



Ferran Centelles

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TASTING ARTICLES

SPAIN

CATALUNYA

NATURAL WINE



Freestyle Catalan wine



Ferran doesn't have to travel far to leave his comfort zone.

I have long had a concern as a wine taster. I have a hard time recommending many of the freer or more 'natural' wines. Any deviations a wine shows, whether in oxidation, farmyard, leather or 'mousy' flavours or recollections of cider, are immediately penalised by my brain. I would like to be more sensitive to this trend, but probably because of my training I am not able to cross the border and accept these deviations as positive, desired and valid stylistic characteristics.

Fortunately, I know and admire many colleagues and producers who have been able to cross this frontier, and I like to approach them, listen to them, and try to understand them.

Lluís Romero (pictured above) is one of these people. His main occupation is as a language teacher in a secondary school, but his passion is wine, and his speciality is the wine of Catalonia, about which he has been writing for almost a decade now. His first book, *Grans Vins a Petits Preus* (*Great Wines at Low Prices*, from [Cossetània Edicions](#)) was a resounding bestseller in Catalonia. Then came *Vins Autòctons* and *Vins Secrets de Catalunya*.

So when I asked Lluís to organise a tasting that would reflect what's going on in Catalan wine, I knew he would choose both wines that are protected by the DOs and those that fall outside the administrative seal.

The morning of the tasting, Lluís made it clear that the line-up would include original, idiosyncratic wines that had surprised and convinced his palate when he reminded me, 'sometimes what for you may be a defect others see as a virtue'.

To evaluate them, we tasted the wines blind, and Lluís explained the format he applies: BLIC, the Balance, Length, Intensity and Complexity assessment that is common in the WSET and IMW programmes. However, he adds a fifth factor: Emotion. BLICE.

Emotion is perhaps the least tangible and measurable quality of a wine, but surely the one that makes us value it the most. On a technical level, emotion is associated with physiological responses. Thus, emotions are able to provoke the body to react, giving us a more enriching and memorable experience.

Furthermore, having experienced an emotion around a wine will influence future experiences with it. A wine that is capable of generating an emotion will be remembered more easily than one that does not – for better or for worse.

What factors or compounds in wine excite or fail to excite a person is totally beyond my knowledge. I know that I love to find purity and precision in wines, but someone else may be fascinated by a wine that contains no additives whatsoever, so the subsequent deviation in the wine is fully understood and enjoyed as a stylistic trait. This dichotomy is more alive than ever in the wine world and I see it clearly in Barcelona, a city that, like Paris, offers a rich array of bars that have no place for the most conventional or interventionist wines, no matter how technically ‘perfect’ they may be.

Lluís is also the only taster I know who tastes the same wine for three days in a row after it has been opened to see how it evolves. We often talk about the concept of the evolution of a wine, but perhaps it is a philosophical approach and it would be appropriate to systematise the evaluation of this factor. This is a question for future discussion.

All in all, I liked this tasting so much because it not only challenged me as a taster but also because it brought me face to face with wines that would not have been included had the tasting been organised by the regulatory council of a DO. In this article, you will find a range of wine styles, all of them representative of Catalonia. And just to let you know, although I live in Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia, and I should be aware of them *a priori*, many of them were totally new to me.

I’d like to acknowledge Lluís for his time and dedication in the selection, preparation and help in understanding this unforced style of wines. Get ready to discover the best of Lluís’s choice!

The 49 wines below are grouped by style/colour and then ordered alphabetically, but you can change this.

Sparkling

A T Roca, Finca Els Gorgs Macabeu/Xarello Brut Nature 2013 Penedès

18

Clàssic Penedès. Single-vineyard sparkling wine from El Gorgs, in Sant Sebastià dels Gorgs. Old vines co-planted in 1943 at 223 metres above sea level facing north-west. Calcareous marl soils. Aged for 7 months in barrel and stainless-steel vats, then in bottle for a minimum of 100 months. Organic.

Tasted blind. A vinous sparkling wine, with a full palate, lots of sapidity and an integrated mousse, but it brings freshness too. Complex. Very vinous, dry, mineral, fluid and vertical. More wine than fizz. I am really amazed by it. Such an impressive mid palate. On my sparkling-wine greatest hits selection. (FC) 12%
Drink 2023 – 2045

Júlia Bernet, Maria Bernet Espumoso de Calidad Brut Nature 2013 Vino de España

17.5

Corpinnat. 100% Xarel·lo. Old vines of 40 years old. Vines located in the Ordal mountains at an elevation of 400 metres above sea level in Alt Penedès and on calcareous soils. Hand-harvested. Alcoholic fermentation at low temperature, with 6 months on its lees. 9 years of ageing in bottle.

