



BERRY BROS & RUDD
WINE & SPIRIT MERCHANTS

www.bbr.com

Spring Press Tasting

The Pickering Cellar
Thursday 14th May 2009
9am – 3.30pm

For further information please contact:-

Vicky Williams

Tel: 01256 340140

Email: vicky.williams@bbr.com

or Emily Monsell

Tel: 01256 340237

Email: emily.monsell@bbr.com

www.bbr.com

Sales & Services:

Tel: 0800 280 2440

Fax: 0800 280 2443

Email: bbr@bbr.com

Weekdays 9am to 6pm

For further information please contact:-

Vicky Williams

Tel: 01256 340140

Email: vicky.williams@bbr.com

or Emily Monsell

Tel: 01256 340237

Email: emily.monsell@bbr.com



One of the aims of this year's Spring Tasting is to demonstrate Berrys' growing expertise in Italy and Spain.

Traditionally known for our extensive knowledge of Bordeaux, Burgundy, Champagne and Port, we have in recent years developed what we think is a matchless Rhône selection and now turn the spotlight onto our Italian and Spanish ranges. Berry's Italian buyer David Berry Green is currently living in Piedmont and will present the wines from five producers. Davide Rosso of Giovanni Rosso will also be on hand to discuss his wines from Serralunga d'Alba.

Described as Spain's 'First Growth', the wines of Vega Sicilia will be available alongside those from Finca Allende. We will also showcase Alvaro Palacios, who we now represent in Priorat and Bierzo, as well as Rioja.

We also welcome Chris Mullineux from Swartland's Mullineux Family Wines and Lucas Rieffel from Domaine Lucas & André Rieffel to present their wines.

Sparkling wines from around the world, as well as a smattering of Southern French and a couple of recently unearthed small parcels from Burgundy, complete the line-up and will hopefully go some way to convincing you it was worth dragging yourself away from London's International Wine Trade Fair for a couple of hours.

We very much hope you enjoy the tasting.

Alun Griffiths MW
Wine Director

Contents	Page
<u>Sparkling</u>	<u>4/5</u>
<u>Champagne</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Alsace</u>	<u>5/6</u>
<u>South Africa</u>	<u>6</u>
<u>Burgundy</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Languedoc-Roussillon</u>	<u>8-10</u>
<u>Southern France (other)</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Italy</u>	<u>8</u>
<u>Spain</u>	<u>10-12</u>
<u>Grappa</u>	<u>12</u>

Sparkling

Single Btl

65254B	2004 Grosvenor Blanc de Blancs, Ridgeview Estate, Sussex, England (12% abv)	£21.54
70149B	2001 Nyetimber 1er Cuvée, Blanc de Blancs, Sussex, England (12% abv)	£33.20
40844B	Berrys' Extra Dry, Crémant de Limoux, Jean Louis Denois, Languedoc-Rousillon, France, (12% abv)	£8.75
65665B	2001 Crémant de Bourgogne Grande Cuvée, Albert Sounit, Burgundy, France (12% abv)	£14.60
49505B	Prosecco di Valdobbiadene, Trevisiol, L. e Figli, Veneto, Italy (12% abv)	£10.70
49615B	Berrys' United Kingdom Cuvée, Blanc de Blancs, Grand Cru, Le Mesnil, Champagne, France (12% abv)	£21.45
70746B	1998 Mailly, Les Echansons, Grand Cru, Champagne, France (12% abv)	£48.90

Sparkling - continued		Single Btl
61491B	2001 Jansz Vintage Cuvée, Tasmania, Australia (11.5% abv)	£19.55

Champagne		Single Btl
-----------	--	------------

69967M	1989 Jacquesson Dégorgement Tardif 2008, Champagne, France (12% abv)	£274.00
--------	--	---------

69968M	1989 Jacquesson Avize Grand Cru, Dégorgement Tardif 2008, Champagne, France (12% abv)	£313.15
--------	---	---------

69969M	1989 Jacquesson Grand Vin Signature, Dégorgement Tardif 2008, Champagne, France, (12% abv)	£440.40
--------	--	---------

Alsace		Single Btl
--------	--	------------

71212B	2007 Pinot Noir, Runz, Domaine Lucas and André Rieffel, Alsace, France (13% abv)	£18.50
--------	--	--------

71217B	2007 Sylvaner, Mittelbergheim, Domaine Lucas and André Rieffel, Alsace, France (13% abv)	£9.60
--------	--	-------

