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Tastings

by Dorothy J. Gaiter and John Brecher

“...John was at a suburban wine shop recently where someone was pouring samples. One of them was a surprise: **a 2000 Tempranillo from Truchard Vineyards** in the Carneros region of Napa. Tempranillo is the great grape of Rioja, but we don’t often see it as a U.S. varietal wine. John tried a sip and was so impressed he bought a bottle (\$25) and rushed home. It was excellent, with a medium body, plenty of spices, some cream and black cherries, and a great taste of earth at the base that’s far too rare in California wines. Jo Ann Truchard told us later that this was the winery’s first release of the wine and that there were just 517 cases. Why Tempranillo? She told us that her husband, Tony, “gets bored and wants to plant new things,” and he loves Riojas. Because it’s unusual, their Tempranillo “is a hard sell,” she said – the unfortunate fate of too many special, small-production wines that consumers should embrace instead of avoid. Be bold!”

