



Meeting Pepe Raventós



I popped into Mission E2 last night before dinner to meet up with Pepe Raventós. What a dude.

His family have been super-important in the development of Cava – until recently they owned giant producer Cordoniu. But in 2012 he decided to do something brave and quite drastic. He took his highly regarded family winery (**Raventós i Blanc**) out of the Cava DO, and has embarked on establishing a new appellation, Conca Del Riu Anoia.

The rules for this new appellation will be much stricter. It will be geographically delineated to a relatively small area around the Anoia River valley between the Anoia and Foix Rivers. Only native varieties will be allowed. Yields will be restricted, and the vineyards must be managed biodynamically (Demeter certified). There'll be a longer minimum ageing period. So far Raventos and one other high quality producer (who can't go public yet) are working on this, and their hope is to get the geographic indication approved, and then make it a DO. It's about returning the focus of Cava to the vineyards and to the place.

Pepe is an interesting guy. He really gets wine. Since training as an enologist in Madrid, he has worked with the likes of Didier Dagueneau in Pouilly Fumé, Olivier Lamy in Saint Aubin, Harald Hexamer in the Nahe and Phillippe Blanc in Alsace. That is quite a CV. He's currently living in New York with his wife and four children: they live on the upper east side and send their kids to public school. From here, he's regularly flying back to Spain, but living in New York helps him work the markets. His plan is to move the family back to Spain in the next couple of years.

With his understanding of interesting wine, and his wide experience, it will be interesting to see how Pepe progresses with this project of creating a Spanish sparkling wine appellation that's a true peer of the best wines of Champagne.