71211B	2007 Riesling, Brandluft, Domaine Lucas and André Rieffel, Alsace, France (13% abv)	£11.80
--------	---	--------

Alsace - continued

Single Btl

71215B	2006 Riesling, Wiebelsberg, Grand Cru, Domaine Lucas and André Rieffel, Alsace, France (13% abv)	£18.65
69645B	2006 Pinot Gris, Kirchberg de Barr, Grand Cru, Domaine Lucas and André Rieffel, Alsace, France (13% abv)	£15.60
71213B	2007 Gewurtztraminer, Gesetz, Domaine Lucas and André Rieffel, Alsace, France (13.5% abv)	NA
71216B	2007 Gewurtztraminer, Zotzenberg, Grand Cru, Domaine Lucas and André Rieffel, Alsace, France (14% abv)	£17.00

South Africa

Single Btl

72717B	2008 Mullineux White, Swartland, South Africa (13.5% abv)	£13.95
72716B	2008 Mullineux Syrah, Swartland, South Africa (13.5% abv)	£16.50

Burgundy

Single Btl

72611B	1992 Meursault, Charmes, 1er Cru, Sélection Nicolas Potel, Burgundy, France (13% abv)	£49.00
72609B	1982 Puligny-Montrachet, Combettes, 1er Cru, Sélection Nicolas Potel, Burgundy, France (13% abv)	£99.50
72610B	1981 Meursault Perrières, 1er Cru, Sélection Nicolas Potel, Burgundy, France (13% abv)	£65.00
72604B	1999 Savigny-lès-Beaune, Sélection Nicolas Potel, Burgundy, France, (13% abv)	£22.50
72605B	1985 Santenay Beaurepaire, 1er Cru, Sélection Nicolas Potel, Burgundy, France (13% abv)	£33.00
72606M	1976 Santenay Beaurepaire, 1er Cru, Sélection Nicolas Potel, Burgundy, France (13% abv)	£69.00
72405B	1988 Volnay, Clos des Chênes, 1er Cru, Maison Camille Giroud, Burgundy, France (13% abv)	£99.00
65470B	1976 Corton Bressandes, Grand Cru, Maison Camille Giroud, Burgundy, France (13.5% abv)	£132.10

Languedoc-Rousillon Single Btl

71135B 2005 Deusyls de la Pèira, Vin de Pays de l'Hérault,
Côteaux du Languedoc, France (14.5% abv) £22.95

71137B 2006 Les Orbieres de la Pèira, Côteaux du Languedoc,
France (14.5% abv) £10.45

71138B 2006 Las Flors de la Pèira, Côteaux du Languedoc,
France, (14.5% abv) £22.95

71139B 2006 La Pèira en Damaisela, Côteaux du Languedoc,
France (14.5% abv) £50.00

Southern France (other) Single Btl

72501B 2006 Domaine de Trévallon Rouge,
Vin de Pays des Bouches du Rhône, France (12.5% abv) £50.00

72502B 2000 Domaine de Trévallon Rouge,
Vin de Pays des Bouches du Rhône, France (12.5% abv) £65.00

Italy Single Btl

71127B 2005 Montefalco Rosso, 'Sololoro', Fontecolle,
Umbria, Italy (13% abv) £15.60

71096B	2005 Sagrantino di Montefalco, 'Ducciochi', Fontecolle, Umbria, Italy (13.5% abv)	£28.30
70504B	2006 Rosso di Montalcino, San Guiseppe, Castelnuovo dell'Abate, Tuscany, Italy (14% abv)	£28.25
71200B	2005 Rosso di Montalcino, Cerbaiona, Tuscany, Italy (13.5% abv)	£24.20
70505B	2004 Brunello di Montalcino, San Guiseppe, Castelnuovo dell'Abate, Tuscany, Italy (13% abv)	£56.75
72230B	2004 Brunello di Montalcino, Cerbaiona, Tuscany, Italy (14% abv)	£78.25
71151B	2007 Dolcetto d'Alba, Giovanni Rosso, Serralunga d'Alba, Piedmont, Italy (13.5% abv)	£13.20
71152B	2005 Barbera d'Alba, Giovanni Rosso, Serralunga d'Alba, Piedmont, Italy (13.5 % abv)	£15.60
71153B	2005 Barolo, Serralunga, Giovanni Rosso, Piedmont, Italy (13.5% abv)	£30.50