Tasted blind. Dried fruit, curry and green apple. Wow! Very high acidity, with lots of freshness. Balance, fluidity, and an incipient acidity but with enough fruit to hold and counterbalance. Lots of crunchy fruit for a 2013 wine. (FC) 12.5%
Drink 2023 – 2035

Raventós i Blanc, Conca del Riu Anoia Manuel Raventós Negra Espumoso de Calidad Brut Nature 2016 Vino de España

17.5

70% Xarel·lo, 30% Macabeu. Wine from Conca del Riu Anoia, in Penedès. Vineyards at 140–150 metres above sea level facing north-north-east. Organic and biodynamic agriculture. Various types of clay-limestone soils of marine origin. Manual harvest, with grape selection in the vineyard. Gravity management of the harvest. Light pneumatic pressing. Alcoholic fermentation in stainless-steel vats by parcel. Aged for 9 months on its lees in stainless-steel tanks, then a minimum of 70 months on lees in bottle. 1,800 bottles

Tasted blind. Green apple, freshness, aniseed. An immediate wine, well made. Dry, delicate profile, with a touch of high acidity and interwoven bubbles, pastries and a hint of dried fruits. Mediterranean purity. (FC) 12.5%
Drink 2023 – 2035

Recaredo, Serral del Vell Espumoso de Calidad Brut Nature 2017 17.5 Vino de España

Corpinnat. 87% Xarel-lo, 13% Macabeu. Single-vineyard sparkling wine from Finca Serral del Vell. Organic, biodynamic viticulture. Hand-harvested. Alcoholic fermentation in oak barrels and stainless-steel vats, then long ageing in bottle, with manual disgorging.

Tasted blind. Delicate, pure, with very well-defined fruit. A wine of purity and fruitiness rather than autolysis. Smooth, balanced and complete on the palate. A voluminous style of wine, with deep character. Buttery notes at the back palate. (FC) 12.5%

Drink 2023 – 2035

Maria Rigol Ordi, Gran Reserva 2015 Cava 17.5

40% Xarel-lo, 35% Macabeo, 25% Parellada. Traditional winemaking, with a minimum ageing of 48 months.

Tasted blind. Bakery aromas, creamy, with quite fine bubbles. Great crafting and precision. Tasty and very complete. This is a great sparkling wine. Long, deep with an aniseed touch. Mediterranean austerity: garrigue stands out above a lot of spiced flavours. A touch of pine and freshness in the finish. **GV** (FC) 12.5%

Drink 2023 – 2040

€19 approx in Spain

Nadal, RNG 10 Espumoso de Calidad Brut Nature 2004 Vino de España 17

Corpinnat. 52% Xarel-lo, 32% Parellada, 16% Macabeo. Produced only in the best vintages. Production limited to 5,287 bottles.

This is quite surprising as it displays a certain youthfulness despite its age. Very delicate palate, with soft and tiny bubbles. I like the purity of the fruit. The steely perception is still dominant over the autolytic (bread and toast) aroma. A remarkable sparkling wine on the delicate side. (FC) 12%

Drink 2023 – 2028

Rimarts, 24 Brut Nature Reserva 2020 Cava 17

Xarel-lo, Macabeu and Parellada. Minimum ageing of 24 months.

Tasted blind. Baked apple and great complexity on the nose. On the palate, the bubbles are quite present, but with a creamy, integrated quality. Long and persistent, finishing attractively dry. (FC) 11.5%

Drink 2023 – 2040

Rovellats, Masia Segle XV Brut Nature Gran Reserva 2013 Cava 16.5

64% Xarel-lo, 23% Macabeo, 8% Parellada, 5% Chardonnay. Traditional winemaking, with a minimum ageing of 84 months.

Tasted blind. Lemon candy and orange peel. The bubbles are lively and fine, and the wine is fluid, easy to drink. Very pleasant. Marzipan from the autolysis and overall quite aromatic. A hint of kerosene at the end. (FC) 11.5%

Drink 2023 – 2030

Colet, Aniversari Brut Nature 2019 Penedès 16

100% Xarel-lo. Organic viticulture. Traditional method. A representative of the Clàssic Penedès brand.

