Yangüe, a former bullfighter who, after being seriously gored in Avila, has made the sport his passion. Next off were over 2000 runners in the MMT Seguros Madrid 5km, more than half of them women.

The main event, the Half Marathon, as in similar events all over the world, was quickly headed by African runners who imposed a strong pace in both male and female categories. The new course record Cinthia Jerotich established in the women’s category surpassed the previous mark by almost two minutes. Ugandan Dicson Huru made it an exciting finish in the men’s race as he fought for victory until the final few metres. Third-placed Silas Kirwa was a further 75m behind. The performances are more impressive than they might at first appear as Madrid is 655 metres above sea level and the course profile includes several tough sections which inevitably slow the runners’ pace.

The race is organised by the Agrupación Deportiva Marathon, an athletic club with a wide range of activities who organise many other events in the capital. The organisers cater primarily for the amateur runner, but no aspects are neglected: through a strong presence of elite runners, it is intended to develop the race into the best half marathon in Spain. Runners who travel from all parts of Spain and abroad provide the essence of the race and play an important role in popularising it.

Continued on page 21
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In places like Plaza Príncipe de Vergara and Plaza de Castilla the atmosphere was extraordinary, although it is the long final stretch which is the most magical segment of the race. A lot of runners celebrate with dedications and gestures to the sky, leaping into the air and blowing kisses as they complete the half marathon distance for the first time.

All this happens as they approach the finish, but once across the line the finish area offers all possible facilities to assist their recovery, including food and drink and the commemorative medal designed especially for such an important occasion.

The runners’ experience is the purpose of the race but no one should forget the hundreds of volunteers with a great attitude who make it all possible: working the previous day at the Expo; serving food and beverages along the route, handling the baggage, manning the start line and finish line of the race. Among them are physiotherapists, podiatrists, emergency services and sponsors, who collaborate each year in putting on the Asics Half Marathon Villa de Madrid.

Come and see it for yourself at the next race on 29 March 2015.

Result

MEN:
1. Peter Emase LEMUYA KEN 1:02:00
2. Dickson HURU UGA 1:02:02
3. Silas Kirwa NGETICH KEN 1:02:15
4. Mohamed BLAL MAR 1:03:26
5. Workneh Fikire SERBE SSA ETH 1:04:15
6. Titus KIPJUMBA KEN 1:04:53
7.Kidane TADESSE ETH 1:05:30
8. Jesus Antonio NUNEZ ESP 1:05:39
9. Abdelahi HA BA SSA ESP 1:05:45
10. Hassan AHOUCHE MAR 1:05:48

WOMEN:
1. Cynthia Jerotich LIMO KEN 1:09:40
2. Marta Tigabea MEKONEN ETH 1:12:01
3. Nancy CHEPTEGEI KEN 1:12:17
4. Salima CHARKI ESP 1:12:22
5. Elena Maria ESPESO ESP 1:14:13
6. Rose CHELIMO KEN 1:15:54
7. Anaia ROSA ESP 1:16:03
8. Marisol MADERA ESP 1:16:48
10. Cristina LOEDA ESP 1:20:05

5km
MEN:
1. Santiago DELAFUENTE ESP 15:33
2. Fernando DIEZ ESP 15:45
3. Borja PEREZ ESP 15:52

WOMEN:
1. Esther DESVIA ESP 16:58
2. Penelope BANOS ESP 18:13
3. Charlotte COTTON 19:33
If you’re going to put yourself through hell, you might as well do it in heaven.