

2010 Comando G Las Umbrias

The 2010 Las Umbrias is a pure Garnacha that is aged for 14 months in foudres. It has a very Chateauf-neuf-like bouquet with animal scents infusing the dusky red fruits, perhaps bringing to mind an old Rayas. The palate is medium-bodied with a chewy entry. It boasts impressive weight and definition, exerts a firm grip in the mouth with red currant, allspice, clove and forest floor towards the finish. This has so much character – a fabulous wine. Drink now-2022.

Comando G is a joint venture between the super-talented Jimenez Landi and Fernando Garcia (from Marañones) and Marc Isart (from Navaherreros.) Like the three musketeers, they are out to source fruit from ancient Garnacha vines near the Sierra de Gredos mountains and judging by the exceptional quality of the two 2010s that I tasted, they are doing a very fine job.

Importer: Eric Solomon, European Selections, Charlotte, NC; tel. (704) 358-1565; and Indigo Wine (www.indigowine.com) in the UK.

Importer(s):

Eric Solomon. European Cellars, 2129 E Seventh St., Charlotte, NC 28204, (704) 358-1565 , www.europeancellars.com

- Neal Martin (October, 2012)

2010 Comando G Rumbo Al Norte

The 2010 Rumbo al Norte comes from possibly the highest Garnacha planting in the world at 1,100 meters. Darker in color than the Las Umbrias, it has a very well defined bouquet with dark berries, forest floor, lavender and a touch of sea salt. The palate is medium-bodied with firm, grippy tannins and a tincture of dark chocolate inflecting the broody dark, dusky, licorice-tinged fruit. This is a cerebral Garnacha that might not appeal to everyone, although its structure suggests that it will benefit from 8-10 years in bottle. If the Las Umbrias is Rhone, then the Rumbo is great Bandol. Drink 2017-2030.

Comando G is a joint venture between the super-talented Jimenez Landi and Fernando Garcia (from Marañones) and Marc Isart (from Navaherreros.) Like the three musketeers, they are out to source fruit from ancient Garnacha vines near the Sierra de Gredos mountains and judging by the exceptional quality of the two 2010s that I tasted, they are doing a very fine job.

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- Neal Martin (October, 2012)

2010 Bodegas Jimenez Landi The End

The 2010 The End is likewise produced biodynamically, foot-trodden in open top barrels with half the crop de-stemmed, spending 14 months in 300 and 500 liter French oak, very little new. It has a very understated bouquet with scents of mulberry, melted tar, autumn leaves and Provencal herbs that demand coaxing from the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannins and very pure dark fruit sprinkled with generous dashes of white pepper and garrigue (white fennel, dill and rosemary.) It is a complex Garnacha, but not one that goes out of its way to impress. Instead the imbiber has to seek out its charms that are abundant within this very well-crafted wine. I cannot wait to see how this matures. Drink 2013-2020+.

If you are seeking Grenache that is understated, complex, full of character and honest without resorting to new oak or ostentation, then look no further than the exquisite and rather brilliant wines of Bodegas Jimenez-Landi, which have rightly been lauded by my predecessors in previous issues. I stand accused of being even more ecstatic about these wines that were riveting earlier this year: wines that stimulate the intellect as much as the senses.

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- Neal Martin (October, 2012)

2010 Bodegas Jimenez Landi Ataulfos

The 2010 El Reventon comes from a one-hectare parcel of Garnacha. It has a beautifully defined bouquet with dark berries, roasted herbs, white fennel and a tincture of something exotic, perhaps wild honey and apricot blossom. The palate is medium-bodied with a very harmonious, succinct entry: a Grenache that is beautifully balanced with perfectly judged acidity. This is one of those wines that words cannot encapsulate: simply pure, unadulterated, expressive Grenache that is nothing short of world class. Drink 2014-2025+

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- Neal Martin (October, 2012)

2012 Comando G La Bruja de Rozas

This is the Comando G entry-level wine, previously called La Bruja Avería but renamed in this 2012 vintage to add the village name where the vineyards are located. As such, the 2012 La Bruja de Rozas shows some reductive, animal-like aromas, in a vintage where they pushed the wine to the limit. It has a wild character. They changed the source of their vineyards for this wine from the warmer Cadalso de los Vidrios to the cooler Las Rozas de Puerto Real, as they were looking for more freshness in the wines. It has notes of damp earth, forest floor, wet leaves, beef blood and fresh meat with hints of fountain-pen ink. In a way, it reminds me of some cru Beaujolais, with its granite freshness and the wild character, low sulfur with a vegetal, herbaceous side plus floral (Fleurie?) hints. The palate is quite different from what you expect after the nose; it's sharp and long, with high acidity, almost citric and no noticeable oak and good length.

