerals. At once lush and vibrant, offering sweet black raspberry and cherry flavors complicated by cola and floral pastilles. Supple tannins give shape to the clinging, sharply delineated finish. This wine's blend of brawn and finesse is really impressive. **93**

(Eric Solomon Selections, [www.europeancellars.com](http://www.europeancellars.com))

### **Bodegas Hesvera**

**2011 Seis Meses Barrica Ribera Del Duero**(\$17) Bright violet color. Ripe cherry and cassis on the nose, along with notes of dark chocolate and musky herbs. Smooth and open-knit, offering plush dark fruit flavors that show a hint of warmth. Finishes smooth and broad, with good cling and building smokiness. **88**

**2009 Cosecha Limitada Ribera Del Duero**(\$45) (malolactic fermentation in small barrels followed by 25 months of barrel aging): Inky ruby. Sexy aromas of dark berries, cherry-cola and spices on the fragrant nose. Fleshy and broad on entry, then tighter in the mid-palate, offering intense blackberry and cherry compote flavors and hints of licorice and vanilla. Fine-grained tannins give shape and focus to the finish, which lingers with impressive tenacity and sweetness. **91**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$28) Saturated ruby. Cassis, black raspberry, licorice and vanilla on the nose, with a floral element that gains strength with air. Sweet, concentrated and densely packed but energetic too, offering dark berry and licorice flavors complicated by exotic oak spices. An assertively flavored, lively wine with firm tannic structure and very good persistence. **90**

(P. R. Grisley Co., [www.prgrisley.com](http://www.prgrisley.com))

### **Hijos de Antonio Barcelo**

**2008 Ribera Del Duero Reserva** Deep ruby. A smoky, exotically perfumed bouquet displays scents of red fruit liqueur, vanilla, woodsmoke and sandalwood. Juicy and seamless on the palate, offering sweet raspberry and bitter chocolate flavors and a slow-building vanilla quality. Spicy and a touch warm on the finish, which is given grip by dusty tannins. **88**

**2005 Ribera Del Duero Gran Reserva** Ruby-red. Smoky cherry and blackberry on the nose, with complicating notes of licorice, pipe tobacco, vanilla and espresso. Sweet, penetrating dark berry flavors show very good depth, with bright acidity giving the wine good back-end cut. Finishes with very good sweet persistence, the vanilla and cherry notes repeating. **90**

**Also recommended:** 2011 Ribera del Duero Roble (86). ([www.vina-mayor.es](http://www.vina-mayor.es))

### **Hornillos Ballesteros**

**2009 Mibal Crianza Ribera Del Duero**(\$27) (aged for 12 months in French oak): Bright ruby. Sexy red berries and oak spices on the nose and palate. Smooth, sweet and accessible, with very good back-end snap and a long, smoky, tannin-free finish that repeats the raspberry note. **90**  
(Ole Imports, [www.oleimports.com](http://www.oleimports.com))

### **Isaac Fernandez Selection**

**2012 Rios De Tinta Ribera Del Duero**(\$14) (no oak): Vivid ruby. Emphatically fruity nose displays scents of fresh red berries and pungent flowers, lifted by a peppery topnote. Juicy raspberry and cherry flavors show very good clarity and pick up a hint of pipe tobacco with aeration. The finish strongly repeats the raspberry note and betrays barely a hint of tannins. **90**

**2011 Finca La Mata Ribera Del Duero**(\$22) (from a single site of tempranillo vines that reportedly range from about 60 to 80 years old; aged for eight months in small barrels of varying age): Bright ruby. Ripe blackberry and cassis on the perfumed nose, with hints of lavender and vanilla adding complexity. Sweet black and blue fruit flavors show good depth and energy and a smooth, velvety texture. Finishes sweet and supple, with very good persistence and sneaky spiciness. **90**  
(Grapes of Spain, [www.grapesofspain.com](http://www.grapesofspain.com))

### **Bodegas Ismael Arroyo**

**2009 Val Sotillo Crianza Ribera Del Duero**(\$20) Deep ruby color. Sexy aromas of cherry-cola, blackberry, pipe tobacco, spicy oak and fresh flowers. Juicy and smooth in texture, offering sweet dark fruit flavors that pick up a smoky nuance in the glass. This rich, lively red finishes with noteworthy power, the sneaky, fine-grained tannins adding grip. Shows plenty of appeal now but has the depth to age. **90**

**2008 Mesoneros De Castilla Ribera Del Duero Roble**(\$15) Brilliant ruby. High-pitched, spicy aromas of redcurrant, cherry skin and fresh flowers. Tangy and lithe on entry, then fleshier in the mid-palate, offering juicy, oak-tinged red fruit flavors that gain sweetness with air. In an elegant style, finishing with good clarity and persistence. **88**  
(Tri Vin Imports, [www.tri-vin.com](http://www.tri-vin.com))

### **Vinas del Jaro**

**2012 Sembro Ribera Del Duero**(\$17) (aged for eight months in two-year-old French and American oak): Inky purple. Spicy cherry-cola and boysenberry on the nose, with a licorice quality adding complexity. Smoky cherry and dark berry preserve flavors pick up a peppery nuance with air, along with a hint of allspice. Finishes with mounting sweetness and dusty, fine-grained tannins that add grip. On the young side but promising. **90**

**2010 Chafandin Ribera Del Duero**(\$72) (raised in French oak for 17 months): Deep ruby. Exotically perfumed scents of dark berry preserves, potpourri and sandalwood, with woodsmoke and Indian spice overtones. Fleshly and expansive on the palate, offering sappy blackberry and cherry-cola flavors and a hint of smokiness. Rich yet lively wine with strong finishing thrust and lingering spiciness. **92**  
(Peninsula Wines, [www.peninsula-wines.com](http://www.peninsula-wines.com))

### **Bodegas El Lagar de Isilla**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Roble**(95% tempranillo and 5% cabernet sauvignon; aged in French and American oak for five months): Saturated ruby. Spice- and smoke-accented dark berry and cola aromas, with a peppery nuance adding lift. Silky and open-knit, displaying good punch to its black and blue fruit flavors. A sweet vanilla note comes up on the persistent finish. **89**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**Bright violet color. Blackberry, plum and roasted coffee on the nose and in the mouth. Plush and broad, with a bit of warmth on the long, supple and dark fruit-driven finish. Plenty rich, in the style of the year, but I'd have liked a bit more vivacity. **88**  
(www.lagarisilla.es)

### **Bodegas Lambuena**

**2011 Ribera Del Duero**Bright purple. Black raspberry jam, plum and black pepper on the nose. Spicy and focused, with a high-toned quality to the perfumed flavors of dark berries and peppery spices. Bright acidity gives the wine lift and sharpens the clean, persistent finish.

