

Forked & Corked

In Defense of the Red Wine Spritzer

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I spent 18 months in Madrid after college, working as a teacher and then as a journalist. In the summertime, the temperature in central Spain topped 38 degrees Celsius. I didn't know the conversion rate back then, but I knew it was hot as hell. It turns out, 100 degrees Fahrenheit is pretty hot.

To cool off, I did like the locals, and started drinking Tinto de Verano. Loosely translated, it's a "summer red wine." You might know it by its trailer park name: The red wine spritzer. The recipe is simple: Pour a tall glass of Rioja over ice and mix in a lemon-flavored soda called La Casera. Garnish with a slice of citrus. Repeat all afternoon.

The best part of the Tinto de Verano (besides how damn refreshing it tastes), is that you don't have to spend a lot of money on the wine, since you're cutting it with soda. And if you're worried about the spritzer stigma, [GQ Style Guy](#) Glenn O'Brien has a pretty eloquent defense of the drink [here](#), complete with classical literature references.

I moved back to the States in 2002, but I never stopped drinking Tinto de Verano. I make the drink with a \$10 bottle of [Big House Red](#) (a consistently drinkable blend) and a bottle of Sprite (the closest approximation to La Casera I've found Stateside). Don't laugh: But for parties, I use Big House's just-introduced three liter box, which is easy to pour and air-tight—so the wine stays fresh for longer. It's a crowd pleaser, and unlike Sangria, you don't have to waste time cutting up fruit.

While there may still be a stigma attached to the spritzer, call it a "Tinto de Verano" and you can feel at least a little European while you're sipping it. As for the boxed wine, welcome to the new economy.

— Mickey Rapkin



Outlet: GQ Online

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