



Written by
Ferran Centelles
26 Jun 2019

Méntrida - Garnacha and more



The Spanish region with the greatest diurnal temperature variation.

Méntrida with its 8,100 ha (20,000 acres) of vineyard might be a bit unfamiliar to international consumers. However, for Spaniards and especially for Madrid inhabitants, it is quite a popular name. The region is in the north west of Toledo province to the immediate south of Madrid.

The immense Gredos range overlooks the appellation. However, Méntrida DO goes beyond the limits of the mountain and extends southwards. In fact, many of its wines are reported on this site as part of articles about Gredos, such as [Gredos Pinot-like Garnachas](#) (but there are many more). In order to discover the whole of the appellation, and expand the focus to the less well known Méntrida wines, I conducted the following generic Méntrida tasting, hoping to broaden out from the Gredos fixation.

The appellation was created in 1976 but some vineyard references date back to the 12th century, and Méntrida was a principal supplier of bulk wine to Madrid in the 19th century. Today the region is still important for the production of bulk wine. There are many co-operatives and the vineyards are shared between 1,376 grape-growers. However, it was only wineries producing bottled wine who were asked to send samples for my tasting.

Antonio Mayoral de Andrés of the main co-operative here, known as Viñedos de Camarena, pointed out, 'the vineyards are really dispersed geographically, with the plots being really tiny. There is very little mechanisation. The region remains very traditional.'

Méntrida is focused on Garnacha, which is grown on 73% of the vineyard area. It also is a land of old vines. Nevertheless, in 2000 the Consejo Regulador approved international varieties such as Cabernet, Merlot and Syrah. In the same year it also incorporated the production of white wines from Albillo, Viura, Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay grapes.

In my tasting, Garnacha performed better than the rest of international varieties. However, Syrah seems to be achieving good results. **Canopy's Malpaso, Alonso Cuesta's Valprimero** and **Arrayán's Syrah** are all examples of remarkable Méntrida Syrah wines.

As for the whites, the **Arrayán Albillo Real** was the best. What an authentic wine! It deserves each of the 17.5 points it has and, honestly, it is a bargain, a hidden gem within the region. Maite Sánchez, the talented young winemaker behind it, explained: 'Albillo almost disappeared, so it is with great respect and pride that we are recuperating it.'

The climate is Mediterranean with dry summers. The day-night temperature variation is really extreme, probably more extreme than in any other Spanish wine region. During the ripening season, days are very hot but nights are quite fresh. Garnacha makes itself at home in such an environment, with an extended growing cycle. The poor, sandy and granitic soils and the extreme climatic conditions have a determinant qualitative role, keeping the yields very low (most of the wines below are made at yields of less than 3,000 kg/ha).

The appellation might be geographically divided in two different areas:

- Lower area: to the middle and south of the appellation, averaging 400 m (1,310 ft) elevation. The soils are sandy and granitic. Most relevant wine villages: Camarena, Fuensalida, La Torre de Estebán de Hambrán and Méntrida itself.
- Higher area: the northern area of the appellation, located within the Gredos mountains. The average elevation is 800 m (2,620 ft), the soils are shallower and the granitic parent rock is closer to the surface. The most relevant village is El Real de San Vicente. The harvest generally starts at the end of September, 15–20 days later than in the lower area. The day/night difference can reach 20 °C (36 °F) here.

Some wineries have their winemaking facility in the lower part of the appellation but own vineyards in the higher area 30 to 60 minutes' drive away. For instance, Canopy winery is located in Camarena but most of their vineyards are in El Real de San Vicente. Similarly, Jiménez Landi is situated in the village of Méntrida but the grapes are sourced from both El Real de San Vicente and Méntrida. Arrayán has its winery in Santa Cruz de Retamar in the lower area, where they have planted international grapes, but they source their Garnacha from El Real de San Vicente and the Albillo from Almorox at 600 m (1,970 ft). This is why I have decided to include the village sourcing the grapes in most of the descriptions of the wines below.