**88**  
(www.bodegaslambuena.com)

### **Legaris**

**2010 Crianza Ribera Del Duero**(\$27) Deep ruby. Musky aromas of redcurrant, cherry pit, tobacco and espresso. Offers tangy flavors of briary red berries, chewing tobacco and cracked pepper, with a bitter chocolate note on the back half. Closes firm and dry, with good clarity and slow-building tannins. **88**

**2009 Reserva Ribera Del Duero**(\$36) Inky ruby. Aromas of dark berries, roasted coffee and vanilla, lifted by a floral topnote. Fleshy and seamless on the palate, offering sweet blueberry and cherry-vanilla flavors and a hint of bitter chocolate. Finishes with good lift and focus, leaving spicy dark fruit notes behind. Drinking very nicely now, with fully absorbed tannins. **90**  
(Aveniu Brands, www.aveniubrands.com)

### **Bodegas Los Astrales**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero**(\$70) (aged in 80% French and 20% American oak, one-third of it new): Vivid ruby. Sexy aromas of red fruit liqueur, potpourri and cola are accented by a floral element. Stains the palate with intense raspberry and floral pastille flavors, picking up notes of mocha and licorice with aeration. Shows a seamless quality on the penetrating, focused, very long finish. **92**

**2010 Christina Ribera Del Duero**(\$90) (made from fruit sourced from 90-year-old vines; aged for 20 months in new French oak): Deep ruby. Sexy aromas of blackberry, incense, potpourri and Asian spices. Juicy, sappy and densely packed, with red and dark berry, mocha and floral pastille flavors enlivened by tangy acidity. Vibrant and appealingly sweet, with excellent focus and finishing cut. This powerful but elegant wine is very seductive now but is built to age. **93**  
(Grapes of Spain, www.grapesofspain.com)

### **Marques de Velilla**

**2011 Ribera Del Duero Joven**Deep ruby. Dark berries, cherry and musky herbs on the nose, with subtle anise and black pepper qualities adding complexity. Gently sweet in the mouth, offering blackcurrant, cherry skin and licorice flavors. Displays an open-knit personality, finishing gently sweet and supple, with good cling. **88**

Also recommended: 2008 Marques de Velilla Ribera del Duero Crianza (86).  
(www.marquesdevelilla.com)

### **Bodega Matarromera**

**2009 Matarromera Reserva Ribera Del Duero**(\$50) (raised in a combination of French and American oak barrels): Opaque ruby. Medicinal cherry, mocha, dark chocolate and vanilla on the highly perfumed nose. Densely packed and sharply delineated, with a suave floral character complementing sweet cherry and blackberry flavors. Shows serious power on the gently tannic finish, which clings with real tenacity and appealing sweetness. **91**

**2001 Matarromera Gran Reserva Ribera Del Duero**(\$110) Deep red. Pungent aromas of cherry, roasted coffee, cigar box and tobacco, with a vanilla undertone. Supple, pliant and fine-grained on the palate, offering red fruit preserves, spicecake and mocha flavors complemented by some exotic oak

tones. Sweet, seamless and smoky on the finish, which is firmed by chewy tannins. This flamboyant wine is evolving very slowly. **92**

Also recommended: 2012 Melior de Matarromera Ribera del Duero (86). (Matarromera USA, [www.grupomatarromera/usa](http://www.grupomatarromera/usa))

## **Matiz**

**2012 Ribera Del Duero Joven**(\$13) Vivid purple. Primary dark fruit aromas are complemented by a subtle floral quality and a touch of pipe tobacco. Fleshy and open-knit, offering smooth blueberry and cassis flavors and a note of cracked pepper. The fruity finish shows good breadth and lingering spiciness. **89**

**2012 Ribera Del Duero Roble**(\$15) (aged for four months in French and American oak): Inky purple. Exotically perfumed aromas of dark berry preserves, anise, vanilla and woodsmoke. Sweet and expansive on entry, then firmer in the middle, offering spice-accented blackberry and blueberry flavors and a hint of mocha. Closes with very good energy and thrust, leaving a tangy berry skin note behind. **90** (Steve Miles Selections, [www.smswine.com](http://www.smswine.com))

## **Bodegas y Vinedos Monteabellon**

**2012 5 Meses En Barrica Ribera Del Duero**(\$15) (raised in a 50/50 blend of French and American oak): Dark purple. Aromas of ripe dark berries, plum preserves and fresh flowers. Lush, smooth and open-knit, offering mouthfilling flavors of dark berries and candied licorice. Finishes with supple tannins and good length, leaving a bitter chocolate note behind. Quite forward for a 2012 but it seems to have the depth to reward more patience. **89**

**2012 Avaniel Ribera Del Duero**(\$11) Bright ruby. Raspberry, fresh flowers and Asian spices on the nose. Sweet raspberry, spicecake and rose pastille flavors offer good sweetness and a smooth, seamless texture. This emphatically fruity wine shows a slightly jammy quality to its smooth, tannin-free finish. I find this extremely easy to drink. **89**

**2010 14 Meses En Barrica Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$25) (aged in French and American oak): Deep ruby. Ripe cherry and plum on the nose and in the mouth. Broad, fleshy and a touch warm, picking up a peppery quality with air. Finishes with lingering spiciness, soft tannins and a hint of bitter chocolate. Seems a bit sullen today, which is uncommon for a wine from this vintage. **88(+?)**

**2008 24 Mesas En Barrica Ribera Del Duero**(\$40) (80% French and 20% American oak used here): Deep ruby. Sexy oaky, floral aromas of cherry compote, blackberry and cola, with a hint of vanilla in the background. Sappy, penetrating and refreshingly tangy, offering concentrated, juicy black and blue fruit flavors that become sweeter with air. Finishes very long, with slow-building tannins and persistent dark berry and smoky oak notes. **90** (Europvin USA, [www.europvin.com](http://www.europvin.com))

