

# IL-QATRA – February Session Report

**Session Theme: Spain – 5 different wine regions**

**Date:** 22.02.2022

## Menu

Jamon Iberico - Thyme Brioche, Miso-Parmesan Espuma

Chorizo & Saffron Risotto

Beef Fillet - Heritage Carrots, Fermented Garlic Pomme Puree, Blackberry

Duo of Cheese

**Food Scoring: 8.2 / 10**

		Wine	Region	Vintage	Varietal	Voting Out of 20	Retail Price	Importer	Consumption
Aprtf	White	Ramon Bilbao Mar de Frades	Rias Baixas	2019	Albarino	14.8	€17	NM Arrigo	8
A	White	Belondrade y Lurton	Rueda	2019	Verdejo	16.6	€48	Philippe Martinet	10
B	Red	Lopez de Heredia Vina Tondonia Reserva	Rioja	2009	Tempranillo, Mazuelo, Graciano	15	€35	Philippe Martinet	10
C	Red	Vega Sicilia PINTIA	Toro	2016	Tempranillo	16.2	€55	Philippe Martinet	11
D	Red	Tinto Pesquera Reserva	Ribera del Duero	2012	Tempranillo	16.5	€39	NM Arrigo	11
<b>Average</b>						<b>15.8</b>	<b>Average per member</b>		<b>1.04</b>


<b>Wine:</b> Ramon Bilbao - Mar de Frades	<b>Region:</b> Rías Baixas
<b>Vintage:</b> 2019	<b>Varietal:</b> Albarino 100%
<b>Alcohol Content:</b> 12%	<b>Price:</b> €16.90

**Tasting Notes**

Mar de Frades is a Galician word meaning “Sea of Friars”. Crashing waves were chosen for the Mar de Frades wine label, Albariño Atlantico. Albariño, an indigenous white grape variety that is just perfect for summer. The grape is noted for its distinctive botanical aroma with a citrus undertone. The wine produced is unusually light, and generally high in acidity with medium alcohol levels. With an iconic blue bottle to truly reflect its Atlantic inspiration. Being one of the biggest vineyard owners in the Rías Baixas region, more than 50% of the grapes that go into this wine are grown in Mar de Frades’ own vineyards. Mar de Frades is now one of Spain’s wineries of reference, and one of the most prestigious white wine brands in the whole sector, receiving multiple awards for both its wines and for the winemaker herself. Fermentation takes place in stainless steel vats, in contact with the lees to give the wine longevity and volume. Albarino also takes to ageing. Mar de Frades vinify the Albariño from Finca Valiñas separately and age them for five years, to intensify that feeling of the ocean even more. Serve at a temperature of 8-10°C. **92 points by Falstaff for the 2020, 95 points by Falstaff for the 2016.**

**Description**

The Val do Salnés is located in Galicia, in the north-west of Spain. There, at the foot of the Valiñas Estate, on the side of a mountain facing the ría Arousa that cools the Atlantic breeze that caresses the vineyards. It is where Mar de Frades wines are born. The Mar de Frades bodega stands in the middle of this spot, with its slender grey figure of granite and copper, polished by the harsh Galician climate. Born with the goal of creating wines that would reflect the water’s personality and character. The vineyards in Rías Baixas are fragmented into thousands of small, disperse plots across the entire region. Mar de Frades is one of the biggest vineyard owners in the region and more than 50% of the grapes that go into this wine are grown in owned vineyards, but they also work closely with more than 100 growers in the area.



<b>Wine:</b> Belondrade y Lurton	<b>Region:</b> Rueda
<b>Vintage:</b> 2019	<b>Varietal:</b> Verdejo 100%
<b>Alcohol Content:</b> 14%	<b>Price:</b> €48

**Tasting Notes**


The 2019 Belondrade y Lurton follows the path of purity and elegance of the 2018 but reflecting the drier and warmer year with notes of yellow fruit and straw, clean and varietal. They have been practicing organic viticulture for a while, and this 2019 is the first one to carry the organic certification on its label. It's ripe without excess and is also rich and has very good balance. It was bottled in July 2020 after nine months in 300- and 500-liter French oak barrels. **94+ Points, Luis Gutierrez – December 2020, robertparker.com**

**Description**


This is the first of the wines from the Belondrade winery, and one of the best white wines in Spain. A mature, elegant white wine inspired by the Burgundy whites, that has in fact surpassed all expectations when it comes to quality from the Verdejo, the indigenous grape varietal of Castile. The wine has also undergone diligent ageing in oak of the highest quality and will continue to develop most favourably in the bottle for a further seven to eight years.

Here is the Belondrade y Lurton, an excellent Crianza white wine from the DO Rueda. A single varietal Verdejo, this Spanish white wine is made from over 30-year-old vineyards located at an altitude of 750 metres above sea level. The organically grown vines grow in soils composed of sand and pebble stones that bring a distinctive freshness and complexity to the wine.

Each plot was separately harvested and vinified. First, the grapes were cold-soaked and spontaneously fermented with their own yeasts in 300-litre French oak barrels. After that, 15% of this single varietal Verdejo from Rueda underwent malolactic fermentation. Then Belondrade y Lurton 2018 was blended and aged on its lees in the barrels for 10 months with periodic stirrings. Finally, this wine of the Belondrade winery was aged for a further 6 months in the cellar prior to its release.



