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THE WINES OF
CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN
SPAIN

From Catalunya to Cadiz

notes of toast, honeycomb, and a gentle smokiness. The very professional wine tourism options offer gastronomy as well as wine.

Viader

www.viader.eu

Eduard Viader joined Corpinnat label in March 2025. Eduard formerly released his traditional method wines under the Muscandia brand with DO Cava, but left the DO at the end of 2024. He started in San Sadurní d'Anoia in 2009 aged 21. In 2018 he acquired the Finca Can Rossell de la Llena in Gelida with its fourteenth-century farmhouse and vineyards, which is where the winery is now. Viader has four sparkling wines. Les Eretes (Xarel.lo 60 per cent, Macabeo 20 per cent, Parellada 20 per cent) and Tres Viles Rosado (Pinot Noir) are both aged for more than 18 months. Anhel Blanc de Noirs (Pinot Noir) is aged for more than 60 months and La Llena (Xarel.lo 70 per cent, Macabeo 30 per cent) for more than 43 months. All are aged under cork.

CONCA DEL RIU ANOIA

Raventós i Blanc

www.raventos.com

Pepe Raventós of Raventós i Blanc left the Cava DO in 2012. At the time a number of significant figures were discussing how to leave and what to do instead, so it was a striking and unexpectedly early move, given that he and his family are direct descendants of Josep Raventós, the first ever Cava producer. The winery is right in the heart of Penedès, just across the road from the other major destination of Codorníu. The membership qualifications for the Conca are strict, which perhaps accounts for the fact that no one else has joined. Pepe is committed to organic or biodynamic working, indigenous varieties, ageing for a minimum of 18 months and returning to traditional work in the vineyard, such as using horses to plough. Through sheer personal dynamism, plenty of energy, and excellent wine, he has built an impressive profile internationally. Proof that with excellent wine, great communication skills, and boundless energy it is possible to work without the support of a DO or marketing organization.

There is a well-chosen portfolio. De Nit is a lively rosado with ripe flavours from Monastrell. De la Finca is a classic blend from old (1964) bush vines from the Vinya dels Fòssils – these vines come from the



Pepe Raventós

original massal selection made in 1888. (The selection was made by Manuel Raventós Domènech, who created the original Macabeo–Xarel.lo–Parellada blend.) The Blanc de Blancs, a blend of the three varieties, also now includes a little Malvasía de Sitges; it is fresh, brisk and intense. The well-named Textures de Pedra blends Xarel.lo Vermell, Sumoll and Bastard Negre to make a *blanc de noirs* that has a stony character and a clean, mineral edge. The wine is a creative reflection of the origin and was deservedly well-received on release. Mas del Serral is a striking single-vineyard expression of Xarel.lo and Bastard Negre. Pepe's father, Manuel Raventós, appears as a benign presence in the winery, and Manuel Raventós Negra is his choice of the best wines, full of flavour, a Xarel.lo with 25 per cent Macabeo, dense and crisp. In addition to these wines, Pepe also has Can Sumoi, an isolated hilltop property (see p. 47) and a series of no added sulphur wines called Vins Pepe Raventós.

Raventós i Blanc itself was begun by Manuel and Pepe's grandfather Josep Marí who decided to **start afresh**, building a winery around the old oak tree. The family have **lived on** the estate since 1497. Pepe is the twenty-first generation and is joined in building the future by his wife Susana and daughters. Their Raventós i Blanc is a fascinating combination of experience, a respect for history and for family, and innovation.

TRADITIONAL METHOD SPARKLING WINES: A ROUND-UP

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, there are traditional method sparkling wines made all over the Spain. This is a book on the wines of central and southern Spain, but I will also mention here some of the more interesting wines from outside the remit of this book. Increasingly, given the competition from Prosecco, there are Charmat method wines appearing, so it is always worth checking the label. Usually the (low) price will be a clue – the cheaper the wine, the more likely it is to be Charmat.

Can Ràfols dels Caus (www.canrafols.com) is in Penedès but outside the DO. Their Climax sees 30 months of bottle age and is a blend of the estate varieties: Xarel.lo, Macabeo and Chenin Blanc. The rosado Climax is brut nature, made from 100 per cent Pinot Noir, also given 30 months ageing. Parisad has seen six months ageing and is 80 per cent Xarel.lo and 20 per cent Chardonnay. All three are brut nature and organic. (See also p. 46.)

Familia Torres (www.torres.es). Familia Torres was a late entrant to the modern world of traditional method sparkling wine. Its arrival had been long anticipated. The question was: would a group as important as Torres join Cava, just at the time when Cava was beginning to wobble? The answer: they did not, which left them free to search for higher and cooler vineyards beyond the denomination. The concept took a while to bed in, partly I feel because of the unusually English name: the brand is called Vardon Kennett, apparently named after an English sea captain called Daniel Vardon Kennett, who settled down to make wine in Penedès. Every wine needs a story to sell it, and this is perfectly authentic. It's just that the name is an unlikely one for a Catalan wine. There are two wines: the white Cuvée Esplendor, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Xarel.lo, 9 per cent fermented in oak and aged for 57 months, is ripe, honeyed and fresh. The rosado, Cuvée Rosé de Mar, is 100 per cent