



ACADEMIA
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GASTRONOMÍA
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OF EXTREMADURA



el **ATRIL**

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THE ACADEMY NEWS

by Francisco Saúco

AEXG AEXG and its promising summer calendar

We are now close to the summer season, with all that it entails: days off, closure of activities programmed for the season, a slowdown in the frenetic pace of the year... but this slowdown is not in keeping with the philosophy of the Academy, so let us tell you about it:

- Our cycle of **AEXG tastings**, as we have already mentioned in previous issues of the ATRIL, ended brilliantly on 26 March, with a great attendance and good reception.

- As for the monthly **AEXG Academics and Friends of the AEXG lunches**, two have been held -at the Galaxia and Lugaris Restaurants, both in Badajoz- and we are already thinking about the next event.

- On the afternoon of **4 June**, at the Academy's headquarters, we inaugurated the first Gastronomic Gatherings in the form of a round table discussion, which we have generically called '**Extremadura on the plate: recipes that tell stories**'. **Three speakers** (a chef specialising in the product, a nutritionist and a sommelier) each had 15 minutes to talk about their topic, followed by a **discussion**.



Lugaris Restaurant,
Badajoz





PAGO LOS BALANCINES



This was followed by a tasting of the product prepared and commented on, accompanied by an aperitif, both harmonised with the Extremadura wine chosen for the discussion. Our first contact with this new activity was successful.

- **Visits to wineries in Extremadura.** Finally, on **June 14th** we started the cycle of visits to wineries in Extremadura with **wine tasting**, going through the ins and outs thanks to the detailed explanation of the winery by a person in charge of the winery; this new activity will be complemented with a visit to an **emblematic place** (castle, spa, historical ruins...) to end the day with a **meal in a restaurant in the area**. In principle, three types of winery have been chosen to inaugurate this season: one with **cutting-edge technology**, another with **medium technology but very attractive**, and finally a third with **ancestral winemaking** characteristics. A very attractive programme, no doubt.

Our first winery, in this case with state-of-the-art technology, was "**Pago los Balancines**"; our first meal was at **Restaurante Aderezo**, in La Zarza. A full day that translates into the recommendation of both places to visitors to our land and to our own Extremaduran countrymen.

I must say that the call to Academicians and Friends of the AEXG has been answered with forcefulness: **we want to make Extremadura bigger and more important** from the institution to which we belong, which in itself is an honour. Our presence and involvement in all the actions of the Academy make this a reality.

Thank you all for your attendance and participation. The path is mapped out.

Francisco Saúco

President of the Academia Extremeña de Gastronomía



TOURISM AND GASTRONOMY
by Francisco Rivero

The region of Montánchez-Tamuja

The Cáceres region of Montánchez-Tamuja is made up of **22 localities**: Albalá, Alcuéscar, Aldea del Cano, Almoharín, Arroyomolinos, Benquerencia, Botija, Casas de don Antonio, Montánchez, Plasenzuela, Ruanes, Salvatierra de Santiago, Santa Ana, Santa Marta de Magasca, Sierra de Fuentes, Torre de Santa María, Torremocha, Torreorgaz, Torrequemada, Valdefuentes, Valdemorales and Zarza de Montánchez.

It is a typical area of **pastureland in Extremadura**, where the famous **La Terrona holm oak** stands out. It is the largest and oldest holm oak in the world, 800 years old and has been declared a Singular Tree of Spain. It is located in **Zarza de Montánchez**. This region lies between the plain of the dehesa and the Sierra de Montánchez.

This huge region has a lot to offer in terms of **cultural tourism**. **Montánchez** (the village of hams) with its **castle**, built on a Roman defensive zone, and its **unique cemetery**, declared one of the most beautiful in Spain, from whose heights you can see, on a clear day, up to 50 villages in the surrounding area. In **Alcuéscar**, the historic Visigothic basilica of **Santa Lucía del Trampal** and in **Valdefuentes**, the village of the **sgraffito**, the **convent of the Augustinian Recollects**, now so topical due to the appointment of the Augustinian Roberto Prevost as Pope Leo XIV. It is a Baroque building erected by the Marquises of Valdefuentes in the 18th century.

In the nearby village of **Casas de Don Antonio**, the illustrious journalist and writer **Pedro de Lorenzo**, editor of the centenary Spanish newspaper ABC, was born.



