

WINE A



Cava Brut, Mas Macia

£7.25

Woodwinters

Jordi and Josep Casanovas' beautiful 60 hectare Can Macia estate has been bottling Cava since 1936 but until recently the family sold most of their production as grapes or wine to other Catalan producers. Following extensive investment in the cellars in 2000, the main emphasis has been on high quality estate-bottled wines.

The mainstay of production remains Cava, from Macabeo, Xarel.lo and Parellada, with a proportion of Chardonnay for the Gran Reserva. The wines are given extended bottle ageing before disgorgement (even the non vintage Brut is aged 18 to 24 months) giving wines of unusual nutty complexity. Still wines are becoming an increasingly important part of the range, the oak aged reds from Tempranillo, Cabernet and Merlot and a ripe and full-flavoured Xarel.lo from a 60 year old vineyard.

In the Vineyard

This Cava Brut is made from Macabeo, Parelleda and Xarello grapes cultivated in Jordi Casanova's 60 hectare Mas Macia estate in the Penedes region near Barcelona.

In the Winery

Mas Macia is produced with the three classic grape varieties: Macabeo, Xarel lo and Parellada, using the traditional Cava method. The finished Cava has very small, fine, persistent bubbles, which are a result of the low temperatures in the wine cellar where fermentation takes place and appropriate levels of carbonic acid during the secondary fermentation. The wine is matured for 24 months before bottling to enhance the complex, fruity aromas.

Tasting Note

A fresh and nicely creamy Cava with complex flavours of apples and stone fruits with herbal notes and some nutty, yeasty notes from time on the lees. Good acidity and a long, savoury finish.

Press & Awards

Mas Macia Cava Brut NV came joint first in Wine International's Cava & Prosecco Tasting - August 2005, scoring a high 94 out of 100 points. It was also highlighted as particularly 'Good Value' along with a couple of other wines in the tasting. Please see some of the tasters comments below:

'Earthy, but with a smoky, buttery intensity. Quite dark, ripe and broad, but with good acidity. CM. 94 Points.'

'Long, rich and satisfying on the finish. RJ'

'Good weight and depth of fruit with a pleasant mid-palate, sweetish lemon fruit and a good length. DS.'

Decanter World Wine Awards 2008, Bronze medal

WINE B



Valentin Bianchi Extra Brut

£8.75

Woodwinters

The Bianchi family winery was founded in 1928 by Italian immigrant Valentin Bianchi and now covers 350 hectares of vineyard. It is now run by the third generation, headed by Enzo Bianchi.

Until recently a sleeping giant that was dependent largely on the domestic market, they have undergone a gradual transformation and modernisation in the past few years.

The Bianchi Brut is not only one of Argentina's most impressive sparkling wines, but also stands up to the best that the rest of the world has to offer at this price.

The grapes, vinified in modern facilities, are fermented and the wine aged on its lees for a further 12 months before release.

50% Chardonnay and 50% Pinot Noir.

It has nice biscuity fruit on the nose and good richness on the palate. Fresh and clean, it finishes dry.

WINE C



Santo Stefano, Ruggeri, NV Prosecco DOC (VSQPRD)

£13.15

Harrisons

This is one of the best Italian wine firms and its Prosecco di Valdobbiadene are among the most absolutely complete expressions of this wine. Today, at the head of the winery, which was founded fifty years ago by Giustino Bisol, is his son Paolo. in the Valdobbiadene area.

Vineyard

Prosecco, with small quantities of Verdiso and Perara which are equally represented in the vineyard and important for their acidity and aroma respectively.

Ruggeri does not have its own vineyards but buys the grapes in from the highly acclaimed vineyards of the best zones of Santo Stefano in the commune of Valdobbiadene.

Grapes are harvested from late September to mid-October

Vinification

White vinification, that is to say without the skins, at a controlled temperature of 20 degrees C. The sparkle is added through slow refermentation in large sealed tanks at 12-14 degrees C, remaining with the yeasts for approximately three months before bottling. With a residual sugar content of around 26g/Lt.

Tasting Notes

This is a classic prosecco with fine bubbles and a fragrant nose of freshly baked bread and ripe fruit. On the palate it is full with a pleasant vein of acidity and a very slightly semi-sweet background which balances the flavours and adds length.

This brilliant wine has an inviting pale greenish colour and fine strands of persistent perlage. Its delicate fruity bouquet is subtle yet persistent, with aromas of mature apples and lemon blossoms. Fresh and lightly sweet, Santo Stefano is well-structured and rounded. It is harmoniously balanced and has a long and gently fruity finish. It is the classic "ombretta trevigiana" (which could be roughly translated as the 'between-meal drink of Treviso') often drunk with pastries and cakes.

Drinks very well with a luxuriant dish of delicate fresh-water shell fish, any light lunch or canapés and is a deliciously refreshing glass by itself.

WINE D



Pelorus NV

£14.00

Woodwinters

Pelorus is the sparkling wine label of Cloudy Bay, comprising two styles crafted from chardonnay and pinot noir grapes. Sunny skies and the long cool summer days of Marlborough ensure the slow ripening so essential for achieving the elegance, crispness and complexity inherent in a quality sparkling wine.

