



ACADEMIA  
EXTREMEÑA DE  
GASTRONOMÍA

GASTRONOMY ACADEMY  
OF EXTREMADURA

el **ATRIL**

THE AEXG MAGAZINE

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THE ACADEMY  
NEWS

by Francisco Saúco

The Academy's  
activities  
continue at the  
same pace



TRAVELLING  
GOURMET

by AEXG

On this occasion  
the travellers  
were the **RAG**  
and the **IAG**



TOURISM AND  
GASTRONOMY

by Francisco Rivero

The region of  
**Tentudía**

This region is located in the south  
of the province of Badajoz and  
borders the province of Huelva. It is  
made up of a total of nine villages...



SIGNED BY

Fernando Valbuena

**Porrina in  
"El Sótano"**

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same ones. The story is long, but  
suffice it to say that it is one of...



SHAKEN,  
NOT STIRRED

by Alfonso Ramos

Gastronomic  
expressions and  
**eponyms part II**

Do you remember the term "**bain-  
marie**"? Following the thread of ATRIL...



HARMONIES

by Rafael Anón

**Extremadura  
and Iberian ham**

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Spain with more **dehesa** (about a  
million hectares) and more pure  
Iberian pigs, so its cured meats and...



WINE OF  
THE MONTH

by Marcelino Díaz

WHITE WINE  
**Legado de  
Barros 2023**

Winery Las Minitas  
Almendrajejo, Badajoz

The death of our dear and appreciated  
Isabel Mijares leaves me the legacy of...



CHAIRS OF  
THE  
ACADEMY

Each new month  
you will meet  
the personalities  
that give name to  
our Chairs

GAZPACHO





## THE ACADEMY NEWS

by Francisco Saúco



Vineyards in  
Diemersdal,  
South Africa

# The Academy's activities continue at the same pace

As we do every month, we **review the activities of our Academy**, so that everyone is aware of the life of the Academy.

In this regard, it is worth highlighting two of them, which have taken place since my last communication:

– A **magnificent conference** within the programme that is being carried out within the **Seminario Permanente de Gastronomía (Permanent Seminar of Gastronomy)** in collaboration with the **UEX** and which dealt with the **preparation of vinegars**, their **types** and the **different dressings** that can be made with them as well as the **preservation of food** with them; at the end of the conference a tasting of vinegars was held followed by a tasting of salads that were dressed with the different dressings that had been discussed and whose base, of course, was made up of the different vinegars tasted.

– There was also a **tasting** led and commented by the **director of the International Wine School**, in which the areas, grapes and wines of three different places were studied: **Italy** (Tuscany and its Sangiovese grape), **Argentina** (Mendoza and its Malbec grape) and **South Africa** (Diemersdal and its Pinotage grape) were harmonised with products indigenous to each area. The tastings were rounded off with a lively discussion.

We continue with our activities, fulfilling our aims and preparing new events, working to continue to enhance our **Gastronomy Academy of Extremadura**.

Greetings to all of you.

### Francisco Saúco

President of the  
Academia Extremeña de Gastronomía



Vineyards in  
Tuscany,  
Italy



Vineyards in  
Mendoza,  
Argentina





## The region of Tentudía

This region is located in the south of the province of Badajoz and borders the province of Huelva. It is made up of a total of nine villages: **Bienvenida**, **Bodonal de la Sierra**, **Cabeza la Vaca**, **Calera de León**, **Fuente de Cantos**, **Fuentes de León**, **Monesterio**, **Montemolín** and **Segura de León**, covering an area of 1,285 square kilometres.

If a traveller wants to visit this area, they must see a key point, the **Monastery of Tentudía**, located at the highest point in the province, at over 1,100 metres above sea level. You have to see it because it shows the best **Mudejar and Renaissance art**. We already know the legend that the master of the Military Order of Santiago, **Pelayo Pérez Correa**, who according to tradition was the one who asked the Virgin to stop the day in order to defeat the Arabs. This monastery is located within the municipality of **Calera de León**, where the **Santiaguista convent** is located, the seat of the knights and which combines **Gothic and Renaissance styles**.



Region of  
Tentudía



Santiaguista  
Convent in  
Calera de León



Monastery  
of Tentudía



Chanfaina  
Extremaduran  
dish



Cabeza la Vaca



Nearby is **Cabeza la Vaca**, the birthplace of **Diego María de la Tordoya**, one of those who accompanied Columbus on his discovery of the New World. It is the **highest village in Extremadura**, with magnificent chestnut forests.

Another illustrious figure from the region is the famous painter **Francisco de Zurbarán**, born in **Fuente de Cantos**, whose work can be found in the sacristy of the monastery of Guadalupe, in the Museum of Fine Arts in Seville, the Prado Museum and other museums abroad.



Chanfaina  
Festival

And in the heart of the Silver Route is the last village in the south of Extremadura: **Monesterio**. This is the site of the Mansio Curiga. Here there are two centres to be seen, one is the **Vía de la Plata Interpretation Centre** and the other is a **museum** dedicated to the **Iberian Pig Ham**, as this region produces numerous herds of Iberian pigs and, therefore, an exquisite cured meat.

Ham is a pleasure for the senses for any traveller who passes through the region and orders a plate of this gastronomic jewel. Another festival of Extremaduran cuisine is the **Fiesta de la Chanfaina (Chanfaina Festival)**, in which the entrails of lambs are cooked, which is held on the last weekend of April in **Fuente de Cantos** and attracts more than 10,000 people, having been declared a **Festival of Gastronomic Tourist Interest** by the Regional Government of Extremadura.