Region of Montánchez-Tamuja



Terrona holm oak



Detail of the **sgraffito** of Valdefuentes inside the Convent of the Augustinian Recollects



Roman Bridge in Casas de Don Antonio

Montánchez



Montánchez Iberian ham, one of the most valuable products of the Extremaduran pantry



Hermitage of Cristo del Amparo, Benquerencia

Pitarra Wine from Valdefuentes



In the field of **gastronomy**, it is worth mentioning that in **Alcuéscar** and **Montánchez** there is an interesting pork industry with **excellent Iberian hams**. Furthermore, the region of Sierra de Montánchez y Tamuja, the heart of Extremadura, is also within the geographical boundaries of the PDO **Torta del Casar**.

Lovers of good food can enjoy **three types of cuisine**: **pastoral** cuisine, based on migas, stews and soups; **big game** cuisine with deer and wild boar meat, as well as **small game** based on rabbits, hares, partridges, wood pigeons and turtle doves.

In addition, the **cuisine** is based on **Iberian pork**, reared in nearby pastures; and of course, the exquisite **Almoharín figs**, of the calabacita variety, which have become chocolates and desserts in many of the area's restaurants.

Thus, by boldly spinning all this glorious pantry, the region has prepared the '**Menu of the Seven Wonders**', in which we will find **ham**, **cheese**, **beef carpaccio**, **partridge salad**, **sweet dehesa rice** or a dessert of **fig bonbon**, true delicacies for the palate, which are made with raw materials from the region and can be tasted in the various **restaurants** that we will find in their localities.

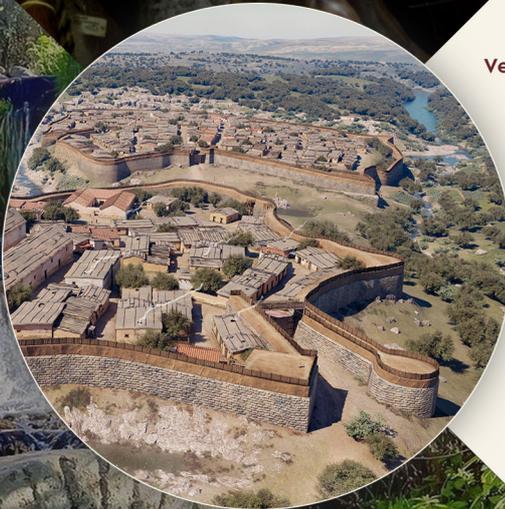
As a gastronomic finishing touch, we should point out that the Montánchez-Tamuja region is also a **land of wines**, especially of the homemade and unique **pitarra** wine: a wine that was traditionally **made by families** for their own consumption and which was left all year round in jars or pitarras (hence the name). Part of this region falls under the **Ribera del Guadiana** PDO, with grape varieties such as borba, Pedro Ximénez, alarije and cayetana, as well as the reds tempranillo and garnacha.

Its production is so old that, according to tradition, it was **already being drunk by Francisco Pizarro**, the conqueror of the Inca empire in Trujillo.

Francisco Rivero

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

Vetonic Hillfort of Villaviejas del Tamuja, Botija



The Mills Route, Arroyomolinos-Montánchez



Fig bonbon, Almoharín





SHAKEN, NOT STIRRED

by Alfonso Ramos

Flavours of the **Rising Sun**: the art of *sake* and traditional cuisine

Japan is a country that has preserved and perfected its culinary culture over the centuries. From the exquisite preparation of traditional dishes to the delicate brewing of sake, its national drink par excellence, Japanese cuisine is a direct reflection of its respect for nature, detail and harmony.

In this article we will explore the fascinating world of Japanese sake and present some of the most representative dishes of Japanese cuisine, a perfect combination to get to know Japan through the palate.

Japanese Sake: tradition in every sip

What is sake?

Sake, known in Japan as *nihonshu*¹ (in Japanese 日本酒), is an alcoholic drink fermented from rice and water; although it may seem simple, the truth is that the brewing process is complex and full of nuances. In Japan, **not everything called 'sake'** falls into this category: only sake made from domestically grown and produced rice can be considered authentic nihonshu.

With an alcohol content of between 13% and 18%, sake has a special place at the Japanese table and can be enjoyed chilled, at room temperature or hot, depending on the season and type.

Brewing process

Sake brewing is an art form. It starts with a **special type of rice** with a starchy core called *shinpaku*, which is polished more intensively than ordinary rice. After **polishing**, the grains are washed, soaked and **steamed**. Then the *Koji* fungus is introduced, which transforms the starches into fermentable sugars. The main **fermentation** (*moromi*) can take several weeks and culminates in the **filtering, pasteurisation and bottling** of the sake.

¹ In Japan, the term 'sake' is used for general alcoholic beverages, while 'nihonshu' refers only to those fermented from rice and water.





