

# Spanish Evening at La Tortilla Asesina

21<sup>st</sup> August 2024

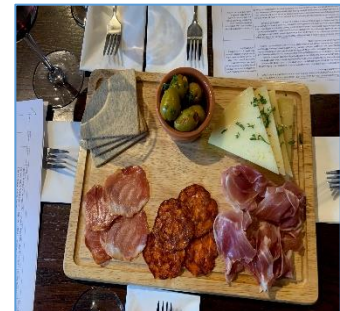
by Ormond Smith

Scotland's oldest tapas bar/restaurant, La Tortilla Asesina in Inverness was the venue for our recent Spanish Evening, owner and fellow confrere Duncan Chisholm Jnr affording the Goustevin a private room for the evening, he himself both presenting the different wines and cooking a paella dish for the repast. Limitations on the size of the room dictated the attendance levels but the event was fully subscribed for what turned out to be a most authentic Spanish culinary and vinous experience.



**Duncan introduces the evening**

On arrival, a welcoming glass of Cava was accompanied by very moreish pintxos, tasty appetisers of both smoked salmon/cream cheese and toasted Manchego cheese with boquerones (anchovies) – that certainly got the evening off splendidly! Once seated and after Connetable Nicol's welcome, our host Duncan took over and explained the evening ahead, the wine areas involved and indeed the wines themselves, the variety of tapas and the paella which he would be creating and cooking in our presence. The tapas selection which included three traditional variations of pork- lomo, chorizo and Serrano and a wedge of semi aged Manchego cheese more than capably stirred the palate and the tapas were accompanied by both a white and a red wine – the white was an Albariño from Galicia, the El Camaron capturing the purity of the Albariño grape, spicy yellow citrus with saline notes, light and fresh with nectarine and nutmeg notes, yet offering an underlying depth and texture. The red was a Monastrell from the Jumilia wine region just west of Alicante in south-east Spain. From the Viña Elena vineyards, this Monastrell was made with grapes from 35-40 year old vines, hand harvested from dry, non-irrigated chalky soils and



**The selection of tapas**



**The Madrid paella - delicious!**

the resultant wine showed dark maroon in the glass with red berry aromas on the nose with a light hint of balsamic. A balanced, full bodied fresh wine which is enhanced with seasoned tannins and recurring traces of ripe fruit. Both wines embraced the flavours of the tapas greatly.

All this time, Duncan was energetically creating the Madrid Paella in the corner of the room and we were soon presented with generous portions. The Madrid paella combines La Bomba rice with smoked haddock, mussels and marinated king prawns, presenting colourfully on the plate and tasting deliciously. To accompany this signature

Spanish dish was a signature Spanish wine, a Tempranillo from the Alavesia area in northern Rioja. 95% Tempranillo with a 5% touch of Graciano to give aging properties to the wine. This Reserva Rioja DOC is made from 40 year old vines sheltered below the Sierra Cantabria mountain range and it

fulfilled expectations – a deep, cherry red in the glass with strident aromas of black fruits and a palate exuding notes of fruit compote, spices, brioche and dairy, long and elegant with a silky smooth finish. The culinary temptations culminated with the dessert, a date slice in pastry with ice cream and “mated” with a glass of Pedro Ximenez, the rich, dark sherry generally referred to simply as PX. The bodega of Gutierrez Colosia is situated on the banks of the Puerto de Santa Maria in Jerez, benefitting from the humidity levels to produce the aging of the Fino. The vines are grown in Albariza soil, perfect for sherry production and after picking are left out on mats in the sun to dry and become, in effect, raisins. When pressed they produce an intensely rich must to which grape alcohol is added to prevent fermentation, the resultant sherry then aged for over four years in barrel. Naturally sweet and dark in colour, the nose emits aromas of caramelised raisins and molasses, the palate is succulent and rich and the finish is quite intense – what a climax to the Tasting!!

Thanks and appreciation go to Duncan for the organisation of the evening, the selection of outstanding wines and the imaginative and creative culinary content of the evening, and not forgetting appreciation to consoeurs Christina Cameron and Caroline Duncan for their assistance in not only dispensing the trays of pintxos and the welcoming glasses of Cava on our arrival but for also creating the tasty appetisers in the late afternoon. To sum up ..... yet another excellent evening in the traditions of Goustevin Scotland!



**Good Wine ...**



**Good Food ...**



**Good Company ...**



**The art of flamenco**