**Monesterio.**  
View of  
the natural  
surroundings  
and the **Iberian  
Ham Museum**  
façade



This traveller has passed through the restaurant **Casa Vicente**, in **Cabeza la Vaca**, which offers an exquisite menu with **local food products and wines**. It is a very welcoming place within the scarce offer of local restaurants. Highly recommended.

## Francisco Rivero

Academician of the **AEXG**  
PhD in Tourism  
Chronicler of Las Brozas and Hinojal



## MEZCLADO, NO AGITADO por Alfonso Ramos

\*1/2 In Spanish, the idiom "¡Me importa un pimiento!" (I do care about a pepper) means the same as "I don't give a damn!" in English. Similarly, "¡No me montes un pollo!" (Don't make a chicken) means "Don't make a fuss" or "Don't make a scene".

\*2  
No me montes  
un pollo

\*1  
¡Me importa  
un pimiento!



## Gastronomic expressions and eponyms (part II)

### More gastronomic eponyms

Do you remember the term "**bain-marie**"? Following the thread of the previous number 33 of ATRIL, we continue investigating more techniques and gastronomic dishes that owe their name to people or places...

> **Pionono**. A pastry that is like a sort of jelly roll, but small and standing upright, on which a toasted cream is poured and soaked in syrup. This sweet is named after Cardinal Giovanni Maria Mastai Ferretti, who was pope between 1846 and 1878 under the name of Pio IX or Pio Nono, as it is called in Italian. He was the last earthly monarch, as popes were formerly kings of the Papal States. The pastry in question imitates the chubby figure of the pontiff.

In fact, the expression pionono is also used with this meaning: "I'm going to buy you a green pionono" (which ironically means "you've got it made"), "you're like a pionono" (you're very beautiful) or "you're worth a pionono" (you're worth a lot)...

> **Yemas de Santa Teresa or Yemas de Ávila**. Traditional sweet made from egg yolks, sugar and lemon. Sometimes we see it with lemon juice; other times, simply by infusing the peel of the citrus fruit. The result is orange balls covered with icing sugar, with a thin crunchy layer - caused by the sugar hardening - and very soft on the inside; a bite that melts on the palate. These yolks are named after the Spanish city where they are made, as well as after Saint Teresa de Jesús, a nun from Ávila, founder of the Carmelite Order.

> **Nachos**. The name of the dish comes from Piedras Negras, in the state of Coahuila in Mexico (near the US border), in 1943. The wives of American soldiers arrived at a restaurant called El Moderno after a long walk day. It was already late and the restaurant was about to close, but the manager did not dare tell them that he would not give them dinner, so he decided to improvise a recipe with what was left in the kitchen: totopos (fried or toasted tortilla chips), cheese and jalapeños. The women were fascinated and asked the manager for the name of the dish, who thought they were asking his name, to which he replied: "Nacho", Ignacio Anaya. The rest is history.



Nachos



Yemas de  
Santa Teresa

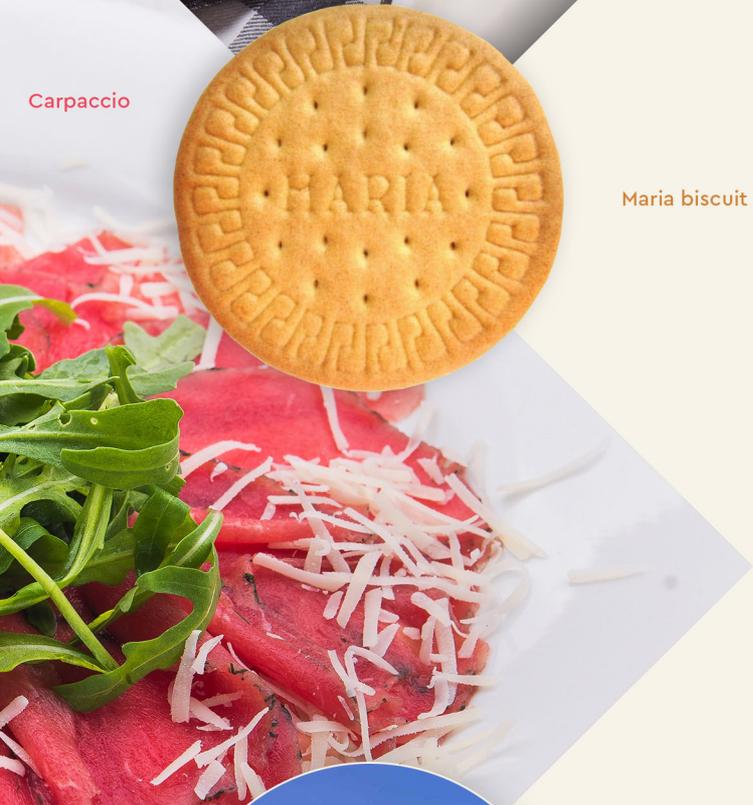




Tatin cake



Bechamel sauce



Carpaccio

Maria biscuit



Tatin Hotel

> **Carpaccio.** No, the Italian painter Vittore Carpaccio was not its inventor. In fact, he lived some four centuries before Venetian chef Giuseppe Cipriani cut ultra-thin slices of meat in 1950 for a countess who had been advised by doctors to eat raw meat. The dish was a success, and when Cipriani saw the dressed meat it reminded him of the shades Carpaccio used in his paintings. And that's what he wanted to call it.

