

WINES FROM SPAIN NEWS

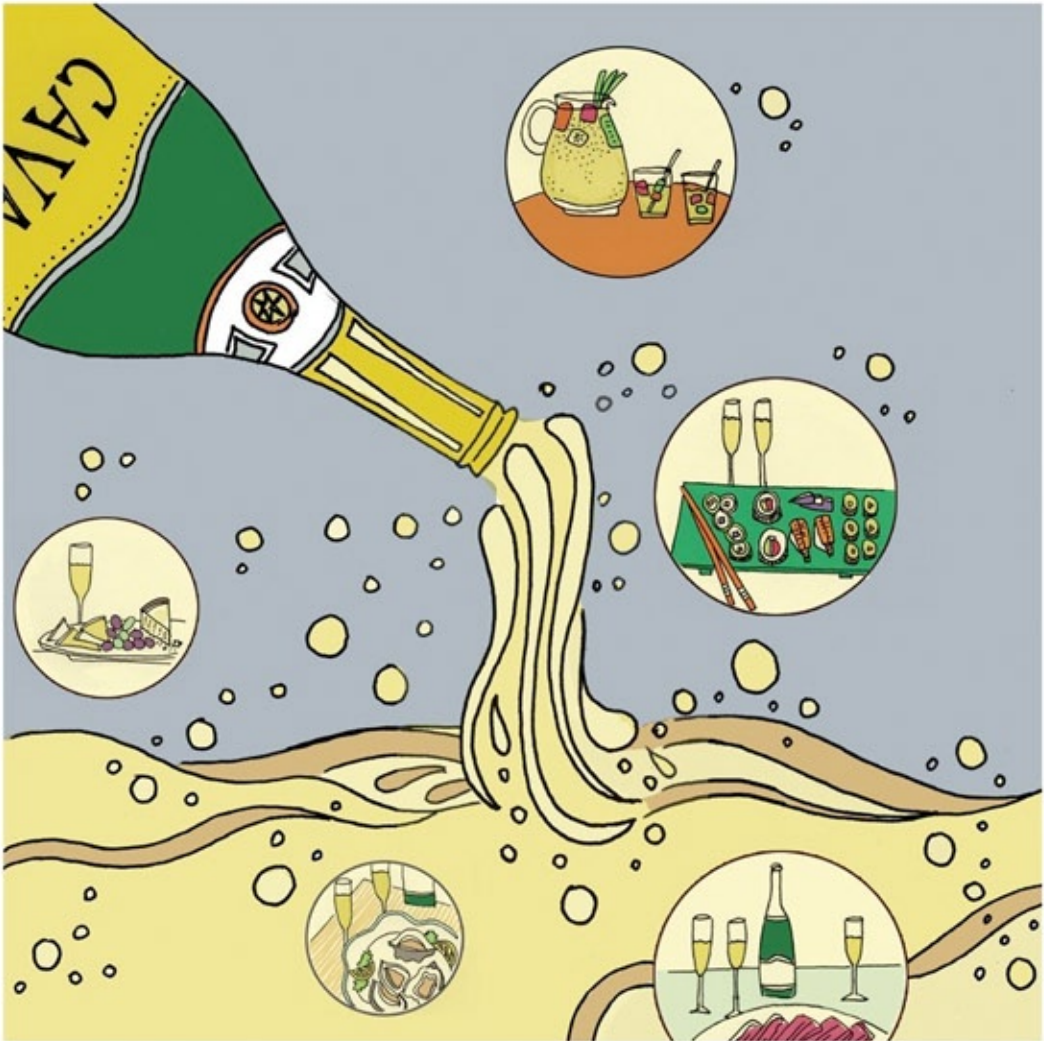
From Raventós to Bond: The Adventurous Tale of Cava

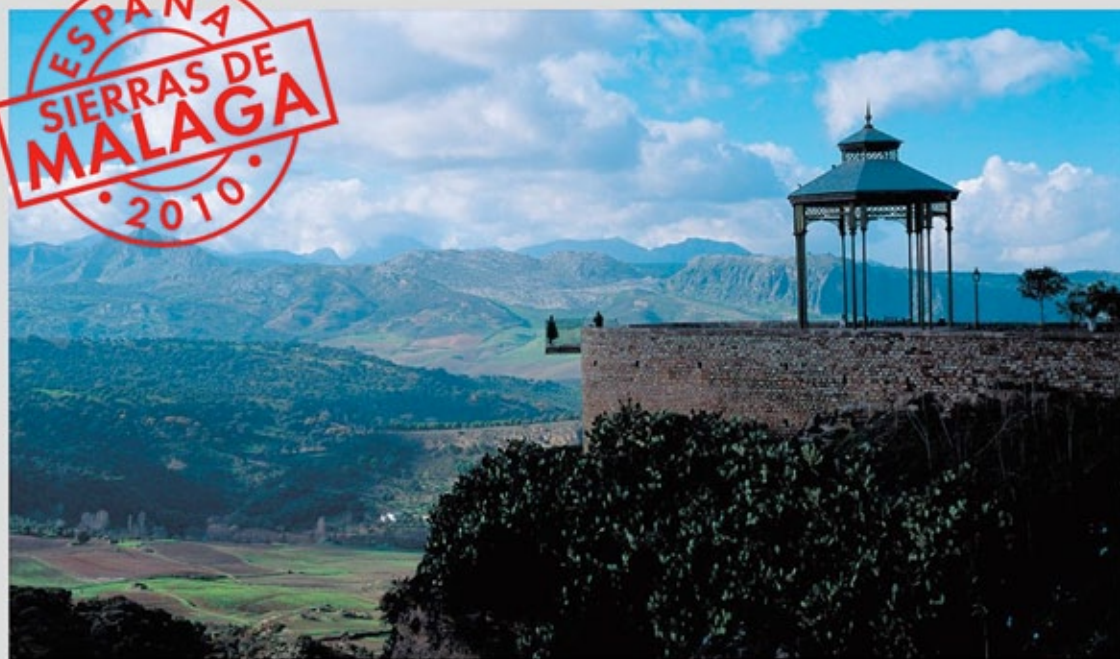
Andrews and Adrià: An Unusual Pair

Global Plate: Koreatown, Where Spice is the Spice of Life

El Taburete: Miami's Sra Martinez

Postmark: Sierras de Málaga by Bicycle





Mirador de Ronda, © ICEX



Bodega Descalzos Viejos © ICEX

Where to eat:

