

# A wine fiesta

The West's hot new grapes are Spanish and just right for sipping now

BY SARA SCHNEIDER | PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS J. STORY

## Albariño

**Say it like a Spaniard:** Ahl-bah-REE-nyoh

**Why it belongs in your fridge:** This white strikes a balance between crisp, refreshing citrus and aromatic stone fruit (look for apricots and nectarines) and blossoms—great for winding down a warm August afternoon. **Foods that make it taste even better:** Seafood. If it ever sported a fin or a shell, it's the right pairing—shrimp, crab, scallops, halibut, sablefish... Try all of the above with lemony aioli or mint pesto. And don't let the summer get away without an Albariño-and-paella party (the wine loves mussels and saffron). **Old World Heritage:** Chalk that seafood-friendliness up to its main home: Rías Baixas (REE-us BI-shus), on Spain's northwest coast, where Albariño accounts for 90 percent of the vineyards.

**West Coast regions to watch:** San Luis Obispo County. Tangent Winery, sister to Baileyana, is farming one of the largest Albariño vineyards outside Spain. (But southern Oregon has its share coming on strong too.)

## TOP PICKS

### ABACELA 2009

**ALBARIÑO** (Umpqua Valley; \$18). Ripe, golden apple and peach rounded out with a touch of almond and orchard blossoms.

### BONNY DOON 2009

**"CA' DEL SOLO ESTATE" ALBARIÑO** (Monterey; \$17). Pretty pink grapefruit and peach

with a refreshing green apple backbone.

### DANCING COYOTE

**2009 ALBARIÑO** (Clarksburg; \$11). Wet stone-like minerals lurk under stone fruit spiked with grapefruit and lemon zest.

### TANGENT 2008

**ALBARIÑO** (Edna Valley; \$17). Honeyed and crisp

at the same time, with orange zest balancing peach and tropical notes.

### VERDAD 2009 SAWYER LINDQUIST VINEYARD

**ALBARIÑO** (Edna Valley; \$23). Lean and beautifully austere; limestone and green herbs balance sweet clementine and stone-fruit flavors. >102



## Wine in the West

### Tempranillo

**Say it like a Spaniard:** Tem-prah-NEE-yoh

**Why you should uncork one:** With earthy, juicy dark fruit, tangy balsamic notes, and a spice rack of pepper and herbs, Tempranillo is a natural for backyard grilling.

**Foods that bring out its best:** Rosemary-rubbed leg of lamb over hardwood coals; skirt steak marinated in lots of herbs, on a bed of onions slow-cooked with balsamic vinegar; long-cured Spanish ham (*jamón Ibérico*); chicken and sausage paella (pour Albariño and Tempranillo).

**Old World ways vs. New World taste:** The centuries-old lean, earthy style of Spain's signature red is giving way to richer, riper Tempranillos, thanks to a tradition-sacking new generation of winemakers.

**Up-and-coming West Coast regions:** California's Lake County (north of Napa Valley), southern Oregon, and eastern Washington.



#### TOP PICKS

**CURRAN 2006 TEMPRANILLO** (Santa Ynez Valley; \$28). Leathery blackberries and plums spiced with anise and black pepper.

**HOVEY 2008 "ROLLERI CUVÉE" TEMPRANILLO** (Calaveras County; \$16). Lush, tangy plums and blackberries with minty chocolate and dried tobacco leaf.

**LONGORIA 2007 CLOVER CREEK VINEYARD TEMPRANILLO** (Santa Ynez Valley; \$36). Earthy dark plum, berry, and cherry flavors touched with licorice, leather, and tobacco.

**QUINTA CRUZ 2007 PIERCE RANCH TEMPRANILLO** (San Antonio Valley; \$18). An aromatic floral and

vanilla wrap lends elegance to dusty berries spiced with anise and a touch of chocolate.

**SIX SIGMA 2006 TEMPRANILLO** (Lake County; \$42). Plush, briary dark fruit, mocha, black pepper, and violets balanced with muscular tannins.

**TEJADA 2005 RESERVE TEMPRANILLO** (Lake

County; \$37.50). Smooth leather, vanilla, herbs, and coffee set off tangy berries and dark plums.

**TRUCHARD 2006 TEMPRANILLO** (Carneros, Napa Valley; \$25). Wild mix of tobacco, soy sauce, violets, and warm spices (cinnamon, cloves) add layers to appealingly tart berries and plums. ■



**PERFECT PAIRINGS  
WITH WESTERN WINES:**  
[sunset.com/winepairings](http://sunset.com/winepairings)