## **Bodegas y Vinedos Montecastro**

**2010 Alconte Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$30) Bright violet color. Black raspberry and cola aromas are complemented by notes of vanilla and mocha. Pliant and seamless in texture, offering sweet dark fruit flavors given lift by juicy acidity and a peppery nuance. Shows very good energy and clarity on the youthfully tannic, spice-tinged finish. The most lithe and elegant version of this bottling I've had to date, this should age well on its balance. **91**

**2009 Montecastro Y Llanahermosa Ribera Del Duero**(\$43) Opaque ruby. Heady, spice-accented dark berry and cherry scents are complemented by mocha and cola. Supple and seamless in texture, with impressively deep blackberry and cherry-vanilla flavors and a bracing jolt of spiciness. The spicy quality continues on the gently tannic, very persistent finish, which showcases sweet dark fruit flavors. **93**

**2009 Finca La Roca Ribera Del Duero**(\$95) Inky ruby. Heady aromas of cassis, cocoa powder, incense and smoky oak. Supple, expansive and deep, with lush flavors of black and blue fruits, Indian spices and vanilla framed by slow-building minerality. Smooth, ripe tannins give shape to the very long, velvety finish, which emphatically echoes the spice and blue fruit notes. This sexy wine has the depth and structure to age but it's awfully seductive now. **93** (Classical Wines, [www.classicalwines.com](http://www.classicalwines.com))

## **Bodega y Vinedos O. Fournier**

**2011 Urban Ribera Ribera Del Duero**(\$14) Bright purple. Primary black and blue fruit aromas are lifted by a peppery nuance. Dry and taut on entry, then fleshier in the mid-palate, offering tangy blueberry and bitter cherry flavors and a hint of smokiness. Closes with firm grip, dusty tannins and a touch of dark chocolate. **88**

**2009 Proprietary Blend Spiga Ribera Del Duero**(\$30) (aged in oak for 13 months): Deep ruby. Fragrant aromas of red berry preserves, mocha, floral oils and smoky minerals. Plush, juicy and alluringly sweet, offering intense raspberry and cherry flavors and an exotic note of chewing tobacco. At once smooth and penetrating on the fruit-driven finish, which features harmonious tannins and a hint of spicecake. **91**

**2008 Tinta Del Pais Ribera Del Duero**Inky ruby. Heady, exotically perfumed aromas of dark berry liqueur, oak spices and potpourri. Sweet, penetrating and seamless on the palate, offering intense black and blue fruit flavors braced by juicy acidity. Closes silky and long, with resonating spiciness and fully absorbed tannins. **92**

(The Country Vintner, [www.thevintnergrou.com](http://www.thevintnergrou.com))

## **Bodegas Ordonez**

**2012 Tineta Avante Ribera Del Duero**(\$16) Deep ruby. High-pitched red berry and floral scents are lifted deeper notes of woodsmoke, licorice and mocha. Sappy, penetrating raspberry and cherry-cola flavors show impressive clarity and energy, picking up an allspice nuance with air. Finishes juicy and long, with supple tannins and excellent focus. This wine delivers exceptional value, especially for its appellation. **91**

**2011 Tineta Avante Ribera Del Duero**(\$21) (all tempranillo, from 50+-year-old vines; malo done in French and American oak casks, where the wine is aged for 22 months): Brilliant ruby. Blueberry, roasted coffee, blackberry and woodsmoke on the perfumed nose. Densely packed and sappy, with very good intensity to its candied plum, spicecake and mineral flavors. The suave, expansive finish is enlivened by juicy acidity, giving this rich wine a surprisingly light touch. Finishes with smooth, harmonious tannins and resonating spiciness. **91**

(Jorge Ordonez Selections, [www.jorgeordonez.es](http://www.jorgeordonez.es))

## **Pago de los Capellanes**

**2012 Joven Roble Ribera Del Duero**(\$22) Deep ruby. Fresh cherry and dark berries on the nose and palate. Juicy and light on its feet, showing good energy and a slightly tart edge to its focused, subtly tannic finish. Drinks easily, especially after a little aeration. **88**

**2010 Crianza Ribera Del Duero**(\$38) (aged for 18 months in new French oak): Glass-staining ruby. Deeply pitched dark berry and incense scents are enlivened by cracked pepper and smoky minerals. Rich and fresh on the palate, offering sweet blackberry and cherry compote flavors complicated by vanilla, mocha and candied rose. Showing its oak today, which is no surprise given its youth. Finishes sweet, spicy and long, with a touch of smokiness. **91(+?)**

**2009 Reserva Ribera Del Duero**(\$57) (100% tempranillo; aged in French oak for 18 months): Inky ruby. Potent aromas of blueberry, cherry-cola, spicy oak and licorice, with hints of tobacco and fruitcake in the background. Broad, chewy and appealingly sweet, offering ripe black and blue fruit flavors and a touch of peppery spices. Finishes smooth and expansive, with supple tannins and a hint of bitter chocolate. **92**

**2009 Parcela El Nogal Ribera Del Duero**(\$82) (100% tempranillo; aged for 22 months in new French oak): Glass-staining ruby. A hugely aromatic bouquet evokes dark fruit preserves, woodsmoke, vanilla and mocha, with an exotic note of incense building in the glass. Deep, palate-coating blueberry and cherry-vanilla flavors show the oak influence but seem more than up to it. Fleshy, sweet and velvety in texture, with excellent finishing power, supple tannins and serious length. **93**

(Antalva Imports, [www.antalva.com](http://www.antalva.com))

## **Pago de Carraovejas**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$50) (85% tempranillo, 10% cabernet sauvignon and 5% merlot; aged for a year in French and American oak, most of it new): Bright ruby. A complex, perfumed nose evokes fresh raspberry, dried flowers, pungent herbs and Asian spices, with an intense mineral quality. Sweet and silky in texture, with juicy flavors of red berry preserves, anise and smoky minerals. Very long and perfumed on the finish, with fine-grained tannins adding grip. **91**



**2009 El Anejon Ribera Del Duero**(\$136) Glass-staining ruby. Explosive, smoke- and spice-accented dark berry compote and floral scents are complicated by notes of spicecake and vanilla. Sweet and expansive on the palate, offering intense black raspberry and cherry-cola flavors and a refreshing touch of blood orange. Rich but energetic, with superb finishing clarity, slow-building tannins and lingering sweetness. **93**