Types of sake

The variety of sake is mainly defined by the level of polishing of the rice and the addition (or not) of distilled alcohol:

- **Junmai:** Pure sake, without additives, brewed only with rice, water, koji and yeast.
- **Honjozo:** Contains a small amount of added alcohol. It is light and dry.
- **Ginjo y Daiginjo:** High-end sakes, with highly polished grains (up to 50% of the original grain), refined aroma and taste.
- **Nigori:** Cloudy Sake, not fully filtered.
- **Genshu:** Undiluted, high alcohol content.
- **Namazake:** Unpasteurised, with a fresh and fruity taste.

Harmonies and experiences

Sake, rich in **umami**, pairs surprisingly well not only with **Japanese cuisine** (such as sushi, sashimi o tempura), but also with **cheeses**, **seafood**, and even **intense stews and grilled meats**. Its versatility has led to its inclusion in **innovative cocktails** such as Samurai Rock (with lime and ginger ale) o el Orange Breeze (with orange juice).

In addition, **each season** of the year offers a **different type of sake**, from the warm *atsukan* in winter to the sparkling and refreshing ones for summer.

Culture and etiquette

Drinking sake in Japan has its **protocole**. You never serve yourself and must always **offer it to the other person**. If you are served, you must **raise the cup with both hands**. In informal settings, the rules are relaxed, but the gesture of serving others is maintained as a symbol of **respect and courtesy**.

Brewery visits and regional jizake

Many prefectures produce their own **jizake**, or **local sake**, adapted to the ingredients and dishes of the region. In cities such as Takayama, Nigata and Hiroshima, you can **visit centuries-old breweries**, take part in brewing workshops and sample unique varieties. Look out for a **sugidama** (a ball of cedar branches): this is the sign that **the establishment produces or sells sake**.



10 typical Japanese dishes you must try

Sushi, sashimi y nigiri

Emblems of Japanese cuisine, these raw fish dishes have become internationalised, but in Japan they retain their purity and technique. *Nigiri* (rice balls with fish), *maki* (wrapped in seaweed) or *sashimi* (sliced fish) are essential.

Japanese noodles: soba, ramen, udon, somen

Each type has its own character:

- **Soba:** buckwheat, ideal hot or cold.
- **Ramen:** with strong meat or fish broth.
- **Udon:** thick and soft, typical in winter.
- **Somen:** very thin, served cold in summer

Natto

Fermented soybeans with a strong taste and smell, usually eaten with rice at breakfast. Rich in beneficial enzymes, it is a very healthy food... but not for all palates.

Kareraisu (arroz con curry)

Imported from India via the UK, Japanese curry is mild and thick. It is served with white rice, noodles or even on bread (*kare pan*).

Tsukemono (encurtidos)

Presente in all traditional meals. They can be daikon, cucumber, ginger or aubergine, fermented in vinegar, salt or miso, and perfectly complement rice and soup.

Wagyu

The most prized Japanese beef, known for its fat infiltration (*marbling*), deep flavour and delicate texture. Kobe beef is its most famous expression.

Okonomiyaki

A kind of Japanese omelette combining flour, cabbage, meat or seafood. In Hiroshima, it is served in layers; in Kansai, everything is mixed together. Each region has its own style.

Takoyaki

Dumplings with pieces of octopus, Cooked on a special griddle and served hot, topped with sauces and dried bonito flakes.

Japanese cheesecake

Light, airy and soft, it is baked in a bain-marie and is famous for having a really fluffy texture. Perfect as a dessert after a hearty meal.





Okashi (japanese sweets)

The world of Japanese pastries is as diverse as it is aesthetically pleasing. *Wagashi*, *mochi* and *azuki* desserts are often served with tea and evoke the seasons.

Perhaps one of the best known is *dorayaki*, consisting of two round cakes filled with *anko*, a paste made from azuki beans.

Conclusion: a unique sensory and cultural experience

Tasting Japanese cuisine and its sake is much more than a culinary experience: it is a gateway to the country's history, aesthetics and philosophy. From the meticulous process of brewing *nihonshu* to the precision preparation of each typical dish, Japan invites you to enjoy the balance of flavour, tradition and modernity.

Whether you're planning a trip or want to recreate Japan at your own table, there's no better way to start than with a glass of good sake and one of these ten dishes that sum up the richness of its cuisine.

Yoroshiku onegaishimasu.

(Pleased to meet you).

(Mucho gusto).