Tasted blind. A touch of cider, somewhat oxidised and metallic. Quince and candied lemon. Fine bubbles and a bitter dryness at the end of the palate. Gentle, easy, tactile, with a very dry finish. Stony finish with white flowers. (FC) 12.5%

Drink 2023 – 2030

Orda, La Ferreria Escumós 2021 Vino de España 16

100% Xarel-lo. From Gelida (Alt Penedès). Ancestral method, with the alcoholic fermentation starting in oak and ending in the bottle. In bottle for 20 months.

Tasted blind. Fresh apple. Lively bubbles, but not excessive and paired with a touch of balsamic vinegar that lifts the finish on the palate. Voluminous with an oxidised profile. Very fine bubbles for an ancestral-method wine. A fabulous one that ranks among the best ancestral-method wines in Catalonia. (FC) 12%

Drink 2023 – 2030

Parató, Àtica Extra Brut Gran Reserva 2017 Cava 16

85% Xarel-lo, 15% Chardonnay. Vineyards in Alt Penedès, next to the Montserrat mountain. Organic viticulture. Traditional winemaking, with a minimum ageing of 30 months.

Tasted blind. A full-bodied, fine-bubbled sparkling wine. High acidity, consistent, and a touch of sour apple at the end of the palate. After a while, aniseed, pear, hints of oxidation, almond. Very complete. Everyone will like it, especially experts and those more classic consumers. Bravo! **GV** (FC) 12%

Drink 2023 – 2030

€16.50 RRP in Spain

Albet i Noya, El Corral Cremat Brut 2012 Penedès

15.5

100% Xarel·lo. Single-vineyard sparkling wine from El Corral Cremat, planted in 1995 next to the Ordal mountains (Penedès) at 385 metres above sea level and on clay-limestone soils. Organic viticulture. Hand-harvested. Light pressing, using just the free-run must. More than 10 years of ageing, with manual disgorging of the bottles. Fewer than 1,000 bottles.

Tasted blind. Touch of wicker, green apple and smoke. Fresh, fluid, and lively bubbles on the palate. Very round finish. Very well made. (FC) 12%

Drink 2023 – 2035

Celler 9+, 4t Espumoso NV Vino de España

15

The winery is located in the village of La Nou del Gaia (Tarragona). Blanc de noirs produced from Garnatxa. Ancestral method but aged on its lees for 12 months. No SO₂ is added.

Very refreshing and vivid. It is a fresh wine, with a touch of cider on the nose. Light palate, with a lingering apple sensation at the back palate. Unforced and lively sparkling wine. (FC) 12%

Drink 2023 – 2025

White

LaFou, de Rams 2018 Terra Alta

18

100% Garnacha Blanca. 50-year-old vines planted in Viña de Ramos, located in the lowest part of the winery's estate. The vineyards lie along the border of Aragón at 340–370 metres above sea level, in valleys with ravines and gorges exposed to the Garbí and Mestral/Cierzo winds. In fact, Fou means gorge. Predominantly limestone soils. Part of the wine is made as an orange wine, with an intense and prolonged skin maceration, and after the blending it rests in the cellar for a minimum of 30 months.

Tasted blind. Delicate, very precise and clean on the nose. The palate is fine, fluid, delicate and very pure. Subtle but fresh flavour. I love the finesse and subtlety of this wine. I truly love it. Salty on the palate, with perfectly placed oak. A touch of lime with some wet stones and fennel at the back palate. I want to drink this wine in 5 years' time. (FC) 13%

Drink 2023 – 2040

Augustus Forum, Augustus Microvinificacions Xarel·lo de Mar 2016 Penedès

17

100% Xarel·lo. Old vines next to the cellar and close to the Mediterranean Sea. Alcoholic fermentation in French oak barrels, then aged on its lees for 4.5 months. A fraction of the must fermented in stainless-steel vats, then blended with the rest of the wine before resting in stainless steel vats for 3 months more. Aged in bottle 5 years. Fewer than 2,000 bottles.

Tasted blind. Very balsamic, with menthol, lemon-lime caramel, and a complex nose. The palate is consistent, and I like the tight profile. Refreshing acidity. Great depth and concentration. Impressive and with great evolution ahead. (FC) 12.5%

Drink 2023 – 2025

Clos d'Agon 2018 Catalunya

17

100% Viognier. A selection from several plots in Calonge (Baix Empordà). It is a small valley located at the beginning of the Gavarres mountain and just a few kilometres from the Costa Brava. Several aspects, and between 40 and 80 metres above sea level. Hand-harvested. Cold soaking for 3 hours, 70% of the must fermented in stainless-steel vats the rest in barrels. 7 months of ageing in barrels and stainless steel-tanks with continuous bâtonnage. 8,000 bottles.