Italy - continued Single Btl

71154B 2005 Barolo, Cerreta, Giovanni Rosso, Piedmont, Italy (13.5% abv) £49.95

71155B 2005 Barolo, La Serra, Giovanni Rosso, Piedmont, Italy (13.5% abv) £49.95

72713B 2004 Barolo, Serralunga, Giovanni Rosso, Piedmont, Italy (14.5% abv) £32.50

72714B 2004 Barolo, Cerreta, Giovanni Rosso, Piedmont, Italy (14.5% abv) £58.50

72715B 2004 Barolo, La Serra, Giovanni Rosso, Piedmont, Italy (14.5% abv) £58.50

Spain Single Btl

65975B 2004 Rioja Tinto, Fince Allende, Rioja, Spain (15.5% abv) £16.55

70099B 2005 Aurus, Finca Allende, Rioja, Spain (13% abv) £107.65

Spain - continued

Single Btl

70801B	2004 Pago de los Capellanes, Reserva, Ribera del Duero, Spain (13.5% abv)	£36.15
72539B	2005 Bodegas Alión, Ribera del Duero, Spain (14.5% abv)	£32.90
72538B	2006 Pintia, Vega Sicilia, Toro, Spain (14.7% abv)	£25.85
72540B	1999 Unico, Vega Sicilia, Ribera del Duero, Spain (13.5% abv)	£163.50
72541B	Vega Sicilia Reserva Especial, Ribera del Duero, Spain (13% abv)	£175.25
70633B	2007 Vendimia Crianza, Bodegas Palacios Remondo, Crianza, Rioja, Spain (13.5% abv)	£9.25
64750B	2004 La Montesa Crianza, Bodegas Palacios Remondo, Crianza, Rioja, Spain (13.5% abv)	£11.00
71006B	2007 Petalos, Descendientes de J. Palacios, Bierzo, Spain (14% abv)	£13.65

Spain - continued Single Btl

71007B	2005 Villa de Corullón, Descendientes de J. Palacios, Bierzo, Spain (14% abv)	£34.25
71008B	2005 San Martin, Descendientes de J. Palacios, Bierzo, Spain (14.5% abv)	£68.50
71009B	2005 Las Lamas, Descendientes de J. Palacios, Bierzo, Spain (14.5% abv)	£88.05
71011B	2006 Les Terraces, Alvaro Palacios, Priorat, Spain (14.5% abv)	£21.75
71012B	2006 Finca Dofi, Alvaro Palacios, Priorat, Spain (14.5% abv)	£45.95
71013B	2006 L'Ermita, Alvaro Palacios, Priorat, Spain (14.5% abv)	£410.00

Grappa Single Btl

70503F	2003 Grappa Riserva de Montalcino, San Guiseppe, Castelnuovo dell'Abate, Tuscany, Italy (45% abv)	£36.75
--------	---	--------

Ridgeview Estate

Ridgeview Wine Estate is a family company dedicated solely to the production of the highest quality sparkling wine from traditional Champagne varieties and methods.

Aptly named with a scenic location on a plateau of paludina limestone near to the highest point of the Sussex Downs (Ditchling Beacon), Ridgeview has been making excellent sparkling wines for over a decade and have won numerous awards and trophies during this time.

Mike Roberts was quick to recognise the potential of the region and its proximity to Champagne, both geographical and geological, and now makes an intriguing selection of fizz, all of it following the *méthode champenoise* pretty much à la lettre.

Nyetimber Estate

Nyetimber Manor is mentioned in the Domesday Book and was once briefly home to Anne of Cleves, fourth wife of Henry VIII. Nearly 1,000 years later it is producing one of the finest sparkling wines in the world.

It was purchased by Stuart and Sandy Moss in 1986, who were convinced that the gently undulating south-facing slopes with well-drained, greensand soils would be ideal for production of high quality grapes for making sparkling wines. They planted 20 hectares of Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier and produced their first wine, a Blanc de Blancs, in 1992. In 1993 they made their first release of Classic Cuvée which is a Champagne-style Chardonnay/Pinot blend. Nyetimber is now owned by entrepreneurial Flying Dutchman Eric Hermeer, but the wine in this tasting was made when flamboyant musician impresario Andy Hill was still at the helm.