Vinification

Pelorus Vintage and NV are both produced using traditional vinification techniques; the grapes are hand-picked, and only the free-run juice is extracted to ensure palate softness and elegance.

The base wines (**chardonnay and pinot noir**) are fermented in a mix of stainless steel tanks, large oak vats, and small French oak barrels to give layers of complexity. These base wines undergo spontaneous malolactic fermentation, which softens the natural acidity and adds depth of flavour and richness. They then spend a minimum of eight months on yeast lees prior to blending each November. The blend is put on triage (dosage to cause secondary fermentation in the bottle) the following February and left for a minimum of two years lees aging before disgorgement.

Wine we are drinking now would be from no later than March 2005 harvest.

Tasting Note

Pelorus NV is a chardonnay-predominant blend of selected vintages.

It is a fresh, aperitif style sparkling wine with fresh lemon and apple-crisp flavours, underpinned by creamy, nutty yeast complexity derived from two years bottle maturation on lees. Very fine and persistent bubbles.

The Name

'Pelorus Jack' was a famous dolphin who, for more than 20 years around the turn of last century, met the steamers crossing between the two main islands of New Zealand and escorted them through the Marlborough Sounds. His descendants abound in the waters of Cloudy Bay and their image has become the symbol of Pelorus.

WINE E



Le Mesnil Grand Cru Brut NV

£24.00

Woodwinters

The co-operative was established in 1937 in the heart of the Grand Cru village of St Mesnil Sur Oger in the Côtes des Blancs, which is widely regarded as the source of the region's best Chardonnay, much of which is used to produce this Blanc de Blancs Champagne. It has around 500 members who between them own around 305 hectares.

The co-operative's principal business is the supply of "Vin Clair" to all the grand marques. However, we are the first and only company to ask the co-operative to make its own Champagne under the Le Mesnil label. Le Mesnil Champagnes are made only from the finest Chardonnay grapes from 25 hectares of the co-operative's vineyards in the Grand Cru of St Mesnil Saint Oger.

Vineyard

The vineyards are located half on the plains and half on the hillsides, taking full advantage of the sun. Under Gilles Marguet, the principles of la lutte raisonnée are applied; limiting the use of chemicals, and green harvesting is practised for low yields.

Vinification

100% Chardonnay.

Wines are matured in the co-operative's chalk cellars with over two years bottle ageing. Following release, non-vintage wines can be cellared for three to five years and vintage wines for up to twenty years depending on the vintage.

Tasting Notes

The wine has a generous floral nose, a deliciously refreshing yet rich palate and a clean satisfying finish.

sure-fire impressive, stupendous value, pleasingly fruity 100% Chardonnay Champagne, a wine of outstanding complexity and finesse.

Pale yellow appearance with a lively bead. The nose displays aromas of lemon peel, orange blossom and brioche. The palate is clean and persistent with firm acidity and good length. Pure fruit and great finesse.

WINE F



Taittinger Les Folies de la Marquetterie

£39.00

Woodwinters

A single vineyard Taittinger new onto the market.

The Château de la Marquetterie, situated in the heart of the Champagne wine-growing region and owned today by Champagne Taittinger was, prior to the French Revolution, the site of village fairs and a meeting place for philosophers and authors of the "Age of Enlightenment".

Vineyard

Thanks to its soils and its sunny south/southwest exposure, the vineyard Les Folies, that overlooks the Château, produces Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes of exceptional quality.

This cuvee of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, (55% and 45% respectively), is produced exclusively from grapes grown at the Folies, picked after the first "green" harvest, giving the wine optimum sweetness and aromatic maturity.

Vinification

Only wines from the first pressing are used, each plot being vinified in small volumes and certain lots in oak casks. All of the wine is slowly aged for over 3 years on its lees in the bottle which brings the flavours of this champagne to perfect harmony.

Tasting Notes

The result is impressive, not forsaking for a moment the famous Taittinger elegance but adding an intensity of Pinot power, manifested in a toasty richness, a backdrop of red-berried fruits and a creamy richness.

It is deep yellow in colour with fine delicate bubbles and an intense, highly fruited bouquet of peaches and hints of broche. It is a full bodied Champagne with a long distinctive finish of stone fruits and toasty notes.

Vigorous with a soft, fruity aroma. Lovely and crisp with warm, ripe fruit flavour and nicely balanced acidity.

Champagne region villages and their associated vineyards are classified (from 80 to 100 percent) according to the quality of the grapes produced.

Of the approximately 270 villages, only 17 have obtained Grand Cru ratings of 100 percent. The next level, called Premier Cru, consists of villages with ratings from 90 to 99 percent.

The remaining villages have ratings of between 80 and 89 percent.

Most of the better-known Champagne houses buy grapes to supplement their own vineyards, and this percentage rating system helps set the prices growers receive. Although it's probably less meaningful in Champagne because the house (producer) is generally considered most important.