



THE WINE SOCIETY DINING CLUB NEWSLETTER

28 Stanhope Road, London N6 5NG

Telephone: 020 8348 9173 Email: assistantsecretary@wsdc.org.uk

Tasting – The Wines of Spain

Tuesday October 4th at 6.30pm

Army & Navy Club

36 Pall Mall

London SW1Y 5JN

THANKS TO JESUS MADRAZO OF CONTINO AND HIS UK DISTRIBUTOR HATCH MANSFIELD FOR THEIR SUPPORT WHICH HAS ENABLED THIS TASTING TO COMBINE GREAT WINE AND A REALLY KEEN PRICE.

First, an explanation. Nigel Black's successor as Club Secretary will only be available to take up the reins from mid-2017. This year's programme will therefore be managed by the Committee with individual Committee members coordinating each event. Rest assured – your Committee is going to do a grand job!

The Club's tour to Spain this year went very well. The quality of the wines and the value offered was remarkable. Tonight, we'll showcase two of the finest wineries visited – one in Rioja, the other in Ribera del Duero, along with many other splendid things.

The sparkler is **Cava Conde de Haro Brut 2013**. Made by Muga, the oldest bodega in Rioja, aged on the lees for two years, this is no average Cava.

Next, two Albariños. **Pazo de Villerai 2015** has all the freshness and vitality of good Albariño. Contrast this with **Fefiñanes 2015**, from one of the oldest producers in the Rias Baxas, which is richer and has more fruit.

Our next three whites show the grape known as Viura in Rioja and as Macabeu elsewhere. From the Costers del Segre in the South, **Tomàs Cusiné Finca Racons 2011** has delicate white fruit and lovely balance. A mere child beside **López de Heredia Gravonia 2006**. Again, balance is the key word; this wine is amazingly fresh and vibrant given its age – exactly like your author! The final white is our first from Contino: the **Blanco 2014**. Easily the youngest of the three, although you wouldn't guess it. My own tasting notes on this wine ended with the single word 'pleasure', heavily underlined.

Before the reds, something about Contino, one of the two top picks from the tour. Dating from the 16th Century, this is one of the finest wineries in Spain, managed by

the charming and hospitable Jesus Madrazo. In addition to the white, we will taste four reds, beginning with the **Contino Garnacha 2012**. 100% Garnacha (Grenache), this red has tons of fruit while keeping everything in harmony. We follow this with two Riojas: the **Contino Reserva 2009** and the **Contino Viña del Olivo 2010**. The Reserva 2009 is extremely bright and lively, my own note says 'delicious'. Which it is. Viña del Olivo is held to be one of the top five wines in Spain which tells us everything we need to know. The final Contino is the **Graciano 2009**. Graciano is comparatively rare and even then grown mostly to blend with Tempranillo. Jesus is quite obsessive about this grape, and you can see why. It's dark and brooding, and very powerful.

Our next two reds come from Ribera del Duero, and one of the wineries of choice of Madrid's better restaurants, Aalto. No coincidence that this was the other visit most enjoyed on the trip. The winemaker, Mariano Garcia, was in charge at Vega Sicilia for thirty years, and his knowledge and passion shine through here. 2013 was not an easy vintage in the region but **Aalto 2013** is an outstanding effort, earning 93 Parker Points. More importantly, my notes say that it is 'very classy'. Aalto's premium cuvee is the Pagos Seleccionados (PS), only made in certain years. **Aalto PS 2013** achieved 95 Parker Points, with Wine Advocate describing it as 'very open, hedonistic and aromatic'. Always excellent to have a little hedonism towards the end of a WSDC event...!

Our final wine switches tack and we end with a Priorat, the **Clos Martinet 2011** from Mas Martinet. This has dark forest fruits, smoked meats and (apparently) porcini mushrooms! The most refined of the three cuvees offered by this leading Priorat estate, this is a great way to end what promises to be a memorable tasting.

Jim Ryan, Chairman

Forthcoming events:

- Rhone Dinner – 31st October 2016 at the Travellers Club
- Christmas Tasting – 5th December 2016 at the Army and Navy Club