**2007 Cuesta De Las Liebres Ribera Del Duero**(\$242) (90% tempranillo and 10% cabernet sauvignon; aged for two years in new French oak): Bright ruby. Sexy strawberry, raspberry and vanillin oak spices on the nose, along with hints of Asian spices and smoked meat. Deeper and darker on the palate, offering powerful red and dark berry liqueur flavors, with energetic minerality adding vivacity. Finishes with serious grip, juiciness and persistence, leaving a sexy vanilla note behind. **93**  
(Kysela Pere et Fils, [www.kysela.com](http://www.kysela.com))

### **Bodegas Pagos de Mogar**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Roble**Deep ruby. Spicy blackberry and cherry aromas show good clarity and energy. Sweet, focused dark berry flavors are lifted by juicy acidity and pick up a peppery nuance with air. Finishes on a bright blackberry note, with soft tannins and good length. **89**

**2009 Vendimia Seleccionada Ribera Del Duero**Dark ruby. Oak-spiced dark berries and mocha on the nose and palate. Plush and open-knit, with subtle smokiness and a touch of warmth on the long, velvety finish. **88**  
([www.bodegaspagosdemogar.com](http://www.bodegaspagosdemogar.com))

### **Bodega del Palacio de Los Frontaura y Victoria**

**2011 Nexus Ribera Del Duero**(\$20) Opaque purple. Ripe black and blue fruit aromas are complicated by vanilla and cola nuances. Fleshy cassis and boysenberry flavors are lifted by gentle acidity, picking up a hint of white pepper with air. Gains sweetness and depth in the glass, finishing with a touch of warmth and slowly building tannins. **88**

Also recommended: 2006 Ribera del Duero Crianza (85). (Maritime Wine Trading Collective, [www.maritimewine.com](http://www.maritimewine.com))

### **Bodegas Paramo Arroyo**

**2008 Eremus Ribera Del Duero Crianza**Bright violet color. Cherry and pungent herbs on the deeply scented nose. Chewy bitter cherry and blackcurrant flavors display good depth and become sweeter with air. Shows a slightly tart edge on the finish, which is firmed by dusty, gripping tannins. **88**  
([www.paramoarroyo.com](http://www.paramoarroyo.com))

### **Bodegas Pascual**

**2009 Ribera Del Duero**Bright violet color. Smoky, mineral-tinged cherry and blackberry aromas, with a hint of cracked pepper emerging with air. Juicy and light on its feet, especially for the vintage, offering lively dark berry flavors that gain sweetness with air. Closes on a note of vanilla, with good breadth, cling and peppery spiciness. **89**  
([www.bodegaspascual.com](http://www.bodegaspascual.com))

### **Bodegas Penalba Herraiz**

**2011 Aptus Ribera Del Duero**(\$16) (aged in 90% French and 10% American oak): Dark ruby. Sexy aromas of cherry-cola, blackberry and floral pastilles. Fleshy and seamless in the mouth, offering sweet black and blue fruit flavors and a touch of spicecake. Finishes smooth and seamless, with a note of candied rose. **90**  
(Grapes of Spain, [www.grapesofspain.com](http://www.grapesofspain.com))

### **Bodegas Hermanos Perez Pascuas**

**2010 El Pedrosal Ribera Del Duero**(\$22) Deep ruby. Sexy, oak-spiced aromas of dark berries and vanilla, with a smoky overtone. Juicy and open-knit, offering sweet black raspberry and mocha flavors

and a hint of licorice. Finishes smooth and long, with harmonious tannins and lingering vanilla and floral qualities. This suave wine is delicious right now. **90**

**2010 Vina Pedrosa Crianza Ribera Del Duero**(\$34) Saturated ruby. Ripe cherry, cigar box and rose oil on the oak-spiced nose. Juicy and seamless, offering sweet cherry-vanilla and floral pastille flavors and a hint of licorice. Picks up a smoky note with air and finishes with excellent clarity and smooth, slow-building tannins. This 2010 looks promising and bodes well for the bodega's top wines from this vintage, which will be released over the coming years. The 2009 version of this wine is drinking extremely well right now, by the way, with sexy black and blue fruit character, spicy oak tones and velvety tannins, but it still has years ahead of it. **92**

**2009 Vina Pedrosa Reserva Ribera Del Duero**(\$55) Bright ruby. Complex aromas of dried cherry, licorice, pipe tobacco and cola, plus a subtle smoky nuance. Sappy and velvety in the mouth, offering intense dark fruit preserve flavors that gain power and spiciness with aeration. Shows sexy floral pastille and spicecake notes on the back end, finishing with very good breadth and a hint of vanilla. **93**

**2009 Vina Pedrosa La Navilla Ribera Del Duero**(\$51) Saturated ruby. Intense mineral and floral-accented redcurrant and cherry aromas open up with air and pick up sexy incense and vanilla qualities. Sweet, penetrating and pure, offering vibrant bitter cherry and currant flavors and notes of licorice, spicecake and mocha. The mineral quality comes back strong on the finish, which features chewy tannins and a whiplash of spice and floral qualities. **93**

(Think Global Wines, [www.thinkglobalwines.com](http://www.thinkglobalwines.com))

### **Bodegas Pico Cuadro**

**2011 La Casa Las Esencias Ribera Del Duero**(\$15) Inky ruby. Wild aromas of medicinal cherry, olive and cracked pepper, with a smoky topnote. Chewy and precise, offering bitter cherry and cassis flavors and a touch of mint. Closes on a meaty note, with sneaky sweetness, soft tannins and good persistence. **88**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero**(\$38) Deep ruby. Spicy, floral-accented dark berries and cherry on the nose and palate. Juicy and precise, offering intense black and blue fruit flavors that gain weight with air. Fine-grained tannins give shape to the very persistent finish, which features exotic black cardamom and spicy oak nuances. **91**

**2010 Vendimia Seleccionada Ribera Del Duero**(\$52) Glass-staining ruby. An exotically perfumed bouquet evokes dark berry preserves, smoky Indian spices and potpourri. Sweet and expansive, offering intense blueberry and bitter cherry flavors and a hint of candied licorice. Toasty oak and floral pastille qualities give a sweetness to the finish, which is firmed by silky, harmonious tannins. **91**