According to Jörgen Gunnarsson from Daniel Gómez Jiménez Landi, 'there are different areas within Méntrida, they express diverse typicality. For instance, Real de San Vicente village has a mountainous climate, and is slightly more rainy compared with the lower areas. It has a great potential due the old plots of Garnacha planted on granitic and sandy soils.' Dani Landi is a Gredos maverick, leading the resurgence of the region. Take a look at the Las Uvas de la Ira 2016 to find a gorgeous wine full of delicacy and depth, demonstrative of the quality potential of the Pinot-like Garnacha from Gredos. (The 2013 was a [wine of the week](#) in 2015.)

Generally speaking, most of the Garnacha tasted had superb delicacy. The alcohol is noticeable, but the texture, particularly the softness of the tannins, and their deep-flavoured aspect make them some of the most delicate in Spain. On the nose, they are quite open and herbal, and pomegranate, sweet strawberries, botanicals and dry leaves are common aromas.

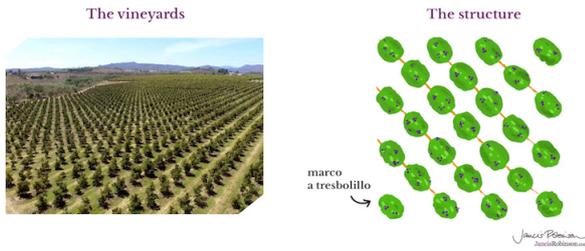
The style has not always been like this. Concentration and rusticity were the norm till the beginning of this century. One of the wineries leading the stylistic transformation is Bodegas Canopy, a small project led by Alfonso Chacón, who points out, 'the new era of Méntrida is bringing a modification of the style towards more freshness, enhanced fruit and drinkability'.

Personally, I find that working on the delicate side of Garnacha and balancing the high alcohol is challenging. Other Spanish Garnachas support the alcohol with fruit charge and texture (for instance, [Campo de Borja](#) or [Priorat](#)). But in Méntrida, the fruit support is so subtle that warm sensations are easier to notice. Actually, because of their subtlety, I have doubts about how long these wines will last.

I want to highlight a few more remarkable wines. As the tasting was blind, I was delighted to uncover the bottle of **Bastión Garnachas**, a wine from the local co-operative of Camarena, that I gave 16.5 points out of 20. In the same way, **El Espinillo** from Bodegas Vega Berciana (16.5) is a superb bargain. Co-operatives are a very important economic engine here, so it is good to see they are making efforts towards quality and fine-wine production.

I also enjoyed tasting the work of the promising new generation. For instance, the project **A Pie de Tierra** from David Villamiel García and Aitor Paúl Iglesias is really encouraging. They presented two wines that I tasted. I was extremely enthusiastic about its *vino de pueblo*, but a bit less moved by their *vino de paraje*. The quality potential of their old vines is translated into particularly elegant wines with remarkable violet notes. David talks eagerly about the region: 'I was born and raised in Méntrida and I identify myself with this land. Méntrida has increasing vitality and lights are shining once more. In the past, large crops and heavy yields were a handicap, but at the beginning of this century some new quality-oriented projects flourished. Méntrida wines display pure Mediterranean Garnacha character. We are in the foot of Gredos, but not in the mountains. The vineyards are corrugated granite hills.'

Actually, some of the vineyards of A Pie de Tierra and some others within the region are planted following a pattern of staggered rows known as *tresbolillo*, used traditionally in some old Spanish vineyards. The picture below shows this unusual planting scheme designed to increase the density in olden times. Going a bit deeper into viticultural history, I discovered a sentence from a book known as *Rerum Rusticarum Libri III* written by the prolific agriculturist Marcus Terentius Varro (116–27 BC) in which *tresbolillo* seems to be mentioned: 'those vineyards designed more attractively are also the result of greater benefit; thus, those that have groves, if they are planted in quincunx (*tresbolillo*) are saving more space'. Fascinating reference, isn't it? [See also the reference to a quincunx vineyard on the Italian island of Lipari, in this [wine of the week](#) – JH]



I would also like to draw your attention to **La Viña Escondida** (17/20) and **La Suerte de Arrayán** (18/20), as they are two extremely soft and delicate Garnachas that you should not miss.

And a final point: do not expect any of the following wines to be massively produced. In fact, none of them exceeds a production of 20,000 bottles.