Tasted blind. Nuts, almonds and great depth on the nose. Moderate acidity, bitter almond on the palate, consistent and tight. Very marked wood too, with some hints of dried apricots, quince and a touch of flint. Slightly astringent finish, with mineral, flinty hints. (FC) 13.5%

Drink 2023 – 2035

Edetària, Selecció 2016 Terra Alta

17

100% Garnatxa Blanca. Old vines planted in low-yielding 'honeycomb' (fossil dune) soils. Alcoholic fermentation and subsequent ageing for eight months in new 500-litre French oak barrels.

Tasted blind. Hints of olive leaf and a herbal touch. Very sweet, with notes of candied orange. An intense, tight wine, with a lot of sapidity. Minerality over a lovely stone-fruit character. A touch of nail varnish. Totally unforced. Lemon balm, orange. Just right for drinking now, and with convincing evolution ahead. Edetària wines get better and better, and this is a marvel. **GV** (FC) 14%

Drink 2023 – 2035

€24.50 RRP

Herència Altés, La Serra Blanc 2020 Terra Alta

16.5

100% Garnatxa Blanca. Centenarian vines. Located between Batea and Gandesa (Tarragona), La Serra is one of the most emblematic vineyards of the winery, around 430 metres above sea level, facing east on limestone soils, with the influence of the Garbí and Mestral/Cierzo winds. Hand-harvested. On arrival at the winery, the bunches are cooled to 4 °C for 24 hours. Direct pressing of the bunches and spontaneous alcoholic fermentation in concrete vats, then aged on its lees for 3 months with bâtonnage. Racked to Austrian oak barrels, foudres and to a 600-litre amphora for 10 months. 4,900 bottles.

Tasted blind. Fresh green-apple aromas, very pleasant. On the palate, it has a saline and aniseed touch. Very well made, with creaminess and volume. A touch of petrol/kerosene at the back palate. (FC) 14.5%

Drink 2023 – 2030

Rubió de Sòls, Sòls Xarel 2021 Vino de España

16.5

Xarel-lo, Xarel-lo Rojo. Vineyards in the Montsec Range (Lleida), in the Pre-Pyrenees. Alcoholic fermentation and ageing in French oak barrels for 6 months.

Tasted blind. A touch of ripe apple, umami, and baked apple too. There is also a touch of grapefruit. On the palate, dense, with a lot of sapidity. Refreshing finish, and steely. A touch of bitterness at the back palate. Long and enveloping with tension. (FC) 13.5%

Drink 2023 – 2030

Viladomat-Aragó, L'Esperit de l'AP-7 2020 Penedès

16.5

90% Xarel-lo, 10% Macabeo. A selection from several subregions of the Penedès. Hand-harvested. Use of stems during pressing, must exposure to the air and spontaneous alcoholic fermentation towards the higher temperature range. Aged for 10 months on its lees in oak, chestnut and acacia barrels, then a year more in stainless-steel vats. 3,700 bottles. Certified organic (CCPAE).

Tasted blind. I perceive reduction: flint, wet stones, toast and dried fruit too. Note of bitter almonds on the palate. Quite creamy and ample with a certain umami richness. Convincing wine. (FC) 12%

Drink 2023 – 2030

€16.50 RRP

Frisach, Vernatxa Instint Primari 2022 Vino de España

16

100% Garnatxa Blanca. A single-vineyard wine from Finca Quart in Corbera d'Ebre (Tarragona). Organic viticulture. Hand-harvested and second selection in the winery. Alcoholic fermentation with skin contact, then pressed. Aged in a 500-litre oak barrel for 6 months. Neither fined nor filtered.

Tasted blind. A touch of curry, high acidity, concentrated and full of flavour.

Natural and free wine with a touch of cider. An unforced and very lively wine.

(FC) 12.5%

Drink 2023 – 2035

L'Olivera, Missenyora 2020 Costers del Segre

15.5

100% Macabeu. Vineyards in Vallbona de les Monges, in the Valls del Riu Corb sub-area. Stony clayey-calcareous soils. Organic viticulture. Hand-harvested. Fermentation in American and French oak barrels and ageing on the lees until spring. 'Abocado' character obtained by adding concentrated must in the style of 'vi bullit', an old local style of wine.