**2010 Original Ribera Del Duero**(\$80) Bright violet. Intensely perfumed aromas of black and blue fruits, potpourri and incense, with a bright mineral overtone. Juicy, penetrating and lithe, offering concentrated boysenberry and cherry-cola flavors lifted by zesty acidity. An energetic and impressively persistent finish features silky tannins, subtle oak spices and a sexy floral pastille nuance. **92**

**2009 Imperio De Dona Isabel Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$18) Bright violet color. Primary black and blue fruit aromas show a slightly jammy character. Tangy and focused, offering juicy blueberry and cassis flavors and a hint of black pepper. Closes with good energy and cut, leaving a slightly tart berry skin note behind. **88**

(Classic Wines, [www.classicwines.us](http://www.classicwines.us))

### **Bodegas Pingon**

**2009 Carramimbre Roble Ribera Del Duero**(\$30) (90% tempranillo and 10% cabernet sauvignon): Saturated ruby. Spicy raspberry, vanilla and cola on the perfumed nose and in the mouth. Lush, ripe and seamless, with a touch of warmth coming up on the sweet, gently tannic finish. This extroverted wine is drinking well now. **89**

**2009 Torre Pingon Crianza Ribera Del Duero**(\$19) (a blend of tempranillo and cabernet sauvignon from a single vineyard; aged in French oak): Dark ruby. Sexy aromas of dark berries, cola, violet and oak spices, with a smoky overtone. Round and seamless on the palate, offering ripe blackberry and cherry-vanilla flavors and a touch of medicinal bitterness. Sappy and sweet on the finish, which features velvety tannins and a subtle floral nuance. This drinks very well right now. **89**

([www.bodegaspingon.com](http://www.bodegaspingon.com))

## **Pinna Fidelis**

**2011 Ribera Del Duero Roble** Bright purple. Dark berries and vanilla on the fragrant nose. Jammy blackberry and blueberry flavors display good concentration but could use more lift and shape. In a fleshy, opulent style, with good finishing breadth and sweetness. **88**  
(www.pinnafidelis.com)

## **Bodegas Portia**

**2010 Triennia Ribera Del Duero** (\$75) (malolactic fermentation and aging in 100% new French oak for 12 months, then racked into another set of new French barrels for two more months): Inky ruby. Explosive, oak-spicy aromas of dark berry preserves, incense, vanilla, potpourri and cola, with a smoky overtone. Fleshy, palate-coating black and blue fruit flavors are enlivened by juicy acidity and suggestions of allspice and clove. Oaky to be sure, but shows good depth. Closes sweet, smoky and long, with resonating spiciness and a strong vanilla note. My score will look low if this wine is able to get its lumber in check. **90(+?)**  
(Palm Bay International, www.palmbay.com)

## **Bodegas Prado de Olmedo**

**2009 Monasterio De San Miguel Crianza Ribera Del Duero** Deep ruby. Aromas and flavors of dark berries, cola and mocha, with a peppery overtone adding vibrancy. Juicy and smooth in texture, finishing with good cling, soft tannins and a lingering spiciness. This easygoing wine is ready to drink. **88**  
(www.pradodeolmedo.com)

## **Bodegas y Vinedos Recoletas**

**2009 Vendimia Seleccionada Ribera Del Duero Crianza** Bright violet. Sexy, oak-spiced aromas of black and blue fruits, incense and fresh flowers. Smooth, sweet and expansive, offering vibrant boysenberry and cherry-cola flavors and a touch of spicecake. Closes sweet and long, with supple tannins and lingering smokiness. **90**

**2009 Crianza Ribera Del Duero** Bright violet. Smoky cherry and blackberry on the fragrant nose. Supple, sweet and open-knit, offering plump dark berry preserve flavors and a touch of vanilla. Finishes smooth and seamless, with lingering blackberry and bitter chocolate notes. **89**

**2006 Reserva Ribera Del Duero** Bright violet color. Smoke-accented cherry and blackberry scents are complemented by musky earth and dried flowers. Supple and sweet, offering smooth dark fruit flavors and a touch of candied rose. Finishes with good energy, soft tannins and a lingering mocha note. This is ready to drink. **89**

(www.bodegasrecoletas.com)

## **Bodegas Resalte**

**2012 Lecco Ribera Del Duero Roble** (\$20) (aged in equal parts French and American oak): Deep ruby. Dark berries and cherry compote on the fragrant nose and palate. A plush, broad wine with a touch of warmth on the finish and an echoing dark berry note. **88**

**2011 Vendimia Seleccionada Ribera Del Duero** (\$30) Dark purple. Primary dark berry and floral aromas are lifted by white pepper. Fleshy, slightly jammy blackberry and cherry flavors show good depth and a seamless texture, as well as some building heat. Closes smooth and broad, with lingering spiciness and no obvious tannins. This is very approachable already.

**88**

**2006 Ribera Del Duero Crianza** (\$39) Deep ruby. Dried red fruits, vanilla and rose oil on the pungent nose. Supple and broad on entry, then tighter in the mid-palate, offering sweet cherry-vanilla and mocha flavors and a touch of fruitcake. Oaky but appealingly sweet, finishing with very good cling and fully buffered tannins. **89**

**2006 Pena Roble Ribera Del Duero Crianza** (\$26) Ruby-red. Dried cherry and pipe tobacco on the perfumed nose. Supple and gently sweet, offering warm dark berry and cherry flavors and a touch of bitter chocolate. A vanilla quality comes up on the gently tannic but slightly tart finish. **88**

**2004 Ribera Del Duero Reserva** (\$78) Deep ruby. Fragrant dark berries and oak spices on the nose, with hints of woodsmoke and licorice adding complexity. Shows good depth and a velvety texture to its

blackberry and cherry flavors, with a floral element emerging with air. Finishes on a sweet vanilla note, with smooth tannins and lingering smokiness. **90**

Also recommended: 2007 Lecco Ribera del Duero Crianza (86). (TGIC Importers, [www.tgicimporters.com](http://www.tgicimporters.com))

### **Vinedos y Bodegas Ribon**

**2010 Barrica Ribera Del Duero** Dark ruby. Blackberry, cherry and cedary oak on the fragrant nose. Fleshy and open-knit, offering cherry-vanilla and licorice flavors and a touch of warmth. Closes smooth and sweet, with gentle tannins and a jammy blueberry note. **88**  
([www.bodegasribon.com](http://www.bodegasribon.com))