> **Bechamel or besamel sauce.** This sauce consists of a thick mass of butter, flour and milk. According to historians, its origin is attributed to François Pierre de la Varenne, the court maitre d' of Louis XIV, who decided to give it that name to flatter Louis de Bechameil (1630-1703), Marquis de Nointel, who was the court butler, a prominent financier of the Newfoundland cod-fishing campaigns, court administrator, ambassador and great lover of cooking. Pierre de la Varenne wrote the book *Le Cuisinier François* in 1651 (a work that marks the transition from the medieval cuisine of yesteryear to modern haute cuisine), where this recipe is first recorded in writing.

> **Tatin cake.** This tart refers to the way it is baked, with the top side down, which is turned upside down once it is ready. This French dessert also originated in hotel kitchens, albeit by accident. The name comes from the Hotel Tatin, run by the Tatin sisters. Although the specific origin of the tart is not entirely clear, it is thought that they overcooked some apples by accident, and so as not to waste them, they put a layer of pastry on top, which they turned over when it was time to serve it. They liked the result so much that they added it to their recipe book.

> **Madalena or madeleine.** Borrowed from the French Madeleine. The name possibly comes from a French confectioner, Madeleine Paumier, who lived in the 18th century. We already know the Spanish madeleine. The French madeleine, the original one, has a shell shape on the bottom because they are made with a special mould.

> **Maria biscuit.** When you think of a biscuit if you live in Spain, the first that comes to mind is undoubtedly this one. It is an English invention from the 19th century.

The first Maria biscuits came out of the oven of some London bakers, PeekFrean & Co Biscuits, and they were made to commemorate the wedding of the Duchess Maria Alexandrovna of Russia, who was marrying the Duke of Edinburgh. The biscuits were very popular in the UK, as they were the perfect accompaniment to 5 o'clock tea. In Spain we quickly took to them (as in many other countries).

Gioacchino  
Antonio  
Rossini



> **Rossini cannelloni.** Gioacchino Antonio Rossini (1792–1868) was an Italian composer known for works such as "The Barber of Seville" and "William Tell". But Rossini also had a great passion: cooking. In fact, he is almost as well known as a gastronome as he is as a composer. He was a lover of food, a friend of the great chefs of the time and a virtuoso at the cooker, a passion he developed only with his friends. It seems that Gioacchino perfected cannelloni, after which one of the ways of preparing it is named. But Rossini also had many dishes named after him: eggs, sirloin, chicken, soup, salad, cannelloni, cocktail, sole, risotto, pheasant and more. Some he made himself, although Escoffier was responsible for many of them. Many of these dishes included foie gras as one of the main ingredients, as Rossini was very fond of them.

> **Praliné.** Cream made with chocolate and nuts, widely used as a filling for bonbons. In fact, chocolates containing this cream are also called pralines. Praliné is a loan from French, a Gallicism, which comes from the surname of a 17th century French marshal, César du Plessis-Praslin. The second surname pronounced in French loses the sonority of the 's' and is an acute word: pralin, praliné. The inventor of this recipe was not the marshal, but his cook.



Praliné

> **Clementines.** Named after Père Clément Rodier, a French monk who lived in North Africa in the early 20th century. Apparently, he found a natural mutation of the mandarin that he cultivated (or created) a hybrid of mandarin and Seville oranges. However, the fruit may have originated much earlier in Asia.



Clementinas

> **Bloody Mary.** Internationally famous cocktail. One of the most widespread theories says that its creation is due to Fernand Petiot, who prepared this drink for the first time in 1921, in Harry's Bar in Paris. It is named after Mary I of England.

> **Pavlova cake.** Dessert made with meringue, named after the ballerina Anna Pavlova, with whom the creator of this dessert is said to have been in love. It is crunchy on the outside and very creamy and light on the inside.



Pavlova  
cake

The inhabitants of New Zealand and Australia have claimed ownership of the recipe for themselves, as has Anzac Biscuit, although the ballerina's biographer writes that when she was on her world tour in 1926, during her stay in New Zealand, the chef at the hotel where Anna Pavlova was staying invented this dessert to surprise the ballerina.



Bloody  
Mary

Wibele



Delmonico  
steak



Albufera  
Poularde



Granny  
Smith  
apples

> **Granny Smith.** Apple originated in Australia in 1868 from a chance seedling propagated by horticulturist Maria Ann "Granny" Smith; hence the fruit is named after her.

> **Bing cherry.** Oregon horticulturist Seth Luelling (or Lewelling) developed the cherry around 1875, with the help of his Manchurian foreman Bing, who gave it its name.

> **Bistec Delmonico.** Apart from a high-quality cut of beef from the Sonora region, this is a dish named after Delmonico's restaurant, at one time considered the best in the United States. Along with lobster a la Delmonico, they are among the many that bear the name of the restaurant and/or its owners. The restaurant's chef Charles Ranhofer (1836–1899) named many dishes after historical figures, celebrities of the time and favourite customers.

> **Albufera sauce.** The chef Adolphe Dugléré, a pupil of Antoine Carême (the chef on whom Escoffier based the modernisation of French cuisine), was the creator of many classics and the driving force behind this sauce, dedicated to the Marshal of the French Empire and Duke of the Albufera Louis Gabriel Suchet (1770–1826). The chef made Poularde Albufera, a dish dressed with vol-au-vents with truffles, mushrooms and giblets. Poularde is a method of rearing hens for gastronomic use, and the hen raised in this way is also known as pularada, appreciated in haute cuisine for the delicacy of its meat, rich in infiltrated fat, which makes it very special for dishes that require baking.

> **Wibele.** Tiny sweet biscuits from the Franconian town of Langenburg. The dough is made from egg white, icing sugar, flour and vanilla sugar. They are similar to Russisch Brot (Russian bread), but are baked only until lightly browned. They are shaped in the form of an 8 and should formally be 22 mm long by 12 mm wide. They were invented by the royal cook of Prince Hohenlohe–Langenburg, Jakob Christian Carl Wibel. Although Café Bauer in Langenburg is the only company authorised to produce the original Wibele, because its owner registered the rights in 1911, the biscuits are manufactured by other companies.

