

Berman's Wine and Spirits

Wine of the Month Club Tasting Notes

Global Exploration – November 2011

2008 Ontanon Vetiver Rioja Blanco

White Rioja is usually made from Viura, also called Macabeo, a grape variety that grows widely throughout Rioja as well as in the Cava region near Barcelona and in Languedoc-Roussillon in France. Made from 100% Viura, Vetiver is yellow with golden highlights and shows aromas of tropical fruits such as oranges, pineapple and a hint of oak. The mouthfeel is quite rich, and the full-fruited palate leads to a long and clean finish. The winemaker, Raquel Perez, sums up the description simply: **“A white wine for red wine lovers.”**

All of Ontanon's wines share a common characteristic: they all taste “right”. It's a quality that's hard to describe in words, but when you taste it, you know it. There's something a little different about the wine that gives it a personality that makes it stand out from the rest.

2008 Caza da Lua - Douro

Portugal's Douro valley is the oldest wine appellation in the world. While winemaking in Portugal began in ancient times, the country is best known for its fortified port wines. However over the past few decades, the wine picture in Portugal is changing, with more vineyards being devoted to growing the high quality grapes needed to make wines such as this one.

Portugal has a large variety of native grape varieties (about 500), producing a very wide variety of different wines with distinctive personality. The Oxford Companion to Wine describes the country as having "a treasure trove of indigenous grape varieties."

Made from a blend of Tinta Roriz, Tinta Barroca, and Touriga Franca, Caza da Lua shows aromas of tart black fruits on the nose followed by more black fruit on the palate with a hint of saltiness, leading to a lingering finish.

2008 Stafford Hill Tempranillo

Stafford Hill is the second label for Holloran Vineyards Winery in Oregon's Willamette Valley. Holloran produces small quantities of hand crafted wine from premium vineyard sites. They emphasize low yields and careful hands-on management of the vines to produce wines that express the unique characteristics of their vineyard sites.

The Stafford Hill Tempranillo tastes like a New World Rioja, since both are made from the Tempranillo grape. It's fruity and easy-going with enough tannic structure to hold everything together.