Comando G was the name used in Spain for one of those Japanese cartoon series of the 80s, where some kids were kind of super heroes. The three winemakers (Daniel G. Jiménez-Landi at the time with his family winery and now on his own, Fernando García of Bodegas Maraiones and Marc Isart of ...

- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2011 Bodega Maraiones Pena Caballera

The 2011 Peña Caballera is a single vineyard wine, the top of the range for Maraiones, pure Garnacha, from a beautiful, mountain vineyard, a north-facing slope surrounded by forests planted with very old vines that are goblet pruned on granite soils with some cherry trees in the middle of the vineyard. It's a very bright, translucent ruby color. The nose is complex and elegant, with notes of raspberries, strawberries, and violets, with plenty of aromatic Mediterranean herbs, spice and a meaty touch. The palate feels light, but it's not: it has power but seems light on its feet, is very pleasant to drink revealing a mineral, textural, earthy sensation. It has brightness and light, velvety and elegant. There is great balance here and the harmony points at a very good evolution in bottle. This is a wine about length, complexity, tension and vertical lift, with nerve and electricity. An introverted, serious Garnacha that represents good value even though it's not really cheap. 2,330 bottles produced. Bravo!

Maraiones has different vineyards totaling 28 hectares in the village of San Martín de Valdeiglesias, in the province of Madrid, and therefore the wines have the appellation Vinos de Madrid, but have a lot more in common with o...

- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2011 Comando G Rumbo Al Norte

The 2011 Rumbo al Norte comes from a vineyard in the tiny mountain village of Navarrevisca, in the province of Ávila. The 60-year-old vines are planted at 1,200 meters altitude. The grapes from the 0.3 hectares of north-facing vineyards were fermented in open barriques with indigenous yeasts after a gentle maceration, then aged 12 months in 500-liter French oak barrels. It feels quite different, with notes of a Bloody Mary, tomato juice, shoe polish and aromatic herbs, accented by a touch of bay leaf and perhaps basil. It's a wine that changes tremendously with air, and is even better the day after you open it. It feels a little riper and fuller than other vintages and develops notes of black olives and tobacco on the second day. Only 1,100 bottles were produced.

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- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2013 Bodega Maranones Picarana

The 2013 Picarana is pure Albillo from six different plots in San Martín de Valdeiglesias fermented in used barriques and foudres where the wine ages for eight months and represents their village white. Even though this was a cold and rainy vintage, the wine is fruitier and a little more tropical. It's weird how Albillo shows fresher in warmer, shorter-cycled years and more opulent in cooler ones when the cycle is longer and the ripeness gets higher and acidity drops. The palate is quite straight and sharp, longer than it is fatter, showing good acidity and freshness highlighted by more subtle flavors.

Maraños has different vineyards totaling 28 hectares in the village of San Martín de Valdeiglesias, in the province of Madrid, and therefore the wines have the appellation Vinos de Madrid, but have a lot more in common with other wines from the Gredos Mountains than with those from other subzones of the Madrid DO, which are much warmer and have different soils and less altitude. The young Fernando García is a true vigneron. He produces a full range of wines (two whites and four reds) since 2008. All wines are fermented with their own yeasts, using a gentle vinification, often with part of the stems, and always using neutral (b...

- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2012 Comando G Rumbo Al Norte

The 2012 Rumbo al Norte is a single-vineyard Garnacha from the one-horse village of Navarrevisca in Avila, at 1,200 meters altitude. The grapes fermented in a small oak vat and were transferred to two barriques. The nose is a little closed at first, feeling very shy and ungiving, you really have to coax it, so I recommend opening the bottle and decanting the wine well in advance. This is all about subtlety, about weightless fruit, flowers and wild small berries with a touch of minerality akin to chewing on chalk. The palate is medium-bodied, but feels light with precise flavors, very well-integrated acidity and weightless fruit. Again, this is an amazing, elegant Garnacha.

