

Robert Parker, Wine Advocate June 30, 2016

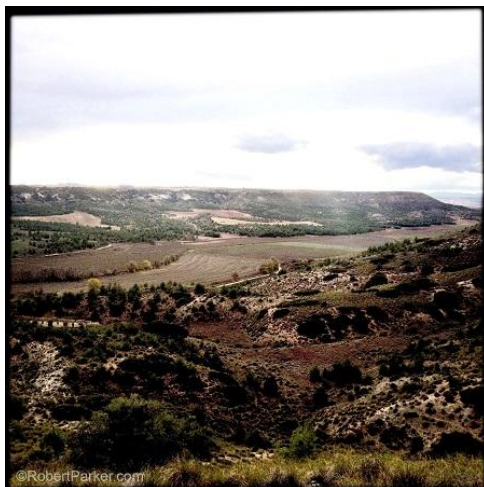
Central Spain: Comfortably Numb

I was struggling to find an appropriate and representative title for this short article on the wines from central Spain, and as is very often the case, I had music playing in the background. Not a lot of exciting things happening here. Not very inspirational... All of a sudden it was Pink Floyd and it made a lot of sense. Comfortably numb. Complacency, subsidies, triumphal messages from local politicians about the quality of the local wines. And eventually we congratulate the huge volumes produced that 'win' in that competition. Everybody is happy. Or maybe not?

First of all, there are always exceptions - that's why I keep getting personal and naming names - and not everything is the same. Second, I'm not really sticking to any formal definition about what constitutes central Spain to limit which wines make it here. This time I've included a few, that for whatever reason, do not really fit into any of the rest of the geographies. Ironically the top scorer here is a wine that I wouldn't really classify as central Spain, as it's from Málaga, which is as southern Spain as it gets. But the wines from there have nothing in common with the wines from Jerez and Montilla, which are the regions from Andalucía that merit a separate article.

So this is a bit of a mixed bag and you'll find a few astray wines here and there. Because if I limited myself to the huge vineyards of Castilla La Mancha, where a substantial part of the vineyards is cultivated to have wine to be distilled, I'd have even less wines for you. I already explained it last time: there is a need to produce alcohol, and that's a huge part of what the vineyards in central Spain do. Fair enough. There is also a market for bulk, low-priced wines, but it's not our interest here.

That, unfortunately, leaves us with very little to discuss. Thank goodness for Más Que Vinos, who produces honest, affordable wines that are not embarrassed because of their origin; there's also Cerro del águila, the single most interesting new project here. I need to dig a little deeper into both, as there are things worth mentioning in their projects.



The La Madre and El Señorito vineyards, from Más Que Vinos in a cooler valley, produce an amazing Garnacha Tintorera

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Más Que Vinos is well known for some of their wines, and if La Plazuela is generally accepted as La Mancha's greatest wine, the 2011 vintage might very well be the finest produced to date. They did not bottle the 2010, even though it was quite a good vintage in the zone, but they didn't like the result. So from the 2009 I tasted last time, we moved to 2011. I need a little diversion now before we come back to La Plazuela. They have a new wine that blew me away. They told me it was Garnacha, but it's really Garnacha Tintorera, of course, because there's not a lot of Garnacha where they are. The wine is the 2014 Garnacha de La Madre. La madre, the mother, is the name of a vineyard they have planted in a cooler valley, where they get less heat and ripeness with material from their old vineyards. Well, this Garnacha Tintorera that they think is very different certainly produces much more elegant wines than your average Garnacha Tintorera. Much more aromatic and floral, spicy but with unusual notes of pink pepper, curry, sandalwood and Moorish spices.

This is certainly a wine you should try and comes highly recommended, but what I want to say is that the La Plazuela has some 20% Garnacha Tintorera in the blend to complement the old vine Cencibel. And it's exactly this Garnacha Tintorera - the one that has been used to plant the La Madre vineyard - so it certainly gives part of its character to La Plazuela. Tasting La Garnacha de La Madre really helped me to understand La Plazuela a little bit better... (...)

Luis Gutiérrez

- 2011 La Plazuela: 94 points.
- 2014 La Garnacha de la Madre 2014: 93 points.
- 2013 El Señorito: 90 points.
- 2014 Ercavio Roble: 90 points.
- 2015 La Malvar: 90 points
- 2013 La Meseta: 89+ points.
- 2014 Ercavio Rosado: 89 points.
- 2014 Ercavio Blanco: 88 points.

For further information visit our website: www.bodegasmisquevinos.com

Thank you