

## Longer Tables with José Andrés

### A wine so good I put my name on it

The wines of Pepe Raventós are both world-class and personal



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Hola people, I hope you had a great weekend, and that you did something to celebrate fall...maybe you went apple picking and made some [pie](#)?

Today, I'm so excited to tell you this story—I've been waiting to tell it for months, maybe years. In some ways, it's a story more than 500 years in the making. It's a story about my friend **Pepe Raventós**—the *21st generation* winemaker from the Catalan region of Penedès who makes [some of the best sparkling wines in the world](#)—whose family has been growing grapes and making wine since the late 1400s! They made still wines for many of those centuries, but in the late 19th century, Josep Raventós, Pepe's great-great grandfather, traveled to France and came back with the champenoise method to create sparkling wines back in Spain (more on this story a little later!).



That's a lot of history in a short time...but I like to think my friendship with Pepe goes back a ways too...it's its own history in a bottle! Together, we created a really amazing sparkling wine that we call **Cuvée José**—you can find it in every single one of my restaurants (I'm not kidding!). It's a unique wine, made only for us, and you can only get it at our restaurants. Made from the three most famous grapes of the region—Xarel·lo, Macabeu, and Parellada, it spends 18 months on the lees, the yeasty byproduct of fermentation, before being

The first time Pepe and I made Cuveé José was in 2015, when we celebrated the 25th anniversary of Jaleo. I loved it so much that we began offering it at every restaurant, and the current vintage we have at the restaurants is the 2020. People, this is a really special wine. Some of the vines that produce the grapes are older than me, and the soil is really unique—Pepe's property was originally an ocean floor, with a high fossil content (you can sometimes see the fossils of seashells and snails in it!). He keeps a section of the land unplanted so you can actually see the fossils!



The wine itself is a little briny, like an oyster, a little toasty, a little creamy, with some green apple and herbs...it's a perfectly balanced wine if you ask me! If you take one sip of the Cuvée José with your eyes closed, it can transport you to Penedès, with its dramatic, hilly landscape, the faint scent of the Mediterranean dancing with the freshness of the soil and agricultural life surrounding you, and maybe, on a clear day, a view of Montserrat, the jagged mountain of the region.



If you aren't convinced yet, you should come to one of my places and try it. It's also a pretty good deal, if I'm being honest...you can't find a bottle of Champagne at the same price!

Another reason this wine is so special is because the history of the family who makes it is so incredibly rich. As I said earlier, the Raventós family has been making wine in this region, specifically in the town of Sant Sadurní d'Anoia, for over 500 years. From father to son since at least 1497 (that's as far back as the family records go), the land around this town has been farmed by Pepe and his ancestors.



Pepe practices biodynamic winemaking, and plows some of his land with horses in the traditional way

Today, Raventós is 100% biodynamic, which means they place equal importance on all the elements that go into making wine—the soil, the plants, and the animals around the farm—because they all contribute their own part in creating an amazing wine. For example, the property has a pond dug by one of Pepe's ancestors, and when it rains, it collects all the rainwater to irrigate the poplar trees on the property. Those poplars were historically used to make wooden boxes for packaging and delivering wine—the family has always used every corner of this property. At one point, horses plowed the entire property, and today they still plow the most important plots.

It's hard to express how much history and experience is in the hands of Pepe. To me, he himself is like a wine grape grown in the rocky soils of Penedès, which in itself has the seeds for the next generation of grapes, but also the DNA of every generation that's grown before it, every fruit that's been made into the family's beautiful wines.

I have more to tell you about Pepe and his wines—will you stay with me for more later this week? I promise I'll come back for monthly and annual subscribers to tell you more about the family's history, plus some of Pepe's more personal winemaking projects—including the very best sparkling wine in his collection, **Mas del Serral**.

People, are you with me??