Alfonso Ramos Retamar

Friend of the AEXG





Between aromas and excellence: 'Jamón de Oro' Contest 2025

We travelled to **Jerez de los Caballeros**, in the heart of the Extremadura dehesa (meadow), to attend the 'Jamón de Oro' Contest 2025 as a **jury**, an event that every year marks a milestone in the calendar for lovers of acorn-fed Iberian ham. In this **XXXV** edition of the **Salón del Jamón Ibérico y la Dehesa** (Iberian Ham and Meadow Show), quality and emotion were once again at the height of the history of this event.

The tasting was held under the technical direction of **CICYTEX** (Centro de Investigaciones Científicas y Tecnológicas de Extremadura -Extremadura Centre for Scientific and Technological Research), guaranteeing a demanding, transparent and absolutely professional process. I had the honour of sharing a table with professionals of the highest level: **María Jesús Barriga Rubio**, veterinarian; **José Barroso Sánchez**, from the 'Dehesa de Extremadura' PDO; **Antonio Silva Rodríguez**, from the University of Extremadura; and **Fernando Valenzuela Barragán**, from the Extremadura Gastronomy Brotherhood.

We evaluated nine selected pieces of acorn-fed Iberian ham, assessing attributes such as aroma, infiltration, texture in the mouth and, above all, the balance of flavours. As always, the **slicing** - by **Jesús González**, master slicer of the 'Dehesa de Extremadura' PDO - was fundamental to appreciate the qualities of each sample under optimum conditions.



Juan Antonio Narro
during the tasting of
the 'Jamón de Oro'
Contest 2025.



EMBUTIDOS
MORATO
Jamón de Oro
(Golden Iberian
Ham)



The '**Jamón de Oro**' (Golden Iberian Ham) was awarded to **Embutidos Morato**, from Los Santos de Maimona. Its piece, from the Santiago Méndez Martínez farm, offered outstanding sensory complexity: deep aromas, well-integrated fat and a texture that melts in the mouth with an elegance rarely seen before.

Arte Corte Monesterio won the 'Jamón de Plata' (Silver Iberian Ham), presenting a product of the highest quality, with intense notes and elegant persistence. Its origin, the Sierra de Cabra Otoño Gonzalo de Armas livestock farm, was also distinguished.

In third place, the '**Jamón de Bronce**' (Bronze Iberian Ham) went to **Montesano Extremadura**, based in the city of Jerez de los Caballeros itself, and the corresponding 'Dehesa de Bronce' (Bronze Meadow) award went to its farm Agropecuaria Montesano.

The **trophies**, designed in this edition by the Extremaduran sculptor **José Hinchado**, were presented during the opening ceremony of the show, which was attended by regional and local authorities, reaffirming the institutional and cultural dimension of this event.

From my role as a jury member -with deep respect for the product, its producers and our gastronomic tradition- I can affirm that this edition has once again demonstrated that **acorn-fed Iberian ham** is not just a foodstuff: it is a **living expression of the territory, patience and know-how** that is passed down from generation to generation.

Leaving this experience with a palate full of nuances and an excited heart is undoubtedly the best reward for those of us who love and defend the culture of Iberian ham. **Because in the Extremadura dehesa, ham is not eaten: it is celebrated.**

Congratulations to the winners.

J. Antonio Narro

Academician of the AEXG



ARTE CORTE
MONESTERIO
Jamón de Plata
(Silver Iberian
Ham)



MONTESANO
EXTREMADURA
Jamón de Bronce
(Bronze Iberian
Ham)



WINE OF THE MONTH

by Marcelino Díaz

When good wines were called Catholics

Miguel de Cervantes, immortalised the **wineskin** in the II part (thirteenth chapter) of **Don Quixote de la Mancha**; hat very Spanish container which has accompanied all Spaniards on their outings to the countryside and which today, as we have become so urbanised, has fallen into disuse.

