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**Thomas Matthews**, crítico de vinos

## Thomas Matthews, wine critic

I am 66 years old. I was born in Flint (Michigan) and I live in Brooklyn, New York. I am a journalist specialized in wines. I am married to Sara, a photographer. No children. Politics? Concrete and realistic actions. Beliefs? No. Gardening, yes. And cooking and reading. Galician wines will surprise us.

Tengo 66 años. Nací en Flint (Michigan) y vivo en Brooklyn, Nueva York. Soy periodista especializado en vinos. Estoy casado con Sara, fotógrafa. Sin hijos. ¿Política? Acciones concretas y realistas. ¿Creencias? No. Jardinería, sí. Y cocinar y leer. Los vinos de Galicia nos van a sorprender



**“I taste twenty wines a day, and my colleagues taste a hundred per day”**

### 'Wine Spectator'

I walked with Thomas Matthews through the Barcelona Wine Week show, at the Montjuïc fair (in another life, yes). And we come across many winemakers: if they would know who this man is who walks amongst them, they would “tackled” him to introduce their wines to him! He is the editor-in-chief of WineSpectator, the most influential international magazine in the world of wine. He was very positive about the fair to me: "Spain needs to encourage wine fairs, create community, this fair is a good first step," he said. Some Spanish winemakers did not attend: “They should come!” Matthews called out. His contact with wine began in old bars in Granada, "full of old men, full of cigarette butts and papers on the floor: I loved it!" Quite a romantic.

**You are a wine guru.**

I only give my honest opinion in the Wine Spectator magazine.

**It is the most influential magazine in the world of wine.**

We have the trust of consumers and producers, we are the loudspeaker of the world of wine:

**And there will be angry winegrowers because of receiving low scores.**

They appreciate it. The Marquis de Riscal once explained it to me. Intrigued by the fact that we were scoring him low, he improved and worked so hard that one day we started scoring him very high.

**How have you achieved so much prestige?**

Saying always, always, the truth.

**Since when?**

Since Marvin R. Shanken took control in 1989, because the magazine had been born in 1976 in California. Shanken is a hero.

**Why?**

With blind tastings of the wines, without any bias, with full integrity, he increased the credibility of the magazine.

**And with good tasters, of course.**

Rigor and experience add up: I've been tasting wines for 32 years in a row.

**And how did it start?**

In Spain, when I was 25 years old.

**Why did you come to Spain?**

As a child, in Brooklyn, I dreamed of distant horizons, of traveling: I was an overprotected child. I obeyed my parents until I finished my law degree, as they asked me to. I then considered myself completely freed.

**Freed to do what?**

To follow my dream: to be a writer. And I travelled to Granada because as a child I had seen a photo of the Alhambra. I was captivated!

**It doesn't surprise me.**

I was fascinated by the cultural confluence: Christian, Jewish, and Arabic culture, exoticism and the climate. I shared a flat with other young people, for a year, in the Albaicín: I could see the Alhambra.

**And what did you do?**

Writing a novel and also having a girlfriend, from Montilla.

**That is where the Amontillado wine is made, right?**

Montilla-Moriles, and fino and oloroso, and palo cortado, and pedro ximénez: generous, wonderful wines. They are unique in the world.

**You liked them, I can see that.**

But at the time I drank them without understanding them. Today I know they taste like Andalusia.

**What flavor is that?**

Almonds, olives and the sea in a glass. And you have to know something important: Shakespeare drank amontillado to write.

**Oh!**

This is what I mean by understanding a wine: you have to know the land, the vineyard, the winery, its history ... And how are the people who make the wine.

**Do you study that in all wines?**

I don't stop traveling, visiting vineyards and wineries, talking to farmers and winemakers, tasting wines ...

**And it all started in Granada, you said.**

I lived in Granada from the end of 1978 to the beginning of 1980, and with my roommate we went to Bordeaux to harvest.

**I almost did the same around that time.**

It changed my life, I met hard-working families of wine growers from the country side, and 40 years later we maintain our friendship. It was there where I learned to admire and to love the world of wine.

**What would you highlight of that admiration?**

The magic contained in every bottle, so connected to nature, to the earth, to the sun, to the water, to the air. And I started writing about winegrowers, wineries, wines ...

**Do you remember about what wine you wrote your first article?**

It was a Chateau Suduiraut-Sauternes.

**Have wines changed in 40 years?**

In the seventies they were light, and since the nineties they are more mature, fruity, rich, alcoholic.

**What should a good taster have?**

Discipline, memory and attention. And a lot of integrity, curiosity, humility and realism.

**Realism?**

Whatever your senses tell you, accept it!

**And we add a little bit of literature?**

We will use clear and direct language.

**How do you see Spanish wines today?**

Spanish producers know what to do and they do it well: dynamic and diverse wines. And they are restless and searching.

**Tell me about a Spanish wine with a future.**

Galicia will give surprises, with fresh and energetic wines, we will like them more and more.

**How many wines do you taste in a day?**

About twenty. Colleagues of mine, almost a hundred.

**And how often does a wine leaves you flabbergasted?**

It is what I look for in every glass. And the miracle happens in two out of every hundred glasses.

**What wines do you like in the United States?**

Californians. Then Italians and French. Then Spanish and then everyone else.

**How should we promote our wine?**

Open more Spanish restaurants. Like José Andrés. a hero: he stands up to Trump, he stands up for the weak. I admire him.

**Does Trump protect Yankee wine?**

With that prices would increase, and the whole market would suffer: it wouldn't be beneficial for anyone.

**Which wine stands out?**

The moment makes the miracle: a table with friends ... and a Penedès wine. It was last night.