Tasted blind. Very dense, but with freshness. Umami, creaminess, and well-ripened white fruit on the palate. Green apple on the back palate. Finishes with volume and freshness. (FC) 12.5%

Drink 2023 – 2030

Terra de Marca, Ur 2015 Penedès

15.5

100% Xarel·lo. A single-vineyard wine from the vineyard of Castellet. Hand-harvested. Pre-fermentation maceration with its skins, then pressed and just 4 hours' settling of the must. Spontaneous alcoholic fermentation and aged in French oak barrels for 8 months.

Tasted blind. Baked apple and green almond on the nose. Creamy, expansive, voluminous, with a great tactile impact. On the palate it has a more oxidised profile combined with herbal notes. (FC) 12%

Drink 2018 – 2025

Paret Seca Xarello 2022 Vino de España

15

100% Xarel·lo. From Font-Rubí (Alt Penedès). Skin contact for 6 weeks and aged in terracotta vessels for 8 months.

Tasted blind. Cider, green apple, fluid and light. It is a minimal-intervention wine. Lemon candy at the back palate. Very nice salty note. For those who like a free-flowing wine profile. An elevating acetic touch. (FC) 11.5%

Drink 2023 – 2025

Vins Desantesos, Lo Tracalet 2020 Vino de España

14.5

Macabeo, Pansal (Xarel·lo). From the plots closest to the Ebro River in Vinebre (Tarragona). Alcoholic fermentation with the skins for 2 weeks, then aged on its lees for 4 months more.

Tasted blind. Wine with a hazy appearance. Oxidised profile: orange peel, honey and marked general oxidation. Creamy on the palate, with a bitter background.

The freest style. (FC) 12.5%

Drink 2023 – 2025

La Gutina, Barbaroig 2021 Vino de España

14.5

100% Garnatxa Gris. Vineyards in Sant Climent Sasebas (Alt Empordà). Granitic sandy soils. Hand-harvested. Refrigeration for one day. Destemming and skin maceration for 4 hours. Pressing using a vertical press and subsequent spontaneous alcoholic fermentation in stainless-steel tanks with temperature control at the higher range. The wine rests in stainless-steel vats until bottling. 500 bottles

Tasted blind. Natural wine with notes of curry and oxidation. Touch of bitterness from skins and dryness. Full-bodied. A pure natural orange wine. (FC) 12.5%

Drink 2023 – 2025

Red

Companyia Vitícola Sileo, Esporreres 2019 Montsant

18

100% Garnatxa. A terraced single vineyard in Cornudella de Montsant. Planted on slate soils at 440 metres above sea level facing north-east. Aged in 500-litre French oak barrels for 12 months. 608 bottles.

Tasted blind. Sweet, powerful, round, with a lot of fruitiness. Full-bodied and concentrated. Ripe fruit, powerful and with volume. A wine of great character and impressive. One of the best Montsants of the moment. (FC) 14.5%

Drink 2023 – 2045

Vall Llach, Mas de la Rosa Gran Vinya Classificada 2021 Priorat**18**

100% Cariñena. Vines between 60 and 90 years old planted on the typical llicorella (slate) soils. Cold soaking for three days. Alcoholic fermentation of the destemmed grapes in 225- and 500-litre wooden barrels and 1,000- and 2,500-litre stainless-steel vats at a controlled temperature, with daily punching down and gentle pumping over. The wine is then racked to new French oak barrels with light and medium toasting and fine grain. It is racked just once during 14 months' ageing. 1,200 bottles.

Tasted blind. Sweet black fruit. A wine with a huge impact on the palate, juicy fruit and sweet tannin. Very ripe fruit, multidimensional on the palate as it wraps it, but with great quality. A wine that still needs to grow in bottle. Huge and impressive. Priorat at its maximum expression and power. (FC) 15%

Drink 2023 – 2050

Cal Batllet, 5 Partides Gratallops Vi de Vila 2016 Priorat**17.5**

100% Carinyena, from five vineyards from slopes (costers) in the village of Gratallops: Camp d'en Piquer (at 250 m, facing east), Coma (at 300 m, facing south), La Capella (at 300 m, facing south), Mas d'en Pallàres (at 300 m, facing south-west) and Vinyals (at 250 m, facing south). Centenarian vines. Aged in new French oak barrels for 15 months. 2,500 bottles.