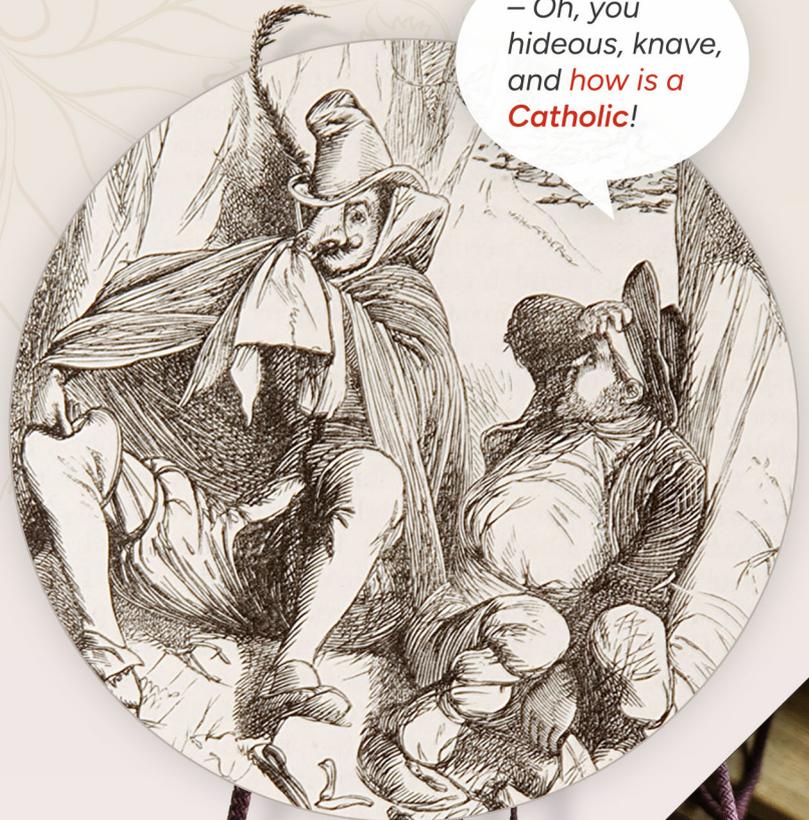
In **Sancho's** dialogue with the squire of the **Knight of the Forest**, the latter says to him, lamenting the scanty food that his knights gave them:

«– ...I bring lunchboxes, and **this wineskin** hanging on the saddle-hoop, whether I like it or not; and she is so devoted to me, and I love it so much, that few moments pass without my giving it **a thousand kisses and a thousand hugs**.

So saying, he **put it into the hands of Sancho**, who, **holding it up** to his mouth, stared at the stars for a quarter of an hour, and when he had finished his drink he dropped his head on one side, and with a great sigh said:

– Oh, you hideous, knave, and **how it is a Catholic!**»

(Cervantes Don Quixote [Esp. 1615]).



*1 | love
Extremaduran Rosés





After **May** and into **June**, with the sense of smell and the retina still **overwhelmed** by nature's hatching of **aromas and colours**, the most catholic **wines and cavas** that are most appetising are **rosés**, those made from the **flower must of red grapes** slightly impregnated with the anthocyanins contained in their skins and whose tones range from the appetising and ethereal **salmon pink** to the classic **strawberry tone** of the excellent rosés from Navarre.

Completely **dry**, from the Garnacha, Tempranillo, Cabernet or Merlot varieties, to drink **as an aperitif** or to **accompany** subtle and delicate fish, rice or pasta dishes; or slightly **sweet**, with some residual glucose, in a large balloon glass and with a fruit salad, they can be the **ideal cocktail** to enjoy on a **warm summer night**, in the swimming pool, garden or patio of the house and of course, for **young wine lovers**, it would be the **ideal drink** to have in the bars and the **discotheques**.

The **wineries in Extremadura** almost all of them **excellent cavas and rosé wines** of which we bring to these pages a selection:

Cava Puerta Palma Brut Rosé, Cava Viña Romale Rosé, Viña Canchal rosé, Bodegas Santa Marina rosé, Legado de Barros rosé (Las Minitas Wineries), Encina blanca de Albuquerque rosé, Blasón del Turra rosé (Santa Marta Cooperative).

Marcelino Díaz

Academician of the AEXG





SIGNED BY
Fernando Valbuena

The dictator in Cáceres

We live in **dispersed times**. Dispersed is a euphemism so as not to lose the sympathetic tone of **El Atril**. Today in the baccaulareate you can still get an A in Russian revolution even if you don't know anything about Leon Trotsky. That's the way it is. Anyway.... and **Miguel Primo de Rivera** is not even mentioned. Sometimes he turns out to be Franco and sometimes his son. His, not Franco's. And most of the time he turns out to be nobody. In other words, nothingness. *O tempora, o mores...*

