CVNEws. There are two kinds of news in the world: the forgettable ones... and the ones you toast to with a glass in hand

CVNEws!

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"Hey, this is not a test! This is rock and roll! Time to rock it from the Delta to the DMZ".

(Good Morning, Vietnam, 1987, Barry Levinson)

Harvest Impressions: 2026

As autumn arrives, it is time for our annual look back at the harvest across all our wineries. From Cava to Rías Baixas, the 2026 vintage has been defined by an unusually early harvest season and the meticulous attention required to determine the perfect picking date for each vineyard.

CVNE: The Challenge of Heat

The 2026 harvest was once again shaped by high temperatures and an accelerated growing cycle. **According to María Larrea, CVNE's Technical Director in Haro, the campaign was "exceptionally early", with the first grapes arriving at the winery in late August and harvesting continuing until 24 September.**

The main challenge was finding the right balance between ripeness, freshness and moderate alcohol levels in a season marked by persistent heat. Achieving this required careful adaptation of harvest dates to the specific characteristics of each vineyard parcel. Fortunately, the absence of rain throughout the harvest meant that the grapes arrived at the winery in excellent health.

The first wines show intense colour, excellent concentration, supple tannins, generous volume on the palate and promising ageing potential.



Harvest at CVNE, Rioja

Contino: Early and Exceptional



Fermentación de mostos de la vendimia 2026, Viñedos del Contino- Rioja Alavesa

The 2026 harvest was the earliest ever recorded at Viñedos del Contino in Laserna, Rioja Alavesa. Harvesting began on 31 August and concluded on 23 September, driven by a warm spring and high summer temperatures that accelerated grape ripening.

The estate's diversity of soils and microclimates played a crucial role in preserving balance, particularly in the oldest limestone-rich plots, where the hallmark freshness and finesse of Contino's wines were maintained. **According to Jorge Navascués, the main challenge was to retain acidity and balance in the face of persistent heat, adapting both harvest timing and winery practices to the specific characteristics of each parcel.**

The early indications are highly encouraging: a vintage defined by ripeness, concentration and elegance, with all the signs of becoming an outstanding year for Contino's wines.

Roger Goulart: Balance and Structure, the Keys to Long Ageing

In the vineyards of Penedès, 2026 marked a welcome recovery after several years of drought, bringing renewed optimism, albeit tempered by caution. The Cava Regulatory Board reduced authorised vineyard yields, and the harvest was, once again, exceptionally early. At Roger Goulart, picking began in late July with Chardonnay, followed soon after by Macabeo and Xarel · lo.

As harvest dates overlapped in some areas, timing became crucial. As **Pedro Muñoz explains, "we had to be extremely precise in determining the picking dates in order to preserve the grapes' natural acidity".**

The first wines from the 2026 vintage already show freshness, balance and remarkable concentration, with the structure and depth that suggest excellent potential for long bottle ageing.

Viña Real: Opulence and Freshness in Harmony

As in much of Rioja, high temperatures accelerated the growing cycle and brought the harvest forward. **Eva de Benito explains that picking began on 31 August and concluded on 21 September, allowing for a selective and unhurried harvest so that each parcel could reach its optimum level of ripeness.**

The exceptional health of the grapes helped offset the challenges posed by the heat, and the first wines already display the hallmarks of the Viña Real style: aromatic intensity, freshness, volume and elegance. The winemaker describes 2026 as a vintage of great potential, producing wines with deep colour, noble tannins and excellent ageing capacity, while remaining true to the character of Rioja Alavesa and the distinctive style of the Laguardia winery.



Tempranillo bunches from the 2026 harvest, Viña Real- Rioja Alavesa



Xarel · lo grapes, 2026, Roger Goulart- Penedès

La Val: Diversity and Contrast

Following a wet winter and a spring and summer marked by heat and a lack of rainfall, the growing cycle advanced significantly across La Val's vineyards. Harvest began on 19 August, the earliest start in the winery's history and part of a wider pattern seen throughout Rías Baixas. The objective was clear: to achieve moderate alcohol levels and low pH values while preserving the freshness and acidity that define the region's wines. Vilachán, in O Rosal, was the first vineyard to be harvested, followed by Taboexa, a young site that also ripened early. In contrast, as winemaker Luis Garrido explains, "Arantei, our oldest vineyard, ripened slowly and evenly, giving us grapes of extraordinary quality." The result is a vintage shaped by diversity and contrast, reflecting the distinctive character of each vineyard while maintaining the freshness, balance and vibrant fruit expression that are hallmarks of La Val's wines.



Albariño vines in the Vilachán estate, O Rosal. La Val, Rías Baixas.

Bela: Character of Red Fruit



Tempranillo vines on clay soils during the harvest. Bela, Ribera del Duero.

Ribera del Duero also experienced its earliest harvest on record. At Bela, picking began on 7 September and finished on 3 October, two weeks earlier than in 2025. The 2026 crop was larger, and the early harvest helped the grapes retain their natural acidity while achieving moderate alcohol levels.