Tragabuches

(1 Michelin Star)
Calle Jose Aparicio, 1, Ronda
+34 952 19 02 91
www.tragabuches.com

Casa Santa Pola

Santo Domingo, 3, Ronda
+34 952 87 92 08
www.ronda.net/usuario/santapola/

ATRIVM Restaurant

(In Hotel Acinipo)
Calle Jose Aparicio, 7, Ronda
+34 952 16 10 02
www.hotelacinipo.com

Where to stay:

Alavera de los Baños

Hoya San Miguel s/n, Ronda
+34 952 87 91 43
www.alaveradelosbanos.com

Parador de Ronda

Plaza de Espana s/n, Ronda
+34 952 87 75 00
www.paradores-spain.com/spain/pronda.html

About the Authors

Mike DeSimone and Jeff Jensen, aka the World Wine Guys, are wine, spirits, food, and travel writers. Their work has appeared in *Wine Enthusiast*, *Wine Spectator*, *Saveur.com*, and *International Living*. The duo regularly hosts wine tastings, including a recent one for the Washington, DC diplomatic community at the Spanish Ambassador's Residence. Please visit them at www.worldwineguys.com.



Al Arbabul Espresso, vista de Ronda © ICEX

POSTMARK: SIERRAS DE MALAGA

All of our Spanish friends told us we were crazy to even think about riding our bicycles from Málaga to Ronda. By car, Málaga is a half hour drive from our home in Nerja, on Spain's Costa del Sol, and Ronda is another forty-five minutes past Málaga. We had mapped out a loop that would take us through the Sierras de Ronda, and the entire trip—from sea-level Málaga to an elevation of about 2,300 feet and back again—would take us five days. The first three days of a route that had seemed simple from the front seat of a car turned out to be one of the most challenging bike rides we had ever undertaken, which only served to heighten the sense of reward we experienced with each meal, accompanied by the surprisingly good local red wines.

The region near Málaga, on Spain's Mediterranean coast (and just over 100 miles from the Atlantic coast) boasts three *Denominaciones de Origen*, or D.O.'s: *D.O. Málaga*, *D.O. Pasas de Málaga*, and *D.O. Sierras de Málaga*. While the first two are known primarily for sweet wines, made from Moscatel and Pedro Ximénez grapes, the *Sierras de Málaga*, and especially the sub-region *Serranía de Ronda*, are becoming known worldwide for their dry red wines, featuring international varieties such as Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, and Merlot, and Spanish varieties Tempranillo and Rome.

When we asked José Peñín, the renowned Spanish wine journalist, if he had his eye on any "up and coming" areas, he immediately replied, "Serranía de Ronda." Locals are quick to dispute the "up and coming" sobriquet, as wine has been produced here since at least the seventh century BC, when the Phoenicians first settled the area. And at the ruins of the nearby Roman settlement of Acinipo, ancient coins have been found with the image of grape bunches on them, pointing to the importance of wine making here in that era.

Ronda's most famous feature is the Puente Nuevo, or "new bridge", which spans a 300-foot deep chasm

above the Río Guadalavín and offers breathtaking views of the surrounding landscape. Its bullring is among the oldest in Spain, and each September brings the *Feria Goyesca*, in which the matadors and many spectators dress as if they have stepped right out of a Goya painting. Its charming cobblestoned streets are filled with whitewashed village houses dating back to Moorish times. The twisting mountain roads leading into Ronda are dotted with cattle and sheep farms and vineyards whose clay and limestone soil are proving to be perfect for the cultivation of grapes.

At **Cortijo Los Aguilares**, winemaker Bibi García produces superb Pinot Noir, and her **Tadeo Red 2007** is a powerful blend of Petit Verdot and Syrah. The bodega's blanco- and rose-colored tasting room is a playful nod to more traditional local wines. Husband-and wife team Jose Maria Losantos Hernando and Gema Alonso Araico's black fruit and cedar-flavored **Chinchilla 2005** is a standout blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Syrah from their **Bodegas Doña Felisa Chinchilla**, located near Acinipo. German-born winemaker Federico Schatz grows award-winning organic varieties such as Lemberger, Pinot Noir, Petit Verdot, and Chardonnay at his eponymous **Bodegas F. Schatz**. Other notable bodegas are **Cuesta la Viña**, **Descalzos Viejos**, and **Joaquín Fernández**.

Bodegas La Sangre de Ronda, or "The Blood of Ronda," is housed in the Museum of Wine of Ronda, whose wine cellar has been converted into a museum. In contrast to almost every local winery, where international varieties and modern technology are the norm, research is being done here with the traditional grapes of the region, and their goal is to reproduce the type of wines made here in the 17th and 18th centuries. If we time our next bike ride right, we can join in on The Heritage Wine Festival, and cool down our tired legs stomping grapes alongside Las Damas Goyescas, who do their stomping in traditional flamenco gowns.