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- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2012 Comando G Las Umbrías

The 2012 Las Umbrías is a single vineyard in Las Rozas de Puerto Real at some 1,000 meters altitude on granite soils, and in 2012 it is extremely pale, a little darker than a rosé. This is their most delicate, ethereal wine built on elegance, elusiveness and subtlety. The vineyard gets very little light, so the ripening is slow and grapes are picked later. The nose is a mixture of extremely perfumed rose petals; ethereal and subtle. The palate is equally light and pure, like a fresh and elegant morning breeze, with acidity that is sharp, delineated and precise. Makes me think of a cloud with wild strawberry flavor. This is simply awesome. Great wine!

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- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2013 Bodega Marañones Treintamil Maravedies

The 2013 Treintamil Maravedies is a blend of Garnacha with 10% other local red varieties (mostly Morenillo) from San Martín de Valdeiglesias. This vintage really benefited from a cooler growing season and shows vibrant and fresh, with showy aromas of red berries and hints of Mediterranean herbs. The palate is medium-bodied with clearly defined flavors of red fruit and good acidity and length, really easy to drink. This is very good value.

Marañones has different vineyards totaling 28 hectares in the village of San Martín de Valdeiglesias, in the province of Madrid, and therefore the wines have the appellation Vinos de Madrid, but have a lot more in common with other wines from the Gredos Mountains than with those from other subzones of the Madrid DO, which are much warmer and have different soils and less altitude. The young Fernando García is a true vigneron. He produces a full range of wines (two whites and four reds) since 2008. All wines are fermented with their own yeasts, using a gentle vinification, often with part of the stems, and always using neutral (big-volume and used) oak.

- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2012 Bodega Marañones Marañones

The 2012 Marañones is pure Garnacha from three different plots, the lower part of Peña Caballera and another two plots, one flat and another one on slopes, all at around 800 meters and all north facing. The 2012 is ripe and showy, with intense notes of violets, hints of peat and malt whisky, a lactic touch and some balsamic, herbal touches. This is a hedonistic, ripe version of Garnacha, with a lush and velvety texture, plus pungent flavors that are no doubt helped by the alcohol through a ripe and long finish.

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- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2011 Comando G Las Umbrías

The 2011 Las Umbrías is a little earthier, especially when tasted side by side with the 2012, which is especially light. Here you find a more leesy character and a little fuller mouthfeel. However, the palate shows the austerity of the vintage in the relatively high acidity; it feels sharp and perhaps not as balanced as the 2012. With a little bit of patience it develops attractive aromas and flavors of malt and blood oranges, which makes you want to put your nose in the glass over and over again. The only problem here is the temptation to compare it with the 2012.

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- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2011 Bodega Marañones Labros

The 2011 Labros is pure Garnacha from their warmest, more Mediterranean vineyard and has very old vines. This is a short-cycle vineyard that gets quite warm in the summer and the fruit gets ripe and gives fruitier wines. It has a nose of very ripe damsons, good depth and some balsamic hints. The palate has a good balance between power and elegance, very fine tannins and a fine thread of acidity that ends on the finish with a mineral, granite feeling.

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- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2012 Daniel Landi El Reventon

The 2012 El Reventón is produced from Garnacha grapes grown on slate soils in the village of Cebreros, province of Ávila, and as such it's officially labelled Vino de la Tierra de Castilla y León, though it's part of the Gredos zone. The soil is rich in slate and marks the wines differently from the granite. The nose is a mixture of violets, blueberries and plenty of Mediterranean herbs like thyme and rosemary. The medium to full-bodied palate is ripe and hedonistic, but feels much lighter than it is. This is by far the best, more balanced vintage of this wine that he was already producing at Jiménez-Landi.