The blind tasting took place in the Bodegas Arrayán headquarters in Madrid. I am very thankful to them for taking the time to prepare, organise and serve the tasting.

These 30 wines are grouped by colour and shown in the order tasted.

WHITE

- Cartema 2015 Méntrida** *Sauvignon Blanc and Muscat Blanc à Petit Grains. The vineyard is planted, totally surrounded by trees, in Santa Cruz de Retamar village. Limited yields of 3,000 kg/ha. Harvested by hand. Light pressure and just the first fraction used to ferment. 12 months' ageing in oak.*
Tasted blind. The wine shows slight premature oxidation. Muscat aromas such as orange peel and flowers are dominant; it also shows baked pear. On the palate, it is creamy and rounded. I would love to taste a younger vintage of it. (FC)12.5% Drink 2019-2020
15
- Arrayán Albillo Real 2017 Méntrida** *Albillo Real planted in Almorox village at 600 m. Extremely low yields of 900 kg/ha. Very old vines bush trained and planted on sandy soils. Cold maceration for 48 hours, fermented and aged in used, large, French oak barrels. Around 2,500 bottles are produced.*
Tasted blind. What a surprise! This is a superbly clean and pure wine. It has a mineral profile, with vivacity and depth. Great delicacy and delineation. Arrayán has really created an expressive wine, with lots of stony and steely minerality. I like the winemaking profile very much. It has many of the characteristics we associate with a great wine. Do not miss such a delight! This wine is truly a bargain. **GV** (FC)13.5% Drink 2019-2025
17.5
- Canopy, Loco Garnacha Blanca 2015 Méntrida** *Garnacha Blanca planted in Camarena village. Sourced from two different plots planted 66 and 59 years ago on sandy and clay soils. Very low yields of 1,300 kg/ha. 48 hours' cold maceration. Fermented and aged in 500-litre barrels and stainless-steel tank.*
Tasted blind. The wine is really clean and shows evolving aromas such as a ripe pear and quince. The nose has some flinty notes, smoke and a touch of nuttiness. Quite voluminous on the palate, with an oily texture. Captivating kerosene touch at the back palate. It is a very singular wine that might not be to everyone's taste - very complex and intriguing. (FC)14% Drink 2019-2021

ROSE

- *Viñedos de Camarena, Bastión de Camarena Clarete 2017 Méntrida Garnacha planted in Camarena village (Toledo). 40-year-old vines planted on very poor sandy soils. Harvested by hand, totally destemmed, and skin contact for 12 hours. Fermented with indigenous yeasts and aged for 12 months in 8,000-litre concrete tanks.*
Tasted blind. Pale rosé colour. This is a light wine, with little extract. Such an easy wine to drink! It is really rounded and appetising, with sweet red fruits and really smooth aspect. It remains me of sloes in liquor. It is an authentic old-school rosé. (FC)14% Drink 2019-2021
15.5

