VI Wine Tasting Course

Importers and representatives of some Spanish wineries that produce wines of the most prestigious designations of origin, just as well as some wine lovers, have met during three days at the Chamber's offices and have shared their knowledge and philosophies about a world that each day steps into more and more foreign territory.

The VI Wine Tasting Course has brought to Belgium the wineries Bodegas Nuestra Señora del Río, Bodegas García Figuero and Bodegas Rodero, all of them D.O. Ribera del Duero; La Cava del Bierzo and Demencia de Autor, with D.O. Bierzo; and Dominio de la Vega, D.O. Utiel-Requena and D.O. Cava, in an exclusive opportunity for those wines that are not yet in the Belgian market.

The first of these courses took place on Tuesday June 29. The sesión was addressed to the wine professional sector, and the wineries that participated were: Bodega Nuestra Señora del Río, Bodega García Figuero and La Cava del Bierzo. Two days later, on Thursday 1st, it was the remaining wineries' turn; Demencia de Autor, Dominio de la Vega and Bodegas Rodero, which also presented their wines and cavas to the people from the HORECA sector. But the really interesting course of this Seminary was the one addressed to both importers and general public that took place on Wednesday 30th. The specialized journalist Patrick Fievez presented, before a great audience, twelve different wines coming from each of the wineries that took part in this sixth edition of the Wine Tasting Course:

Bodegas Nuestra Señora del Río/ D.O. Ribera del Duero: Jorge Alberto Cabrejas was the person in charge of presenting his winery; a family enterprise with tempranillo vineyards of about 120 years old, which grapes undergo strict selection processes. As he explained, the winery maintains a traditional system of baskets, and the promotion policy followed by the company at wine tasting courses is to "explain our modest way of working; we intend our product to be valued on the table". For the moment, all the assistants to the seminary were able to value a young 2009 with a great fruity bouquet; a Roble (oak) semi aging of 2008, a year that even though was complicated, has turned to have a great evolution inside the bottle; an aging 2006, perfect to be prepared with meats, cheese, and other natural products; and last, a Vintage Wine 2001 which had no fruity taste left.

Bodegas García Figuero/ D.O. Ribera del Duero: Bodegas García Figuero is another wine lover's dream become true. Antonio Figuero, part of the second generation, explained his family's aim of accomplishing a wine that stands out due to the selection of the soil from which its grape is extracted. These grapes are "tempranillo, but they are smaller than the normal ones, and this is why they get a higher concentration of color and sugar". The harvest is done by hand and it turns out into wines such as those presented at the Chamber: Figuero 4, a 2009 young proceeding from vineyards of between 15 and 20 years old; Figuero 12 2006, harvested in vineyards of between 30 and 50 years old with a taste of black fruits and ground smell; Figuero 15, which he described as "elegant,

balanced and with a taste that reminds to that of mint and chocolate"; Figuero Noble 2005, coming from vineyards of about 70 and 80 years old, and left during 15 months in American oak barrels and 6 months in French oak barrels before being bottled.

La Cava del Bierzo/ D.O. Bierzo: "Wines must speak for themselves" said the two persons in charge of presenting this winery based in El Bierzo (León-Spain). This philosophy has led them to acquire a production of cava of 5.000 liters, extracted from vineyards more than half a century old. From their harvest, they obtain both Tempranillo and Mencía grapes, a fact that allowes them to create wines as such that were tasted during the VI Seminary: first, a 2009 fruity and soft Young, which is made with the whole grape, without pressing it. This makes the result of the fermentation be "so special"; later, a 2005 young with Mencía grape, which as they pointed out "is a special grape; you either like it or not"; a 2008 Roble (oak) with a mix of fruit and wood taste; and last, an aging that had stood six months in a barrel.

Dominio de la Vega / D.O. Utiel-Requena y D.O. Cava: Eva Pardines, responsible of exports at Dominio de la Vega, a winery that has been working since its foundation with the importer El Pozo in the Brugge area, was the person in charge of the opening the last course of the Seminary. During her exposition, Eva Pardines explained how the situation of its winery near the Vega of the river Magro, in Requena (Valencia), provides very fertile fields, that in addition to other vineyards with grounds of different characteristics, get the wines and cavas Dominio de la Vega to acquire such a great complexity. Their oenologist Daniel Expósito (oenologist of the year 2010 by the Valencian Association of Oenologists) supervises the selection of the grapes, the night harvest and all the elaboration processes in the most natural and respectful way in order to extract the best from the terroir. Personal and elegant wines and cavas in a limited production mainly elaborated with the grapes Bobal and Macabeo. Some of them, three cavas and a wine, were tasted in the Chamber; first, a young called Brut; then a special Vintage, called best cava of Spain several years in a row and which in words of Eva Pardines, "is the pride of the winery"; an Artemayor, made 60% of Macabeo and 40% Chardonnay, which was the cava that received the best mark (93 points) ever given by Robert Parker to a cava; and last, the wine Bobal 2009, left during six months in an oak barrel.

Demencia de Autor / D.O. Bierzo: Its name means madness in Spanish, and so considered some of the public that came to the course when they heard Nacho León - creator, owner, and harvester of this small winery- say that "our production is of only 4.000 bottles". Impossible to be reach, but completely possible to make a living out of it and enjoy every single process of its creation; as Nacho León affirmed, "our purpose is to make the wine we believe in; that one which is the grape the one that makes the effort". These Mencía grapes have made Demencia 2006 and Demencia 2007, the wines presented at the Chamber, a special and almost exclusive product, due to its little production and their target: wine lovers clubs and high standard resaturants.

Bodegas Rodero / D.O. Ribera del Duero: The last winery to participate in this VI Seminary organized by the Chamber was Bodegas Rodero, presented by Silvia Rodero, daughter of Carmelo Rodero, who's been around the wine world since birth. Before founding its own winery, Carmelo Rodero sold for about 14 years his tempranillo,

sauvignon and merlot grapes to the famous Bodega Vega Sicilia. Silvia Rodero explained how the winery tries to innovate each year, and detailed the production process. She pointed out the “importance of working plot by plot”. The different grapes result in the wines that Bodegas Rodero offered during the course: Roble (oak) 2008 made out of tempranillo grapes; 2007 Aging with a 90% tempranillo and 10% sauvignon, awarded as the best Aging 2007 by the Gourmet Guide; 2005 Vintage, gotten from tempranillo and sauvignon grapes and left for 20 months in a barrel; and to finish the tasting course, the 2005 TSM which abbreviation means Tempranillo Sauvignon Merlot. It has similar characteristics to the typical Ribera del Duero, but at the same time is really different, and it is said that has the power to specially attract women.