



Robert Parker's The Wine Advocate

Reviewed by Luis Gutiérrez

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Emmanuel Kemiji is a Master Sommelier born in the US but raised in Madrid. He is also owner of Miura Vineyards in California. He started a small project in Priorat back in 2003 with some partners, including some friends from his time at the Ritz Carlton, some chefs, Sylvain Portay, Gerald Hirigoyen, Laurent Manrique and even some celebrities like Antonio Banderas. The project has kept a low profile and I previously had only heard the name but had never actually tasted the wines. They produce wines from Montsant and Priorat, as they own vineyards in both appellations, but none is subject to the official appellation of origin. The winery is located in the outskirts of Falset. Lisa Perroti-Brown met Kemiji in California and she was impressed by the wines from Priorat and got me in contact with him. I'm glad she did...

2010 Clos Pissarra • La Vinyeta

Rating	Price	Drink Date
93	\$110	2016-2022

The 2010 La Vinyeta is mostly an anecdotal wine: In 2010 they had a problem of hail; they lost about 80% of the grapes and only produced a grand total of 132 bottles of it. The La Vinyeta is from an ancient vineyard of that name, 0.34 hectares of it planted with centenary Cariñena and Garnacha in the village of El Lloar. As they only had a handful of grapes, they fermented the very few grapes in a 110-liter oak barrel; the "normal" production is 600 bottles or two barrels. The field blend is approximately 80% Cariñena to 20% Garnacha and that's what you get in the wine. Here 10% full clusters were used for the fermentation and the wine matured in a new Taransaud barrel for 18 months. There is a touch of nuts and toasted sesame seeds, as I guess the ratio of wood to juice was very high this year. Even with such a small volume and all the difficulties, there is superb concentration and power while the wine is not aggressive at all and seems to have been polished by the time in bottle, as it was bottled back in February 2012. There is great acidity, too. Drink it if you can. I look forward to tasting other vintages of this wine.



2012 Clos Pissarra • La Vinyeta

Rating	Price	Drink Date
92	\$120	2016-2021

Similarly, the 2012 La Vinyeta, sourced from an ancient coster vineyard, is a blend of Cariñena with some 20% Garnacha. It fermented with some 10% full clusters in new Taransaud barrels. It matured in those French barriques for 18 months. It has a peachy note intermixed with ripe cherries. All the wines have a dusty minerality, a shared profile that provides character, certainly with some rusticity, but that's what the zone is like. The mouthfeel is also quite earthy, with moderate acidity, ripe, but without excess. 480 bottles were filled in March 2012 so this is mostly an academic wine.

2010 Clos Pissarra • El Riu

Rating	Price	Drink Date
92	\$110	2016-2020

The 2010 El Riu is pure Cariñena from a centenary vineyard in the village of El Molar in Priorat, but it is sold without appellation. The vineyard is next to the river ("el riu" is Catalan for the river) and the soil combines the classical llicorella slate with some gravel from the river. It fermented with indigenous yeasts and 10% full clusters and matured in new Taransaud barrels for some 18 months. It has a savory nose with soy-like aromas mixed with Mediterranean herbs and a touch of earth, significantly more developed than the 2010 La Vinyeta, here the wine feels more advanced with more tertiary aromas. The palate feels quite polished, but it keeps the freshness (it has a low pH of 3.2 even if the acidity is not very high at 5.6 grams) and it finishes very tasty. From around one hectare of vines, they only managed to produce 840 bottles that were filled in February 2012.



2012 Clos Pissarra • El Riu

Rating	Price	Drink Date
90?	\$120	2016-2018

I also tasted the 2012 El Riu, which is from a very ripe vintage that favored Cariñena. It fermented in brand new 225-liter French barriques with indigenous yeasts where the wine matured for 18 months. It has an earthy and slightly animal profile that makes it feel a little wild, mixing notes of graphite with smoked cured meat and a touch of ink and licorice. The palate is medium to full-bodied with some earthy minerality, ending a little dry. I would drink this sooner rather than later in case the animal profile gets increased in the bottle. It's precisely this phenolic twist that made me hesitate... There are 850 bottles produced.