RED

- *Viñedos de Camarena, Bastión Syrah 2018 Méntrida Syrah planted in the village of Camarena (Toledo). 25-year-old vines yielding 7,700 kg/ha. Green harvest is common for Syrah. The harvest is done mechanically during the night. Three months' ageing in French oak barrels.*
Tasted blind. This is a green style of Syrah, very youthful and herbal with lots of pungent spices. Extremely vivid and still to mellow. It almost tastes like a raw wine, needing more time to settle and soften. (FC)13.5% Drink 2019-2022
15
- *Viñedos de Camarena, Bastión Garnachas 2018 Méntrida Garnacha. 90-year-old vines planted on poor sandy soils. Sloped vineyard. Extremely limited yields of 2,000 kg/ha. Organic cultivation. Harvested by hand and fermented with 10% of stalks by indigenous yeasts. 13 days of post-fermentation maceration. The wine stays two months in French oak barrels. Neither clarified nor filtered. 3,000 bottles produced yearly.*
Tasted blind. Wow! This is a fragrant wine, with lots of fruit and youthfulness. Not really complex but very honest and genuine Garnacha. It is produced as a young wine, but already is gratifying. It has balancing and integrated acidity, very easy to drink, with a clear strawberry touch. The back palate has a slight dairy character. Lots of fun and an uncomplicated drink. A wine I clearly would buy for its price, it is a bargain! **GV** (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2025
16.5
- *Alonso Cuesta, Camarus Garnacha 2017 Méntrida Garnacha. Sourced from bush vines yielding 2,500 kg/ha and trellised vines yielding 6,000 kg/ha. Harvested by hand; sorting table used. Cold maceration for 48 hours and gentle pumping-over during fermentation. Three months' maturation in 300-litre American oak barrels. Production of 20,000 bottles.*
Tasted blind. This is a Garnacha on the extreme side of ripeness. The fruit and the concentration are there, but probably it has suffered from excessive warmth. The nose shows cherry liqueur, earth and herbal notes. I think it is slightly overburdened. The back palate is imposing and bitter. A powerful and warm wine. (FC)14% Drink 2019-2022
15
- *Alonso Cuesta, La Garnacha de Lola 2017 Méntrida Old-vine Garnacha. Sourced from bush vines yielding 2,500 kg/ha and trellised vines yielding 6,000 kg/ha. Harvested by hand; sorting table used. 48 hours of cold maceration and very soft pumping-over through the process. Two months' maturation in French oak and Spanish chestnut barrels.*
Tasted blind. This is a vinous wine displaying lots of ripe red fruit, jam and sweet spices. The tannins are really polished and mellow. A pleasant structure, satisfying nose and broad overall

expression. It has soft tannin but generous alcohol. Not particularly deep but a really rounded and pleasurable mid palate. (FC)14% Drink 2019-2025

15

- *A Pie de Tierra, A Dos Manos Vino de Pueblo 2017 Méntrida* This is a recently launched project by David Villamiel García and Aitor Paúl Iglesias. Garnacha yielding less than 2,000 kg/ha. 70-year-old vines bush planted in tresbolillo – a traditional planting pattern used in Spain in which the rows are staggered. Organic farming and starting to apply biodynamic practices. The project is really small, and David and Aitor are in charge of everything. The vineyards have always belonged to the family. Harvested by hand using traditional buckets as they point out that: 'buckets help to retain freshness better than boxes'. Whole-bunch, cold maceration for 24–48 hours. Ambient-yeast fermentation and very long maceration (30–35 days). Aged for 6–8 months in large-format casks of French oak and Spanish chestnut. No clarification, filtration or stabilisation. 5,000 bottles produced.

Tasted blind. The wine is fragrant and delicate. I sense violet, raspberry, red fruits. It is captivating. It is great on the aromatics: very open, creamy, well-judged oak. It has vibrant Garnacha character. On the palate, the oak is more noticeable and less elegant, but the texture is just fascinating; so soft and deep. Great delicacy. This is a superior wine. David and Aitor should be very proud. We will keep a close eye on them. (FC)14% Drink 2019-2025

17.5

- *A Pie de Tierra, A Dos Manos Vino de Paraje 2017 Méntrida* This is a recently launched project by David Villamiel García and Aitor Paúl Iglesias. Low-yielding Garnacha cultivated organically. No destalking. Cold maceration, ambient-yeast fermentation and long skin contact (30–35 days). Aged for 6–8 months in French oak and Spanish chestnut cask. 5,000 bottles.

Tasted blind. Very herbal and open nose, it shows cherry-brandy notes and wild berries. The wine is soft and pleasant, on the delicate side of Garnacha with a paler 'Garnacha de Gredos' profile. I love the delicacy of the tannins. However, on the aromatics, it seems a bit less vivid than the *vino de pueblo*, the other wine from this producer. A winery to follow closely. (FC)14% Drink 2019-2025

16

- *Jiménez-Landi, Piélago 2016 Méntrida* Labelled 'Vino de Paraje'. 40- to 60-year-old Garnacha planted on granitic soils. Cold maceration, whole-bunch and wild-yeast fermentation. Oak aged for 12 months. 2,500 bottles.

