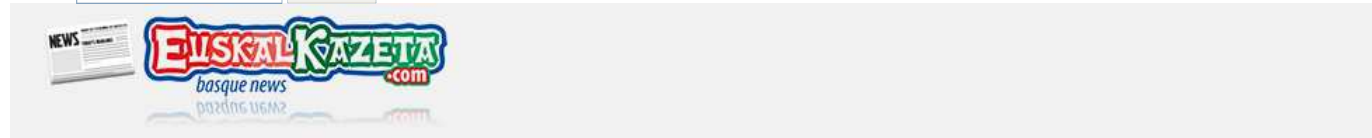




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## A Basque in the Big Apple finds Txikito



Antonio Verdiny

NYC's Txikito serves a variety of Basque wines

By Antonio Verdiny

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So I am here in New York searching out some new wine deals and from one of my new wine contacts I get a hot tip on a Basque restaurant in Chelsea. A few trains uptown and across, I walk into Txikito, owned and run by Basques, at 240 Ninth Ave. ( New York, 10001, (212) 242-4730), which has an impressive line up of sagardoas from Euskadi, txakolinas, some with names I have never heard of, aside from the ubiquitous “Amestoi” we find more of on the West Coast. They even had magnum (1.75 ml.) bottles of some Rose Txakolina, (priced at \$150.00, you better bring a party of lagunak with cash) and a host of some serious wines from all over Euskal Herria, particularly Rioja, Rioja Alavesa and Navarra. A wine list you would expect to find in Donostia (San Sebastian) at your favorite taberna.

Just before getting there, I had stumbled across a block in Soho, blessed with a few Spanish tapas bars and a paella restaurant on Mulberry. Having not had lunch yet, I found myself gorging on a bocadillo followed by some churros and chocolate and then washed down with an ice cold horchata de chufa. I was as full as a party animal in Pamplona during the San Fermine! However, at Txikito, I had to at least have a “Marijuli” (banderilla) of guindilla pepper, tomato, jamon and anchovy to accompany my list of “must try” ciders, txakolis and wines.

The menu is formatted as a proper Basque jatetxea (restaurant) menu would be: ostatuak/(from the bar), pintxoak/Basque canapes, hotzak/cold items and beroak/hot items ranging from boquerones, foie micuit (foie gras terrine) txiki txampi (mini mushroom, shrimp & grilled cheese, the must-have solomo, arraultza (sofrito, txorizo, & quail egg) txanquetes (baby arugula, poached egg, crispy silverfish) all the way up to the kroketas, patatak mentaiko (fries with spicy cod roe mayo), txangurro (crabmeat gratin), pil-pil, txipiron encebollado, cordero asado and their own take on txilindron. Txikito’s version is in the form of spicy cross cut pork spare ribs. All of the “Basque specific” ingredients (cheeses, chorizos, peppers, anchovies etc.) are imported from Iparralde or Hegoalde (France or Spain).

An interesting treat they have that of course I had to try: not being a West Coast jatetxea, they don’t know what Picon is but they do have a light, refreshing, “Zugarrapote” which is an iced cocktail made with a red wine dry fruit-infused base, lemon-garnished cooler. Nice, but in no way the knock-out aperitif of the Basque dinner houses of the west! This is definitely a place to check out when in NYC.



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