### **Bodega San Mames**

**2010 Doble R Ribera Del Duero Crianza** Deep ruby. Smoky cherry and blueberry on the nose and palate. Plush and easygoing, with good breadth and appealing sweetness. A bit loose-knit on the finish, with the blueberry note strongly echoing. **88**  
Also recommended: 2010 Ribera del Duero Joven (86). ([www.bodegasanmames.com](http://www.bodegasanmames.com))

### **Bodega San Pedro Regalado**

**2010 Marques Del Campo Ribera Del Duero** (\$18) Deep ruby. Pungent aromas of dark berries, licorice and spicy oak. Fleshy and nicely concentrated, offering juicy blackberry and bitter cherry flavors plus a hint of vanilla. Closes with solid thrust, building tannins and a touch of oak spice. This wine improves a lot with aeration. **89**  
(Frontier Wine Imports, [www.frontierwineimports.com](http://www.frontierwineimports.com))

### **Bodegas Santa Eulalia**

**2011 Dominio De Emeraldibarra Ribera Del Duero** (\$30) (aged for six months in French oak): Bright ruby-red. High-pitched red berry and cherry skin scents are complemented by deeper notes of licorice and mocha. Tangy and precise on the palate, offering energetic but slightly tart-edged raspberry and bitter cherry flavors. Finishes with good lift and focus, leaving a smoky note behind. **88**  
**2008 Picres Ribera Del Duero** (\$60) Opaque ruby. Aromas of cherry, blueberry and oak spices, with a smoky topnote and a hint of cracked pepper. Fleshy and sweet, showing good depth to its cherry-vanilla and dark fruit flavors. A hint of succulent herbs comes up with air and carries through a long, gently tannic finish. This wine benefits quite a bit from aeration. **90**  
(The Artisan Collection, [www.theartisancollection.us](http://www.theartisancollection.us))

### **Vina Sastre**

**2011 Roble Ribera Del Duero** (\$20) Bright purple. Pungent aromas of blueberry, cherry-cola and smoky minerals, with a spicy overtone. Expansive black and blue fruit flavors show impressive depth and energy, picking up a smoky nuance with air. Closes on a spicy note, with gentle tannic grip and excellent length. Pretty impressive for an entry-level wine, especially from this vintage.

**91**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Crianza** (\$33) Opaque ruby. Spicy, high-pitched aromas of blueberry, violet pastille, licorice, cola and black pepper. Very concentrated but lively and precise, offering palate-staining dark berry and floral flavors and suggestions of mocha and smoky minerals. Finishes with excellent clarity and power, smooth tannins and lingering florality. **92**

**2010 Regina Vides Ribera Del Duero** (\$100) Bright purple. Powerful, deeply pitched aromas of black and blue fruits, woodsmoke and licorice, with a strong mineral topnote. Shows superb clarity and intensity, offering smoky cassis and boysenberry flavors and notes of candied flowers and mocha. Closes broad and extremely long, with lingering smokiness and slow-mounting tannins. Can't get this off the palate and don't really want to. **94**

**2010 Pesus Ribera Del Duero** (\$750) Inky purple. An exotic, highly perfumed bouquet combines ripe blackberry, cassis, smoky minerals, espresso and incense. Dense, sweet and deep, with velvety texture and suave floral lift to its intense black and blue fruit flavors. Palate-staining but comes off shockingly lithe. Rich but impeccably balanced and seamless, with superb finishing power, focus and floral-driven persistence. This wine is something else. The 2009, a spectacular if still extremely young wine, is worth

a special search of the market as well.

**96**

**2009 Regina Vides Ribera Del Duero**(\$100) (aged in 100% new French oak): Dark purple. Exotic, heady aromas of dark fruit preserves, incense, vanilla and floral oils, with a smoky overtone. Lush, sappy and incisive, offering sweet black and blue fruit flavors and notes of bitter chocolate, mocha and lavender pastille. Smooth and sweet on the youthfully tannic finish, with intense elements of blueberry and spicecake. **94**

(De Maison Selections, [www.demaison.com](http://www.demaison.com))

## Senorio de Bocos

**2011 Ribera Del Duero Roble**(\$18) Bright purple. Dark berry and cherry aromas show a slight jamminess and a touch of oak spice. Silky and open-knit, with good energy on the tannin-free, fruity finish. Very easy to drink; this could even take a slight chill. **88**

**2008 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**(\$25) Deep ruby. Fresh cherry, dark berries and vanilla on the oak-spiced nose. Fleshy and sweet, offering smoky blackberry and cherry-vanilla flavors and a touch of bitter herbs. Finishes on a sweet note, with an echo of vanilla and soft tannins. On the woody side but there's a good amount of fruit here as well. **88**

(Baskland Imports, Jersey Village, TX)

## Bodegas Senorio de Nava

**2011 Tinto Ribera Del Duero**Vivid purple. Spicy red berries and cherry on the nose and in the mouth. Tangy and linear, in the style of a Beaujolais, with good finishing cut and a touch of jamminess. Not the last word in complexity but this would be delicious lightly chilled. **88**

**2008 Crianza Ribera Del Duero**Dark purple. Pungent cherry, plum and dark berry aromas are joined by suggestions of licorice, black pepper and espresso. Deep and rich on the palate, with concentrated bitter cherry, redcurrant and vanilla flavors. Youthfully firm tannins give grip to a penetrating finish that features a sappy note of bitter cherry pit. **89**

([www.senoriodenava.es](http://www.senoriodenava.es))

## Vinedos del Soto

**2010 Aclareo Ribera Del Duero**Bright purple. Spicy, mineral-accented aromas of cherry pit and cassis, complicated by licorice and black pepper nuances and a subtle herbal quality. Juicy, light-bodied dark berry flavors show a slightly bitter edge and gain spiciness with air. Closes with firm tannic grip and good clarity, leaving spice and licorice notes behind. **88**

([www.vinedosdelsoto.es](http://www.vinedosdelsoto.es))

## Bodegas y Vinedos Tabula

**2010 Damana 5 Ribera Del Duero**(\$17) Inky ruby. Black and blue fruits on the perfumed nose and in the mouth. Plush and open-knit, with a seamless texture and slow-building oakiness. Finishes on a juicy note, with good clarity, a touch of warmth and soft tannins. **88**

**2010 Clave De Tabula Ribera Del Duero**(\$139) (made from a single high-altitude plot of vines that are reportedly over 50 years old): Inky ruby. Sexy, oak-spicy aromas of black and blue fruits and potpourri.