Tasted blind. Delicate and very open nose, with a pleasant fruit charge. The palate is gentle, with soft tannin and generous alcohol but built to charm. Totally fulfilling the expectations for Méntrida Garnacha: depth, soft fruit charge, delicacy and energetic back palate. (FC)14% Drink 2019-2025

16

- *Jiménez-Landi, Sotorrondero 2016 Méntrida* Labelled 'Vino de Parcela'. Garnacha and Syrah planted on granitic soils. Cold maceration, 30% whole bunch, aged for 12 months in large oak casks. 4,000 bottles.

Tasted blind. This wine is a classic among the best-value wines in Spain. Very good quality, great price but limited production. It has lots of ripe strawberries and a clear fruit impact on the nose. It is lively and lifted. Still really youthful and showing a vivid expression. Great drinkability and approachability. In the best sense possible, this is a wine to drink without thinking. It tastes much more Garnacha than Syrah to me. **GV** (FC)14% Drink 2019-2025

16

- *Canopy, Malpaso 2016 Méntrida* 27-year-old Syrah planted in Camarena village at 350–450 m elevation. 4,500 kg/ha. Whole cluster, cold maceration for five days, indigenous-yeast fermentation and aged in large-format oak for 12 months.

Tasted blind. The wine displays a generous oak charge and shows mint, black pepper, smoke

and toast. It is consistent and rounded with superbly ripe black fruit. Appropriate intensity and really tightly textured, still to mellow. It has a leathery touch that I did not detect in previous vintages. It displays lots of black fruits, a meaty character and black olives at the back palate. It is a remarkable vintage, but more power than in previous years. (FC)14% Drink 2019-2025
16

- **Canopy, Tres Patas 2016 Méntrida** *High-elevation Garnacha planted at 750–850 m in El Real de San Vicente village. 55- to 90-year-old vines. Mountainous vineyard surrounded by holm oaks and juniper trees. Very low yields of 2,000 kg/ha. Cold maceration, whole cluster. Neither stabilised nor filtered.*

Tasted blind. This is a rich, dark and intense Garnacha. What concentration and ripeness! It has generous alcohol and is the ripest Tres Patas I have ever tasted. The fruit is really consistent, juicy and a stream of density. Tannins are integrated and mellowed. It is an explosive Garnacha from Méntrida. (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2025

16.5

- **Arrayán, La Suerte de Arrayán 2016 Méntrida** *Garnacha from El Real de San Vicente village in Toledo. 750 m elevation. Organic production. Yields limited to 2,500 kg/ha. Harvested by hand, cold maceration for 3 days, indigenous yeast, 20 days of skin contact and aged 12 months in French oak barrels of 300 and 500 litres. Just under 10,000 bottles produced.*

Tasted blind. This is a very delicate and floral style: violets, jasmine, herbal, apothecary aromas and layers of soft red fruit. It has complexity and refinement on the nose. I really like the delicacy; it is elegantly driven through the palate, soft and warm. It has vivid expression on the mid palate and great delineation. I am very impressed by this, and I truly think this is a bargain. What delicacy! **GV** (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2025

18

- **Tavera, Vendimia Seleccionada 2016 Méntrida** *45% Syrah, 45% Tempranillo, 10% Garnacha. Planted in Arcicóllar and Camarena villages. Aged in 300-litre barrels.*

Tasted blind. The wine has a prominent oak charge displaying toast, vanilla, cinnamon and liquorice. The oak slightly overwhelms the fruit and displays a sweet profile. The palate is quite refined, soft and nicely textured. However, the oak does not let the fruit fully express itself. (FC)13.5% Drink 2019-2023

15

- **Daniel Gómez Jiménez-Landi, Cantos del Diablo Sierra de Gredos 2016 Méntrida** *Garnacha coming from a single plot (hence labelled *Vino de Parcela*) of 0.4 ha (1 acre). 70-year-old vines planted on granitic and sandy soils in El Real de San Vicente. Biodynamic cultivation. Whole-cluster fermentation, indigenous yeast and 64 days of extremely gentle skin contact. Aged in French oak foudres. Around 1,737 bottles.*

Tasted blind. Very pale colour, almost like a dark rosé. Extremely closed, it needs decanting. Very flinty and closed, not expressing its full potential due to the reductive character (struck flint and rubber). The palate profile is very delicate, deep and refined. It almost tastes like Pinot Noir to me. However, after 90 minutes in the decanter the aromas still don't shine. I would love to see how ageing helps the wine to fully express itself. (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2025