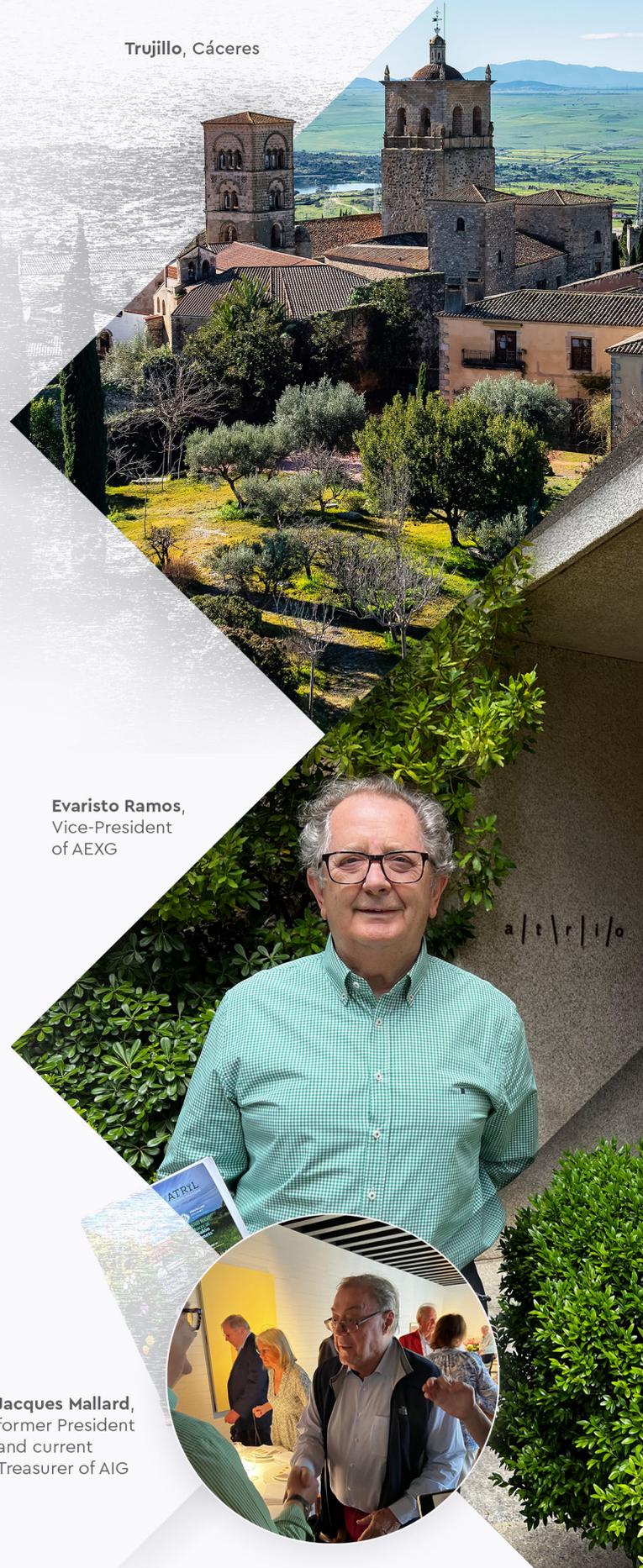
*(To be continued...).*

## Alfonso Ramos Retamar

Friend of the **Academia Extremeña de Gastronomía**



Trujillo, Cáceres



**Evaristo Ramos,**  
Vice-President  
of AEXG

## On this occasion the travellers were the **RAG** and the **AIG**

Although in this article we always aim to show the traveller from Extremadura the gastronomy and cultures of the world, this time we pass the baton to luxury visitors, whom we recently had the pleasure of hosting.

Last 2023, the **Real Academia de Gastronomía (Royal Academy of Gastronomy - RAG)** organised a tempting trip to Extremadura and Salamanca, at the request of the **International Academy of Gastronomy (AIG)**; unfortunately, this visit could not take place in the end.

However, **Fabien Petitcolas**, president of the AIG, contacted **Luis Suárez de Lezo**, president of the RAG, and urged him to organise a new visit. And so, members of the AIG, accompanied by the exquisite presence of Lourdes Plana, former president and academic of the RAG, were finally able to visit Madrid, Trujillo, Cáceres, Guijuelo and Salamanca from 10 to 14 June, honouring us with their presence on the 11th.

After a first contact with the beautiful architectural ensemble of Trujillo, our "travellers" set off for Cáceres to have lunch with the Vice-President of the **Academia Extremeña de Gastronomía (Gastronomy Academy of Extremadura)**, **Evaristo Ramos**, in our flagship restaurant, the three Michelin starred **Atrio**.

**Jacques Mallard,**  
former President  
and current  
Treasurer of AIG





## REAL ACADEMIA DE GASTRONOMÍA

Lourdes Plana,  
former President  
of RAG



Marinated shrimps  
Torre de Sande



The **lunch**, masterfully directed by **José Polo**, head waiter, and **Toño Pérez**, chef at Atrio, was a **gastronomic journey** for our visitors with a common thread, with a single master line: **the Iberian pig**.

From the appetizers to the dessert itself and during **22 steps**, the **pig** was present throughout; a commitment to a unique menu that exponentially elevates one of the jewels in our gastronomic crown and its surroundings.