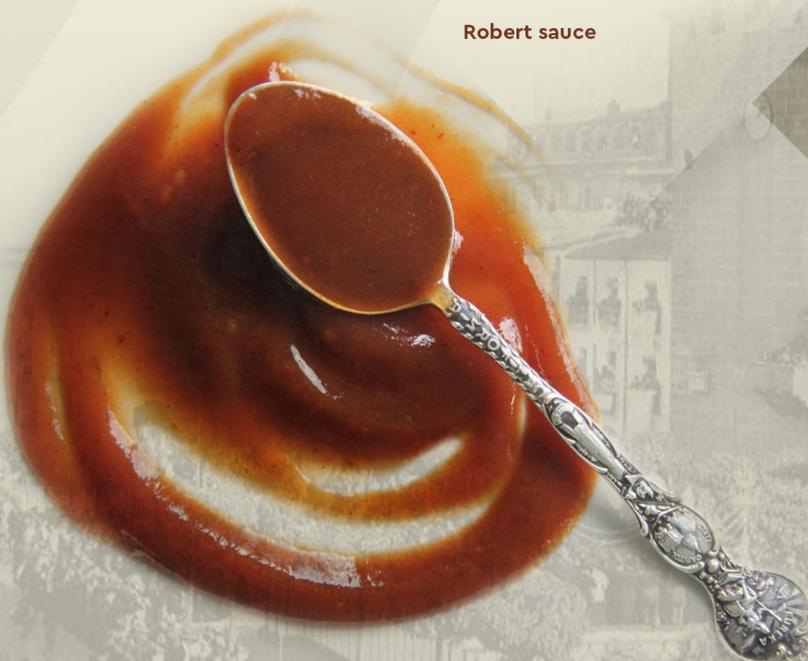
But we're back to business. Tables and tablecloths. Not long ago I was rereading old newspapers when I came across a report of Don Miguel's visit to **Cáceres**. Yesterday, as today, the presence of a managerial leader moves legions. And even more so if the managerialist happens to be the President of a military directorate. Common, dictator.



Leon Trotsky



Robert sauce



Miguel Primo
de Rivera



Railwayman next to one of the locomotives that used to run in Arroyo-Malpartida Station in the 1920s .



So Cáceres put on his 'mantilla' (shawl) and went out to meet him. Cáceres and Malpartida, because the neighbouring town sent a commission made up of the mayor, the deputy mayors and even the secretary. The expenses of the trip were, with apologies, borne by the Malpartida town council and amounted to the not inconsiderable sum of one hundred and thirty-eight pesetas, as recorded in the municipal minutes.

It was **31 October 1925** and **Berlanga** (well-known Spanish film director) had already been born. To welcome him –the Marquis of Estella, not José Luis Berlanga– at the crossroads of Sierra de Fuentes with the road to Madrid, attention, one hundred and twelve cars. Did they include any from Malpartida? There is no record. In Avenida de Armiñán, the Segovia Regiment and members of the somatén (citizen militia) paid tribute to him.

The General and the retinue of authorities visited the Town Hall before being entertained at the Diputación with a **succulent banquet** served by Casa Montalbán. I leave you with the menu for the delight of your palates. **Axdir eggs, hake in robert sauce, veal with mushrooms, French-Spanish peas, cold meats al aspi** (sic), **Santa Catalina cream, royal cakes** and fruit. Of course, coffee and cigars. Red and white Rioja. And Domecq champagne. Everything as God commands.

At dessert se loaron, ¡cómo no!, he spiritual values that Extremadura treasures, the need to modernise the Extremadura railway once and for all, and a rousing cheer for the dictator. More or less the same as always.

Fernando Valbuena

Academician of the AEXG



MISCELLANY

by Alfredo Álvarez and
Jesús Salvador Lozano

A gastronomic experience at the School of Hotel Management and Tourism of the San Fernando Institute

On 19th March 2025, the **Gastronomy Academy of Extremadura** had the pleasure of visiting the **restaurant** of the **School of Hotel Management and Tourism of the San Fernando Institute** where the **Basic Degree in Cookery and Catering**, the **Intermediate Degrees in Catering Services and in Cookery and Gastronomy** (also distance learning) and the **Higher Degrees in Catering Services Management and in Kitchen Management** can be studied. On this occasion, the **students of the first year of Kitchen Management and Catering Services Management** offered us a high level culinary experience, in which they demonstrated their **skill, passion and professionalism** in every detail of the service and the preparation of the dishes.

The **menu** was **carefully designed and paired** with a selection of wines that enhanced every flavour and texture.

The experience began with a delicate **appetizer** of **marinated salmon rolls with cheese, eels and guacamole**, paired with **La Poda Sauvignon Blanc 2022**, D.O. Rueda, a fresh and fruity wine that perfectly complemented the smoothness of the salmon and the creaminess of the cheese.

As a **starter**, the students presented a classic **Tagliatelle Alfredo**, whose creaminess and flavour were enhanced by the same **La Poda Sauvignon Blanc 2022**, balancing the creaminess of the sauce with its acidity and citrus notes.



