

BY THE GLASS

# By the Glass: Grower cava reflects heritage from grape to glass

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If past experience has led you to put cava in the “cheerful but unremarkable” category of sparkling wine, three meticulously crafted bottles will update your notions about what the dry Spanish bubbly can be. These sparklers, made in the Champagne method from macabeo, xarel-lo, and parellada grapes, are the products of winegrowing families with longstanding roots in Penedès, Catalonia.



ELLEN BHANG FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

In the late 19th century, after the vine pest phylloxera wreaked havoc on the region’s wine economy, the Esteve family rebuilt their livelihood from the ground up. In Avinyonet del Penedès, an hour’s drive west of Barcelona, they replanted on new rootstocks, and expanded acreage. Today, the current generation makes a line of sparklers under the name Avinyó. The four siblings at the helm work organically, farming estate-owned vineyards to make grower cava.

When you learn that Celler Mas Candí was launched in 2006, you might assume that the people behind it are new to cava. But Ramón Jané’s family has cultivated grapes for 500 years, selling the fruit to large cava producers. Jané, together with his wife, Mercé Cuscó, and enologist friend Toni Carbó, are committed to farming their vineyards biodynamically, limiting production to ensure quality over quantity.

The viticultural lineage of the Raventós family reaches back hundreds of years — to 1497 to be exact — but they are not afraid to evolve. In 2012, the 21st generation decided to leave the cava DO (denominacion de origen) to create a more stringently defined geographic appellation. They named it Conca del Riu Anoia, after the river valley where the organically farmed, single estate is situated. Results in the glass are beguiling.

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