Tasted blind. Modern, intense and consistent. Very concentrated and ripe black fruit. A wine with a high load of tannin, opulent, but very well constructed. It is almost a New World profile but extremely delicious. (FC) 15%

Drink 2023 – 2035

Domènech, Teixar 2019 Montsant**17.5**

100% Garnatxa Peluda. Old vines planted in Finca Teixar, a name given to a corner of Capçanes (Font del Teixar). Several plots with a total area of 3 ha between the Llaberia and Montalt mountain ranges, at an elevation of 400 metres above sea level, surrounded by pine forests and Mediterranean shrubs. Calcareous stony soils with a slope of 10–35% and a north–south aspect. Organic, biodynamic viticulture. Spontaneous alcoholic fermentation in 500- and 300-litre barrels. Aged for 14 months in French oak barrels.

Tasted blind. Very concentrated black fruit, spicy, and with tannin that blends with the acidity. A touch of sweet spices well integrated with the tannin. Full-bodied and full-flavoured. Sweet spices from Mediterranean aromatic herbs that melt on the back palate. I want more Garnatxas with this level of finesse. (FC) 15.5%

Drink 2023 – 2040

Mas Blanch i Jové, Troballa Garnatxa 2020 Costers del Segre

17.5

100% Garnacha. The vineyards are in Pobla de Cérvoles, in the DO Costers del Segre, subzone Las Garrigues, at 800 metres above sea level. Troballa is a line of spontaneously fermented wines with a rustic character. Aged for 6 months in amphorae, stainless-steel tanks and French oak barrels. 1,700 bottles.

Tasted blind. Very consistent black fruit, somewhat rustic but integrated tannin. Concentrated, very pleasant fruit. Full palate, intense, modern, powerful. Spicy. A hint of cocoa, with fine-grained tannin. I don't recognise myself giving this score to a natural wine, but this one is exceptional, a great natural and amphora wine that has been a revelation. VGV (FC) 14.5%

Drink 2023 – 2035

€12–€14 in Spain

Mas Llunes, Finca Butarós 2016 Empordà

17.5

60% Carinyena, 40% Garnatxa. Vineyard planted at the end of the 19th century on slate soils in the Butarós area (Garriguella, Alt Empordà). Hand-harvested. Each variety fermented separately in stainless-steel vats at a controlled temperature and with a single daily pumpover. Once the malolactic conversion is completed, the two varieties are blended and aged for 1 year in French oak barrels, and then for 3 years in the bottle.

Tasted blind. Firm but very integrated tannin. It is a consistent, powerful, fruity wine, with a lot of concentration. I like its sweet tannin because it adds volume and flavour. On the palate, still surprisingly fluid. It is a wine that I would say is seamless. Textured, with hints of graphite at the back palate. (FC) 14.5%

Drink 2023 – 2035

Castell del Remei, 1780 2018 Costers del Segre

17

Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo, Merlot. A blend of vineyards. Alcoholic fermentation and malolactic conversion in 10,000-litre stainless-steel vats, then aged in new French and American oak barrels for 18 months.

Tasted blind. Very oaky, spicy and of high quality. Great palate, with concentration. Incredible texture and depth. Graphite, salinity, power. A marvel. So much concentration but very well conceived. (FC) 14.5%

Drink 2023 – 2040

Cérvoles, Estrats 2019 Costers del Segre

17

Garnatxa, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot. Vines planted in the 1980s at 700 to 750 m above sea level in the subzone of Les Garrigues. Clay-loam and silt-loam soils with abundant gravels. Each variety fermented and aged on its lees. The malolactic conversion took place in new French oak barrels, then the wine was aged in new French oak barrels for 18 months with periodic bâtonnage during the first 5 months.

Tasted blind. A nose representative of a great wine, with structure and concentration. Balance of power and volume. Very pure and consistent vinification. The oak is evident. It is made with the intention to be very impressive and generous, and that is what it offers. Great wine. (FC) 15.5%
Drink 2023 – 2035

Frisach, Sang de Corb 2021 Terra Alta

17

40% Garnatxa, 40% Carinyena, 20% Garnatxa Peluda. A single-vineyard wine from an old parcel of 60-year-old vines. Clayey-limestone and stony soils. Organic viticulture. Hand-harvested. Alcoholic fermentation in stainless-steel vats. Aged in oak barrels for 12 months.