Tagliatelle
Alfredo



Marinated
salmon rolls
with cheese,
gulas and
guacamole

Aperitif and
starter
harmoniser: La
Poda Sauvignon
Blanc 2022



Red mullet in panko with garlic sauce



Beef Carpaccio



The **first dish** surprised with an innovative proposal: **red mullet in panko with squid garlic mayonnaise**. The crunchy texture of the breading – made with panko produced in-house from the same dough used for bread – and the marine intensity of the garlic mayonnaise, were enhanced by the accompaniment of *Perro Verde Verdejo*, D.O. Rueda, a wine of great freshness and herbaceous nuances that highlighted the flavours of the sea in the dish.

The **second course** offered an elegant **beef carpaccio**, where the tenderness of the meat and the subtle seasoning found in *La Planta Tempranillo 2023*, D.O. Ribera del Duero the ideal pairing. Its fruity notes and tannic structure brought balance and depth to the dish.

To round off the experience, the **dessert** consisted of an exquisite **lemon meringue**, whose refreshing acidity and sweetness were enhanced by the *Alvear Moscatel*, a sweet and fragrant wine that brought a perfect harmony to the end of the menu.

The excellent selection of **homemade breads** and the attention to detail in the coffee service were the finishing touches to a memorable experience.

The Gastronomy **Academy** of Extremadura **congratulates the students and teachers of the San Fernando Institute** for their dedication and professionalism. Their passion for gastronomy and catering augurs a **promising future** for Extremadura's hospitality industry.

Alfredo Álvarez and Jesús Salvador Lozano

Academicians of the AEXG

Lemon meringue





Manuel Godoy, the Prince of Peace: glory, power and exile of a man made by a king

By Aida Sánchez Calvo

Manuel Godoy y Álvarez de Faria was undoubtedly one of the most controversial figures in Spain in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. **Of noble origin and with no notable military merits**, in barely a decade he went from being a simple bodyguard to holding titles such as **Duke of La Alcudia, Prince of Peace** and Generalissimo of all the armies, accumulating a power and fortune comparable only to his meteoric and controversial career.

From the horse to the summit of power

Born in Badajoz in 1767, Godoy was educated at the seminary of San Antón, but soon opted for a military career. His entry into the **Guardia de Corps** brought him directly into the entourage of Princes Charles and Maria Luisa, future kings, after a minor but symbolic incident: a fall from a horse that impressed the heir to the throne. Sponsored by influential figures and very close to the princes – **legend** has always pointed to an **affair with Queen María Luisa** – Godoy became a regular at royal gatherings.

With the accession to the **throne of Charles IV** in 1788, he began his meteoric rise: in barely five years he went from cadet to **captain general**. In addition to military glory, he was also showered with **titles of nobility, court honours and**, most importantly, **substantial property and income** that made him **one of the great lords of Spain**.

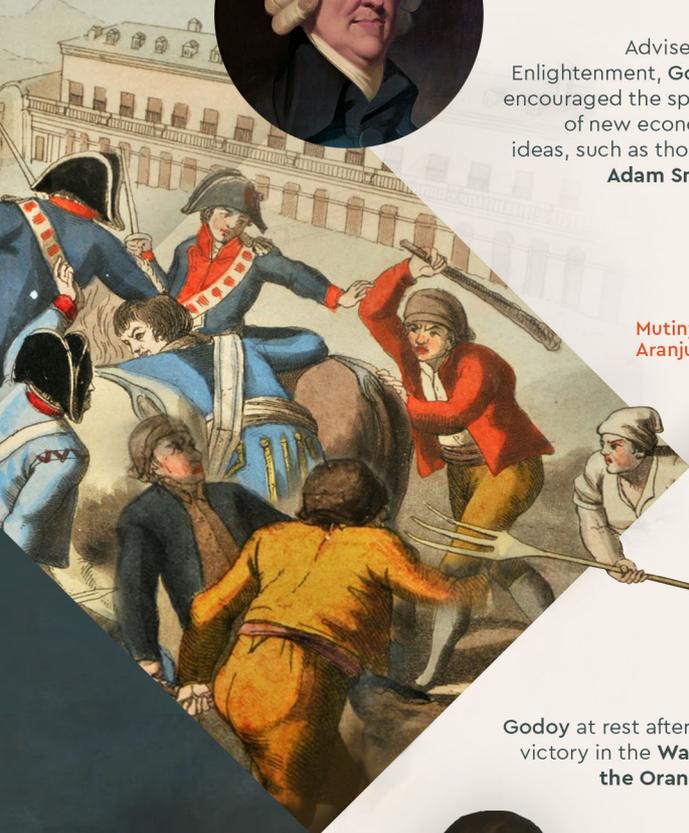
He converted his new wealth into entailed estates and cultivated an important **collection of art and books**, a symbol of his **power and** enlightened culture.