The menu was divided into **5 blocks**: "Snacks", "Cochinito goes to beach", "When the cochinito takes a break in the dehesa", "Caviar and pork" and finally "Cochinito sweet side". Extraordinary morsels and sublime presentations; all of which are put together with logic, mastery and exquisite taste.

After a **visit** to the incredible monumental complex that makes up the **Old Town of Cáceres**, **dinner** took place in the **Torre de Sande** restaurant, a 15th century building with an imposing tower and a **charming garden** –also run by Toño and Jose–, where the cuisine is more intimate, traditional and with a focus on embers, Extremaduran sausages, spoon dishes and simple but excellently executed recipes.

**Bloody Mary**, celery, tomato granita, green onion ice-cream; **Marinated shrimps**, sour cream and smoked caviar; **Hake**, turnip, cauliflower and almonds pure; **Roasted goat**, potatoes pure with its reduction sauce; and finally, **Apple tatin pie** and vanilla ice-cream.

A fantastic day, which we hope and wish was to the full satisfaction of our illustrious "travelling gourmets".

## AEXG Editor

Alcantara style  
partridge  
Atrio





# WINE OF THE MONTH

by Marcelino Díaz

WHITE WINE

## Legado de Barros 2023

Winery Las Minitas

Almendralejo, Badajoz

### The resurgence of Pardina

The **death of our dear** and appreciated **Isabel Mijares** leaves me the legacy of writing this page on wines, which she had been completing, always admirably.

I will begin by talking about the very Extremadura **variety**, the **Pardina**, now that **whites** seem to be recovering an unusual **boom** as a consequence of climate change, which makes them more appetising and refreshing than the corpulent reds.

Marcelino Díaz, our recent "signing" to carry on Isabel Mijares' legacy



Isabel Mijares, at the last Academy Awards Gala





'Pardina' is a native grape variety exclusive to Extremadura and especially to the province of Badajoz, where it was grown before phylloxera devastated Extremadura's vineyards in 1897. As a natural selection of species, farmers chose it as the only variety to replant due to its good yields, its lower cultivation costs and its adaptation to the Extremadura climate and soil. As a result, single-varietal viticulture would grow from zero to more than 100,000 hectares in the 1970s.

The new generation of oenologists who today direct the winemaking process in our wineries have achieved with this variety a level of quality that has brought it to the level of the best white wines in Spain and as an example of this I bring to these pages this Legado de Barros 2023, produced by the oenologist Pepe Llanos in the Winery Las Minitas in Almendralejo, which I recommend you to know and enjoy.

### Tasting notes

**Appearance.** Pale, bright white colour.



**On the nose** it delivers clean, floral aromas.



**In the mouth.** The light, unctuous and well-balanced palate invites you to drink it again and again.



Its exceptional value for money makes it even more attractive. The bottle has an RRP of around five euros on the market.

### Marcelino Díaz

Academician of the AEXG

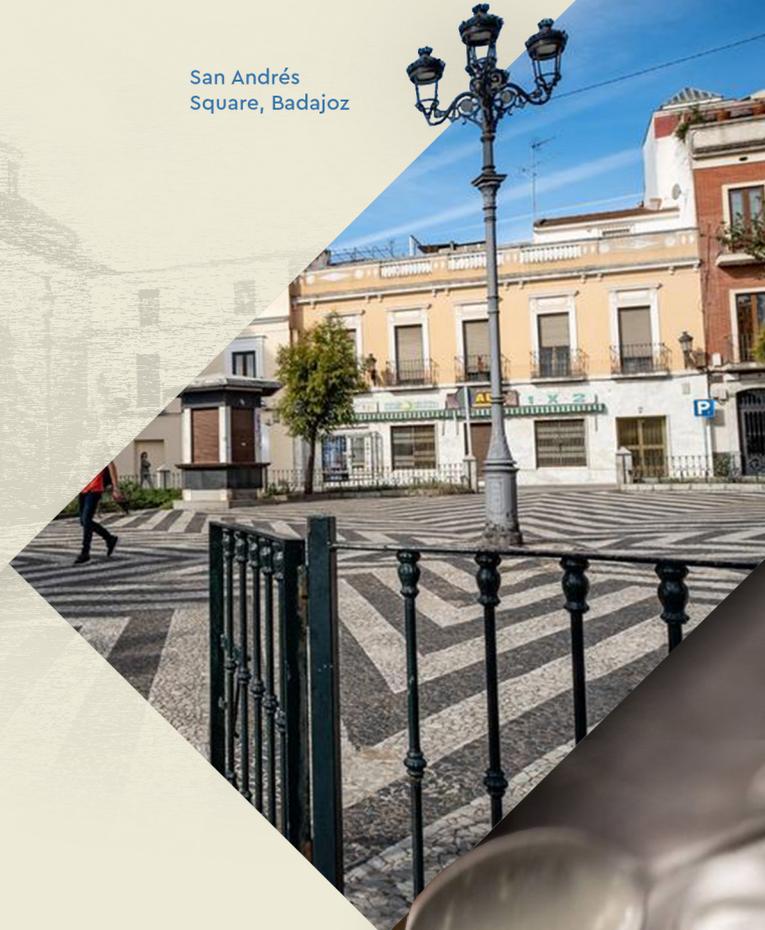




**SIGNED BY**  
Fernando Valbuena



San Andrés  
Square, Badajoz



## Porrina in “El Sótano”

Every second Thursday of the month I eat with friends. With the same ones. The story is long, but suffice it to say that it is one of the few gastronomic societies in Badajoz: **La Cuchara de San Andrés** (San Andrés Spoon). Perhaps the only one with its own premises at street level.