Domaine Jean Louis Denois

Jean Louis Denois is a passionate and innovative winemaker. After completing his studies in Beaune he worked in Australia, New Zealand, California and South Africa. He believes in environmentally friendly vineyard practices and also in minimising yields to maximise the quality of the grapes.

We usually describe Jean Louis as a perapatetic iconoclast, mainly because, as a native Champenois, he makes fantastic sparkling wine, in the Champagne style, but in the foothills of the Pyrenees. This description is no less apposite for his still wines, the best examples of which capture the essence of the grapes in question, and throw in for good measure a dose of winemaking genius and a generous pinch of Languedoc sunshine.

The Domaine's wines make the most of the contrasting climates and terroirs available across the Languedoc region and are allowed to evolve naturally and gradually with as little interference as possible. Its vineyards are situated in the extreme Southwest of Languedoc, close to Ariège at the foot of the Pyrenees.

Trevisiol L. e Figli

The Trevisiol family were among the first Prosecco winemakers, with Luigi and his son Paolo continuing to make traditional sparkling wine from 25 hectares of prime Valdobbiadene vineyards close to the Alte-Adige border.

Paolo capitalises on the region's altitude, which at 300 meters extends the growing season or hang time to deliver excellent flavours, whilst ageing the wines for six to nine months in oak on their lees.

Le Mesnil

Le Mesnil is located in one of Cote des Blancs' greatest villages, Le Mesnil-sur-Oger. This co-operative produces wines that are smooth and rich with fine acidity at the non-vinatge level, with crisper, richer, fuller fruit that will develop a toasty finesse.

Mailly

Mailly is one of the great Grand Cru villages in the Montagne De Reims. With a membership of 70 growers, the village's eponymous co-operative is one of the most dynamic in the region.

Founded in 1929, Champagne Mailly produces only Grand Cru Champagne from its 70 hectares of vineyards, using just Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes. These are harvested from more than 400 parcels, providing harmonious and steadfast blends. With a potential output of 500,000 bottles each year, Mailly exports 50% of its production.

One has only to visit its splendid seven-story gravity-fed installation to realise that this is a rather special organisation, the quality of its wines matched only by the peerless efficiency of its management. With a gifted winemaker in Hervé Dantan, Mailly are able to exploit the full potential of these top-graded vines and to produce a rich, Pinot Noir dominated Champagne.

Jansz Tasmania

The Jansz vineyard in the Piper's River region of the Australian island of Tasmania was originally planted in 1975.

In 1986 the owners, Heemskerk, were joined by Champagne house Roederer in a joint venture. Roederer recognised this cool-climate region as perfect for the production of top quality traditional method sparkling wines. The vineyards are planted with all three Champagne grapes, but the Pinot Meunier will soon be replaced with more Pinot Noir as Pinot Noir produces better quality wine here.

Under current owners Yalumba, Jansz continues to go from strength to strength, producing ever more complex and delicious wines.

Jacquesson

Voted the third best of all Champagne houses (after Bollinger and Krug) in 2005 La Revue Des Vins De France, Jacquesson has, in the following years, really proved the merit of such an accolade. Based in the evocatively named town of Dizy, just to the north of Epernay, the house is run by the Chiquet brothers (cousins of our own Gaston Chiquet). The brothers are long-term advocates of the modish philosophy of zero dosage: this is put to the test in *extremis* with the equally modish move to release late disgorged cuvées: the juxtaposition of minimal sugar and extended lees ageing has produced these, some of the purest and most poised of all Champagnes, showing at their very best in magnum of course! These are very serious Champagnes with an emphasis on minerality and complexity of fruit. The wines have significant gravitas, are good food companions and age beautifully.

Domaine Lucas and André Rieffel

Near the town of Andlau, surrounding the village of Mittelbergheim, lie the nine-and-a-half hectares of vineyards owned by Lucas Rieffel and his father André. Lucas took over the reins in 1996, and he has been working towards becoming organic ever since.

Mostly Riesling (35%) his current crop of varietals is grown on a rich mix of sandstone, clay, marl, granite and limestone soils. His holdings include a tiny parcel of Grand Cru Wiebelsberg, he also makes impressive examples of Pinot Gris, Gewurztraminer and a Klevner Pinot Blanc (aka Auxerrois) from 50-year-old vines. For the past four years he has been busy replacing the overly generous clones with a hand-picked 'selection masale' for greater quality. Vinification is a traditional blend of 'foudres' and stainless-steel.

