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The Best Wine Bar in the World?



Monvínic

The wine list at Monvínic offers some 60 selections by the glass.

Despite my best efforts, I haven't been to every wine bar in the world, so it may be that there are other contenders to the throne, but Monvínic in Barcelona is certainly the best wine bar I've been to in recent memory. When the sommelier at El Bulli tells you you can't miss it, you would be foolish not to act on the advice.

Monvínic is located in the center of the

city near the northern end of the Ramblas, not far from the Plaza Catalunya. After some several nights of Michelin-starred dining, I decided to spend my last night in Spain there, and it was a great decision. In a city that prides itself on architecture and design, the slick interior by Alfons Tost is worth a visit in itself, the bathrooms being a high point. As you enter you see a very extensive wine library behind glass panels; patrons are welcome to browse, and many of the volumes are in English. But reading will soon make you thirsty and it's the wine list that's the star here.

When you sit down you are handed an iPad-like device that allows you to browse by region, grape variety and producer. There are some 60 selections by the glass. I started with an '08 Fillaboa Albariño, which set me back €3.50 (\$4.30), while my wife, who drinks only bubbly, ordered the '06 Freixinet Cuvée D.S. But the list covers pretty much the entire world. A rich, oaky '05 Fieuzal (€8) was a nice follow-up. Then, with my langoustines Catalan style, I ordered an '07 Albert Grivault Meursault Perrières. The langoustines were so good they almost distracted me from the wine. Chef Sergi de Meia is a mad locavore who sources almost everything from artisanal Catalan farmers, whose photographs are projected on the wall of the dining space. With my suckling lamb, roasted till the outer fat had developed a nice crispy shell, I had an '04 Produttori del Barbaresco Moccogatta, a great example from this great vintage, and then, on the principal of drinking locally, a 2000 Garsed e Hijos Clos Garsed Priorat, a wine I'd never heard of before—a very old-school Priorat which the sommelier informed me was made with full stem contact from old Carignan grapes.

If I'd been ordering by the bottle I would have had some amazing choices: 2006 Leflaive Puligny-Montrachet Clavoillon for €83; an '03 Remírez de Ganuza Reserva Rioja for €53. Deep-pocketed drinkers might want to visit for rarities like the '01 Henri Mayer Vosne Romanée Cros Parantoux (€2,074) or the extensive collection of mature wines from Domaine Romanée-Conti and Château Yquem. No fewer than six sommeliers work on the list. I'm only sorry I didn't check out Monvínic till my last night in Barcelona, but it's definitely one more reason to return.

Readers: What is the best wine bar that you have ever been to?
Share your experience in the comments.