

Ferran introduces himself

13 May 2013 by Ferran Centelles

Dear friends of www.JancisRobinson.com,

Never in my life would I have imagined to have an opportunity like this. I have been on an emotional roller coaster for the last two weeks. On one side I feel extremely happy, moved and really eager to collaborate and work hard, but also I feel that from now on I will have a huge responsibility to transmit in the best way the entire intricacies of the country with more vineyards than any other in the world.

I am honestly very grateful to Jancis Robinson and all the team. I know they are taking a gamble, as my English writing skills are not above the average. But in response I will try to offer my unique working tool: constancy.

I would like also to thank to all the elBulli team, especially Ferran Adrià, Juli Soler and my very dear sommelier colleague there David Seijas, for all the support and learning I have received from them during the last few years. Ferran was extremely happy when he knew this collaboration; it is also thanks to him that I can take this step.

I also feel fortunate because in Spain there is a huge array of very talented tasters and wine professionals. I admire many Spanish colleagues and I really hope to live up to this opportunity of representing the country.

I start this new way with just two clear objectives: education and objectivity. I will try to learn as much as possible and I am sure your help as a Purple Pager will be crucial for my development. I will take any feedback from you and use it to develop as a wine professional (I will rate wine but please feel free to rate me at any time too). I will also push my objectivity to the maximum as I understand my role is slightly different here than in the restaurant, where hints of subjectivity were always welcome.

Last week Alex Hunt MW made a confession in his article. He wrote, 'I am from the cassette generation', and that provides the perfect introduction to descibe the first time I met Jancis. I remember that day as though it were yesterday. Unfortunately it was one of the saddest days in the history of Spain. I had waited for a long time for that day. Jancis was giving a conference about Spanish wines in the Alimentaria exhibition in Barcelona but the day began with the catastrophic news of the terrorist attack by radical Islamists during rush hour on four trains in Madrid. That day is remembered as 11-M 2004 in Spain where we all still keep in mind the discouragement that we lived through during the months after the tragedy.

We were hundreds of peoples waiting to hear Jancis, my cassette* was ready to start recording (which makes me think that I was probably really old fashioned in 2004) and after the disheartening moment of silence the conference started. That day I learned a lot about how to look to the Spanish wines in a global way and I was really impressed about the sensibility and objectivity displayed by Jancis. That day I became Jancis fan.

Today I am writing the first words for <u>Jancisrobinson.com</u> and I have a strange but nice feeling. I had before the same feeling at the restaurant: a mix of happy nervousness, waiting to do it well and with a lot of respect for the person receiving the words. Is the same sensation I used to have when we had wine people at the restaurant. I remember being more nervous (in a good way) when admired wine people used to come more than when any celebrities came. I remember the long afternoons at elBulli restaurant waiting and preparing myself to receive the much loved <u>Luis Gutiérrez</u> (whom I think it is impossible to replace), or <u>Gérard Basset</u>, or Isa Bal [of The Fat Duck], or Josep 'Pitu' Roca [of Celler Can Roca in Gerona that has just been voted Best Restaurant in the World], or Nick and Jancis. This was exactly the same feeling that I am experiencing while writing these words to you - exactly the same excitement about doing my best and exactly the same hope of making people enjoy what I do.

Now I feel like the personage from Robert Frost's poem 'The Road Not Taken', mentioned by J F Kennedy in one of his speeches: 'Two roads diverged in a wood, and I - I took the one less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.'

I hope that the unexplored path that I am starting today by your side will be pleasurable and of course as in the film *Casablanca*, 'the beginning of a beautiful friendship'.

*I have had this cassette in my room since 2004, although I no longer have any way of playing it. So, Alex Hunt, I join the cassette club.

Jancis Robinson.com