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# DO CAVA

Autor:

Data de publicació: 06-07-2020

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Height of the vineyard: 200-500 m ?hectares of vineyard: 33,600 ?annual rainfall: 600 mm ? average annual temperature: 14.5 ° ?winemakers: 6,350 ?registered wineries: 241

The moments of celebration and party are no longer exclusive to uncorking a bottle of Cava. In fact, even most sparkling wines feel better many times outside of their party environment and the obligatory toast because, among other things, the simple ritual of their uncorking, their service in special glass and their tasting in company, it's already a pleasure.

Cava was born in the image and likeness of Champagne, but more than 1,200 kilometers away in latitude and with a difference of 100 years, so it is never possible to make a product exactly the same, even applying the same method and the cultivation of the same varieties. The climate and soil directly affect the yields of the plants and the vines that grow best here are different from those of Champagne. Luckily, the most convinced of this are the winemakers themselves who, for many years now, have agreed to make a sparkling wine with its own personality, boasting of the dominance of second fermentation in the bottle like no other wine region in the world.

The first Catalan sparkling wine was bottled by Francesc Gil Borràs and Domingo Sobirà Mestres in 1862 in Reus, and they promoted the marketing of what was then popularly known as "Reus Champagne". The initiative starring Agustí Vilaret, an Indian who returned to his hometown, Blanes, decided to focus his activity on the production of natural sparkling wines, dates from the same years. It was the origin of the Mont-Ferrant cellars, which in 1877 declared that its production was already around 10,000 bottles. But really the most emblematic and important character in the history of Cava was Josep Raventós, and his Codorníu winery. Raventós studied in the Champagne region the classic procedure for making the most famous sparkling wine in the world, and began to put his knowledge into practice with native vines in the centenary farmhouse of Can Codorniu, in Sant Sadurní d'Anoia, 25 kilometers south of Barcelona. When in 1872 he officially presented his first sparkling wine in Barcelona, ??he did not realize that he was placing the Penedès area in a new oenological era. Josep Raventós, in the same way that all his descendants have been to this day at the summit of the prestige of the Codorníu family business, was an advanced creator. The brilliant success of his feat led him to expand the production of sparkling wine, so he needed other spaces, and as he had known in Champagne, he had to dig a first underground cellar or "cava". It was then that Catalan sparkling wine was first associated with the concept of "cava" (winery).

This new bubble drink was known as "champagne or champagne", in honor of the champenoise method applied by French champagne producers. But with the entry of Spain into the EU, the neighboring country claimed the exclusive right to this designation in all its variants, and Spain had no choice but to establish a valid code for the EU and seek a own concept, which, in 1986, was red-baptize with the Denomination of Origin Cava. There are currently more than 240 wineries that produce more than 240 million bottles.

## Location, soil and climate

The qualifying relief of Cava differs from any other denomination of conventional origin in one essential point: it does not refer to a single region in particular. In other words, although more than 98% of the total production of Cava comes from Catalonia and extends to 63 municipalities in the province of Barcelona, ??52 in Tarragona, 12 in Lleida, 5 in Girona, there are also areas of production in 18 municipalities of La Rioja, 2 of Zaragoza, 3 of Álava, 2 of Navarra and those of Requena (Valencia) and Almendralejo (Badajoz), that also have equal right to use this original designation whenever they fulfill the demanded regulation. Consequently, it is the only denomination of Spanish origin that puts before a method of vinification (the traditional champagne or second fermentation in bottle) to its geographic origin, although there are well-defined production areas and a Spanish sparkling wine cannot be labeled with the word

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“Cava” if it is not produced in officially recognized areas or wineries.

Thus, in view of the natural factors of each region and municipality, the know-how of the viticulturists of the denomination of origin has concretised in practices of own crop, tending to obtain base wines destined to the manufacturing of Cava with own characteristics and with the required quality.

In the same way, the soils on which the vineyard is based are very varied, as is the climate, but in any case they allow a correct evolution of the vineyard, especially in the pre-harvest phases, facilitating a staggered maturation of the different authorized varieties, in order to obtain base wines suitable for the production of Cava with moderate alcohol content, high acidity, low pH, and good health.

### Type of Cava

According to the amount of residual sugar:

Gross Nature: Less than 3 g / l. and without added sugar.

Extra gross: Between 0 and 6 g / l.

Gross: Less than 12 g / l.

Extra dry: between 12 and 17 g / l.

Dry: Between 17 and 32 g / l.

Semi-dry: Between 32 and 50 g / l.

Sweet: More than 50 g / l.