Mullineux Family Wines

Mullineux Family Wines is based in Swartland, South Africa, an area that has traditionally been overlooked as a region capable of producing great wine, but this is rapidly changing. In winemakers Chris and Andrea's travels through the region, they have seen vineyards and tasted wines that show incredible character and potential, and intend to bring this ever further to the fore. Their aim is to bottle wines that are a true expression of the Swartland and all steps of their winemaking process are taken with this aim in mind.

A natural, minimalist approach is followed in the vineyards and cellar. They work closely with a select group of growers who follow sustainable, reasoned farming practices. In the cellar, apart from minimal amounts of sulphur, nothing is added to, or removed from the wine. They do not make use of any yeasts, acids, tannins, enzymes, or fining and filtering agents.

The winemaking is focused on what they believe the Swartland does best, and produce just three wines: A barrel fermented White Blend of Chenin blanc, Grenache blanc, Clairette and Viognier; a perfumed Syrah, sourced from nine different vineyards, matured in second and third fill demi-muids; and a super rich Straw Wine made from air dried Chenin Blanc, fermented and matured in old barriques.

Maison Camille Giroud

The House of Camille Giroud, established in Beaune since 1865, has been owned by Americans Joe Wender and Ann Colgin since early 2002. Though the recent vintages are made in quite a different style to the previous Giroud tradition of long maturation in cask, there are still good supplies of old vintages which are only put on the market when they reach maturity. This year we have been able to select and ship a variety of crus from major vintages of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

Sélection Nicolas Potel

With his exceptional connections among the vigneronns of Burgundy, Nicolas Potel has sourced parcels of old wines from various cellars in the region, produced bottled and stored by the growers themselves but now offered under the selection Nicolas Potel label. Berrys' have in turn selected several outstanding mature wines from this range. They have been shipped directly from Burgundy in May 2009.

La Pèira

Our most exciting Languedoc find of 2008, La Pèira is located on the limestone plateau of the fashionable enclave of Les Terraces Du Larzac.

First planted by the Romans, these beautiful vineyards share the terrain with the Roquefort-producing sheep and the wild savagery of the garrigue. The 'Domaine' consists of a stone barn, its location almost exactly half way between the two great properties of Grange Des Pères and Mas De Daumas Gassac.

Highly respected consultant oenologist Claude Gros has really struck gold here. His secret is fairly straightforward and centres on traditional winemaking with indigenous varieties (both Carignan and Cinsault pre-date Grenache in the area).

Every single wine in the versatile La Pèira portfolio is an absolute stunner; from the magisterial complexity of the white, Deusyls, through to the three reds which pretty much cover the spectrum of expectation from a great red wine; Les Obriers is fruity yet dense, Les Flors is rich yet magnificently intricate and La Pèira en Damaisela is a terrific *vin de garde*, worthy of extended cellaring.

Domaine de Trévallon

Domaine de Trévallon is located in the Medieval town of Les Baux-de-Provence, 30 kilometers due south of Avignon, marginally closer to another photogenic Roman out-post, Arles. The proximity to the Southern Rhône in vinous terms is an important qualitative indication, but one must also underline the inherent differences, and stress the nuances and genius that have allowed Eloi Durrbach to make the greatest of all Provençal wines.

Whereas Châteauneuf-du-Pape glories in heady Grenache and brooding Mourvèdre, Trévallon is an equal partnership of Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Cabernet has found a natural homestead in the relative altitude of the slopes of the Alpilles, its generous black fruit core held in counterpoint by the purity and focus of the Syrah.

The assemblage aroused suspicion in the authorities and in 1993 the wine was effectively down-graded from an Appellation Contrôlée Coteaux de Baux en Provence to the seemingly humble Vin de Pays des Bouches du Rhône. Eloi was unmoved; he knew that the blend was the right one and that Trévallon would quickly take its place at the High Table of great Vin de Pays of the world, where, despite impressive competition, it has held court with great eloquence ever since.

Cantina Fontecolle

Originally from Rome, the Pompili family have been grape-growers since the 1960s. During the 1990s they began to experiment by bottling their own fruit, culminating with Duccio (Aldo) Pompili, the latest generation, making the switch to winemaker in 2003; aided and abetted by consultant Tiziano Vistalli.

