Introducing our new Spanish specialist

24 May 2011 by Jancis Robinson

Read Luis' excellent take on the current state of Spanish wine - the good, the bad and the ugly and Victor de la Serna's recently added assessment of him below.

We have specialist writers on Italy in Walter Speller, Germany in Michael Schmidt and American wines in Linda Murphy - all very talented individuals. But we have no one specifically covering the extremely dynamic Spanish wine scene. I'm delighted to say that this situation has just been remedied.

Our new Spanish specialist correspondent Luis Gutiérrez works in business management for the large multinational company Tetra Pak in Madrid, sharing his free time between his family and wine. He's frequently to be seen in different wine regions in both Spain and Portugal, tasting at wine cellars and enjoying the local gastronomy and the conviviality of wine producers, being particularly interested in the human story behind great wines.

He writes and tastes regularly for elmundovino.com and other publications belonging to the *El Mundo* newspaper in Spain as well as contributing to other publications about wine and gastronomy in Spain, Portugal, Puerto Rico and the UK. With Jesús Barquín and Victor de la Serna, he is co-author of *The Finest Wines of Rioja and Northwest Spain* to be published later this year.

He is a Cavaleiro da Confraria do Vinho do Porto, port and the Douro being favourites of his. But deep inside, his heart belongs not in the Iberian Peninsula, but to… Burgundy! He writes about what is happening in the wine world in Spain and Portugal, with occasional forays into Burgundy, Rhône, German Riesling, Champagne and other classical regions in Europe, as he writes locally about foreign wines, and abroad mainly about Spanish wines.

Purple pager and Spanish wine writer and winemaker Victor de la Serna adds:

Luis is a very able person. His daytime job is not related to wine (he's a top exec for TetraPak in Spain and the Mediterranean), which has its cons but many pros: mainly, that he's he's totally incorruptible. He's much younger than me (early 40s), a computer whizz and former hard rock musician, and we've been friends since the early days of the internet, when all the wine geeks in the world quickly got in touch with each other (as you and I well know). He has a very good command of English (not to mention an English wife).

In addition to co-authoring the north west Spain book for TWOFW with Jesús and me, Luis has been writing for elmundovino since our inception in 2000, and he's part of our small tasting team. He is probably Spain's foremost specialist on Portuguese and Swiss wines (yes - the Swiss thing is an oddity he and I share) and one of the top three or four on Burgundy, the Rhône and Riesling. This is of no direct interest to your purposes, but of course it means he is in constant touch with what's best in the world and therefore doesn't suffer from 'palate insularity' as so many Spanish tasters do. His specialties also give you a clear clue of his general taste in wine.

As a taster, he has won the Spanish blind tasting championship for pairs which Vila Viniteca organises yearly (with Ignacio Villalgordo), and he has been a part of the elmundovino team which has twice placed second, in 2009 and 2010, in La Revue du Vin de France*'s European blind tasting championship. (With him on the team are Jesús Barquín, Ignacio Villalgordo and our naturalised Brazilian centre-forward, Dirk Niepoort.)*