

THE UNDERGROUND WINELETTER

Celebrating Over 30 Years!

SOME GREAT NEW WINES FROM OLD FRIENDS AND A FEW NEW SURPRISES

John Tilson • 5/22/12

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SPRING 2012

CALIFORNIA

- Gary Farrell Vineyards And Winery
- L'Aventure Winery
- La Follette Winery
- Mount Veeder Winery
- Robert Craig Winery
- Robert Mondavi Winery
- Tablas Creek Vineyard

FRANCE

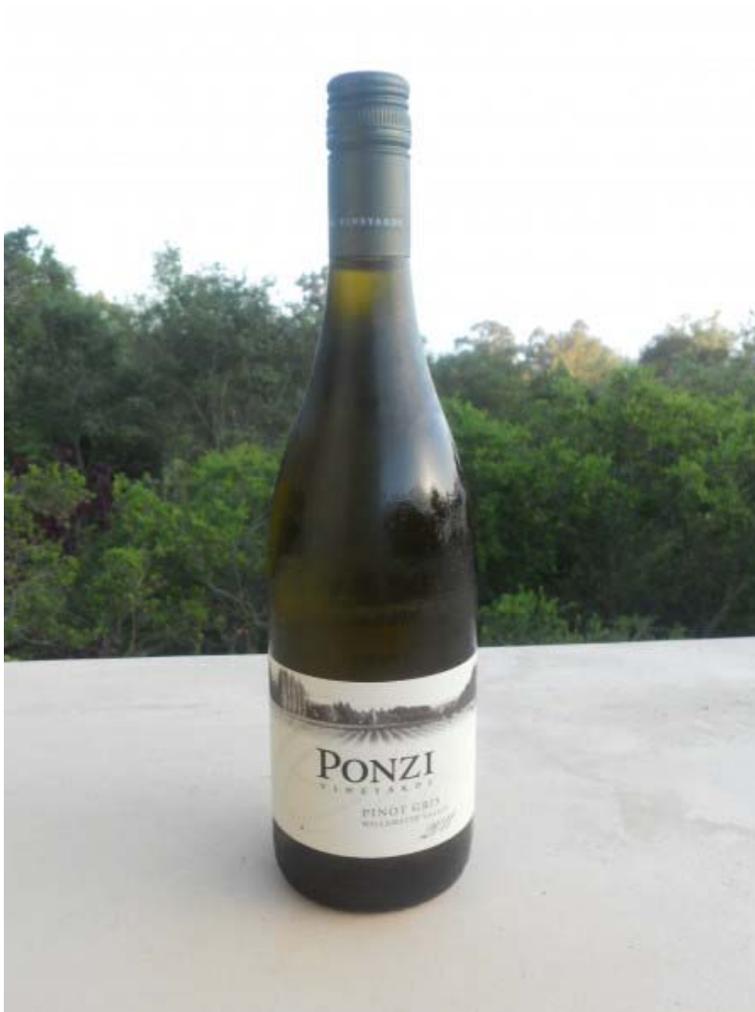
- Burgundy – Domaine A. et P. de Villaine * Domaine Follin-Arbelet * Domaine Jean-Marie Chaland * Domaine Michel-Andreotti * Domaine Savary
- Champagne – Franck Bonville * Lenoble * Pierre Paillard

elegance and finesse and a long crisp finish – **Outstanding Plus.** \$34.99 Imported by Polander Selections Mount Kisco, NY ★★★★★

OREGON

Ponzi Vineyards

Founded in 1970, Ponzi Vineyards was one of the pioneer Oregon wineries. The winery has been under the direction of the second generation for more than two decades. This Pinot Gris is made from mostly estate grown grapes. Oregon Pinot Gris is one of my favorite inexpensive “Under The Radar” white wines. It is great with a wide variety of foods, but I especially like it with pork.



2011 Ponzi Vineyards Pinot Gris Willamette Valley.

Pale yellow in color this wine has a gorgeous perfume with faint hints of lichee nut, pear and apple intermingled with a kiss of citrus. It has great finesse and is elegant and crisp with a very faint petillance. The fruit is very pure with subtle nuances of apple and pear with a faint floral grapefruit note. This is really terrific and a great value. Don't miss it – **Outstanding.** \$11.99 **Best Buy** ★★★★★

SPAIN

Three of the major wine regions of Spain are Priorat, Ribera del Duero, and Rioja. The Priorat is located in the Catalonia area of

southern Spain. The wines of Priorat are enjoying a renaissance with a new style of intense fruit and a required minimum of 13.5% alcohol. The red wines are based on Grenache with some Carignan. There are old vines of these varieties in the area and more recently some plantings of Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah have been added. The Ribera del Duero is located on Spain's northern plateau. The principal grape here is the Tempranillo. It is the home of what I believe is the best Spanish red wine, Vega Sicilia. (To read about a very great Vega Sicilia Reserva Especiala [click here](#)) The Rioja is located in northern Spain. It is one of the oldest wine growing regions in the world dating back to the 9th century. Typically the red wines are a blend of grapes with Tempranillo and Grenache the most prominent. Also, they are aged in oak and are designated for the length of time aged in oak and bottle before they are sold.



