

Wines of spain essay



This research focuses on the analysis of Spain's wine history, classification systems, wine regions as well as its grape varieties. Furthermore, it introduces us to its special wines, soil characteristics and gives an overview of consumption market. Introduction Spain boasts the largest vineyard surface area of any nation in the world. Unlike most wine-producing countries, there is literally something for everyone in Spain; Spanish wineries craft high-quality wines of numerous varieties, including reds, whites, sparkling wine and even sherry.

Yes, we knew all these but we overlooked the important point of how all these happened. Well, those who are unfamiliar with Spain's wines and are interested to learn something new, are welcome to come along and discover the world of Spanish wines and their production history. What is Wine? Put very simply, wine is a drink made from the fermented juice of freshly-picked grapes. As such it is often described as one of the most natural of all alcoholic drinks. However, wine is more than just an alcoholic grape juice.

There are many influences on how a wine looks, smells and tastes which give a wide variety of styles. That variety will give a wide selection of wines to choose from in a bar, restaurant or shop. To be more specific, there are three types of wine: light, sparkling and fortified wine. Each one of them can be made in a variety of styles according to the color (red, white and rose) and the taste (dry, medium, sweet). History of Spanish Wine Wine has touched many of history's greatest events. For centuries, wine has been the drink of choice of poets, novelists, playwrights, artists, and composers.

It is unclear precisely where vines were first cultivated in Spain or who brought the winemaking techniques. Various sources believe the first vineyards were cultivated on the southwest coast of Andalusia. As the years gone by, the Romans continued to produce wine in this area, introducing their own particular techniques over time, for example, the ageing in small clay amphorae in sunlit attic areas or next to chimneys. According to contemporary accounts these wines acquired floral and fruity aromas and flavours and an appreciated smoky taste.

In the 8th century, the arrival of the Arabs slowed the winemaking development as the Koran prohibited the consumption of alcoholic and fermented drinks. Despite this religious prohibition, the cultivation of vineyards continued as certain dynasties were liberal in their treatment of the dominated Christians and allowed them to continue making wine, particularly in the monasteries. Spanish winemaking really prospered after the conquest of Spain by the Catholic Kings. The re-established religious monasteries and communities played a major role in this process..

After the phylloxera epidemic in the late 19 century, France imported wines from Spain to make up the local shortfall. The wines were not as French expected them to be and so French winemakers went to Spain and introduced their winemaking techniques which included aging in oak barrels. But instead of choosing French oak barrels, Spanish winemakers chose American oak which can create a stronger flavor to the wine. For the last few years, Spanish winemakers were trying to place Spain on an equal level with winemakers as good as the Italians and the French by renovating their winemaking processes.

Lately, the gross human apparent annual consumption of wine in Spain has been and stands currently at 22 liters per capita. The total domestic use is expected to continue declining as producers still keep increasing sales of wine to export markets. Data released by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Affairs and based on a research of 12, 000 households, indicates that the consumption of wine in households increased by 7 % in the year to November 2012. However total household expenditure with the same products increased only by 2 %.

According to wine industry specialists this means people are buying more wine in supermarkets as the economic crisis makes them turn to drink wine inside the household. Furthermore, it means that consumers are more price-sensitive and prefer less expensive products. Chart 2. Consumption by Households, Spain (2012/2011) Chart 3. Value of Household Consumption of Wine, Spain Spanish Grape Varieties Today Spain has more than 146 acknowledged wine varieties which make Spain one of the most varied wine cultures in the world.

At this point we are going to see alphabetically some of the most common Spanish varieties. * Spanish Red Grape Varieties Alicante, Bobal, Callet, Carinena, Cencibel, Garnacha, Graciano, Juan Garcia, Listan Negro, Manto Negro, Mazuelo, Mencia, Monastrell, Moristel, Prieto Picudo, Tempranillo, Trepas * Spanish White Grape Varieties Airen, Albarino, Albillo, Caino, Dona Blanca, Garnacha Blanca, Godello, Hondarribi, Listan, Loureira, Macabeo, Malvasia, Moscatel de Alejandria, Palomino, Parellada, Pedro Ximenez, Torrontes, Treixadura, Verdejo, Viura, Xarel-lo Ageing Classification System of Spanish Wines

Wines are classified according to the amount of time they have spent ageing in the winery, meaning that they are not sold until they are ready to drink. *

Crianza Any bottle with the word “Crianza” on the label, the Spanish word for ‘ageing’, means that the wines have spent at least two years at the winery before being sold, with at least one of those years spent in oak barrels. Crianza wines can be identified by their cherry red back label. The wines are still young, fresh and juicy with cherry and strawberry fruit flavours typically found in wines made using Tempranillo grapes, along with hints of vanilla and spice from the oak barrels.

Reserva These wines are made from select grapes and have spent longer ageing at the winery than Crianza wines. They spend at least one year in oak barrels, a further two years at the winery and are only released for sale when they have reached optimum maturity. Reserva wines have a deep red back label. The flavors in these wines are more complex, with lots of layers and more depth. They often have an explosion of aroma and taste sensations that continue to evolve in the mouth. **Gran Reserva** Gran Reserva wines are only made in the best vintages using the finest grapes.

They must spend at least five years in the winery, including two years in oak barrels and three years’ maturation in the bottle. Gran Reserva wines are identified by a teal blue back label (previously brown red). They are the classic and often the most traditional Rioja wines, ranking amongst the finest wines in the world. **Quality Classification System of Spanish Wines** The mainstream quality wine regions in Spain are referred to as Denominaciones de Origen (similar to the French Appellations) and the wine they produce is

regulated for quality according to specific laws. * Estate Wines (Vinos de Pago)

This is one of the innovations found in the Vineyard and Wine Act. It is the highest established category for a wine, and comprehends wines of recognized prestige made from grapes grown under climatic and soil conditions distinctive to a certain 'place' or 'rural site'. The production and marketing of these wines must comply with a comprehensive quality control system that must, as a minimum, fulfil the requirements applied to a Qualified Denomination of Origin. Further, these wines must be made and bottled in the winery of the specific vineyard or within the municipal area where that vineyard is located.

In cases where the entire vineyard is located within the boundaries of a Qualified Denomination of Origin, and is registered under that designation, it will be allowed to receive the name of "qualified vineyard," and the wines produced there shall be labelled as 'qualified vineyard wines'. * Qualified Denomination of Origin Wines - QDO (Vinos de Denominacion de Origen Calificada - DOCa) This category is reserved for wine that has achieved high levels of quality over a long period of time. The first designated wine to enter this class was Rioja, in April 1991.

The requirements that must be fulfilled to attain this status include the following: Denomination of Origin (DO) status for at least the previous 10 years; all products must come to market bottled in wineries located in the region where they are produced or which follow a suitable quality control system imposed by their monitoring and regulating body. * Denomination of

Origin Wines - DO (Vinos de Denominacion de Origen - DO) Wines bearing the DO distinction are prestigious Spanish wines produced in a specific production area and are made according to the parameters governing quality and type.