Portrait of **Charles IV**, anonymous. Prado Museum.



Advised by Enlightenment, Godoy encouraged the spread of new economic ideas, such as those of Adam Smith.



Mutiny of Aranjuez

Godoy at rest after his victory in the War of the Oranges



Treaty of Basilea

A ruler without a plan but with absolute power

In 1792 he entered the political arena as **Secretary of State**, aged just 25. He had no diplomatic training or experience, but he had what the king wanted: **blind loyalty**. Charles IV was looking for a manageable ruler (as Godoy commented in his **Memoirs**, 'someone who was his workmanship'), and Godoy fitted the bill perfectly. His accession to power caused outrage among the aristocracy, who accused him of being a mere favourite of the Queen. However, modern historians see his rise as a pragmatic decision by the king in the face of Europe's political debacle.

The **assassination of Louis XVI and the outbreak of the French Revolution** marked his **first years** in power. Spain went to war with France, with disastrous results that undermined his popularity. However, Godoy survived the crisis with the signing of the **Treaty of Basel (1795)**, which earned him his most famous title: **Prince of Peace**, an unprecedented distinction for a subject.

The new title further elevated his position at Court, even above that of the great lineages. It was then that he began to **shape his figure as an enlightened statesman**: he promoted **education**, **scientific expeditions**, the **free press** – albeit not so free – and surrounded himself with enlightened men such as **Moratín** and **Jovellanos**. He even tried to **suppress the Inquisition**, although without success. His politics were always ambivalent: reformist in economic matters, conservative in religious matters.

Ally of Napoleon and enemy of the people

His **alliance with France** and the signing of the **Treaty of San Ildefonso** with the French Directory kept him in power, but made him new enemies. At home, the **nobles detested him**; abroad, **England became his sworn enemy**. The consequences soon followed: constant war, economic crisis, social unrest and rumours that he was the source of all the country's ills.

His attempt to strengthen his position led to the **War of the Oranges** against Portugal (1801), which he won and used to reinforce his role as indispensable. He was named **generalissimo of all the armies and grand admiral of Spain and the Indies**, with a power practically equivalent to that of the king.

But not even all his power was enough to stop his enemies. From within the Court a **fierce opposition** was organised, led by Prince Ferdinand (the future **Ferdinand VII**), who orchestrated the Conspiracy of El Escorial and later, in 1808, **the Mutiny of Aranjuez**, which ended with the fall of Godoy, the abdication of Charles IV and the rise of Ferdinand.



María Teresa de Borbón y Vallabriga, **Duchess of Chinchón**, was the first wife -of convenience- of Godoy (painting by Goya).



Queen María Luisa de Parma, another of the most influential women in Godoy's life (also portrayed by Goya).

Exile and the fall

Arrested and humiliated, Godoy was released by Napoleon and taken to Bayonne, where he witnessed the surrender of the Spanish Crown to the Emperor. He thus began his **long exile**, first with the kings in Italy and then, after the death of Charles IV and Maria Luisa, alone. He lived in Rome, where he tried to rebuild his fortune and finally married his **mistress, Josefa Tudó**. He then moved to Paris, where he spent his last years in financial hardship, harassed by Ferdinand VII and forgotten by many.

In 1837, the Spanish government returned his **property and titles** (except that of Prince of Peace), and ten years later he was authorised to **return to Spain**, although his **delicate state of health** prevented him from doing so.

He died in Paris in 1851, leaving behind him a figure shrouded in controversy, legends and contradictions.

Epilogue of a political meteor

Manuel Godoy was a man **made in the shadow of the throne**, a politician with no fixed ideology but endowed with a singular ability to **survive in the centre of power**. He represented both the **reformist ideals** of the Enlightenment and the **more clientelistic practices** of the Ancien Régime. Idolised and detested, he was a symbol of a **Spain torn between modernity and tradition**, between absolute monarchy and the winds of revolution.

His tomb in the **Père Lachaise** cemetery in Paris holds the remains of a figure who, through merit or favour, left his indelible mark on the history of Spain.

Aida Sánchez Calvo

Academician of the AEXG



Josefa (or Pepita) Tudó was the third woman in Godoy's life, immortalised by Goya in his paintings «La maja vestida» y «La maja desnuda».



Tombstone of Manuel Godoy in the **Père Lachaise** cemetery, Paris.

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