Sweet and seamless in texture, offering densely packed boysenberry and cassis flavors with a hint of mocha. The oak recedes on the finish, which features silky tannins and a late note of candied rose. **92**

**2009 Tabula Ribera Del Duero**(\$55) (aged for 16 months in new French oak): Deep ruby. Ripe black raspberry and licorice on the perfumed nose. Sappy, focused red and dark berry flavors flesh out with air and pick up a spicy quality, along with a hint of smokiness. Finishes sweet and gripping, with fine-grained tannins and a touch of bitter chocolate. **91**

**2009 Damana Crianza Ribera Del Duero**(\$30) (aged for 12 months in a combination of French and American oak): Deep ruby. Cherry, blackberry and vanilla on the highly perfumed nose. Fleshy and appealingly sweet, offering intense dark fruit flavors that become livelier with air. Shows very good clarity and lift on the persistent finish, which features supple tannins and a touch of mocha. **90**

**2009 Gran Tabula Ribera Del Duero**(\$82) (virtually all tempranillo, with a bit of cabernet sauvignon, sourced from a plot with many remaining vines reportedly over a century old; aged for 16 months in new

French oak): Opaque ruby. Heady, exotic perfume of dark berry preserves, incense, vanilla and lavender, complicated by a smoky nuance. Lush, sappy and penetrating, offering sweet blackberry and blueberry flavors given spine by gentle acidity. Supple tannins shape the very long, floral finish. **92**  
**2009 Clave De Tabula Ribera Del Duero**(\$130) (aged for 14 months in new French oak): Opaque ruby. Heady, complex scents of candied dark berries, roasted coffee and incense, with a mineral nuance adding vibrancy. Sweet, palate-staining blueberry and cherry-cola flavors are impressively concentrated and surprisingly lively thanks to juicy acidity. Smoky oak notes carry through the gently tannic but gripping finish, which clings with excellent tenacity. **93**  
Also recommended: 2012 Damana Verdejo Rueda (86). (Las Arribes/Manolo's Wines, [www.manoloswines.com](http://www.manoloswines.com))

### **Bodegas y Vinedos Tamaral**

**2011 Ribera Del Duero Roble**(\$15) Vivid ruby. Dark berry, cherry-cola and spicy oak scents show good energy and a smoky nuance. At once fleshy and lithe, offering sweet black raspberry and cherry compote flavors and a hint of bitter chocolate. Finishes with repeating smokiness and dusty tannins, leaving a warm dark berry note behind. **89**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**Deep ruby. Sexy aromas of dark berries, cola and spicy oak. Smoky and sweet in the mouth, offering juicy black raspberry and cherry compote flavors along with nuances of licorice and bitter chocolate. A brighter red fruit quality emerges on the clinging finish. This one looks to be a slow ager. **90**

**2010 Vendimia Seleccionada Ribera Del Duero Crianza**Deep ruby. Sexy, oak-spiced dark berries and fresh flowers on the nose. Sweet and accessible, offering energetic black and blue fruit flavors and a touch of bitter chocolate. A vanillin oak nuance emerges with air and lingers on the smooth, subtly tannic and persistent finish. **90**

([www.tamaral.com](http://www.tamaral.com))

### **Bodegas Thesaurus**

**2011 Flumen Dorium Ribera Del Duero Roble**Bright violet color. Dark berries, vanilla and plum compote on the perfumed nose and in the mouth. Round and open-knit, boasting lots of fruit but only moderate vivacity. Finishes with good power and cling and lingering warmth. **88**

Other wines tasted: 2009 Flumen Dorium Ribera Del Duero Crianza. (Doyna, Ltd., [www.doynabeer.com](http://www.doynabeer.com))

### **Bodegas Tionio**

**2012 Austum Ribera Del Duero**Bright purple. Jammy dark berries on the nose and palate. A peppery quality adds lift and buffers the wine's juicy fruit, which carries nicely through a smooth, tannin-free finish. **88**

**2010 Ribera Del Duero Crianza**Deep ruby. Smoke-accented aromas of dark berries, cola and fresh flowers, with a peppery overtone. Cherry-vanilla and candied lavender flavors show impressive depth and energy, picking up cola and sweet chewing tobacco nuances with air. Closes spicy and long, with building sweetness and smooth, harmonious tannins. **90**

([www.tionio.com](http://www.tionio.com))

### **Bodegas Torremoron**

**2012 Ribera Del Duero**(\$13) (all stainless steel): Bright ruby. Floral and peppery spice notes lift aromas of black raspberry and cherry. Fruity and supple on the palate, with fresh red berry and anise flavors sharpened by a touch of white pepper. Finishes dry and spicy, with dusty tannins and a hint of bitter herbs. **89**

(Ole Imports, [www.oleimports.com](http://www.oleimports.com))

### **Torres de Anguix**

**2010 T D'Anguix Barrica Ribera Del Duero**Opaque ruby. Spicy raspberry and cherry on the nose, with a floral nuance adding complexity. Brisk, faintly medicinal red fruit flavors show subtle sweetness, with tangy acidity adding lift. A vanilla note creeps in on the finish, which shows good energy and no tannins. This drinks quite easily right now. **88**

Also recommended: 2007 T de Anguix Ribera del Duero Crianza (86).  
([www.torresdeanguix.com](http://www.torresdeanguix.com))

### **Bodegas Valdevinas**

**2004 Tinar De Mirat Ribera Del Duero Crianza** Dark ruby. Heady, complex bouquet evokes dried red fruits, cured tobacco, potpourri and vanilla. Pliant and expansive on the palate, offering sweet cherry and cola flavors and a touch of bitter chocolate. The vanilla note repeats on the finish, which features building tannins and a late kick of licorice. **89**  
([www.valdevinas.es](http://www.valdevinas.es))

