**2020 NASUCA (Virtual) Annual Meeting**

**Monday Social**

**Wine School with Bill Jensen**

**“Rioja”**

While David celebrates one of Spain's most iconic dishes, I'll give you an introduction to its most storied wine region: Rioja. Like paella, Rioja comes in many shapes and sizes. It's most iconic form is the stately, barrel-aged red wine with varying amounts of age from Crianza to Reserva to Gran Reserva. But it also comes in lighter, more thirst-quenching iterations and single vineyard wines of place without an aggressive oak influence. Although they only account for 7 to 8 percent of annual production, the region's white wines are equally delicious and just as perfect with paella, which is to say nothing of its juicy, vibrant rosés.

I'll give you an introduction to all the major styles along with a proper grounding in the history of the region. As for the wine itself, the world is your oyster. I have some recommendations below, but Rioja has an embarrassment of riches to offer the oenophile. Just pick a style you like, be it white, rosé, or red, buy a bottle or two, and come prepared to learn more about it. Feel free to [reach out to us](mailto:wineschool@tailupgoat.com) if you have any questions about what's available in your neck of the woods.

There are many fine producers in Rioja, big and small, grand and humble, modern and traditional. Among my favorites are: López de Heredia, La Rioja Alta S.A., CVNE, Remelluri, RODA, Muga, Marqués de Murrieta, Ramirez de la Pescina, Sierra de Toloño, and Tentenublo. If you're in the Washington area, feel free to provision through our retail outlet at Reveler's Hour. We have a [lovely selection of wines](https://revelers-hour.myshopify.com/collections/all-about-rioja) from the region that we'll be adding to as the lesson approaches. If you can't make it our way, we offer Sunday delivery within DC proper.

If you're joining us from afar, I recommend buying online if you're in one of the [14 states that legally allow shipping](https://www.foodandwine.com/wine/shipping-wine-between-states-legal) from retailers out of state. Two of my favorite online merchants are [Astor Wines](https://www.astorwines.com) out of New York and [K&L](https://www.klwines.com) on the West Coast. [Wine.com](https://www.wine.com) is also a reliable source of worthwhile offerings nationally. As for specific recommendations:

- Astor has everything from $10 to $150. On the red front, [Viña Ilusión](https://www.astorwines.com/SearchResultsSingle.aspx?p=1&search=31592&searchtype=Contains) is lovely introduction to Tempranillo without a whiff of oak; [Cerro Anon](https://www.astorwines.com/SearchResultsSingle.aspx?p=1&search=24542&searchtype=Contains) makes a wonderfully affordable 2015 Reserva;  [Viña Ardanza](https://www.astorwines.com/SearchResultsSingle.aspx?p=1&search=34461&searchtype=Contains) is a classic wine and the 2008 is showing beautifully; [this 1998 Gran Reserva](https://www.astorwines.com/SearchResultsSingle.aspx?p=1&search=31677&searchtype=Contains) is a remarkably value; swing for the fences with a [1966 Reserva](https://www.astorwines.com/SearchResultsSingle.aspx?p=1&search=49644&searchtype=Contains). On the white front, [Muga's entry level](https://www.astorwines.com/SearchResultsSingle.aspx?p=1&search=50064&searchtype=Contains) is fabulous and would be singularly delightful with paella; [López de Heredia](https://www.astorwines.com/SearchResultsSingle.aspx?p=1&search=50430&searchtype=Contains) makes some of the region's most highly sought-after (and lovably nerdy) white wines; [Remelluri](https://www.astorwines.com/SearchResultsSingle.aspx?p=1&search=71994&searchtype=Contains) rewrote the book on white wine in the region.

- Out West, K&L is equally well stocked from $15 to $200. For reds, look no further than a fresh, fruity second year wine from [Bodegas Puelles](https://www.klwines.com/p/i?i=1430937&searchId=c64dcbc2-8f69-4625-a6ff-3c4f584ee603&searchServiceName=klwines-prod-productsearch&searchRank=22); this dignified [2014 Reserva](https://www.klwines.com/p/i?i=1454962&searchId=76d3aba8-6842-4499-8733-b9be87483281&searchServiceName=klwines-prod-productsearch&searchRank=8) is another bargain; [Sierra de Toloño](https://www.klwines.com/p/i?i=1478172&searchId=76d3aba8-6842-4499-8733-b9be87483281&searchServiceName=klwines-prod-productsearch&searchRank=50) is making some of the most compelling single vineyard wines in the region; La Rioja Alta's ["904" Gran Reserva](https://www.klwines.com/p/i?i=1495763&searchId=76d3aba8-6842-4499-8733-b9be87483281&searchServiceName=klwines-prod-productsearch&searchRank=14) is a local benchmark. For whites, [Muga's affable entry level](https://www.klwines.com/p/i?i=1501952&searchId=76d3aba8-6842-4499-8733-b9be87483281&searchServiceName=klwines-prod-productsearch&searchRank=23) is available as is CVNE's more cerebral "[Monopole](https://www.klwines.com/p/i?i=1495435&searchId=76d3aba8-6842-4499-8733-b9be87483281&searchServiceName=klwines-prod-productsearch&searchRank=44)." There's pink wine as well with [Muga again](https://www.klwines.com/p/i?i=1426652&searchId=76d3aba8-6842-4499-8733-b9be87483281&searchServiceName=klwines-prod-productsearch&searchRank=6) or the greatest, most age worthy rosé in the world from [López de Heredia](https://www.klwines.com/p/i?i=1362706&searchId=4f2d2c5e-0736-4b17-9220-ad729f2e6710&searchServiceName=klwines-prod-productsearch&searchRank=55).

Once again, don't hesitate to [reach out with questions](mailto:wineschool@tailupgoat.com), and we hope to see you for a lesson in Spanish food and wine.

Bill Jensen is the Co-Owner & Beverage Director of Tail Up Goat and Reveler's Hour in the historic Adams Morgan neighborhood of Washington, DC. Prior to opening his own place, Bill spent the better part of a decade at local fine dining institution Komi, rising from server to Service Director and Sommelier. He was born and raised in the DMV, spent his formative years at a small liberal arts college in Maine, and caught the restaurant bug working at 2 Amys Neapolitan Pizzeria after finding himself unsuited for nine-to-five life. He believes that eating and drinking should be an act of replenishment, renewal, and discovery, and that wine functions best when it is not only about what’s in the glass but becomes the sum of the place and the people who produce it. Above all, Bill loves telling these stories and teaching his staff and his guests to appreciate drink in a new light.

