

30/03/2020

WINE LESSONS at HOME

Level: B1+

PRE-READING TASK

Match the words from the box with their meanings:

Sidelines	Staggeringly	Vapid	A lack of	Weaned on
Devoted to	Soggy	Jumble	Yield	Ripen

To accustom to

The area where substitute players sit.

Loyal to

To mix in a confused mass; to confuse mentally.

Tending to overwhelm or overcome in mind or feeling.

Thoroughly wet.

To bring or come to maturity.

To produce by a natural process.

Deficiency.

Insipid, flat.

READING

Now, read the article. Check the text for the meanings of the words we have seen before. We will talk about the text in the correction video.

Spain

It could be argued that Spain is a viticultural miracle. After years on the sidelines of the world of fine wine, it is now a major player. Investment and ambition in vineyard and winery are resulting in more and more rich – often highly alcoholic – spicy reds that are finding increasing favour among international consumers weaned on ripe New World wines. Proud possessor of more land devoted to vines than any other, Spain is only just beginning to capitalise on this resource in any consistent or cohesive way – which is perhaps not surprising. If it had Germany's love of efficiency, or France's respect for centralism, Spain would have been sending us oceans of judiciously priced wine made expressly for the international market for decades. But Spain is an anarchic jumble of districts and regions, just as its landscape is an anarchic jumble of staggeringly raw scenery and heartbreakingly awful human constructions, and has to be treated as such by the wine enthusiast. There is real treasure to be found by those prepared to dig, however and, now that a connoisseur class has developed in Spain itself, all manner of ambitious investors have been doing their bit to change the image of Spanish wine.

A look at a map suggests just how much climatic diversity there is likely to be between Spain's many wine regions, from the soggy green vineyards of Galicia on the north Atlantic coast to the baked Mediterranean south east. Spain's saving grace, viticulturally, is the average altitude of her vineyards, over 600 m (2,000 ft). A high proportion of Spanish vineyards therefore manage to produce grapes with good levels of colour and acidity simply because night-time temperatures are relatively low, and grapes do not ripen until the end of a usefully prolonged growing season. And because irrigation (officially allowed in Spain since 1996 but on a case by case basis) is expensive and rarely used, vines are typically planted as widely spaced bushes so that yields tend to be very low, ideally resulting in grapes packed full of flavour. Lower altitude vineyards, notably those of the Levante on the southern Mediterranean coast, tend to produce wines whose main problem is an excess of alcohol and a lack of acidity. The traditional Spanish recipe for balancing this was to add white grapes or white wine. Spain's wine surplus makes an ideal potent complement to the vapid sort of red that makes up France's wine lake.

Source: <https://www.jancisrobinson.com/learn/wine-regions/spain>