Daniel Gómez Jiménez-Landi started his solo adventure in 2012 after eight years at the family winery Jiménez-Landi in Métrida. He has kept some of the vineyards but has also lost the source for many of his previous wines. The red Las Uvas de la Ira only has the same name as the previously released wine from Jiménez-Landi, as the source for the grapes is completely different. He was able to rescue a couple of wines from 2011. Since 2012, he produces around 20,000 bottles from seven hectares of vineyards in the same winery as the wines from Comando G in Cadalso de los Vidridos.

Importer(s):

Eric Solomon. European Cel...

- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2012 Bodegas Jimenez Landi Sotorrondero

The 2012 Sotorrondero, a blend of Garnacha and Syrah outside the boundaries of Gredos aged in barrels for ten months is young, open and aromatic, like its big brother, the Jimenez-Landi Bajondillo. In this wine the two grapes are well assembled showing a clean and complex nose of raspberry and strawberry aromas, hints of spices, smoke and a meatiness from the Syrah. The palate is medium-bodied with great balance, polished tannins and fine acidity sharpening the focus of the flavors through the supple and tasty finish with great length. This is a good showing for Sotorrondero. 12,000 bottles produced.

Jiménez Landi is one of the oldest wineries in the region. Their first vintage was 2004, but their wines were not really defined until 2007 when the focus moved clearly to Garnacha. Since 2012, the family split into two separate companies and divided their vineyards; Daniel Gómez Jiménez-Landi on his own, and the rest of the family continuing with what they were doing. The winery is located in the old family house in Méntrida, a village in the province of Toledo that gives its name to a DO. Two of their wines are in the Garnacha de Gredos Association but I also included two others, blends of Garnacha and Syrah that do not fall in t...

- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2012 Daniel Landi Las Uvas de la Ira Cebreros

The 2012 Uvas de la Ira Cebreros is pure Albillo from a single vineyard in the village of Cebreros in the province of Avila on slate soils, a rarity in the Gredos region, as most of the soils are granite based. Albillo works very well in warm, short-cycle vintages like 2012 and shows notes of apples, quince and yellow peach. The palate is more layered than the whites from granite, it's quite lush with good concentration and freshness along with citric hints (think tangerines, orange peel) that come through as powerful and elegant at the same time. Great white. Unfortunately only 400 bottles were produced.

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Importer(s):

Eric Solomon. European Cella...

- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2013 Daniel Landi Las Uvas de la Ira

The 2013 Las Uvas de la Ira is produced from three plots of old-vine Garnacha from the village of El Real de San Vicente where the soils are granite-based. The wine is aged in oak vats for ten months. This 2013 (only bottled one month before I tasted) is still showing reductive notes and feels a little dizzy. It should improve in bottle, but if uncorked young it should be decanted energetically to reveal the red fruit, floral character, that vegetal hint of balsamic herbs and the spicy notes. The palate is medium-bodied with great acidity and purity.

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- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2012 Daniel Landi Cantos del Diablo

The 2012 Cantos del Diablo is a single-vineyard Garnacha from a granite and sandy half-hectare plot at 800 meters in the village of El Real de San Vicente. It's a vineyard that is cool and is the last to be harvested. It feels mineral from minute one. It's subtle and elusive, with hints of flowers and red berries and a medium-bodied palate with great finesse. Overall, it feels cool and linear with a pungent, citric finish. This is simply superb.

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- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2011 Daniel Landi Cantos del Diablo

The 2011 Cantos del Diablo is a single-vineyard Garnacha from the El Real de San Vicente village in the province of Toledo with granite soils. There is only one 700-liter barrel. This 2011 is ripe, hedonistic and very aromatic with upfront fruit aromas plus notes of red and black cherries and hints of rosemary and lavender. The palate is medium-bodied, quite balanced, with unnoticeable tannins and good freshness and acidity, with a very cool, sharp finish, especially for a warm vintage.

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- Luis Gutierrez (October, 2014)

2011 Daniel Landi El Reventon

The 2011 El Reventón, a single vineyard Garnacha from Cebreros on slate soils. This is a vineyard where the wines are naturally opulent and the challenge is to balance that opulence and show more its mineral and Mediterranean side without overwhelming the senses. It has a nose of ripe cherries, balsamic herbs and some damsons plus blueberries with hints of violets. The palate is medium to full-bodied, rich and opulent with noticeable alcohol but good balance. This is a Mediterranean expression of Garnacha.

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