### **Valtonar**

**2004 Dominio De Castellares Vendimia Seleccionada Ribera Del Duero** Full ruby. Oak-tinged cherry and dark berry scents, with a smoky overtone and a hint of mocha. Supple and round on the palate, offering sweet cherry-vanilla and cocoa flavors lifted by gentle acidity. Finishes smooth and sweet, with just a hint of tannins. **88**  
Also recommended: 2010 Tinto Barrica Ribera del Duero (86). ([www.valtonar.com](http://www.valtonar.com))

### **Bodegas y Vinedos Valtravieso**

**2009 Crianza Ribera Del Duero** (90% tempranillo and 5% each of cabernet sauvignon and merlot): Brilliant ruby. Smoky, oak-tinged cherry and dark berries on the nose and palate. Lush and open-knit, showing good lift and sweetness. Closes with dusty tannic grip, an echo of dark berries and good persistence. **89**

**2009 Vt Tinta Fina Ribera Del Duero** (100% new oak): Saturated ruby. A heady, seductively perfumed bouquet evokes black and blue fruit preserves, vanilla, potpourri and woodsmoke, with a hint of licorice in the background. Sappy, penetrating and sweet, offering ripe blueberry and mulberry flavors braced by juicy acidity. The smoke and vanilla notes come back on the finish, which features velvety tannins and a note of floral pastilles. **92**  
([www.valtravieso.com](http://www.valtravieso.com))

### **Vega Clara**

**2010 Mario Ribera Del Duero** (\$30) (85% tempranillo and 15% cabernet sauvignon; was aged in a combination of French, American and Hungarian oak): Brilliant ruby. Smoky dark berry and cherry-cola scents are complicated by notes of vanilla and floral pastille. Smooth and pliant, offering assertive cherry compote and vanilla flavors that become spicier with air. Finishes sweet, smoky and long, with sneaky tannins and a late kick of peppery spices. **91**  
(Classic Wines, [www.classicwines.us](http://www.classicwines.us))

### **Bodegas y Vinedos Vega Sicilia**

**2008 Tinto Valbuena Ribera Del Duero** (\$174) Opaque ruby. Sexy, oak-spicy aromas of dark berry preserves, pipe tobacco, licorice and vanilla, with a smoky overtone. Plush, expansive blueberry and cherry-vanilla flavors show superb depth and pick up Indian spice and bitter chocolate nuances with air. Finishes sweet and seamless, with slow-building tannins and a whiplash of sweet blue fruit. **93**

**2003 Unico Ribera Del Duero** (\$465) Inky ruby. Highly aromatic scents of ripe cherry and dark berries, singed plum, cured tobacco and succulent herbs, with a vanilla undertone. Sweet, expansive and powerful, offering intense black and blue fruit flavors with smoke and floral accents. Rich and full but surprisingly lively, with excellent finishing thrust and sweet, harmonious tannins adding grip. Shows the ripeness of the vintage to good effect; this is a somewhat approachable and exotic Unico, especially with some air, but it has the concentration to age slowly. **95**  
(Europvin USA, [www.europvin.com](http://www.europvin.com))

### **Bodegas y Vinedos Vega de Yuso**

**2009 Tres Matas Vendimia Seleccionada Ribera Del Duero** Deep ruby. Smoky dark berry and floral scents are lifted by bright mineral and cracked pepper notes. Fleshy and broad initially, then tighter in the mid-palate, offering blackberry and bitter cherry flavors and a note of candied licorice. A vanillin oak

nuance come up on the finish, which features supple tannins and a hint of cocoa powder. Pretty sexy stuff--and drinking very well right now. 90  
([www.vegadeyuso.com](http://www.vegadeyuso.com))

### **Vicente Gandia**

**2010 Dolmo Vendimia Seleccionada Ribera Del Duero**(\$12) Dark purple. Ripe cherry and dark berries on the nose and palate. Plush and open-knit, with very good breadth and cling on the smoky, seemingly tannin-free finish. This tasty, emphatically fruity wine is ready to drink. 89

Also recommended: 2012 Nebla Verdejo Rueda (86), 2012 Dolmo Vendimia Seleccionada Ribera del Duero (86), 2009 Raiza Rioja Crianza (85). (Vicente Gandia USA, [www.vicentegandiausa.com](http://www.vicentegandiausa.com))

### **Bodegas Viyuela**

**2005 Seleccion Ribera Del Duero**Deep ruby. Pungent spicy aromas of dark berry preserves, cola and floral oils. Sappy, penetrating blackberry and bitter cherry flavors pick up notes of mocha and vanilla with air and show a very appealing sweetness. Finishes smooth, broad, gently tannic and long. 90  
([www.bodegasviyuela.com](http://www.bodegasviyuela.com))

### **Bodegas Vizcarra**

**2012 Senda Del Oro Ribera Del Duero Roble**(\$22) (raised for six months in used French and American oak): Opaque ruby. Smoke-accented aromas of black raspberry, cola and licorice. Broad and expansive in the mouth, offering juicy dark berry flavors and notes of cola and mocha. Finishes smooth and long, with resonating spiciness and soft, rounded tannins. 90

**2010 Ines Vizcarra Ribera Del Duero**(\$100) (90% tempranillo and 10% merlot; aged for 18 months in new French oak): Vivid purple. Black raspberry, blueberry, minerals and candied flowers on the intensely perfumed nose. Densely packed and powerful, with complex, spice-accented flavors of blackcurrant and violet pastille. A juicy, suave wine that finishes sweet and extremely long, with dusty tannins lending shape and grip. 93

**2010 Celia Vizcarra Ribera Del Duero**(\$151) (90% tempranillo and 10% garnacha; aged for 18 months in new French and American oak): Inky purple. Heady aromas of raspberry, incense, vanilla and exotic spices. Dense, concentrated and sweet, with intense flavors of red and dark berries, floral pastilles and spicecake. Shows excellent clarity and lift on the lingering, subtly tannic finish. 94

**2010 Torralvo Ribera Del Duero**(\$82) (aged for 18 months in large French and American oak casks): Opaque purple. Captivating aromas and flavors of blueberry, smoky minerals and candied violet. Sweet, lush and broad, with fine-grained tannins adding grip to an impressively long, oak-spiced finish, which features sweet black and blue fruit qualities. Offers plenty of early appeal but has the structure to age. 93  
(Ole Imports, [www.oleimports.com](http://www.oleimports.com))