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Report #42: Wines of Catalonia

Introduction



The Nulles Cooperative Winery

Catalonia (Cataluña, Catalunya) is a region distinct from the rest of Spain in terms of history, language and culture. Even its winery architecture is distinct, influenced by the great Catalan architect Gaudi. A large and diverse region for wine production owing to differences in geography, climate and soils, Catalonia consists of 12 wine-producing appellations, many of which have made wine since ancient times. As recently as the late 19th century, Catalonia had as much area

under vine as all of California does today.

During the 20th century, after the tumult of the Spanish Civil War and World War II, the Catalan wine industry became one of the leaders of the innovation behind the Spanish wine revolution, embracing modern winemaking techniques and increasing the plantings of international grape varieties. Many producers, especially the smaller artisanal ones, have a strong passion and commitment to local tradition, and culture. They make their wines from local varieties and follow well-established winemaking regimes. Today the Catalan wine industry consists of very large commercial wineries, especially in Cava, family wineries, and many small artisanal wineries scattered throughout the region that are making new wave wines.

In this report, we provide readers an overview of the wineries and wines of Catalonia. We focus on Catalonia's principal appellations or Denominaciones de Origen (DOs) with the goal of identifying their principal characteristics, the nature of the wines they produce, and some of their

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noteworthy growers and winemakers. We also provide tasting notes and ratings for a selection of the wines from each D.O. In total, we review over 300 still wines and Cava.

Cava occupies a special place in this report. Most Cavas are produced within the subregion of Penedès, although Cava also is its own D.O., which encompasses sparkling wines made in other parts of Catalonia and other areas of Spain.

This report builds on our previous publications on *The Wines of Priorat*, *The World of Grenache*, and *Sparkling Wines*. In this report we will examine such issues as global warming and its impact, the rediscovery of indig-

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enous varieties, wine making challenges in the vineyards and wineries, and the potential of Catalonia as a wine growing region.

Exports are very important to the Catalan wine industry, especially today when some Spanish consumers are boycotting Catalan wine in response to the region's independence movement.

As this report illustrates, Catalonia has many talented producers and a wide variety of unique, exciting wines. We highly recommend them to consumers around the world.

Editorial Note: Catalonia has its own language, but few outside the region speak it. For that reason, we generally use Spanish and/or English terminology and spellings in this report. For example, we use Garnacha instead of Garnaxta, Xarello instead of Xarel-lo, and Catalonia or Catalunya instead of Cataluña.

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