It is not enough to get together to eat, you have to **cook what you eat** with the hands that God has given us (to cook). That is why we are a gastronomic society.

For some years we ate and cooked in “**El Sótano**”, a restaurant that was, and still is, in Badajoz. I am telling this now that it is the centenary of the birth of Porrina. There, the same tables, the same chairs that one day **heard Porrina**. You would have to ask **Paco Zambrano**, who knows best, but it was enough for us to hear the echo of his presence, so gypsy and so Badajoz.

Gastronomic  
Society



Façade of the  
former **El  
Sótano**  
Restaurant



**EL SÓTANO** BAR Y RESTAURANT. Vinos de las mejores casas de La Mancha. Aperitivos variados. Cervezas y Licores. **PACO VACA**  
 ECHEGARAY, 8 BADAJOZ TELÉFONO 537

That the tangos are from Badajoz and the gypsies from the Plaza Alta... that "El Sótano" was a stopover for the man they called Marqués de **Porrina**. There he sang and ate. There, more than once and more than twice, the farras. "She is brown and poor, the cinnamon is browner and is eaten by the lords". There the friends and the serranas. There pans, casseroles and pots and pans for the greater glory of my land of Extremadura.

At that time in "El Sótano", **hake Basque style** reigned among the clientele, although **partridges in pepitoria** conspired to take the crown. Dishes that the cantaor (flamenco singer) surely tasted.

But it is said that Porra liked above all the grilled **pork sirloin** with lots of garlic and tomato with coarse salt. No lettuce, though. Those who knew him say that he didn't know how to peel prawns and that he took the bacon off the ham. They say that **for his hair** he would not allow any ointment other than **olive oil**.

**They say and they don't stop.** That his baptismal name was José Sálar Molina, that he was a child and a shoeshine boy. That he invented his own character, that he looked always really smart in his suit, always with a **carnation** in his buttonhole and a **clean, macho and flamenco song in his throat**. They say and they don't stop. They say that the Virgen de la Soledad has been craving for a carnation, they say that it was El Porra who gave her one.

## Fernando Valbuena

Academician of the AEXG



**HARMONIES**

by Rafael Ansón



## Extremadura and Iberian ham

Extremadura is probably the area of Spain with the most **dehesa** (around one million hectares) and the most **pure Iberian pigs**, which is why its cured meats and sausages, especially pure acorn-fed Iberian ham, are so good.

It is an extraordinary product, a hallmark of our culture and gastronomy. Precisely for this reason, it has a special section within the project "**España: Cocina Abierta** (Spain: Open Cuisine)", which was launched by **Google Arts & Culture** in collaboration with the Real Academia de Gastronomía (Royal Academy of Gastronomy) in 2019, and which immortalised our cuisine in the digital world.

### The production of Iberian ham

The **dehesa** is a **unique protected ecosystem**, where livestock (pigs, sheep, cattle) coexist with wild species such as wild boar, eagles or deer, and graze in the shade of holm oaks, cork oaks, gall oaks and oaks.

A landscape that has remained unchanged over time, and in which **new production techniques are mixed with ancient methods**, inherited even from Roman times, such as livestock farming, preserving pork legs in salt or artisan production.

With the arrival of autumn, the acorns fall and the '**montanera**' begins, which usually lasts until March. It could be said that what the **black Iberian pigs** (a breed with a large size, long snout, hairy skin and droopy ears) achieve is practically a miracle: they graze freely and **transform the oleic acid in the acorns into fat infiltrated** into the muscles of their legs.

After this time, the pig's leg undergoes several transformation processes (**salting, shaping, drying and curing**), which must take a minimum of 600 to 730 days from the time it is salted.



El jamón ibérico, un clásico de la gastronomía española

Mitos, términos y modos de consumo del jamón ibérico. Un plato tradicional acompañado, desde el desayuno a la cena.





### PDO Dehesa de Extremadura

Under the **Protected Designation of Origin Dehesa de Extremadura**, there are only two breeds: **100 % Iberian pigs** (whose hams carry a **black label**) and those with a **minimum of 75 %** (which carry the **red label**).

Of these, 90 % of the PDO production comes from acorn-fed pigs, i.e. without supplementary feeding on acorns or the other natural resources of the dehesa pasture. The remaining 10 % are "**cerdo de cebo de campo** (free-range pig)" which, during the fattening phase, are fed cereal and legume feed. The latter hams carry a **green label**.

### Harmonies for Iberian ham

On several occasions, I have been asked about the **best harmony for eating Iberian ham**. I have even experimented with academics, family and friends to see which was the majority result.

The first conclusion is that you have to be careful with the **temperature at which you eat** the ham, which should be around 22-24 °C. As for the beverage, **sherry wines** are great companions, especially **fino**, as well as **light red wines with slightly woody**. However, the best harmony is the one that each person likes best, as I always say, is beyond discussion.

### Rafael Ansón

Founding President and Honorary President of the **Real Academia de Gastronomía**





## CHAIRS OF THE ACADEMY

# Francisco de Zurbarán

By Rafael Bergillos López

A Spanish Golden Age painter who excelled in religious painting, following the provisions of the Counter-Reformation on Art. His works show his acute observation and reproduction of nature, especially in capturing tactile values, as well as a great talent for highlighting figures – on dark backgrounds in his first period, and later on beautiful landscapes. His **colouring** is **very personal** and well harmonised: pinks, mauves, greens and splendid whites. Zurbarán always emphasised the **humanity of the saintly characters**, and depicted natural elements and everyday scenes with a real and spiritualised air at the same time, in an atmosphere of magical silence.