Tasted blind. Herbaceous, leathery, very ripe black fruit and a balsamic touch. Powerful on the palate, firm tannin, concentrated and with high acidity considering the level of ripening. Consistent and concentrated but still totally unforced. (FC) 13%
Drink 2023 – 2035

Mas Foraster, Julieta 2022 Conca de Barberà

17

100% Trepat. 80-year-old vines. The vineyards are in Montornès (La Segarra, Lleida), at 450 metres above sea level. A quite arid region, with rocky limestone soils and high diurnal thermal contrast, although this vineyard is very shaded due to the protection of the neighbouring mountains. On arrival at the winery, the bunches are cooled for 24 hours to 5 °C. Crushing with 20% of the stems and spontaneous alcoholic fermentation at low temperature. Aged on its lees in 1,900-litre concrete eggs for 7 months.

Tasted blind. Light, fresh, fluid. Low tannin. A wine to drink and enjoy and not to sip and ponder. It has high acidity that lengthens the palate. Fresh red fruit and lots of vivacity. A very enjoyable wine. Strawberry, pepper, with a lactic finish. Trepat is the Catalan answer to Pinot Noir. When you drink it you get pepper, a touch of leather, and the profile of a luxurious Trepat. (FC) 12%
Drink 2023 – 2040

Bell Cros, Selecció Delfí 2019 Montsant

16.5

100% Garnatxa. Old vines (65 years). Calcareous soils at 270 metres above sea level. Alcoholic fermentation in stainless-steel vats at controlled temperature. Aged in French oak barrels for 14 months. 1,400 bottles

Tasted blind. Lots of finesse, with soft and sweet tannin. Subtle, delicate, with a fantastic richness of fruit. Mediterranean maturity, somewhat compoted, but not overripe. Very well made. Floral touch at the finish. (FC) 15%

Drink 2023 – 2045

Parés Baltà, Hisenda Miret Garnatxa 2020 Penedès

16.5

100% Garnatxa. Old vines planted in Finca Cal Miret. Quaternary clay loam soils, deep and with gentle slopes. Biodynamic viticulture. Hand-harvested. Light pressing. Alcoholic fermentation at low temperature in stainless-steel vats for 3 weeks with 3 daily pumpovers. Aged in new and second-year French oak barrels for 5 months. This wine belongs to the Micro-Cuvée line because of its limited production, and it is only made in certain years.

Tasted blind. Ripe black fruit and a touch of spices. Firm, consistent, with very marked acidity even on the nose. Unforced wine with hints of graphite on the palate. Touch of leather and somewhat ferric too. Floral touch at the back palate. (FC) 14.5%

Drink 2023 – 2030

Perelada, Centenario 1923–2023 2020 Empordà

16.5

Syrah, Garnatxa. Use of a manual sorting table. Twice daily pumpovers then long maceration at controlled temperature. Aged for 12 months in new 300-litre bordeaux barrels of French Allier oak. Subsequent resting in the bottle.

Tasted blind. A very consistent, tasty wine, with very sweet, ripe tannin. It has a modern profile. Complex with a touch of rubber and bitterness at the back palate. Jamy black fruit and clove too. For everyone. (FC) 14%

Drink 2023 – 2040

Scala Dei, Masdeu de Scala Dei 2018 Priorat

16.5

100% Garnacha. Masdeu is a terraced vineyard located at the highest elevation of Scala Dei on the slopes of the Montsant, around 800 metres above sea level. Planted in 1945. The soil is mainly red clay, with calcareous veins as the elevation rises. Hand-harvested. Whole-bunch, spontaneous alcoholic fermentation in a 3,500-litre concrete vat with no temperature control and pressing in the tank itself. Aged for 15 months, 60% in concrete and the remaining 40% in a French oak foudre.

Tasted blind. Liqueur cherry and a herbal touch. Ripe tannin on the palate and a touch of bitterness. Good balance, smooth and sweet, but with a marked Mediterranean character. It has a slightly short finish, but it is a great bet for the fine wines of Priorat. (FC) 14%

Drink 2023 – 2040

Can Serra dels Exibis Viticultors, La Baula 2019 Pla de Bages

16

60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Sumoll, 20% Mandó. Vineyards at 500 metres above sea level, terraced, on red calcareous dry soils. Organic, biodynamic viticulture. Late harvest without reaching over-ripeness. On arrival at the winery, the bunches are cooled to 4 °C. Selection of the bunches, destemming and alcoholic fermentation in open barrels and ceramic tanks with frequent pigeage.

