

VEGA SICILIA RIBERA DEL DUERO UNICO 2006

Incredibly floral and beautiful with dark berry, spice, cedar and mint. Chinese plums. Asian spices. Bark. Tea. Full body, dense and so soft and complex. The finish goes on for minutes. Endless and fine. January 2018 release. Reminds me of the gorgeous 1991 or 1964. Drink forever. A wine that you want to spend time with.

● 100 points



DOMINIO DE PINGUS RIBERA DEL DUERO PINGUS 2014

Exotic aromas of dried dark fruit such as blackberry combined with fig, mushroom and meat. Dried flowers too. Full body yet agile and very fine. The quality of the tannins is next to none. A truly phenomenal young wine that sets standards for finesse and elegance in a mindboggling textural way. Glorious. Drink or hold.

● 100 points



DESCENDIENTES DE J PALACIOS BIERZO LA FARAONA 2015

This has so much iron and blood character with dark fruit and spice. Intense aromas. Full body with an endless depth and structure. The chewy yet fine-grained tannins are fantastic. A great, classic wine. Handmade from some of the steepest vineyards in the world. 1,700 bottles. Drink from 2020.

● 99 points



COMPAÑIA DE VINOS TELMO RODRIGUEZ RIOJA LAS BEATAS 2014

Amazing aromas of rose petal and blueberry that turn to violets. Full bodied with seamless tannins and an endless finish. A truly superb wine with incredible polish and balance. Stunning. Perfect to taste now but will age forever. 1,488 bottles made.

● 99 points



Alluring Freshness

While Spain has more than 3,000 years of winemaking behind it, in some ways its culture is as new as that of California or Chile. **James Suckling** recently tasted nearly 1,200 wines in Rioja and was thrilled to see that the top tier of Spain's wine industry is far more dynamic than people realise. Here are 10 of his top picks

MUGA RIOJA PRADO ENEA GRAN RESERVA 2010

The wonderfully silky texture with an added juiciness is what makes this wine so special. Its flawless and seamless nature is so impressive that it takes your breath away. Plenty of beautiful fruit but what mouthfeel. Drink now and forever.

● 99 points



ARTADI ALAVA VIÑA EL PISÓN 2014

Amazing aromas of crushed berry with bark, dark tea and blueberry undertones. Violets and lilac too. Full body, yet agile and vivid, with dense and beautiful tannins. Liquorice and light tar finish. Endless. Drink in 2020.

● 99 points



MUGA RIOJA ARO 2010

Cuts deep and long with such confidence and beauty. Extreme power and balance. Effortless. Dark berry and blueberry with clay and limestone undertones. Blend of tempranillo 70% and graciano 30%. 5,000 bottles. Drink in 2020.

● 100 points



VEGA SICILIA RIBERA DEL DUERO RESERVA ESPECIAL 2015

A layered and dense red with blackberry and sweet tobacco. Full body, wonderful fruit, with chocolate, walnut, light vanilla and dried berry. This is a wine that opens on the palate and delivers amazing depth and richness yet changes all the time. Bottled in 2014.

● 98 points



CONTINO RIOJA GRAN RESERVA 2010

This is very Asian with black tea, mushroom and bark aromas, and ripe fruit undertones. Full body, round and polished. Edgy structure with blackberry, mushroom skin and cedar. Fantastic finish. Just a baby. Stock up for the cellar. Better in 2020 but already excellent.

● 98 points



CVNE RIOJA REAL DE ASUA 2001

Wow. So decadent and rich with incredible ripe fruit, foie gras, truffles and other mushrooms. Full body, round and velvety with ultra-soft tannins. Cherry stone, hints of dried fruit and a fruity finish. Truly great. Only in magnums. Limited release. Perfect now. Long life ahead of it.

● 99 points



To see the top 100 list of wines from Rioja, visit jamesuckling.com