

H U D I N



CATALAN WINES, IN THE GLASS

Pepe Raventós – Mas del Serral 2012

by Miquel Hudin | 03-07-2023

Viewing it as just another year in the grand litany of years we've accumulated as a species, I've nothing against 2012. In fact, I look back on it rather fondly as I'd just moved to Barcelona and was exploring the city with great joy, learning Catalan, re-learning Spanish, and doing the initial research for the [Priorat book](#) which was finished in the fall of that year.

Now that I think about it, I **really** liked 2012.

When we look at it through the lens of the wine world, the rose-tinted aspect dims considerably however.

One regional report in Catalunya stated, "it was a year perhaps more favorable to fresher zones". Marked by successive heat waves that started in the middle of May and ran until the middle of August, it definitely wasn't one of the finest vintages in the region. In fact the reds more or less arrived to a Port-y state (due to many grapes going to raisin on the vines) and still remain as such.

As if to give one final taunt, nearly half the rain of the year fell in October, **after** most of the harvests were finished.

But things are always different when talking about sparkling wines, especially those of the Penedès region. Yes, if it's warm in this corner of the Mediterranean, it will be warm in Penedès as well. The key difference is that the grapes are harvested so, so much earlier than those of the still wines in order to preserve acidity, so a different set of rules usually applies.

For example DO Penedès (where still wines that are 80% white and sparkling Clàssic Penedès wine are both produced) rated the year as 'Excellent' for whites.

And this is why it's interesting to have a look at the Mas del Serral from Pepe Raventós. While a sparkling produced in the Penedès region, it carries no DO or other certifier to it as Raventós chose to go his own way and label his wines as being from Conca del Riu Anoia.

If you'll recall, I reviewed the 2010 two years ago and scored it very highly which I still stand by today. That was an awe-inspiring sparkling wine from an excellent vintage.

Raventós produced a 2011 wine, but in even smaller quantities as it was an even hotter year. In 2012, he did manage to get enough grapes from this single parcel to produce just over 2,500 bottles however.

The blend here is the same as the 2010 with Xarel·lo and Bastard Negre (better known as Graciano), but the latter is vinified as a white wine. I can't think of anyone else in Spain who does this, but it very much works within the bounds of this wine.


As to how the wine has ended up after 100 months of bottle aging, it's definitely not the 2010, but it's still a very fine wine. I have to respect the fact that they allow the vintage to show and make no mistake, 2012 was a hot vintage that lent a massive degree of structure to the wine and you find all of that here along with a finely-developed mousse and a savory finish that still has plenty of acidity.

I've tasted a number of other long-aged sparkling wines from the region from this vintage and I have to say that this really stands on the highest of grounds when taking into account everything they had to deal with to bring these wines to fruition.

Availability: You can search for the 2012 but as it's just been released, availability outside of Spain will be limited. You can find the 2011 throughout the US, Germany, Singapore, UK, and of course Spain which isn't bad for such a limited-production wine.

WINE

Pepe Raventós - Mas del Serral 2012

Dried yellow apple and apricot, light notes of ginger, chalky limestone, white tea, bits of caramelized sugar, toasted bread crust, and dried white blossoms. Fine mousse with a great deal of frontal structure, punchy citric notes, dried lemon and lime peel, crisp acidity and a lengthy, engrossing finish. 

● Xarel·lo, Graciano · 12.5% · 150EUR

Region: Catalunya

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