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8 Affordable Spanish Reds

New reviews of Tempranillo-based wines from Spain's Rioja region

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Tasting Highlights bring the best wines from our editors' most recent tastings to WineSpectator.com members.

Rioja offers several great advantages to lovers of red wine. First, many bodegas mature their wines for years in their own cellars before releasing them, so that consumers can choose from a number of different vintages, depending on their taste preferences. Second, these Tempranillo-based wines are typically polished and food-friendly, with a good balance of fruity and savory flavors and moderate tannins. Finally, the wines are priced very fairly for their quality. So what's not to like?

The older wines in this selection represent the excellent 2009 and 2010 vintages, and these particular bottlings lean towards Rioja's traditional style of supple reds with tobacco and orange peel accents to the red fruit flavors. The 2011 and 2012 vintages are lighter years, but the wines highlighted here take a more modern approach, with brighter, richer fruit flavors, to deliver fresh, lively reds. With most of the wines selling for \$20 or less, you can experiment with both styles to see which you prefer.

BODEGAS LAN Rioja Crianza D-12 Fifth Edition 2011 Score: 90 | \$21

The raspberry and cherry flavors are ripe and bright in this vibrant red. Vanilla and candied citrus notes add a touch of spicy sweetness. The texture is firm but smooth. A traditional style. Drink now through 2018. 400 cases imported. —*T.M.*

CONDE DE JAUREGUI Rioja Crianza 2009 Score: 89 | \$16

This polished red delivers dried cherry, vanilla, candied orange peel and spice flavors in a supple texture, with light, firm tannins and lively acidity. A traditional style. Drink now through 2019. 1,450 cases imported. —*T.M.*

CONDE DE JAUREGUI Rioja Reserva 2009 Score: 89 | \$16

This generous red is round and fleshy, with ripe flavors of plum, candied cherry, tea and vanilla. Features orange peel acidity and just enough tannins for grip, showing a spicy, citrusy finish. Drink now through 2021. 1,450 cases imported. —*T.M.*

ARTADI Rioja Viñas de Gain 2011 Score: 88 | \$25

Briar, tobacco and loam notes give this red an earthy character, with a core of plum fruit. Features firm tannins and balsamic acidity. A bit austere, but solid. Drink now through 2018. 2,156 cases imported. —*T.M.*

BARON DE LEY Maturana Rioja 2011 Score: 88 | \$23

This polished red shows some weight on the palate, with juicy black cherry and plum flavors mingling with chocolate and toast notes. Features smooth tannins and gentle acidity, but remains fresh through the floral finish. Drink now through 2018. 111 cases imported. —*T.M.*

BODEGA EDUARDO GARRIDO Rioja Crianza 2009 Score: 87 | \$20

This round red offers flavors of ripe plum, spice, vanilla and dried herb, with light tannins and balsamic acidity. Showing some maturity now, but balanced and accessible. Drink now through 2017. 500 cases imported. —*T.M.*



Courtesy of Bodegas LAN

Bodegas LAN is the source of an outstanding 2011 Rioja Crianza.

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INVACESA Tempranillo Rioja Rivarey Crianza 2010 Score: 87 | \$8

This polished red delivers cherry, roasted plum, tobacco and cedar flavors, with light, firm tannins and a silky, spicy finish. Balanced, in the traditional style. Drink now through 2018. 4,800 cases imported. —*T.M.*

BODEGAS PALACIOS REMONDO Rioja La Vendimia 2012 Score: 87 | \$17

Black cherry, light chocolate and tobacco notes mingle in this round red. The ripe fruit is supported by light tannins and fresh acidity. Drink now through 2016. 6,500 cases imported. —*T.M.*