Also, the DO Cava grants the categories of Reserve to the Cavas with a minimum aging of 15 months, and the category of Great Reserve to the Cavas with a minimum aging of 30 months. In addition, vintage, harvested, vintage or vintage cavas are also made, as well as others that show the date of slaughter on the back label, which guarantees the aging time and, above all, the freshness of the product.

### Varieties

The grape varieties authorized by the DO Cava for the production of Cava are the white Macabeu (Viura), Xarel·lo, Parellada, Malvasia (Subirat Parent) and Chardonnay, and the red Grenache Noir, Monastrell, Pinot Noir and Trepát, although the latter can only be used to make rosé Cava.

### Wines

Today there is a wide variety of styles of cavas on the market. Some are made with a single grape variety, others come from a single terroir, there are also white cavas made with red grapes, others show exclusive and unconventional blends, some even opt for a vertical blend of different wines vintages, and more and more cellars where their base wines have been fermented or aged totally or partially in oak barrels.

However, the Macabeu, Xarel·lo and Parellada varietal trilogy continues to integrate the traditional blend of most Catalan Cavas, but the introduction of other varieties in recent years is offering an alternative to the more purist palates. One of them is Chardonnay, which offers Cavas with a magnificent creamy structure, and provides varied and delicious aromas of hazelnut, praline and butter. But the most recent is the Subirat Parent, a white variety of the malvasia family, which provides very Mediterranean-style personal cavas, with a remarkable persistence of ripe fruit (apricot) and at the same time fresh (apple), dried fruit (almond). green), and a savory and kindly bitter finish.

However, cavas also proliferate with a majority concentration of Xarel·lo grapes, such as the Celler Batlle de Gramona, even single-varietals such as the Turó d'en Mota de Recaredo, which make them suitable for acquiring a lot of complexity in their very long aging.

As for the black varieties, they are now fashionable to obtain single-variety pink cavas with very fresh, light and especially fruity profiles, as well as giving them a beautiful pink-raspberry color, clean and bright.

The blanc de noir are also of the latest generation; that is, white cavas made with black grapes, mainly with pinot noir. Its purpose is to achieve Caves a little more corporeal, even with other registers in its fruity nuances, a less ethereal mouthfeel and a more crunchy bubble, still without losing freshness, finesse and elegance.

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The use of the barrel is also a new alternative to the vinification of some great champagnes, such as Bollinger and Krug, along with a desire to give more texture and body to Cava, as well as complexity and an extension of sensory registers. Generally only a small portion of the base wines take on slight contact with the barrel, and this is noticeable in a more solid structure, along with the increase of certain smoky and pastry nuances. It is always a very risky and difficult technique, where only a few experienced manufacturers dare to carry it out, such as Torelló, Albet i Noya or Agustí Torelló Mata, among others.

#### Present and future

Things have not changed much in terms of the products of this DO. Although very young, the *modus operandi* had been in operation for many years when the Regulatory Council was set up, and most wineries have their own style book that changes very little year after year.

Cava, by definition and in spirit, was born in the shadow of champagne, but it should be noted that there is no other sparkling wine in the world that uses the traditional method without its varietal basis is not the same as that of French sparkling wine. Cava, therefore, works mostly with traditional Catalan varieties, and only a small part uses Chardonnay or Pinot Noir, authorized since 1990 by the Regulatory Council.

A very positive point is to detail the vintage of their base wines and, in addition, to state the date of slaughter of the bottle. It is also necessary to evolve some concepts, such as the cavas of small companies are better than those of large productions, or the famous "artisan" cavas, as some producers and consumers call them, which often belong to companies that do not have a vineyard. , who buy good base wines and make a good product, but who have very little "craftsmanship" inside.

As is also the case in other denominations of origin in our country, some wineries in the Penedès abandoned the DO Cava and integrated their sparkling wines within the DO Penedès with the Clàssic Penedès brand, claiming other signs of identity for their sparkling wines, such as the search for a space of its own, a much more specific framework to develop its differentiating elements in both production and quality, a commitment to the grapes from the vineyard in the Penedès, an exclusively ecological work in the vineyard, a minimum of 15 months of aging and the inclusion of the date of drawing and slaughtering on the label, among other things. In short, the new Clàssic Penedès brand within the DO Penedès defines an identification with the territory, the climate and its lands, and, in addition, is part of the ambitious project to differentiate the different subzones of the Penedès and their characteristics.

For now there are 15 wineries that have joined the new Clàssic Penedès and it is not ruled out that others will be added: ADDIA, ATRoca, Mas Comptal, Albet and Noya, Torre del Veguer, Bonans, Can Gallego, Colet, Clos Lestiscus, Finca Can Ramon, Can Morral del Molí, Mas Beltràn (Argila), Loxarel, Mas Can Colomé and Puig Romeu.

Autor: Alfredo Peris Balada · Categoria: País de vins

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