

Best Cava and Spanish sparkling wines under £25: 12 to try

Spain's sparkling wines are worth seeking out if you want to enjoy bubbles that don't break the bank. Julie Sheppard rounds up a selection of styles from recent tastings – all of which offer great value for money.

Julie Sheppard September 22, 2021



Credit: Photo by Richard Barnard on Unsplash

In the world of sparkling wine, Spain flies under the radar. Its image is less glamorous than France's **Champagne** or Italy's **Franciacorta**. Meanwhile **Prosecco** has cornered the market for fun, budget bubbles.

However, much like **French crémant**, Spain – and especially its DO Cava – has much to offer fans of sparkling wine. For a start, in terms

of winemaking, Cava has more in common with classics like Champagne in that it is made in the **traditional method** with secondary fermentation in the bottle, as opposed to the tank fermentation used in Prosecco.

Secondly, Spanish sparkling wines and Cava are produced in a range of styles that will suit everyone. From crisp and fresh younger wines to rosés and creamy, complex vintage wines.

Scroll down for tasting notes and scores for 12 best Cavas and Spanish sparkling wines under £25

Cava: the facts

Catalonia in northwest Spain produces the majority of Cava seen on shelves. However it is the winemaking process that receives the Cava DO (Denomination of Origin), instead of a specific region.

So while 95% of all Cava production is focused in Catalonia, there are seven other provinces in Spain where it can be produced, including Aragón, **Extremadura**, **Rioja**, Navarra and Valencia.

A range of grapes can be used to produce Cava, including several international varieties such as **Chardonnay** or **Pinot Noir**. However three Catalan grapes provide the backbone of most Cava production: Macabeu, Parellada and Xarel·lo.

Together these grapes have come to define the signature Cava taste profile. Macabeu give the wines their fresh fruitiness; Parellada contributes aroma and acidity; while Xarel·lo lends structure.

While most Cavas are blends, there has been a definite trend towards producing single-varietal wines. Cavas made exclusively from Xarel·lo are worth seeking out and can age for decades.

From value to luxury

Cava has earned a reputation for making some of the world's best-value traditional method sparkling wines – as the bottles selected below prove. However, the DO's best producers have also turned their attention to making top expressions that can compete with the best sparkling wines in the world.

To that end, the Consejo Regulador del Cava introduced a new category into Cava production back in 2016. Cava de Paraje Calificado (or Cava de Paratge in Catalan) are wines made exclusively with grapes from a 'singular parcel' according to strict production rules. These rules include a maximum yield of 48 hl/ha, a minimum of 36 months' ageing (versus nine months for a standard Cava, 15 months for a reserva and 30 months for a gran reserva).

Look out for the name Cava de Paraje Calificado on bottle labels if you want to trade up to a more premium Cava.

Meanwhile, take advantage of the many fantastic Cavas and sparkling wines produced in Spain, starting with the bottles below.

Best Cava and Spanish sparkling wines under £25:

Wines shown in score order



Raventós i Blanc, De Nit Rosé Brut, Penedès, Spain, 2016

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A zero-dosage fizz from the three Cava grapes with some Monastrell to give the pink hue. Complexity from 18 months' lees ageing, plus ripe red berry flavours, a fine saline edge and refreshing acidity.

Points **92**

Alta Alella, Mirgin Gran Reserva Brut Nature, Cava, 2017

[+ Add to My Wines](#)

A blend of Pansa Blanca (Xarel·lo), Macabeo and Parellada from organic vineyards. Fresh aromas: delicate creamy citrus, herbal and floral hints. Creamy palate with pastry notes, lemon tart, green apples and ground almonds, balanced by brisk acidity, with gentle bubbles and a crisp, clean finish.

Points **91**





Juvé y Camps, Reserva de la Familia Gran Reserva Brut

+ Add to My Wines

A classic Cava blend of Macabeu, Xarel-lo and Parellada; bready, citrus aromas with hints of honeyed peach and white blossom. Fresh, with a creamy mousse and persistent bubbles. Beeswax, ripe lemon citrus, stone fruit and candied peel, alongside savoury, yeasty notes. Very satisfying.

Points **91**

Aldi, Vintage Cava, Calalunya, Spain 2017

+ Add to My Wines

Made for Aldi by renowned Cava producer Freixenet, this is a traditional blend of Macabeo, Parellada and Xarel.lo. Firm mousse and crisp acidity carries flavours of green apple and lemon zest on the light-bodied palate, with a mineral and hay lift through the finish. Available online only from 21 June.

Points **90**





Augustí Torelló Mata, Brut Reserva, Cava, Catalonia, 2017

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A blend of Macabeo, Parellada and Xarel·lo from organic vines aged 30-40 years. Subtle aromas of green apple, apricot pastries and ripe lemon. Evolved honeyed notes on the palate, alongside fresh apple and lemon citrus, with a creamy texture, gentle bubbles and a fresh lift of grapefruit acidity on the...

Points **90**

Pere Ventura, Primer Reserva Cava, Penedès, Spain

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There are some cracking value Cavas to be had if you know where to look, and this is one of them, made by a leading family estate in the region. Remember that Cava is produced using the traditional (Champagne) method, this one spending 15-18 months ageing on lees for the...

Points **90**





Roger Goulart, Gran Cuvée, Cava, Catalonia, Spain, 2012

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A blend of the classic Cava grapes (60% Xarel-lo, 20% Macabeo, 20% Parellada), each vinified separately before blending. Five years on lees adds complexity and a lovely honeyed note to the palate. Creamy citrus and apple aromas, followed by a lifted and elegant palate, showing plenty of freshness, with delicate...

Points **90**

Codorníu, Cuvée Barcelona 1872 Brut NV, Cava, Penedès, Spain

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Brilliant value for money, this light and fresh Cava is a blend of Macabeu, Xarel-lo and Parellada. Appealing aromatics: apricot pastries, fresh lemons, lemon tart...





Fermi Bohigas, Mas Macià Brut Nature Reserva, Cava NV

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Very classic Cava, showing some evolution and nutty complexity. Pleasant autolytic notes.

Points **89**

Vallformosa, Origen Brut Bio, Cava, Catalonia, Spain, 2017

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A blend of Macabeo, Xarel·lo and Parellada from organic vineyards. Fresh apple and lemon aromas, with hints of honey and herbs. A well balanced palate with good depth of honeyed citrus fruits and stone fruit, fresh acidity and brisk bubbles. A great aperitif.

Points **89**





Freixenet, Rosé NV, Cava, Catalonia, Spain

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This good value rosé is a blend of Garnacha and Trepat, an indigenous variety of Conca de Barberà in Tarragona - there are only 1,000ha planted in Catalonia. Strawberries and raspberries on the nose. Lots of ripe and creamy red berry fruit on the palate; the sweetness held in check...

Points **88**

Vilarnau, Brut Reserva NV, Cava, Catalonia, Spain

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A blend of Macabeo, Parellada and Chardonnay, vinified separately before blending to produce a fresh, citrus fizz with exuberant bubbles. Creamy, almond notes, a touch of salinity and honeyed finish add interest. Simple, but well made - and great value for money.

Points **88**

