

WINE REVIEW OF CAVA "MARALBA" BRUT NATURE CUVÉE



Cava has a 140 year tradition of being produced in Spain and has a growing worldwide following; it's much more than just the poor cousin of France's Champagne and, in many respects, constitutes much better value than the product of their European neighbours to the north. Commonly misconceived as a cheap imitation of Champagne, Cava is a sparkling wine in its own right with its own grape varieties and its own unique history.

Previous to the 1970's Cava was simply known as Spanish Champagne until the EU passed a ruling that only wine produced in that specific region of France could carry the name Champagne. This ruling put the Spanish producers in a position where they had to find a new name for their product and

they came up with "Cava" (the literal translation of which is "Cave" or "Cellar"). The ruling turned out to be a blessing in disguise for Spain's sparkling wine producers forcing them to disassociate themselves with champagne and forge a new identity for their product, allowing Cava to emerge from the shadow of its French cousin. A downside to the EU legislation was that Spain also had to enforce stricter controls over what could carry the Cava name although, because of this, standards and quality have improved steadily, cementing Cava's reputation as a viable alternative to Champagne.

The vast majority of Cava produced, comes from Catalonia and, in particular, the Penedés region within it. The capital of Cava production is the village of Sant Sadurni D'Anoia which is said to produce 85% of the total output of the wine.



What is it that makes Penedés so good at creating the sparkling wine? There are a number of reasons for this, the most salient being the climate and the topography of the region. Temperatures in the region are mild with averages between 12-14°C and the regions grapes thrive at varying altitudes. Rainfall is mainly limited to storms in the autumn and spring but vital

moisture is also provided by the summer dew. Winds in the region are not too strong and not too cold and therefore not damaging to the grapes.

To go back to Cava's routes we must backtrack to the 1870's when a group of Catalan wine producers got together to discuss how to produce a sparkling wine to rival that of France's Champagne. They invested heavily in equipment, vineyards and additional staff and in 1872 3,000 bottles of Cava was produced as we know it today. The emphasis was placed on using grapes native to Spain to give the Spanish version of champagne its own character. These are still used today and the three main grapes that formulate Cava are Macabeu, Xarel-lo and Parellada. Since 1986 Cava producers have also been allowed to integrate the Chardonnay grape in their DO and it has been steadily planted in the last 20 years.



Maralba, Brut Nature comes from Cellers Mas-Oliver, a family-run cellar in Sant Sadurni D` Anoià, right in the very heart of the Cava region. Only the first juice has been selected for this extremely fine Cava. This cava is produced on four different grape varieties: 40% Macabeo, 35% Xarel-lo, 10% Parellada & 15% Chardonnay, the first 3 grapes are traditional to cava, and the chardonnay more innovative. This blend gives it a freshness and silky texture that set it apart from traditional Cavas, although the method of elaboration is the same. It was aged 30 months in the cellars at a constant temperature of 16°C. and manually clarified in wooden racks. Extremely bright yellow with green shades. Excellent transparency and fluidity. Presence of fine bubble chains and a persistent crown on top of the wine. Should be served between 5 -7 °C

**MARALBA, BRUT NATURE CUVÉE COST€ 13,50/BTL AND CAN
BE BOUGHT AT INTERBROSA, C/CANTARERO 3 IN MARO –
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