**Fuente de Cantos** (Badajoz) had about 700 inhabitants when Francisco de Zurbarán, the sixth son of a well-to-do merchant of Basque origin, **was born there on 7 November 1598**. He showed signs of his talent as a child, and as early as **1613** his father granted him a power of attorney so that he could train with the image painter **Pedro Díaz de Villanueva** in Seville.

His **first known work** is an **Immaculate Conception** of **1616**, full of tenderness but also full of technical defects, as many as illusions. In **1617** he completed his apprenticeship and returned to his hometown without passing the master's examination; it seems that he was in a hurry to return, perhaps with **María Páez**, **whom he married** a few months later.

The Cabildo of Llerena – where he christened his daughter Maria – commissioned a fountain from him. Later he painted **The Visit of Saint Bruno to Pope Urban II** for the Carthusian monastery of Las Cuevas in Seville, where his wife had a family; **The Refectory**, a very unadorned work in which the whiteness of the canvas plays with the ivory light of the robes; and **The Virgin of Las Cuevas**, heir to the candour of the medieval virgins of mercy, according to Guinard. The dating of these pieces has been modified: they are no longer considered to be such an early production, but are dated to the middle of the century.

**Alonso Cano** was already **impressed** by these paintings and, at this point, the Carthusian friars advised him to travel to Granada to meet Sánchez Cotán, one of the few who worked on life paintings at that time.



**Self-portraits** by Zurbarán, one included in the collection of 10 stamps produced in 1962 by the FNMT-RCM (Fábrica Nacional de Moneda y Timbre - Royal Spanish Mint)



Immaculate Conception of 1616.



Detail of The Virgin of Las Cuevas (The Caves), 1655.



A detailed view of the lower torso and legs of the Crucified Christ, showing the white cloth draped over the body.

Detail of the  
Crucified Christ,  
1627

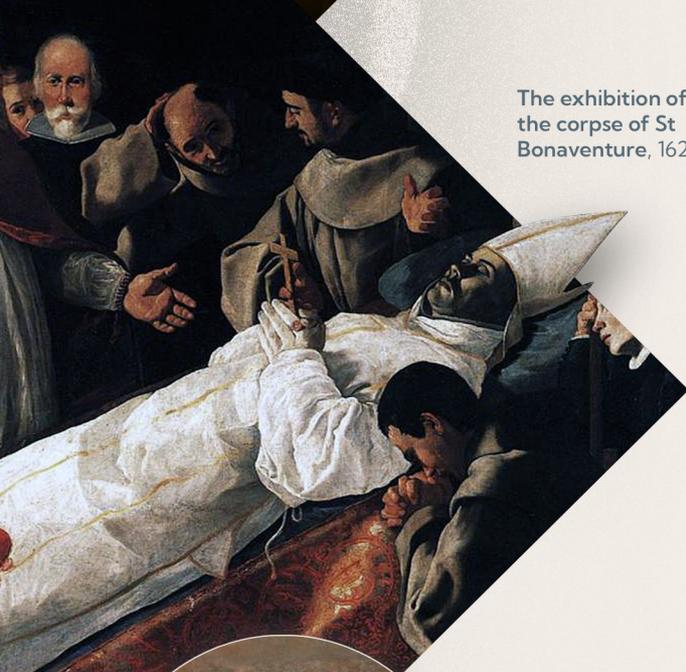
However, his early successes also coincided with personal sorrows: in **1623** he had his third daughter and **his wife died**.

It seems that, destitute in his loneliness, **he married Beatriz Morales** two years later, who was to support him greatly thereafter. He then began a period of **feverish work**: in **1626** the Dominican convent of Saint Paul commissioned **21 paintings** from him in a period of eight months, of which we have **The Miraculous Delivery of the True Portrait of St Dominic** in the monastery of Soriano and **The Miraculous Healing of Blessed Reginald of Orleans**, in which, on a plate, a cup, an apple and a rose appear, details of closeness that would become so common in his later works. Only three of the Doctors of the Church remain in Seville: **St. Ambrose**, in which he delves into psychological portraiture; **St Gregory the Great**, a wonderful study of perspective; and **St Jerome**, one of his greatest works.

He painted a **Crucified Christ** of **overwhelming beauty** in **1627**: against a dark background, he illuminated the left side while the right remained in shadow. One hand opens and the other shrinks in pain; the cloth is criss-crossed in a thousand folds. On the cross, he also produced a superb study of the wood and the blood.

The following year he signed a contract for **22 paintings** with the Order of La Merced Calzada: these were **scenes from the life** of **St Peter Nolasco** that were to have a concrete dimension. Zurbarán was to reside there with his assistants, who were to be provided with everything they needed as, in his own words, "I only have to put my hands". Only four canvases have survived: in the Prado are **The Vision of St Peter Nolasco** and **Apparition of the Apostle St Peter to St Peter Nolasco**.

His success spread and the municipality of Seville begged him to establish his residence there: the city "will take care to favour him and help him in all circumstances". In **1629** he was commissioned to continue **the Life of St Bonaventure cycle** begun by **Francisco de Herrera**; in these works Zurbarán attempts to show the triumph of contemplation in the midst of active life. Of particular note is **The Exposition of the Body of St Bonaventure** in the Louvre. For Guinard, with the exception of **The Burial of Count Orgaz**, no other post-Renaissance painting offers such an image of the death of the just and their greatness. The commissions followed one after the other. Also in **1629** he signed a contract to paint the altarpiece of **St Joseph of the Trinity in Calzadas** and undertook to paint twelve mercenary doctors, but the picture took a turn for the worse in **1630**. The past always returns, and he may now regret his youthful haste to return to Fuente de Cantos.

