



Rioja vs Ribera del Duero

The Two Faces of Tempranillo

Wednesday February 18, 2026

Registration: 6:00 PM, Tasting: 6:30 PM

Faculty Club, Univ. of Toronto, 41 Willcocks Street, Toronto

Price (including HST) Member: \$140; Guest/Non-Member: \$180

For our February event, **TVC** members and guests will discover how the same grape (Tempranillo) can tell two different stories, comparing Rioja versus Ribera del Duero wines. Set side by side, our curated selection offers a focused exploration of terroir and tradition: elegance and nuance on one hand, depth and intensity on the other. It is an ideal line-up for anyone curious about how place, climate, and blending can shape the character of Spain's signature red grape.

Rioja and Ribera del Duero are two of Spain's flagship red wine regions, united by Tempranillo yet offering distinctly different expressions in the glass. In Rioja, Tempranillo tends to be more acid-driven and red-fruited, often feeling savoury and complex thanks to longer, traditional barrel ageing. In Ribera del Duero, the same variety shows a riper, darker, more concentrated side, with lower perceived acidity and a plusher, more muscular palate impression. Where Rioja is the classic elder statesman, with a long tradition of oak-matured wines prized for elegance and harmony, Ribera del Duero has emerged more recently as a source of darker, more powerful Tempranillo with a bolder, "rock & roll" personality.

Rioja lies further north and benefits from a milder climate influenced by both the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, allowing grapes to ripen more gradually and retain fresh acidity. This slower ripening under gentler conditions tends to produce wines that feel silkier, with vibrant red fruit and a graceful, medium-bodied profile. Ribera del Duero, by contrast, sits on a high, continental plateau with hot days, cold nights, and lower rainfall, conditions that yield smaller berries with thicker skins and higher tannin. The result is typically deeper colour, fuller body, and more concentrated fruit, often giving a sense of intensity and structure that invites comparison with some of the world's great age-worthy reds.

In Rioja, Tempranillo is often blended with grapes such as Garnacha, Graciano, and Mazuelo, a classic coupage where Tempranillo provides backbone while its partners add body, fragrance, and acidity. Many wines are matured in American oak, which can bring notes of vanilla, coconut, and sweet spice layered over red cherry, strawberry, and subtle savoury nuances. Ribera del Duero focuses much more narrowly on Tempranillo (locally Tinto Fino or Tinta del País), with top wines frequently made entirely from this single grape. These wines commonly show dark cherry, blackberry, and plum, along with tobacco, leather, and spice, framed by firm tannins and often aged in French oak for a more taut, linear expression of power.

Designed for collectors and serious enthusiasts alike, this is an evening dedicated to heritage, craftsmanship, and perspective — a chance to explore how two iconic regions, through shared values and distinct voices, continue to define what Spanish fine wine can be.

The event price includes reception wine, bread, appetizers and, of course, our main wines! Newcomers and those who would like more tutoring are encouraged to sign up for our Newcomers' Table on our registration page.

REGISTER/ BUY TICKETS online at [Rioja vs Ribera February 2026](#) pay by e-transfer, credit card (via PayPal) or by cheque. E-transfer & credit card payments must be received within 48 hours of signing up to secure your reservation. Cheques must be received by Wednesday February 11, 2026. You will be sent an automated email confirmation from our online reservation system, Jotform, after submitting your registration. All ticket sales/reservations are final. If you tried to register but did not receive your confirmation, please contact winetastings@torontovintners.org before trying to register again. In order to maximize everyone's tasting experience, we ask that you please refrain from wearing scented products.



Tasting Notes and Information

Rioja vs Ribera del Duero

(Prices are as of date of purchase)

RIOJA

2018 Vega Sicilia Macán \$149

"Aromas of Chambord and cedar pave the way for cassis, Simka plum, cocoa powder, coffee bean and baking spice flavors. Sturdy tannins come on hard and heavy and slowly peel away to reveal a closing note of violet."

Drink between 2018 – 2036 94 pts - *Wine Enthusiast*

2011 Granja Remelluri Gran Reserva \$79

"Very consistent with the style of the very dry, warm and ripe year, the 2011 Granja Remelluri Gran Reserva had a powerful personality, with darker fruit and some earthy sensations, very Mediterranean, with plenty of rosemary aromas. It has the rugged tannin nicely polished and fine-grained, more elegant than what was produced in the 1990s."

Drink between 2018 - 2032 94 Pts – *Wine Advocate*

2015 Muga Prado Enea Gran Reserva \$79

"This dark-ruby wine offers a bouquet of ripe cherry and baking spices. Notes of clove and nutmeg transition to the palate alongside flavors of blackberry, cassis, chocolate-covered espresso bean, eucalyptus and violet. Luxurious tannins amble towards a lengthy finish."

Drink between 2023-2070 98 Pts – *Wine Enthusiast*

2016 Herederos del Marqués de Riscal 150 Aniversario Gran Reserva \$94

"Dark garnet to the eye, this wine has a bouquet of black currant, bittersweet chocolate and almond blossom. It alights on the palate with flavors of blackberry, cassis, chocolate-covered espresso bean, violet and citrus zest. Energetic tannins power their way into a cherry-pie finish. Made with vines more than 30 years old, this wine is unfiltered; decant before serving and strain if necessary."

Drink between 2021 – 2029 99 Pts – *Wine Enthusiast*

RIBERA DEL DUERO

2019 Vega Sicilia Alion \$161

"The 2019 Alión was cropped from a drier vintage compared with the average, and the wines from that year tend to be powerful, concentrated and with structure.... They define 2019 as a powerful, concentrated and juicy vintage, sensual and unctuous... It's quite fruit-driven, ripe and juicy, with abundant, slightly dusty tannins despite the limited pumping over they did to avoid extracting too much, and the maceration was also shortened."

Drink between 2022-2038 94 Pts – *Wine Advocate*

2016 Perez Pascuas Vina Pedrosa Grande Reserva \$67

"They are one of the few still using the Gran Reserva designation, and the 2016 Viña Pedrosa Gran Reserva shows textbook aromas of truffles and forest floor, earthy and spicy with notes of noble woods and a touch of soy sauce. It has a powerful palate with abundant but fine-grained and polished tannins after having spent two years in barrel and another couple of years in bottle."

Drink between 2024-2035 95 Pts – *Wine Advocate*

2018 Telmo Rodriguez Matallana \$77

"The wine is subtle, harmonious and elegant, complex and with integrated oak, very expressive with velvety tannins and a long, dry, chalky finish. This is superb, elegant but with the Duero rusticity and stone minerality."

Drink between 2022-2038 97 Pts – *Wine Advocate*

2018 Tr3smano Vendimia \$94

"Aromas of blackberry, cassis and caramel waft from the glass. These transition to the palate of this wine, where they are joined by flavors of butterscotch, orange zest and fennel bulb. A strong vein of acidity and robust tannins linger on the tongue and gums."

Drink between 2022-2035 94 Pts – *Wine Enthusiast*