The tiny (four-and-a-half hectares) Fontecolle estate (seven-and-a-half hectares of ancient olive trees) is planted predominantly to Sagrantino at 450 metres on steep free-draining stony soils. Further down the hill, on flatter deeper clay-rich soils is also found some Sangiovese, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon; ingredients for the Montefalco Rosso.

Duccio tends his vines without recourse to pesticides or herbicides, but refuses to get drawn into a discussion about organics. Fermentation of only free-run juice takes place in 20 hectare litre small static stainless-steel vats before being transferred to new and used french 500 litre Saury tonneau for malolactic fermentation and affinamento/elevage.

The Montefalco Rosso, generally a blend of 60% Sangiovese, 15% Sagrantino, 25% Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon sees 12 months oak affinamento and six months stainless-steel before release.

Only 6,500 bottles were made of the inaugural 2005 vintage. The 100% Sagrantino de Montefalco (Secco) sees 18 months new French oak and 12 months in stainless-steel prior to bottling. 2,500 bottles were made of the 2005.

San Giuseppe di Stella di Campalto

Run by the talented Stella di Campalto, the six hectare San Giuseppe wine estate in Castelnuovo dell'Abate, is strewn with several soil types (volcanic, iron-rich, galestro, clay...). It was originally planted in 1992, became organic in 1996 and then biodynamic in 2002.

Great attention is paid to harvesting the parcels of vines separately in order to capture the maximum fruit quality and soil expression, using gravity and a combination of large 38 hectare litres Austrian oak barrels and French oak barriques to vinify the juice as gently as possible.

All her fruit qualifies as Brunello di Montalcino, yet in 2003 she chose to declassify everything to Rosso di Montalcino; her inaugural Brunello has been released in 2009 for the 2004 vintage.

Cerbaiona

Tucked away off the Torronieri road, the small Cerbaiona estate has been home to Diego and Nora Molinari since 1977, who produced their first vintage in 1980, all 70 bottles of it!

The estate comprises three hectares of vines and 12 hectares of wood and olive grove; half planted to Brunello, the rest to Sant'Antimo and IGT Toscana (using Cabernet Sauvignon, Malvasia Nera, Merlot and Syrah). Production is limited to 8,000 bottles.

Lying on the north-eastern shoulder of the Montalcino commune the estate enjoys a fine eastern exposition at 390 metres elevation, with good aeration and galestro/alberese clay soils. This imbues the wines with a naturally good acidity. Diego does not use herbicides, pesticides or fungicides on his vines. This hands-off approach is reflected in their tiny winery, which is bolted onto the back of the 16th Century property. A wooden press is preferred, followed by gentle vinification in cement and ageing/invecchiamento in 20 hectare litres slavian botte.

The Brunello spends 30 months in oak, followed by a year in bottle pre-release, while the Rosso sees 18 months.

Giovanni Rosso

The Rosso family have been Serralunga d'Alba vineyard proprietors since the 1890s but first bottled wine under the 'Giovanni Rosso' label in 1995.'

Most of the estate's seven parcels are centred on prime Serralunga marl, clay and sandstone soils at 430 metres; notably those of the precipitous, limestone-rich La Serra and deeper clay-rich Cerretta.

Davide's approach to viticulture is essentially organic. In the winery he follows a traditional line, with month-long wild yeast alcoholic and malolactic fermentations in small cement vats without temperature control. Gentler remontaggio is preferred to delestaggio to retain fruit purity. Affinamento/elevage takes place in 50 hectare litres botte made from french Fontainebleu oak. Consequently the wines capture the essence of their terroir.

Vega Sicilia

Vega Sicilia, Spain's 'first growth' and most prestigious wine estate, is located in Ribera del Duero, just to the east of Valladolid. The estate covers around 1,000 hectares, of which 230 - 250 are under vines. It was founded in 1864 by Don Eloy Lecanda y Chaves, who arrived from Bordeaux with cuttings of local grapes (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Malbec) and planted them, together with Spain's signature grape Tinto Fino (clone of Tempranillo), in the arid Ribera soils.

Vega Sicilia has founded its success on its meticulous wine-producing practices: In the vineyard it applies low yields, aided by green harvesting, and a painstaking grape selection. In the winery, wines undertake a complicated series of rackings from huge barrels to new and old oak. Despite the very prolonged barrel ageing (the 1970 Unico has over 16 years) the wine flavours are never dried out or overly oaky when mature, which is compelling evidence of the superb quality of the raw materials.