<b>Wine:</b> Lopez de Heredia - Vina Tondonia Reserva	<b>Region:</b> Rioja
<b>Vintage:</b> 2009	<b>Varietal:</b> 70% Tempranillo, 20% Garnacha, 5% Mazuelo, 5% Graciano
<b>Alcohol Content:</b> 13%	<b>Price:</b> €35
<b>Tasting Notes</b> As with many wines this time, I had two vintages to taste of the Reserva from the Tondonia vineyard, 2009 and 2008, two very different, almost opposite vintages. The 2009 Viña Tondonia Reserva, a blend of 70% Tempranillo, 20% Garnacho and 5% each Mazuelo and Graciano, matured in used American oak barrels for six years. It has some toasted character, with ripe fruit, black rather than red, denoting a warm year but more restrained than the Bosconia Reserva from the same vintage. 2009 is a year of ripeness, concentration and tannin; the wines are powerful, but here you see the finesse of Tondonia in comparison to the more rustic Viña Bosconia. 220,000 bottles produced. It was bottled in May 2017 <b>93/100 Luis Gutiérrez, Wine Advocate (October 2020)</b>	
<b>Description</b> López de Heredia is “one of the last great bastions of Rioja tradition” (Hugh Johnson). As Luis Gutiérrez writes on erobertparker.com, “visiting the winery is like time travelling to 100 years ago, with no stainless steel or new oak to be found anywhere”. All their wines are named after different plots on the estate. From "a year of ripeness, concentration and tannin" (WA), Tondonia Reserva comprises mainly Tempranillo, plus portions of Garnacha, Graciano and Mazuelo, and was aged for six years in barrels, then bottled unfiltered for maximum flavour. It’s a wine of great complexity with a savoury nose of spices and leather, vibrant berry and cigar box. The palate is rounded and remarkably fresh and long. Decant early, then savour slowly.	




<b>Wine:</b> Vega Sicilia Pintia	<b>Region:</b> Toro
<b>Vintage:</b> 2016	<b>Varietal:</b> Tempranillo 100%
<b>Alcohol Content:</b> 14.5%	<b>Price:</b> €55

**Tasting Notes**

The 2016 Pintia comes from a cooler but drier vintage, and the wine has a little less alcohol and more freshness. It fermented in oak vats and matured in mostly new and mostly French oak, but this year they used a little more American oak with the idea to increase density. 2016 was an atypical year in Toro; they had plenty of time to pick the grapes with lower alcohol and wines with more elegance. This is clearly a more elegant vintage than 2015. The wine has some notes that took me to the Northern Rhône, and the oak is neatly integrated—it seems to get better integrated in cooler years. There is a mix of black and red fruit that denotes good freshness. The palate is medium-bodied, with a distinct lack of rusticity and density, and it’s more fluid. It has abundant, chalky and fine-grained tannins and a supple, long and dry finish. **[95 Points, Luis Gutierrez – June 2021, robertparker.com]**

**Description**

Vega Sicilia’s owners, the Álvarez family, bought Bodegas Pintia in 1996, attracted to the *galet-strewn terroir* in the northern Spanish region of Toro, the rich clay subsoils and the familiar altitude. They decided to produce an alternative expression of Vega Sicilia’s style of Tinto Fino (Tempranillo) from this site. Toro’s main point of difference to Ribera del Duero is the ambient temperature, which can blaze in the height of summer. The challenge here is to match concentration with elegance, a challenge met by Bodegas Pintia with no shortage of aplomb.



<b>Wine:</b> Tinto Pesquera Reserva	<b>Region:</b> Ribera del Duero
<b>Vintage:</b> 2012	<b>Varietal:</b> Tempranillo 100%
<b>Alcohol Content:</b> 13.5%	<b>Price:</b> €38.99

**Tasting Notes**

Initial cola and root-beer aromas precede floral berry scents. A strict palate is firm but avoids crushing weight. Narrow plum, currant and berry flavors are focused and framed by roaring tannins. This is still young and tough, but with great potential; **drink from 2019–2035. MICHAEL SCHACHNER**

**Description**

The estate was founded in 1972 before Ribera del Duero had come to prominence, by Alejandro Fernández (a former salesman of farm machinery) and his wife Esperanza. The purchase was financed by money from the sale of a patent. Pesquera de Duero was the home town of the couple; the estate lies on its outskirts. The first harvest was the 1975. The wine found immediate success, following in the footsteps of its neighbor Vega Sicilia, and forced the recognition of DO status for Ribera del Duero in 1982. It is now one of the foremost wineries in the country.

The 200 hectares (500 acres) of mature vineyards are spread out along south-facing banks of the Duero river on a variety of soils, although these are mainly based on sandy, gravelly soil over limestone and clay. These vineyards are around 2000-2500ft (600-700m) above sea level, and have a continental climate with hot days and cool nights. Rather than cultivating bush vines, the plants are trained on low espalier trellises, to better capture ground heat. Pesquera was one of the first producers in the region to use wire training. Tinto Pesquera's wines are made in a converted 16th-Century stone building. A carefully considered mix of French and American barriques are used to age the wines – the Crianza for a minimum of 18 months, and the Reserva for up to three years. The Gran Reserva and Janus Gran Reserva are aged for 36-48 months before release. The wines are bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

