

### **Statement of the subject**

After the revolution of Spanish wine since the entry in the EU in 1986, successful regions have dominated the image of Spanish wines, such as Rioja and Ribera del Duero. Helped by the starting fame of Bierzo, red Galician wines are coming up with some very fine examples. With the market of Spanish wine limited to a few grapes varieties, Mediterranean and Continental styles of wines, Galicia with its Atlantic climate seems to offer something different and new on the wine scene. The whites from this region have already enjoyed a great accomplishment. On the contrary, the reds have attracted little attention so far. But who could have predicted the success of Priorat and Ribera Del Duero 20 years ago? Who had heard about Bierzo 15 years ago?

The purpose of this paper is to show if the red wines of Galicia could be the next hot spot for Spanish wines.

### **Motivation**

I have developed a passion for Spanish wine since selling wines of this country in Belgium, a very competitive market. Over the last few years, I have tasted several fine red wines made from native grape varieties in Galicia. It was a great discovery for me and I was wondering if they were only exceptions, or if there was potential for a concrete wave of new wines bringing their share in the evolution of Spanish wines.

### **Methodology**

I have first studied the history of Galicia and its wines. To be able to make a description of the 5 DO of the region and the importance of red wines, I have contacted the different DO's. I made some theoretical research on the characteristics of the most important red grapes of Galicia, to be compared to my tasting notes of the same grapes tasted from my own experience.

I have also based my work on a trip made in Galicia guiding sommeliers and visiting different wineries. I have contacted several winemakers to get their opinion about red wines of the region, their potential for making quality wines and their future. In addition a search was made in the specialized press, on the web and in the references guide.

Lastly, in order to make recommendations for red wine producers, I contacted them to see what could be done to improve their quality and their reputation.

### **Content**

In the first part, I have placed Galicia on the map of Spanish wine and described briefly its 5 DO's. Then I have explained that the red wines of this region could be the next hot spot in Spain thanks to different factors including climate, topography, grape varieties and a new generation of winemakers.

In the second part, I have discussed several reasons that have impeached the red Galician wines to have the same success as wines from other successful regions. I have mentioned several causes, regarding their evolution, the white wines success impact on the reds, their production, and their wine style.

In the third part, I have studied some propositions for winemakers, local authorities and wine importers that could be taken in order to improve the actual situation.

Finally, based on the 3 chapters of the main body, I have answered to the question of my thesis.

### **Conclusion**

Due to its isolated location, Galicia didn't benefit from French wine merchants like in Rioja that brought their expertise about viticulture and vinification. On the contrary this region has been forgotten from the Spanish wine scene until 20 years ago. It has so far preserved the region from massive and prompt investments, like in Ribera del Duero or in Priorat that have generated many bankruptcies.

Thanks to the combination of climatic conditions, native grape varieties and a new generation of talented winemaker, fine red wines are produced in Galicia. In terms of quality, the region can be considered as a hot spot for Spanish wines offering unique examples with a distinct character that set them apart from the ones produced in the rest of the country.

However, due to a lack of local belief, the evolution remains quite slow. Galicia needs undoubtedly more time:

- ▶ For the DO's to find their own identity, a wine style that will characterize/define them.
- ▶ For the producers to get older vines from the native high potential grapes, for more experience with these grapes, and to fine-tune both viticulture systems and wine making methods.
- ▶ For importers to understand better Galician wine specificities; educate opinion leaders and final consumers.

The evolution towards better quality wines is certainly under way and there is room for great progress and improvement. Nevertheless, the production of the best wines remains very limited and Galician reds still represent a niche market for wine specialists and connoisseurs, unknown for the "public at large".