During the harvest, daytime temperatures exceeded 30°C, while mild nights allowed vine activity to continue. However, the grapes arrived at the winery in excellent condition, and the absence of rainfall minimised the threat of fungal diseases.

The first 2026 wines are already showing expressive fruit aromas, good acidity and pH levels, ripe and flavoursome tannins, balance and notable potential for medium- and long-term ageing. They retain a fresh character, marked by the predominance of red fruit.

Virgen del Galir: A Vintage That Let Nature Take the Lead

Valdeorras, and Virgen del Galir, experienced an early harvest that set a new record when it began on 18 August, driven by the intense summer heat, which persisted throughout the harvest period. **As Miguel Tienda explains, ripening accelerated, making an early harvest necessary to preserve freshness, acidity and low pH levels while achieving good ripeness.** Once this challenge had been overcome, however, and the grapes had been processed and the wines fermented in the winery's different vessels, the outstanding health and purity of the fruit made it possible to work with minimal intervention in the cellar, producing Godellos with a herbal and citrus-driven profile.



Old vines in As Ermitas- Virgen del Galir-Valdeorras

Imperial: A Classic for the Ages



Imperial bottles from 2009-2019 vintages for the Jacobo García Andrade vertical tasting

The James Suckling *Rioja Focus* series once again turned its attention to one of our flagship wines: **Imperial Gran Reserva, with a retrospective tasting covering (and comparing) vintages from 2009 to 2019.**

Beyond the scores, the article explores the idea that truly world-class wines express the character of each vintage without ever losing their identity. In his review of Imperial, Jacobo García Andrade highlights how the wine has evolved over time while continuing to reflect its Rioja Alta origins, drawing on vineyards that have long formed part of the blend, such as Torremontalbo. Imperial expresses each vintage with elegance and finesse, remaining a great wine in both cooler and warmer years.

The stand-out vintages on this occasion were 2016 and 2018, which the critic praised for sharing a vital quality: both are enjoyable today, yet, as he notes, **“they will age in the way a classic Rioja unquestionably does.”**

La Val: Plenty to Celebrate

They say no one is a prophet in their own land. Yet for La Val, this autumn has proved that every rule has its exceptions.

The Galician winery achieved a double success at the latest Festa do Viño do Condado do Tea in Salvaterra do Miño, where La Val Condado was awarded the Gold Medal and La Val Orballo the Silver Medal. The result was particularly meaningful for a wine made in the traditional Condado do Tea style, earning the competition’s highest distinction in its homeland.

From Galicia to the international stage. Just a few weeks later, La Val Albariño 2025 was selected as **Wine of the Week** by JancisRobinson.com, one of the wine world’s most influential publications, founded by Jancis Robinson MW.

In an article entitled ***Exemplary Albariño for a Song***, journalist **Tara Q. Thomas singled out the wine from among the thousands of Albariños competing on the global market, praising both its quality and the work behind it.**

Thomas first encountered the wine in New York at a tasting held during Climate Week and linked to International Wineries for Climate Action (IWCA), where CVNE presented some of its sustainability initiatives. In her article, she explores the viticultural work led by Oliver Weiss and the winemaking carried out by Luis Garrido, while reflecting on the strong position that Rías Baixas currently enjoys in international markets.

Two different accolades, yet both point to the same conclusion: when origin, landscape and craftsmanship move in the same direction, the message is understood anywhere in the world.



Header image of the JancisRobinson.com feature on La Val Albariño.

Bela Earns Further International Critical Acclaim

Bela’s wines continue to win praise from some of the wine world’s most influential critics. Among the latest accolades are the scores published by *Vinous*, where **Áurea Minerva 2023 achieved 96 points,** while **Heredad Arano 2022 received 94 points.**

Further recognition came from **Virginie Boone, Spain reviewer for Jeb Dunnuck, who also awarded Áurea Minerva 2023 94 points, describing it as “an integrated, refined Ribera, full of nuances of black fruit, balsamic notes, spice and earthy undertones”.** In her report, Heredad Arano and Bela also received excellent ratings, scoring 91 and 90 points respectively.

These results are further evidence of the strong momentum behind CVNE’s Ribera del Duero project and the consistency of wines that continue to earn recognition both in Spain and internationally.

Bangkok by Tuk Tuk, Tapas… and Wine

There are many ways to discover a city. **In Bangkok, we decided to do it the CVNE way: with a glass of wine in one hand and a tapa in the other.**

That was the idea behind the **Tuk Tuk Tapas Tour by CVNE**, an initiative that brought together hospitality professionals, wine influencers and opinion leaders from the Thai capital for a unique journey through eight of the city's restaurants. The concept was simple: climb aboard one of Thailand's most iconic forms of transport, the tuk tuk, and **explore Bangkok while enjoying a series of pairings featuring Spanish tapas and CVNE wines.**

Throughout the tour, participants discovered wines such as Cune Blanco, Monopole Clásico Reserva, Viña Real Reserva and Cune Gran Reserva, accompanied by a range of traditional dishes including croquetas, Spanish omelette, patatas bravas, empanadas and beef ribs. The result was a moving feast that transformed the city into a meeting point between two gastronomic cultures.