A painting depicting the exhibition of the corpse of St Bonaventure, showing several figures gathered around the body, which is lying on a table covered with a white cloth.

The exhibition of  
the corpse of St  
Bonaventure, 1629

A circular painting of St. Jerome, depicted as an elderly man with a long white beard, wearing a red hat and a red robe, holding a book.

St. Jerome, 1640

A year after the Cabildo's invitation to go and live in Seville, Alonso Cano, on behalf of the **painters' guild**, demanded that Zurbarán submit to an **examination** in accordance with the law. The controversy became bitter, but the authorities supported him by commissioning an **Immaculate Conception**. It was the hour of his triumph: he painted the **Altarpiece of St Peter** for the cathedral and the marvellous **Immaculate Conception of Jadraque**, a very balanced composition.

Zurbarán poured his deep faith into his paintings; we see it in his **Immaculate Conception with two young clerics** (1632) in which, from the mouths of the boys, comes the Latin plea "Show that you are Mother; make us sweet and chaste".

In the smaller **Agnus Dei** (Lamb of God), he recreated the studies of the white between the curls. In addition, he depicted domestic scenes of the **Virgin and Child** and a series of **child Virgins** sleeping, painting or sewing with touching naivety. He may have been inspired by his daughter Isabella, who was ten years old at the time.

He also began to produce his **paintings of the Santa Faz** in numerous variations and foreshortenings, while at the same time he was attracted to what he called "inanimate natures", **still lifes**. Success smiled on him and by royal order he was called to Madrid, where he painted for the Buen Retiro the series **The Forces of Hercules**, where he seems to depict the hero's anguish rather than his glory. Guinard spoke of the **Baroque of force** rather than movement; Philip IV is said to have been fascinated.

In **1635** he painted the portrait of **The Young Count of Torrepalma**, whose silhouette emerged from the shadow. At the same time he commissioned the **Altarpiece of St Esteban** for the Sevillian church of that name and, in **1636**, **Eternal Father**, representation of God.

The following year, together with **Alonso Cano** and **José de Arce**, he began an **altarpiece for the Charterhouse of Our Lady of the Defence in Jerez**, but abandoned the work because the city of Seville wished to present the king with a **ship** and he was commissioned **to decorate it**, in which Zurbarán put all his skills to the test. The praise was resounding and he even signed his name as Painter to the King. After completing the paintings for the ship, he returned to the Carthusian Monastery in Jerez, where he painted an **Annunciation** now in the **Musée de Grenoble**. He presented the scene in an ideal interior that extends its warm lights into the lights of a break of glory.

In his works the figure of **St Joseph** is depicted as a young man full of strength, as in **the Circumcision**. Later, in the **Hieronymite Monastery of Guadalupe**, he painted a magnificent **collection of paintings** in the sacristy, playing with the light of the environment. It was clear that his capacity for work was overflowing; for Camón Aznar, neither Rubens nor Titian in their phases of greatest creative fever equalled his effort.

Detail of Adoration of the Three Wise Men, 1638



Agnus Dei, 1631



St Elisabeth of Thuringia, 1640



Martyrdom of St James, 1640





Virgin breastfeeding the Child, 1660



Still life with pots and pans, about 1650



Inmaculate Conception of Budapest, 1661



Levi III, one of The 12 sons of Jacob. 1644

But grief returned... again with the death of his wife. He sought refuge in the Merced Descalza and there he worked on **Christ with St Luke as painter**, which could be his self-portrait as the saint who offers God his brushes. Around this time he finished his radiant **Immaculate Conception in the Museo Cerralbo**.

For a few years his pace slowed, until he remarried in 1644 to **Leonor de Tordera**. He had six children and returned to intensity: he produced a young and cheerful **St Anthony** and his large series, such as the **Seven Infantes of Lara** or **Jacob and his Twelve Sons**, which aroused great interest in his time.

Also of great importance are his **series of saints**, of which approximately fifty have survived, almost all of them workshop works. **St Margaret** and **St Casilda Child**, treated with great delicacy.

In 1649, the arrival of **the plague** took away the joy of Seville and also **five of his children** with Leonor. He was overwhelmed by debts and his property was seized. In 1656 he painted **Christ with the cross on his shoulders**, a weight he could feel on himself, identifying himself with this figure sunk in the violent twilight.

In 1658 he could no longer resist and travelled to **Madrid** in search of a glory that slipped through his fingers. **He would never return to Seville**. In Madrid he met Alonso Cano for the last time before a court charged with proving Velázquez's cleanliness of blood, a necessary step to make the author of *The Venus in the Mirror* a Knight of Santiago.

Two years later, what was left of his family joined him. He brought back some paintings and sold them well. In addition, he received a serious commission: **one of the altarpieces** for the **chapel of St Diego in Alcalá de Henares**; the other two were the work of Cano and Bartolomé Román. They are pieces which combine pain and tenderness, such as the **Virgin with Child Jesus** and **St Juanito (Johnny)** or the **Virgin breastfeeding the Child**, where there is no lack of flowers or the joyful play of apples.

The **faces** of the figures now reflect the **drama of their lives**, such as that of the repentant Saint Peter. In addition, there is an **evolution of style**, softer and more velvety.

After the establishment of the Conceptionist doctrine, in 1661, he painted the **Immaculate Conception** in the **Budapest Museum**, a nostalgic evocation of that of 1616.

He died in **Madrid** on **27 August 1664** after a long illness. His will was something like a hymn to ephemeral glory: a cloth cloak and two hats... a dress of an old cinnamon-coloured dress... two boards of ordinary tablecloths... six towels...

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