Tasted blind. Marked wood and with lots of sweet spices: clove, coconut, vanilla and nutmeg. Medium-bodied. Fluid and fresh, but the oak does not allow the full expression of the fruit. It's got a bit of everything. There is a lot of fruit, and there is a lot of oak. (FC) 13.5%

Drink 2023 – 2030

Cara Nord Garrut 2019 Conca de Barberà

16

100% Garrut (Monastrell). The vineyards are at 800 metres above sea level, between the Natural Park of the Prades Mountains and the Natural Park of the Forest of Poblet. Organic management of the vineyard. Low-temperature fermentation and aged in a 1,000-litre tinaja for 12 months. 750 bottles.

Tasted blind. A touch of candied red fruit, although with lots of freshness. Uncomplicated and really pleasant. It reminds me of a well-made Beaujolais. Fluid, fresh, with light tannin. A wine to drink and not to think about. (FC) 13.5%

Drink 2023 – 2030

Foresta Sumoll 2021 Vino de España

16

100% Sumoll. Vineyards located in Arboçar, a village in the heart of the Massís del Garraf (Penedès). Terraced vineyards and dry, poor soils with Mediterranean shrubs, too. Alcoholic fermentation and ageing in used French oak barrels for 8 months, then a year in bottle.

Tasted blind. Red wine that could almost be a dark rosé. Wow! What a balance between acidity and freshness. Fluid, almost non-tannic, light, lively and fresh. A red wine to drink without complications. A really refreshing wine with notes of wild red fruits and strawberry at the back palate. This is for acid lovers. (FC)

11.2%

Drink 2023 – 2030

Cellers Underground, Blunt 2018 Pla de Bages

16

85% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Sumoll. A cool vineyard next to a forest and on poor soils. Hand-harvested. On arrival at the winery, the bunches are cooled to 4 °C. The bunches are destemmed, and the alcoholic fermentation took place in second-use, open oak barrels with pigeages but without temperature control. Just the free-run wine was used, racked to oak barrels for a further 15 months' ageing.

Tasted blind. Mediterranean character. Herbal, warm, with enough fruit to support the wine. A touch of toast, but delicately integrated. Ripe, warm, but very well structured and a vegetal character on the palate that adds freshness.

Firm tannin. (FC) 14.5%

Drink 2023 – 2030

Josep Grau, La Florens 2021 Montsant

15.5

100% Garnatxa. Centenarian vines planted in Marçà (Tarragona). Calcareous soil. Use of ambient yeasts and fermentation in concrete vats. Aged in 2,500-litre foudres for 14 months.

Tasted blind. Hints of cherry liqueur paired with fresh fruit. Very fruity on the palate, soft tannin, a wine with a clear Mediterranean character. Hints of bitter orange. Delicate. Soft and generous alcoholic finish with great balance. (FC) 14%

Drink 2023 – 2025

Ficaria, Pater 2020 Vino de España

15

100% Garnatxa. From La Figuera (Priorat, Tarragona). Old vines (30–80 years). Planted at 300–625 m above sea level. Aged for 12 months in French oak barrels. 2,270 bottles.

Tasted blind. A full, round, warm wine with sweet tannins. Ripe black fruit, fig, on a background of spices such as clove. Warm but delicious, with round tannin. Plays at the edge of over-ripe fruit. (FC) 15%

Drink 2023 – 2030

Sweet

Celler Marfil, Marfil Molt Dolç NV Alella

17.5

100% Pansa Blanca (Xarel·lo). Organic viticulture. Oxidative ageing in a system of solera and criaderas started in 2003.

Tasted blind. Orange caramel, date, noble wood, touch of toasted saffron. Sweet wine with great concentration. Power and depth. Varnish, marron glacé with a touch of citrus. Very sweet but very concentrated. (FC) 15%

Drink 2023 – 2050

Giol Porrera, Dolça Carinyena 2022 Priorat

17

100% Carinyena from a steep single vineyard, Tros de la Teresina, in Mas de la Giola (Porrera). Young regrafted vines from another vineyard, Trosset del Pagès. Natural sweet wine made from over-ripened bunches and no use of wood. 300 bottles

Tasted blind. A wine with a lot of structure, power and sweetness. Ripe red fruit, concentrated. Very sweet, with hints of fig. It is of great quality, with a lot of flavour. Such ripe fruit that a touch of VA embraces it. A great sweet wine. (FC)

15%

Drink 2023 – 2050