



## Rioja and Jerez drive strong performance for Spain at the International Wine Challenge

*100 of Spain's medals were from Rioja and 32 from Jerez – making up over 53% of their total wins.*

Spain's winemakers picked up 247 medals in the latest round of the International Wine Challenge (IWC), the world's most influential wine competition.

Eight of these were Gold medals, putting Spain in fifth place behind France, Australia, Portugal and New Zealand in the medal table.

Tempranillo and Palomino proved to be Spain's key grapes. Tempranillo had a trio of triumphs:

- Bodegas Castillejo de Robledo's Altos de Valdoso Reserva 2011
- Bodegas Pinea del Duero's Pinea Crianza 2014
- Baron de Ley's Morrisons The Best Marques de Los Rios Rioja Gran Reserva 2012

Palomino proved itself in three Sherries; two, from Jerez producer Emilio Lustau, are destined for UK supermarkets – Waitrose's Palo Cortado Torre del Oro and Marks & Spencer's Very Rare Palo Cortado. The other is Sánchez Romate's The Society's Fino.

The other red wine awarded a Gold medal is Codorníu Raventós Scala Dei Cartoixa 2015, a Garnacha-Cariñena blend made in Priorat.

The only Spanish white wine to gain Gold is the Bodega Cuatro Rayas' Cuatro Rayas Cuarenta Vendimias Cuvée, made from Verdejo grapes.

Several Albariño wines – including one sparkling version – were awarded Silver medals.

Charles Metcalfe, IWC Co-Chair and Founder, commented: "The whites from Galicia were looking very good, particularly those made from Albariño."

In total, 58 wines were awarded a Silver medal. Out of Spain's medal winners overall, 100 (40%) were from the Rioja region – a 25% increase on last year's results for Rioja.

Highlighting the weight that these medals carry, Dr Jamie Goode, another co-chair, said: "I think that if a wine achieves a medal in the IWC then it's a safe bet for a good bottle this Christmas. It takes a lot to get a Silver, and the Golds are rare!"

Charles Metcalfe added: "We don't just hand out medals to our favourite winemakers! Every medal has been awarded after a blind tasting by experts from all over the world."

The first part of the 2019 International Wine Challenge – Tranche 1 – saw 212 wine experts from 23 countries judging the wines over four days in London. Tranche 2 judging will take place from April 1-11, 2019, with the results announced on May 8.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

## The International Wine Challenge

In its 36<sup>th</sup> year, the International Wine Challenge is accepted as the world's finest and most meticulously judged competition. The IWC assesses every wine 'blind' and judges each for its faithfulness to style, region and vintage. Each medal-winning wine is tasted on at least three separate occasions by a minimum of 12 different judges including Masters of Wine. Awards include medals (Gold, Silver, Bronze) and Commended awards. The IWC is committed to helping consumers discover great wine, and the medals displayed on winning bottles offer a trusted guarantee of quality.

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