Through the Sangria Glass: A look at Spain’s cultural differences through their traditional drinks

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By:

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May 2012

Expected Date of Graduation: May 5, 2012
Abstract:

The purpose of this thesis was to further explore the cultural diversity between the United States and Spain. Through personal experience and independent research I have created a bilingual multimedia website that explores Spain's culture and traditions through their popular alcoholic drinks. The website also explains the differences between Spain's drinking culture and the United State’s drink culture. Four interviews were conducted, one with a Spanish proprietor of a bar in Central Spain, one with a Ball State Spanish professor who also teaches classes in Central Spain, one with a Ball State student who was raised in Eastern Spain, and one from a professor who lives and teaches in Northern Spain. The website is composed of three print articles, three videos, two interactive graphics, and various pictures that all come together to portray the cultural pieces of Spain.
Acknowledgments:

A number of people had a hand in making my thesis a success. Foremost, I would like to thank my advisor Suzy Smith for always keeping me on task, being flexible, and helping me create my first official website.

I would also like to thank Dr. Lisa Kuriscak for all her hard work and help. I would not have been able to do this without you. Dr. Chin-Sook Pak was also a big help. Both Spanish professors helped me extend my knowledge and usage of the Spanish language.

Finally, I would like to thank Kristen Reed for her help with the interactive graphics.
Author/Artist Statement:

My main goal for my honors thesis was to incorporate both my majors: Telecommunications and Spanish. I wanted to create something that would showcase all the work I had completed in college and be an accessible tool for students. I believe my creative project truly reflects the knowledge I acquired in the last four years. It is a multimedia bilingual website that explains the Spanish drinking culture through their traditional drinks: Sangria, Queimada, and Sidra. The address to my website is raiseaglass.weebly.com

I began my thesis last summer when I was studying in Segovia, Spain. It was the first time I had ever been to Europe and I spent the first few weeks just taking in the Spanish culture. I noticed many aspects that were different from the United States. What sparked the idea for my project was when we went to order a drink at a restaurant and an alcoholic beverage was cheaper than a Coke. I was taken aback by this. From there, I began noticing other differences between the drinking cultures. I realized this was a pertinent subject to college students. It was particularly relevant to college students who study abroad and want to know what to expect in the country they will study in. I finally decided that I wanted to give students and faculty a “taste” of the drinking culture of Spain in comparison to the United States.

Sangria was a drink I had heard of prior to studying in Spain. It’s a popular drink with Spanish roots that is popular around the world. I began asking the Segovian locals where I could find the most authentic Sangria. Many Spaniards led me to “El Oso Blanco” which was a bar located in Segovia. I interviewed the proprietor and he agreed to give me his Sangria recipe. This is a big step for Spaniards because they are proud and do...
not like to give up their secrets. However, he knew it was for a literary project so he was willing to help me out. I filmed him making his Sangria and this was a cultural experience for me and my peers. He explained why each ingredient was selected and how much of it to add to the drink. This video is an integral component to my project because it was rich in culture and information. This video can be found on the “Experience” page of my website.

After I returned from Spain I wanted more sources that had connections with the Spanish culture. I interviewed Dr. Lisa Kuriscak from the Modern Languages and Classics department who also teaches classes in Segovia, Spain. I also interviewed Ball State student Anna Leno who grew up in Barcelona, Spain. These interviews gave me two different perspectives on the same subject. To further use my Spanish speaking ability, I conducted both of these interviews in Spanish. I transcribed their interviews into English and wrote articles in Spanish and English based on the information that I collected.

One aspect that Dr. Kuriscak introduced was that there were other traditional drinks aside from Sangria. Sangria was not very popular in the northern regions of Spain. Dr. Kuriscak contacted a few of her friends from Galicia and Asturias and I was able to use their information when creating the “Traditional Drinks from Spain” page of my website. Since I had filmed the process of Sangria, I wanted to show the processes of these two drinks as well. I found two videos on YouTube that showed the presentation of Sidra and Queimada. These can be found under the “Traditions” Page.
After researching these two drinks I realized there was a common ingredient in each of the three drinks: Wine. So under the “Home” page I incorporated a written article (again, in English and Spanish) on wine and its’ history in Spain. I felt this was necessary under the home page because wine was technically the home of all three of these drinks.

Another element of my website is the graphics on the “Traditions” page. These graphic shows the regions of Spain where Sidra, Queimada, and Sangria are popular. It also gives the recipe of each of the drinks and how it is presented. I realized that presentation was an important part of the drinking culture in Spain. Most Spaniards viewed their drinks as art. The presentation was almost more important than the drink itself.

Since the reason behind creating this website to describe the differences between Spain’s drinking culture and the United State’s drinking culture, I decided to write a text article comparing the concept of alcohol in each country. I felt this article was necessary to explain the different experiences one can expect to have when drinking in the United States and Spain. This article can be found under the “Experience” page.

I created an even mix of print and video because these mediums are currently converging into one industry. My professors taught both of these elements in my telecommunications classes because now we are being trained to become multimedia journalists. Therefore, I wanted to show both of these elements in my project.

My second goal of my senior project was that my website could be accessible and helpful for others. I chose to make a multimedia website because it was the most efficient medium for video, text, pictures, and graphics. I decided to make a website because I had
never made one on my own before. Now, instead of a project I will put on a shelf to collect dust, I have a concrete version of my senior project that will forever exist in cyberspace. Also, it is a reference tool for future Ball State students who are curious about Spain’s traditions and culture.

The biggest challenge of my senior thesis was creating a bilingual website. Translation and transcription was a long and tiring process, but I am glad that I did it in the end. Now Spanish speakers can access and use my website as well as English speakers. Every English component has a Spanish counterpart. The website is easily navigable for anyone who speaks either English or Spanish.

My senior project was a rewarding but challenging experience. I not only got to incorporate both of my majors, but I learned a lot about Spanish culture and a lot about myself in the process. I truly feel that my website is a capstone project that describes my experiences while attending Ball State.

The home page of my website (http://raiseaglass.weebly.com)
Traditional drinks of Spain Video and Graphic
(http://raiseaglass.weebly.com/traditions.html)

The "Sangria Experience"
Part of the cultural experience in Spain is how traditional drinks are prepared. Jesus Montes, a Spanish chef, and owner of El Oso Blanco, a Spanish bar in Spain, has a very specific process. He does it every day and makes a “jar” of Sangria for his customers. He pours the wine and bitters into a jar, before adding the fruit and wine. He then lets it sit for a few days, allowing the flavors to develop. The result is a refreshing, fruity, and delicious Sangria that is the perfect way to enjoy a traditional Spanish drink. The video shows the process in action, allowing viewers to see how the Sangria is made and enjoyed in Spain.
Wine Article in Spanish (http://raiseaglass.weebly.com/el-raiacutez-de-todo-el-vino.html)

Spanish article on Alcohol in Society (http://raiseaglass.weebly.com/alcohol-en-la-sociedad.html)
Work Cited


<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gv8tWVg9adY>.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kx1qz3Tc0A>.


