

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. ■



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