



notes from organised tastings

These are notes from an organised tasting events of some sort. Every note is dated, and prices and UK stockists for wines are given where known



[home](#)

[back to
organised
tastings](#)

Some like it hot - Wine for Spice. 10/03

by Tom Cannavan. Homepage photograph © [Cephas](#)

I was contacted recently by Warren Edwardes, a London-based wine-lover and curry fancier, who has begun a brand new wine business, designing and importing a small range of wines specifically chosen for the ability to match with Indian and other spicy cuisines. He has formed his company, **Wine for Spice** and currently has a small range of wines on trial in the capital before a national roll-out.

He sent me the first three wines in the range to try. Each is produced in Spain, and each is gently sparkling (more *pétillant* than fizzy). The idea is that this adds a dimension of refreshing spritz which suits spicy food, without the gaseous overload of lager. Two of the three wines are off-dry, again in the belief that a little sweetness works as a contrast to chilli and spice.

Edwardes says he carried out extensive tasting research with Portuguese Vinhos Verdes, Italian Frizzantes and French Crémant wines amongst others before coming across the *Vinos de Aguja* wines of northern Spain, close cousins of Vinho Verde, but made from indigenous Spanish grapes like Macabeo, Parellada, Xarel-lo and Tempranillo. The "gold" also has Muscat in the blend, and the rosé is made from Garnacha and Tempranillo.

Though Edwardes gives quite specific spicy cuisine matching advice for each of his wines, I first tasted the wines on their own, then drank a small glass of each along with vegetable pakora and a chicken rogan josh from Glasgow's excellent Shish Mahal Indian restaurant. Much to my surprise, I felt the dry white was the easily best match overall, having previously found semi-sweet examples to be ideal partners if drinking white wine with curry. All three wines have only around 11%-11.5% alcohol, making them easy to drink in sufficient volume to quench ones thirst with a spicy meal. Tasted objectively on their own, I guess none of these wines would earn more than a "good but not great" rating, but matching wine to spicy food is a very tricky challenge, and one where Edwardes has succeeded.



Edwardes has done a great job in choosing wines that are very specifically suited task, with the crispness and freshness that is needed, and the fruit profile to match a variety of spicy cuisines styles, not just Indian, but Chinese, Thai, Mexican and more. His project deserves success. It is initially aimed at the restaurant sector, but private case sales are no doubt possible. The wines have retail price of £5.99.

Viceroy White (Spain) Semi-sparkling dry

Very pale, almost transparent colour. The nose has some gentle floral notes, and a core of crisp green apple. On the palate it is dry and slightly sherbety, with crisp, tangy lemony and tart green apple flavours that are zesty and bright. I thought it worked extremely well with the rogan josh in particular, with the zippy acidity freshening the palate, and the fruity flavours enhancing the curry. Very good indeed.

Rani Gold (Spain) Semi-sparkling medium white

Pale golden colour, and exotic, flowery, lychee and nivea cream nose with summer fruits and a touch of leafiness. Quite dry on the palate really, with certainly more sweetness than wine one, but not noticeably sweet and not at all cloying. Robust fruit on the palate is like crunchy apples, with a herbal edge and crisp acidity. I felt this matched well with the curry, though it was perhaps better with the pakora, or more specifically, the accompanying chilli dipping sauce. Very good.

Raja Rosé (Spain) Semi-sparkling medium-dry

Pale salmon-pink colour. Quite a subdued herbal and cherry nose, with a little hint of raspberry jam. On the palate I would classify this as dry, or *just* off-dry. The flavour profile is rather neutral, with some stony flavours, and modest redcurrant fruit. I found this a little flat as a wine to drink on its own, but again it worked quite well with the curry dish, and Edwardes' suggestion of matching it to dry lamb or pork dishes might well have suited it better. Good.

For more info see the Wine for Spice [web site](#) or email warren.edwardes@wineforspice.com.

[↑ top of page](#)

[home](#)