The Vega Sicilia range includes three cuvées: Unico ('unique') is the flagship, followed by Reserva Especial, a blend of top vintages, both made up of Tinto Fino (80%), Cabernet Sauvignon and a little Merlot, and traditionally 10 years of ageing. Nowadays the wine maker Javier Ausas ages the Unico wines for only five to six years, before bottling.

Valbuena is made from younger vines, and in years when Unico is not produced, grapes normally destined for Unico will go into Valbuena. It is only released after five years' ageing. Spain's 'Chateau Latour' has illustrious history, a sense of place, immense respect for tradition and immaculate winemaking. It has laid the foundation for what has become one of the best wine-making regions in Spain.

Finca Allende

Finca Allende, the estate created by Brother and sister team Mercedes and Miguel Angel de Gregorio, is located in the hill town of Briones in the Rioja Alta. 'Allende' can be roughly translated as 'further'; its philosophy is to go further and further towards creating the perfect Rioja. This has been done by marrying the old and the new, by embracing the traditional grape varieties but then treating them to new French oak. A further distinguishing characteristic, apart from their ripeness and structure, is that Allende's best wines are vineyard-based, with focus on the expression of Rioja's varied terroir.

Finca Allende's production comes from their own 22 hectares, supplemented by long-term contracts with certain other growers in Briones. The principal cuvée is 100% Tempranillo aged for 13 months in predominantly French oak. The oldest vines (Tempranillo with some Graciano) are kept back to make Aurus.

Pago de los Capellanes

Pago de los Capellanes is located one kilometre from the village of Pedrosa de Duero in the heart of the Ribera del Duero region, and is considered by some to be the more modern face of Ribera Del Duero, providing a perfect counterpoint to the wonderfully traditional Vega Sicilia. It is owned by the Rodero-Villa family and they now have over 70 hectares of vineyards.

The Reserva is made from the same blend as the Crianza but is made from the finest fruit available and is matured in oak for 18 months.

Alvaro Palacios

Bierzo

Alvaro comes from the large and esteemed Rioja winemaking family of Bodegas Palacios Remondo. His success in independent ventures in Priorat inspired him to search again for something new, this time putting his faith in the potential of Bierzo.

Bierzo's principal grape is the obscure, indigenous red variety Mencía. While Bierzo is a relatively new wine appellation, it has a wealth of very old vines planted on extremely steep hillsides, and in this respect it much resembles the Priorat region.

Palacios with his nephew Ricardo Perez established Descendientes de J. Palacios in 1998 in the village of Villafranca del Bierzo. They named the estate in honour of Alvaro's father who passed away in 2000.

Bierzo Corullón comes from three vineyards with vines from 60 to 100 years old. It is a vivid and unique, a red wine that marries rustic flavours with modern polish.

Petalos, comes from 60 year-old vines which are farmed biodynamically, is an intense wine that mingles beautifully wild plum, smoke and spice flavours.

Las Lamas is farmed at very low yields (15 hectare litres / hectare) some at an altitude of over 700 metres. This wine is the *sine qua non* of Alvaro Palacio's adventure in Bierzo.

Rioja

Alvaro Palacios returned to the family property in Rioja Baja, and in a very short space of time, decreased production by 60% and increased quality by a far higher factor! The most Southerly of the Rioja vineyards, Baja centres on the rich silty soils of the River Ebro, its best vineyards, such as this, at quite considerable altitude.

The reds offer a range of options across different price ranges. The Vendimia is exuberantly juicy, for immediate consumption. The Crianza La Montesa has a glossy feel to an otherwise traditional style. A 90 hectare plot with vines up to 550 metres of altitude, Montesa is fermented in large oak vats then aged for 10 months in French barriques, 50% of which are new. The make-up of the blend varies according to the vintage; each year there is correspondingly more Mazuelo and Graciano, adding interest.

Priorat

Alvaro Palacios spent two years at Château Pétrus before setting up on his own in Priorat in 1989. From the outset, he set out to produce world-class wines by using fruit from extremely low-yielding old vines and by applying ultra-modern winemaking techniques.

The cream of the crop is the single vineyard wine L'Ermita, which was first produced in 1993. It is a blend of 80% Garnacha, 15% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cariñena, and is aged in new French barriques for up to 20 months. It is bottled unfiltered. It has intense concentration and enormous depth and a complexity which is simply staggering. Arguably the most individual red wine in Spain, it is certainly now the most expensive.

