

FOOD & WINE

THE
TRAVEL
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GLOBAL TASTEMAKERS

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Spanish Sparklers

Cava reigns supreme for your palate and wallet.

By Brian Freedman

CAVA IS ONE OF THE GREAT VALUES in the world of sparkling wine, balancing often subtle complexity with serious energetic pop. And more and more producers are working with organically grown grapes, which means that these bubbly don't just taste great, but they're often better for the environment, too. From nonvintage bottles to well-aged vintage gems, the eight here are perfect both for the warm weather and throughout the entire year.

NV MASIA SALAT CAVA BRUT NATURE (\$13)

Vibrant and energetic, this brut (i.e., dry) Cava possesses a mineral spine that carries notes of lemon pith, green melon, and Bosc pears. Enjoy it with generously seasoned fried foods—bring on the fritto misto, or even a Nashville hot chicken sandwich.

NV MARQUÉS DE CÁCERES BRUT (\$19)

Lovely lemon, orange, and apple notes find ballast in honeyed almonds and multi-grain toast, and a top note of salinity keeps this sparkler savory. It's precise and mouthwatering, and it works well as an aperitif and alongside fresh seafood.

2021 RAVENTÓS I BLANC CONCA DEL RIU ANOIA BLANC DE BLANCS (\$25)

This certified organic standout is made up of mostly old-vine Xarel·lo, Macabeu, and Parellada, and the result is a precisely structured wine with notes of caramel apples, citrus pith, and walnut toast.

2013 PARÉS BALTÀ BLANCA CUSINÉ GRAN RESERVA BRUT NATURE (\$45)

Xarel·lo blends with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in this mature Cava; it proves just how well the best bottlings can age. It's the color of burnished gold, with nut and orchard fruit notes.

NV CODORNÍU ARS COLLECTA BLANC DE BLANCS BRUT (\$15)

With 85% Chardonnay, this gulpable Cava from a historic producer is bright with Granny Smith apples and a seashorelike salinity. Flavors of hard nectarines and a quiet suggestion of walnuts extend through the finish.

2018 ROGER GOULART BRUT RESERVA (\$23)

Vegan-friendly and made with organically farmed grapes, this bottle is both rich and lively, with flavors of apricots, autumn orchard fruit, and coriander that all ring through the nougat-flecked finish. Try a glass with your favorite spicy foods.

NV SEGURA VIUDAS CAVA BRUT RESERVA HEREDAD (\$30)

This instantly recognizable bottle with its pewter-colored base holds a bubbly aged for more than 24 months before being disgorged. Its flavors suggest red apples and fresh baked brioche, with a hint of lemon blossom.

2016 AVINYÓ LA TICOTA CAVA GRAN RESERVA BRUT NATURE (\$50)

This single-vineyard, old-vine (planted in 1940) wine gets serious depth and complexity from five years of aging on the lees (spent yeast from fermentation). Its flavors recall pears and white peaches, with a touch of sesame.