



The Heart of Rioja **Timeless Tempranillo**

Wednesday May 21, 2025

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

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

Price (including HST) Member: \$130 Guest/Non-Member: \$160

For our May event, the **Toronto Vintners Club** will be exploring the bold, complex, and beautifully age-worthy red wines of Rioja, Spain's most prestigious wine region. Discover the captivating world of Tempranillo, the noble grape at the heart of Rioja's winemaking tradition, along with our guest speaker, Peter Wearing, wine educator and founder of Vin de Soif, a boutique wine agency based in Toronto.

Located in the picturesque north of Spain, Rioja is a region defined by its dramatic landscapes, rolling vineyards, and centuries-old commitment to crafting exceptional wines. Nestled along the banks of the Ebro River and protected by the Cantabrian Mountains, Rioja boasts a unique climate and terroir that nurtures Tempranillo to perfection. The region's three subzones—Rioja Alta, Rioja Alavesa, and Rioja Oriental—contributes its own distinct character to the wines. From the high-altitude elegance of Rioja Alta to the structured power of Rioja Alavesa and the warmer, riper profiles from Rioja Oriental, this is a region of remarkable diversity and depth. At the heart of Rioja's red wines is the Tempranillo grape, often called Spain's noble variety. It's known for producing structured, balanced wines with vibrant red fruit, subtle spice, and earthy complexity. In Rioja, Tempranillo is often blended with native varieties such as Garnacha, Graciano, and Mazuelo, adding further depth and dimension.

Our tasting features Reserva and Gran Reserva wines — two age-worthy styles that showcase Rioja's commitment to tradition. Reserva wines are aged at least three years, gaining smooth texture and layered flavors of spice and oak. Gran Reservas, made only in top vintages, age for five years or more, developing deep, complex notes of dried fruit, leather, and tobacco. These wines embody the elegance and craftsmanship of classic Rioja.

This guided tasting offers more than just exceptional wine—it is an exploration of the stories, vineyards, and techniques behind each bottle. You will learn how Rioja's winemakers balance tradition with innovation, and how aging in American and French oak influences flavour and texture. We'll also compare the stylistic differences between classic producers and modern interpretations.

Whether you are a seasoned enthusiast or new to the wines of Rioja, this event promises to deepen your appreciation for one of the world's great wine regions. Enjoy expertly paired bites, engaging discussion, and a selection of wines that embody the richness and soul of Spanish winemaking. Come sip, savour, and celebrate the timeless beauty of Rioja.

REGISTER/ BUY TICKETS online at [Rioja May 21, 2025](#) and 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, May 7. 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

Heart of Rioja

(Prices are as of date of purchase)

2010 Castillo Ygay Gran Reserva Especial \$198

"2010 was one of the finest vintages in Rioja in recent years, and this blend of Tempranillo with 15% Mazuelo (Cariñena) has to be one of the finest modern day Castillo de Ygays. The grapes come from a plot planted in 1966 at 485 meters in altitude, the highest in the estate, and the vines yielded 3,500 kilos per hectare. The two varieties fermented separately in stainless steel for 11 days, and the wine spent 26 months in a mixture of American and French oak barrels."

97 pts - Wine Advocate.

2016 Torre Muga Reserva \$96

"Even if the wine has concentration and power, it has great balance and freshness. And it's drinkable now, even if it's going to get polished with some more time in bottle, where it should have a long life. And for its age, it feels quite round, and it doesn't have edges or any harsh tannins; the oak is present but it's neatly integrated in the wine. It has to be one of the finest vintages for Torre Muga."

96 pts - Wine Advocate

2008 Viña Tondonia Reserva \$64

"The nose is very elegant, fresh and with an herbal twist, starting to show the complexity of the aged wines that are sometimes still too young when they are released 10+ years from the vintage! The palate is medium-bodied, with lightness and depth, very classical with extra freshness and all that is needed for a long development in bottle. This is the more Tondonia of the two vintages I tasted side by side. There are notes of maple syrup, smoke, licorice and crisp fruit. The palate is more austere, crunchy and reveals the chalkiness of the soils."

95 pts - Wine Advocate

2012 Cune Gran Reserva \$40

"...a blend of 85% Tempranillo, 10% Graciano and 5% Mazuelo, matured in barrel for two years and was kept in bottle for three years before it was released. It had a lot of freshness, with notes of red fruit and an iron-like touch, reminiscent of beef blood and meat, austere and serious. The oak is pretty much in the background. The palate is sleek and polished, with fine tannins and a soft mouthfeel. Very good balance and drinkability. "

91+ pts - Wine Advocate.

2012 Coto de Imaz Gran Reserva \$40

"This dark, relatively tight-knit Rioja proves that the Gran Reserva category doesn't just indicate the supremely well-aged, relaxed and reposeful style of Rioja, but can also serve to draw drinkers' attention to outstanding wines of density and tenacity which still have a way to run along their potential ageing trajectories. Look out for dark, urgent fruits here sweetened and back-lit by cunningly angled oak, with intense, deep, fresh and searching flavours in which the 10% of Graciano seems to be working overtime. A Rioja of innate drama."

97 Pts - Decanter

2013 Remelluri Reserva \$37

"The flagship red 2013 Reserva, the wine most people call simply Remelluri, was cropped from a cool, wet, challenging year, and it has a little less alcohol and higher acidity than the previous harvest. It had an élevage of 20 months in oak barriques. It has an herbal twist reflecting the conditions of the year, and it is developed and polished. It has the grippy, Nebbiolo-like tannins that are a signature of the Remelluri wines, a little more evident in a year like 2013. A Remelluri for food"

93 pts - Wine Advocate

2009 Viña Tondonia "Bosconia" Reserva \$61

"...a blend of 70% Tempranillo, 20% Garnacho and 5% each Mazuelo and Graciano, matured in used American oak barrels for six years. It has some toasted character, with ripe fruit, black rather than red, denoting a warm year but more restrained than the Bosconia Reserva from the same vintage. 2009 is a year of ripeness, concentration and tannin; the wines are powerful, but here you see the finesse of Tondonia in comparison to the more rustic Viña Bosconia. "

93 pts - Wine Advocate

2012 La Rioja Viña Ardanza Reserva \$61

"The wine is a prototype of polished and aged Rioja with a ruby color with some orange and a developed nose with subtle aromas of decayed leaves, sweet spices and some cherries in liqueur even, quite complex and harmonious. The palate is velvety but rich, with resolved tannins and a fine chalky mouthfeel, sleek and elegant, terribly balanced. The flavors are pure and defined, and there is an overall sense of harmony that I like very much. Brilliant Ardanza!"

94 pts - Wine Advocate