16+

- **Daniel Gómez Jiménez-Landi, Las Uvas de la Ira Sierra de Gredos 2016 Méntrida** *Garnacha. 'Vino del Pueblo' on the label. 60- to 70-year-old vines planted in El Real de San Vicente village, on granitic and sandy soils. Biodynamic cultivation. Whole-cluster fermentation, indigenous yeast and 50–60 days of extremely gentle skin contact. Fermented and aged in French oak foudres of 15–30 hl for 10 months. 11,500 bottles.*

Taste blind. Extremely pale colour. It has a fragrant, delicate, elegant and mineral expression. Wow! It is really charming: pomegranate, flint and fresh fruit. What an immersive nose. I love

the palate construction: long and deep, the tannins are superbly integrated and delicate. I found delicacy and elegance in my glass, with tight acidity that drives the wine through the palate. The alcohol level is so well supported by the squashed red-fruit aromas that seem to be never-ending. Less-is-more – a thrilling wine. (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2030

18

- Tavera, Garnacha Vieja 2015 Métrida *Garnacha from Arcicóllar and Camarena villages. 60- to 80-year-old vines. Aged in 500-litre French oak barrels.*

Tasted blind. The wine is starting to show notes of evolution. Herbal, mint, toast and some wormwood aromas. It is ripe and concentrated, generous and charged. The back palate has some tertiary notes such as earth and mushrooms. (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2023

15

- Vega Berciana, El Espinillo 2015 Métrida *Old-vine Garnacha yielding 6,000 kg/ha. The growers practice polyculture (vineyards share the land with olive trees). Fermented in cement tank at 22 °C. 25 days' skin contact. Aged in 300-litre French oak barrels. Limited production to 1,200 bottles. Co-operative producer.*

Tasted blind. The wine is slightly closed but opens beautifully after few minutes in the glass. It has a mineral expression and shows dry leaves, pomegranate, red cherries and a touch of herbs. It has a very delicate palate, slightly angular but lots of vivacity. The palate is deep rather than broad, with pure flavours and tight expression. It is complex, elegant and pure. A discovery coming from a remarkable co-operative. **GV** (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2025

€12 approx in Spain 16.5

- Gonzálo Valverde, El Remedio del Rey 2015 Métrida *Garnacha planted in Val de Santo Domingo and Carmena villages. Organic cultivation. Low yields of 4,000 kg/ha.*

Tasted blind. The wine is really toasty and intense on the nose: eucalyptus, mint, toast and vanilla. The oak slightly overwhelms the ripe dark-fruit charge. I love the concentration and the fruit texture; rounded, juicy and well profiled. I would definitely love to see this wine with a bit less oak, as the fruit is really succulent. Top-quality fruit but hidden by oak. (FC)14.5%

Drink 2019-2025

15.5

- Alonso Cuesta, Valprimero 2015 Métrida *Garnacha, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah planted in Carmena and La Torre de Esteban Hambrán villages. Traditional agriculture. Harvested by hand, cold maceration for 48 hours and soft pumping-over during fermentation. Six months' ageing in American and French oak.*

Tasted blind. The wine is clean and has prominent fruit (dark, smashed fruit). The oak displays integrated vanilla, liquorice and cedar notes. It is a soft and delicate wine. It has lots of drinkability, easy-going tannins and comfortable pleasure. Well made, it represents the soft and juicy face of Métrida, with a herbal aftertaste. (FC)13.5% Drink 2019-2025

16

- Canopy, La Viña Escondida 2015 Métrida *90-year-old Garnacha planted on granitic soils at 750-850 m elevation. An isolated vineyard surrounded by holm oaks and cultivated organically. 'La Viña Escondida' is 'The Hidden Vineyard'. The village is Real de San Vicente. 1,800 kg/ha.*

The profile is herbal and botanical with fruit behind the mineral character. Vibrant, delicate and long. A gentle and soft expression of Garnacha. I love the style: delicate, little tannins, refined texture. Really deep but not broad. Delineated through delicacy and depth. It truly is a Gredos-style Pinot-like Garnacha. (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2025