Beyond the wines and the food, however, the event was a reminder that both remain a universal language. Between one stop and the next came conversations, new connections and a growing appreciation of the Spanish way of life. Because sometimes the best way to explain who we are is simply to invite people to our table… even when that table is travelling through the streets of Bangkok on three wheels.



Scenes from the 2026 Tuk Tuk Tapas Tour in Bangkok

Cycling for a Good Cause

This autumn, CVNE supported Cycle Together as a sponsor, a charity initiative that brought together wine and hospitality professionals for a cycling ride **from London to Brighton in memory of John Osborne**, a highly respected and much-loved figure within the drinks industry.

Funds raised by the event were donated to The Drinks Trust, the charity supporting people working across the drinks and hospitality sectors. **Among the participants was our Export Director, Carlos Delage**, who joined a day defined by camaraderie, remembrance and commitment to a cause that means a great deal to the international wine community.

Because some journeys are worth making not for the destination, but for the meaning behind the route and the people they honour.

HALL OF FAME



TIM ATKIN CATA RIOJA



JACOBO GARCÍA ANDRADE & MARÍA LARREA



MASTERCLASS- BANGKOK

VIRGINIE BOONE & MIGUEL TIENDA



CYCLE TOGETHER

DELAGE X2???







JORGE NAVASCUÉS CON MUCHO GUSTO



con mucho gusto

MESA PARA DOS

El enólogo volante que es un hombre feliz

Jorge Navascués trabaja en cuatro denominaciones de origen de España, la garnacha es su bandera y le encanta brindar junto a su familia

POR MARIANO MILÁN

«Es un orgullo que tres varias generaciones de viticultores, por fin tengamos la firme de nuestra propia bodega»

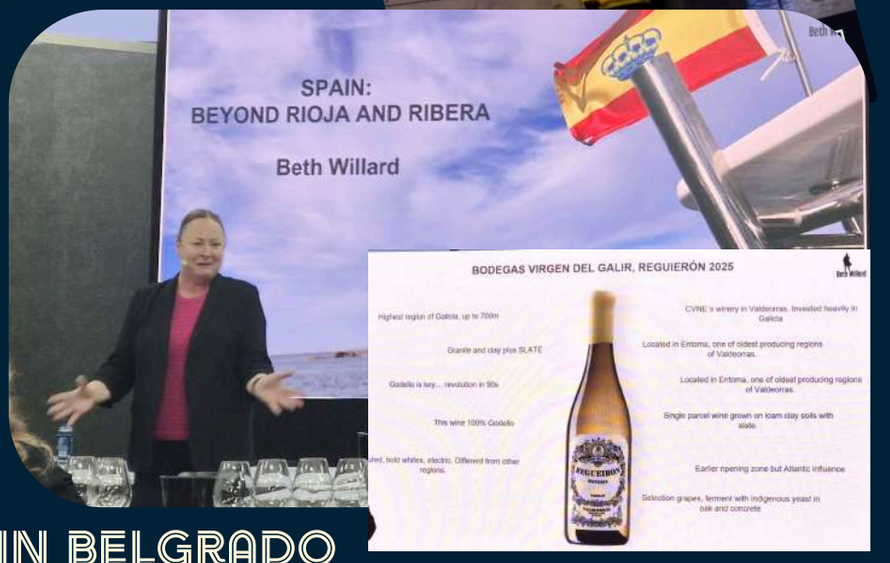
«Deseo ir a casa de mi padre para ver qué vinos ha comprado y poder catar juntos, como siempre, a ciegas»

CUNE BAILARINA & BOBO'S EN LISBOA



CURIOUS VINES RIOJA EDUCATION AWARD 2026





BETH WILLARD & REGUEIRÓN IN BELGRADO

Don't Leave Without...

A look at this issue's leisure recommendations

A Film
Annie Hall (Woody Allen, 1977)
Nearly half a century after its release, this classic starring the incomparable **Diane Keaton remains as fresh and influential as ever**. Inspired by Keaton's relationship with Allen, Annie Hall became a cultural landmark, endlessly imitated but never truly matched.

A Wine
Viña Real Gran Reserva
A great wine never needs an excuse to be opened. The celebration begins the moment the cork is pulled. And when the bottle happens to be Viña Real Gran Reserva, the only question is: when wouldn't the occasion feel right?

A Song
Jolene (Dolly Parton)
Dolly Parton may be gone, but her songs remain. None more enduring than Jolene, inspired by a beautiful woman who, according to Parton, flirted with her husband at a bank in Nashville. A timeless classic, and one well worth returning to from time to time.

Play



Cheers!



Sing



See You in the Next Issue of CVNEws!

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