2014 Clos Pissarra • El Mont

Rating	Price	Drink Date
91	\$60	2016-2019

The pure Garnacha 2014 El Mont is sourced from a 14-year-old vineyard on clay and volcanic soils in the village of El Lloar within the physical limits of Priorat. It has a whopping 15.7% alcohol. As the rest of wines, they used some 10% full clusters for the fermentation and the wine matured in used barriques for around one year. It doesn't really have any alcoholic sensations, it's quite aromatic, quite earthy, more soil-driven than fruit-driven, with a dusty, powdery texture that transported me to the landscape of Priorat. Rustic within its elegant style or rustic within its elegance. Quite tasty. 1,880 bottles were produced. It was bottled in August 2015.



2012 Clos Pissarra • El Ramon

Rating	Price	Drink Date
91	\$30	2016-2019

The 2012 El Ramon is a complex blend of 49% Garnacha, 21% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Cariñena and 12% Syrah. This comes from three vineyards in Bellmunt del Priorat (but sold without appellation) on classical llicorella (slate) soils, the main of which is 3.8 hectares that belong to their grape grower Ramón, and thus the name of the wine. Here the Garnacha and Cariñena are old and the French grapes are younger. This is meant to be their vision of a modern Priorat, fermented with some 15% full clusters and natural yeasts and matured in used French barriques. It has a nose full of Mediterranean herbs and a touch of esparto grass with an earthy touch. The fruit is black rather than red. The palate is quite polished with the tannins mostly resolved. There is a slight touch of volatility in the finish that lifts the wine and kind of transported me to the Priorats of yesterday. There are 6,960 bottles produced.

2012 Clos Pissarra • Aristan

Rating	Price	Drink Date
92	\$20	2016-2020

The 2012 Aristan is a blend of Syrah with some 28% Garnacha from 2.2 hectares of ten-year-old vines in Falset (Montsant) fermented with some 15% full clusters with indigenous yeasts and matured in used 500-liter French oak barrels for 11 months. This is clearly distinct from the "Priorat" wines, from a vineyard next to the winery, and here the influence is clearly from the Syrah, mixing smoky, peat-like and graphite aromas with an earthy profile with notes of violets, à la northern Rhône. It's a dense and ripe, juicy wine, with moderate acidity and very tasty flavors. This is certainly different from the others. 4,704 bottles were filled in August 2013. Their idea is to keep the wines in the cellar and offer them when ready to drink. This superb Mediterranean Syrah is certainly ready to deliver.



2014 Clos Pissarra • Arrels de Clos Pissarra

Rating	Price	Drink Date
89	\$20	2016-2018

The 2014 Arrels de Clos Pissarra is the entry-level red and is from the Montsant zone close to Priorat (but like all the wines, it is without appellation of origin). It is pure Garnacha from 2.34 hectares of slate-rich soils planted some 20 years ago. It fermented in 500-liter French oak barrels. This was the first vineyard he purchased, in the village of Falset, in the limit with Bellmunt. This is a vineyard with lots of llicorella slate. Even though it would hypothetically be outside the limits of the Priorat appellation and would fall in Montsant, as all the wines here it's sold without any appellation of origin. This is a fresher, lighter style, with less influence from the oak, with the idea to have a by-the-glass wine. There are some notes of graphite and shoe polish over a core of ripe red and black berries and a pinch of spices. It's medium bodied, with fine, slightly dusty tannins. It has character and keeps freshness, easy to drink. There are 4,212 bottles produced.

2014 Clos Pissarra • El Sol Blanc

Rating	Price	Drink Date
91	\$30	2016-2019

The one white from Clos Pissarra is the 2014 El Sol Blanc. It is pure Garnacha Blanca from 1.2 hectares of seven-year-old vines on clay and slate soils in Falset within the Montsant boundaries but without appellation of origin. One-third of the volume fermented in oak barriques and the rest in stainless steel with natural yeasts after pressing the whole bunches. It matured for 15 months before bottling. It has a very flinty nose with some balsamic aromas of pollen and wax, with judicious oak, quite elegant. The palate shows very good balance, with power and good concentration, focused and defined flavors with a very tasty finish. The first vintage of white was in 2012. Very impressive. 2,568 bottles were filled in February 2016.