17

- López Campos, Almavid Garnacha Crianza 2014 Métrida *Single-vineyard Garnacha planted in 1919 in the village of Valmojado. Harvested by hand, délestage during fermentation. Aged for 10 months in French oak barrels. Limited production of 1,250 bottles.*

Tasted blind. The wine is really ripe and intense, unmistakably a warm-climate wine. It shows cherry jam, black olives and present oak. Voluminous and broad on the palate, with generous alcohol and sweet fruit. A touch of leather at the back palate. Broad fruit but a bit forced in terms of ripening. (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2022

15

- **Gonzálo Valverde, Mensagallo Crianza 2014 Méntrida** *Organically cultivated Garnacha from Val de Santo Domingo and Carmena villages. 4,000 kg/ha.*

Tasted blind. On the nose, it has lots of herbal and botanical notes. Dried flowers, cherry brandy, sweet black fruit and wormwood aromas. The palate is pleasant and rounded, but slightly rustic. It is starting to show tertiary notes such as dried herbs and cooked black fruits. Very good momentum from this powerful Garnacha wine. (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2022

15.5

- **Alonso Cuesta 2014 Méntrida** *Garnacha, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot coming from Camarena and La Torre de Esteban Hambrán villages. Traditional agriculture. Harvested by hand, cold maceration for 48 hours and gentle pumping-over. Aged in new American and French oak for 12 months.*

Tasted blind. On the nose, this is a very generous wine: an explosion of black fruit, toasted oak, pungent spices and mint. It is very ripe but not on the jammy side, displaying a refreshing minty lift. It has great consistency and depth. Am I feeling salty notes? Vivid and lifted acidity despite the fruit charge. It has a modern international profile, with prominent oak and fruit. It could be from anywhere, but no doubt the quality is there. (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2025

16

- **Tavera, Edición Numerada 2014 Méntrida** *Syrah yielding 7,000 kg/ha, planted in Arcicóllar and Camarena villages. Fermented and aged in new 500-litre French oak barrels.*

Tasted blind. Extremely spicy and showing lots of black pepper, cinnamon and cloves. The fruit is a bit overwhelmed by the spiciness. It has a concentrated style, prominent tannins, bitter notes and is well-charged with fruit. Consistent and firm. It is an ample, broad and herbal Syrah. Slightly rustic back palate. (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2022

16

- **López Campos, Almavid Syrah Crianza 2014 Méntrida** *Syrah from Valmojado village. It yields 3,800 kg/ha. Totally destalked and délestage practised during fermentation. Aged in French oak barrels for 8 months.*

Tasted blind. The wine seems to have suffered from premature oxidation. The fruit is generous and has a warm condition. I would love to have tasted a more vivid and younger expression. (FC)13.5% Drink 2019-2020

14.5

- **Arrayán Syrah 2014 Méntrida** *Syrah from Santa Cruz del Retamar village in Toledo. The vineyard was planted in 1999 on sandy soils. Organic cultivation. Cold maceration for 2 days, 30 days of skin contact during fermentation. 12 months' ageing in French oak. Total production 3,000 bottles.*

Tasted blind. This is a very rounded and sweet-scented wine. Lots of spices: cloves, black pepper, curry. It has consistency and is well driven by a vivid freshness. Deep and long palate. Well-managed Syrah, with a herbal and botanical aftertaste. A meaty and succulent wine! (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2025

16

- **Arrayán, Estela 2013 Méntrida** *Syrah, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot. The vineyard is located in Santa Cruz del Retamar village on sandy soils. 17 months' ageing in French oak barrels. For this wine, after racking, the last fraction of each of the premium wines from the winery are blended together. This last fraction is richer and more concentrated, closer to the taste of a press wine.*

Tasted blind. This wine has lots of everything: lots of oak, lots of ripeness, jammy notes and deep cherry and blueberry aromas. On the palate, the sweet fruit is noticeable and has a really ripe aspect. It is spectacular but lacks a bit of soul. Firm tannins, but I wonder whether they will finally mellow. Inky, dairy and charged wine. Lots of power! (FC)14.5% Drink 2019-2025