

Spain Begins to Taste Wine Tourism



Spain boasts the biggest amount of land in the world suitable for making wine. The Spanish are now third only to the Italians and the French in the world of wine making and export. The Northern Rioja region brought great rewards to Spanish wines' reputation. There is also the crisp Cava of the Catalonia region and lesser-known reds of the Ribera del Divo area, which has sparked a huge amount of attention at international wine fairs.

The government has reacted to this wine frenzy by offering tourists wine tours, or 'rutas del vino'. For example, after the 100 million US dollar inauguration of the Marques de Riscal's city of wine in October last year, the Northern Rioja is widely promoted as a real wine- gourmand heaven. There is a luxury hotel with a range of activities on offer celebrating the sacrilegious beverage. These include massages with grape-seed oil, wine baths, grapevine wraps and visits to the wine cellar with every vintage from every harvest since 1862 on display.

The Spanish government has seized this opportunity to enhance wine tourism. Staff at cellars, hotels and vineyards is now trained in the fine art of wine presentation. Tasting facilities have been improved. Multi-lingual materials are produced to please gourmands from abroad. The way things are going, a bull as the national Spanish symbol could be replaced by a bottle of red wine as the Spanish really take the industry by the horns.

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