Spanish Red Wines – Heredad Collection

Spanish wines are receiving a lot of attention these days for their balance and value. Here are notes on some really nice red wines. They are part of the Heredad Collection and are imported by **Freixenet USA, Inc Sonoma, CA**. Later, I expect to do reviews of many different Spanish Albariños. Albariño is the great food friendly and value priced Spanish white wine. (To read my most recent comments on Albariño [click here](#))



2008 Vaza Crianza Rioja.

Vaza is a brand originating from the Spanish word “Baza” which means “new beginning”. The wine is made at Solar Viejo winery and is made from Tempranillo grapes. Crianza is a designation that the wine was aged for a least 2 years with at least 1 year in cask before it is sold. This wine has a deep color and a gorgeous floral berry perfume accented by cedar and spice and a tinge of chocolate. There is a great intensity of mulberry fruit and the flavors are enhanced by a cedary nuance. Lovely to drink now, but this balanced and harmonious wine should age effortlessly for many years – **Outstanding. \$18 Best Buy ★★★**

2009 Valdubón Ribera del Duero.

This winery was founded in 1997. With a deep color this wine has a lovely floral perfume with hints of plum and a faint spiciness. It is elegant, rounded, and finessful with very nice balance and a nice finish – **Highly Recommended. \$15 ★★**

2003 Valdubón Crianza Ribera del Duero.

This wine is made from 100% Tempranillo grapes. Crianza means it was aged for at least 2 years with at least 1 year in cask before being offered for sale. With a deep color the wine has a lovely berry perfume with hints of cedar. Quite lush and forward there is lovely rounded fruit with hints of spice and cedar – **Highly Recommended Plus. \$18 ★★★**

**2006 Valdubón Reserva Ribera del Duero.**

The Reserva designation means that the wine was aged for 3 years with at least 1 year in cask before being offered for sale. This is a lovely wine with a dark color and an engaging perfume of dried flowers and berry fruit with a touch of spice and cedar. It is rounded and supple, yet with good structure and backbone. The dark fruit flavors are accented by hints of cedar vanilla and spice and as nice as the wine is now I would expect it to evolve and develop over many years – **Outstanding. \$24 Best Buy ★★★**



2007 Morlanda Crianca Priorat.

This winery was founded in 1997, but the vines surrounding it are much older with many 25 to 40 years old. This wine was aged in oak for 2 years before bottling and is composed of 50% Garnacha Tinta and 50% Cariñena. It is an intense wine with 15.5% alcohol, but it is balanced by the fruit and structure. With a dark color showing a tinge of purple the wine has a deep perfume of plum and berry fruit with cedar and spice nuances and a faint herbal undertone. There is lots of fruit and concentration which, complemented by a nice cedary tone and faint tinges of chocolate, envelop the soft underlying tannins. This is a wine that benefits greatly with decanting – **Outstanding.** \$48 ★★

Article Tags: [A.et.P. Villaine](#), [Belle and Barney Rhodes](#), [Follin-Arbelet](#), [Franck Bonville](#), [gary Farrell Vineyards and Winery](#), [Gerard Boulay](#), [Heredad collection](#), [Jean-Marie Chaland](#), [Joe Heitz](#), [L'Aventure Winery](#), [La Follette winery](#), [Michel-Andreotti](#), [Mount Veeder winery](#), [Pierre Paillard](#), [Ponzi Vineyards](#), [Robert Craig winery](#), [Robert Mondavi winery](#), [Savary](#), [Spanish red wines](#), [Tablas Creek Vineyard](#)

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WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT THIS POST

2 comments for “SOME GREAT NEW WINES FROM OLD FRIENDS AND A FEW NEW SURPRISES”

1. Thank you John for a great list of affordable wines. Spain in general and the “other” regions of France continue to expand quality without inflating prices. One could drink very well for a lifetime of honest, widely varied and interesting wines without having to spend more than \$25 or \$30 per bottle.

All the Best

Mort

Posted by [Mort Maizlish](#) / [May 27, 2012, 11:25 am](#)

2. Thanks Mort,