

fine lees

Extreme Winemaking

Living on the edge

Premium Cava

The discerning alternative

Beaujolais

Hanging with the Cru

*Not another
wine publication
I hear you groan*



*The unfettered
wine report*

Issue 1

Listen up – despite the current unsettled political stage, the world of wine is more diverse and dynamic than ever before. Pét-Nat, natural and orange wines are undoubtedly buzzwords of the current scene, and that's great! Phases (or fads?) come and go, but the producers we champion in this new bi-monthly publication are firmly rooted and worth taking note of.

This new publication celebrates the wonderful goings on in the vinous-sphere, highlighting some of our favourite wine growers that go to extremes to bring us their spoils.

Picture this: buried vines in the frozen vineyards of Prince Edward County, courtesy of the Pinot King himself, Norman Hardie – a man with more focus than a Ford. He brings us cool climate varietals that'll literally make you sing. Discover Norm and other extreme winemakers on page 12.

The return to prominence of spellbinding Gamay from Lucien and Yohan Lardy is a story not to be missed. This father and son duo have intriguingly different approaches when producing their individual cuvees, yet the wines are equal in their brilliance of championing the Crus of the region. Find out more about jolly great Beaujolais on page 5.

And to add a little more sparkle to this otherwise greying time of year, we bring you the unstoppable surge of undeniably delicious Cava from our friends at Llopart. Dating back to 1887, Llopart have consistently produced organically-farmed, traditional method Cavas of the utmost awesomeness. Check it out on page 21.

We're proud to bring you these stories – so settle in, fill your glass and load the next page.

Cheers,

Julian Bicknell



First bitten by the wine bug in 2007, **Julian** graduated UCL with a geography degree in 2011. From there he joined the wine trade working a busy Christmas stint with an online supplier of fine wines and spirits, called Slurp. Realising he needed to learn more, Julian joined the wine team at Hawksmoor Guildhall and within 6 months was managing the wine department at the newly opened Hawksmoor Air Street. Five years later, he made his way back to the supply side and recently joined the Bibendum team as North London Account Manager.



LUCIEN LARDY VIGNERON

Dignes



Fleurie

Appellation Fleurie Contrôlée

" Les Moriers "

2014

Piccolant au Olivier - Fleurie (Rhône) - France

Hangin' with the Beaujolais Cru



"I love that the region is being discovered all over again; the memory of Beaujolais Nouveau is slowly fading like a bad ex-girlfriend."

"Yohan and Lucien really care about the wines they make – the attention to detail is beautiful. Our customers have been receiving these wines really well."

Heath Ball of The Red Lion and Sun, Highgate

More than baby Bourgogne

By Gergely Barsi Szabo

My love affair with this highly-underrated area started at the dawn of my wine studies, and solely out of practical reasons. This was one of the first regions I could remember every aspect of. I could recite all its villages, from south to north and back up again... Only one variety to remember: Gamay. Carbonic maceration. Beaujolais Day. And that was pretty much what I needed to know for my exams.

I had a vague idea about a light, fruity wine, but its northern neighbour Burgundy – with all its intricate snobbery – was far more interesting for a young somm. And to be perfectly honest, back in the early 2000s Beaujolais was for most people far, far from interesting. Those were the high times of heavy reds with tons of oak.

A light-bodied wine reminiscent of Ribena and bubblegum, with its weird vinification method, was way out of fashion. Usually Beaujolais was considered a subchapter, if not a humble footnote to Burgundy. The region's wines were being squeezed out for Beaujolais Nouveau-day in mass production: the soils were dead, the vines tired, and the producers were only interested in quantity. But thankfully not all of them.

Waking up to change

Bar a few, most people here in London had no idea what the region and its people are really capable of. This all changed massively in the spring of 2010. Reluctantly joining a Beaujolais Association tasting at the Arts Club, fellow somms and I were absolutely stunned by the diversity and fine detail of the wines on show.

That March afternoon, seven years ago, has put the region back on our maps. The underdog became a superhero. It was clear: this is not baby Bourgogne. It is not the carbonic supermarket wine factory. This region does not want to be anything else than what it is: proud of its Gamay grapes and granitic soils. The only thing it has in common with Burgundy is that they are both located in France.

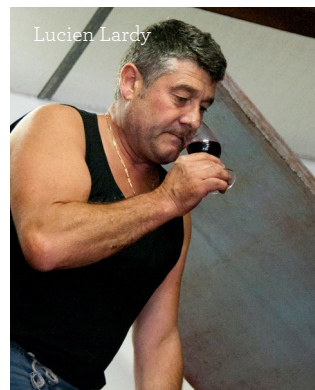


Originally a sommelier – and a journalist in a previous life – **Gergely** joined Bibendum after years spent at Gordon Ramsay group and a year detour at Sager and Wilde. He is now part of the Bibendum Fine Wine Sales team and a Business Development Executive. As a side project G makes wine in his native Hungary, a dry Furmint from Tokaj to be precise. Follow him [@gergelywine](#).

Modern-day Bojo

Nowadays when you turn the pages of a wine list you have a pretty good chance that the Beaujolais section will be of consistently high quality. Winemakers realised that the varietal and region is perfectly suited for a more natural approach and the ideas of organic and biodynamic production practices are spreading rapidly.

The wine bars of East London have a Beaujolais section almost matching the size of Burgundy, but thankfully not in price. I guess it took a new generation of wine drinkers to move Beaujolais out of the shadows. Those folks who only care about good wine and a more natural approach, rather than traditions, prestigious names and high prices.



Lucien Lardy

So how to enjoy these wines?

Firstly, forget everything you think you know about the region and the grapes. This is serious winemaking done with discipline. The wines are light so they don't cover up the nuances of subtle differences of the slopes, aspects and rocks. With light-bodied varietals you have to do an ultra-precise job in the vineyard and an even more precise one in the cellar – simply because there's no mask of oak or overwhelming fruit flavour to hide any imperfections.

With that in mind you'll be thrilled with the expression of the landscape in a glass of Cru Beaujolais. Not bad from a region that 10 years ago was pretty much considered to be close to a soft drink...



A seriously premium alternative

By Richard Siddle

Whisper it gently but Beaujolais, yes, quite unassuming Beaujolais, is now very near the top of any discerning sommelier's "to buy" list.

For its lifelong fans, Beaujolais' return to favour is simply long overdue, but even the staunchest of French wine lovers would have been excused if their attention had drifted off to alternative, more obviously exciting wine regions in recent years.

But the world of wine is forever changing and Beaujolais is benefiting in a number of ways. Experienced and, crucially, well-heeled wine drinkers are returning to wines right across the Old World. They have had their excitement Down Under or in South America and are ready to return to the classics.

Pulled its socks up

It's very much still an on-going project, but there has been a marked change in the way Beaujolais wines are being made to allow for greater complexity and ageing. All helped by a better understanding and characterisation of its soils, and being able to identify and map out the best plots of land in its top vineyard sites.

The region has always had the quality and diversity with its 10 Crus, or 'growths', to interest sommeliers and wine enthusiasts alike. Through improved viticulture and ageing, its Chiroubles are now gaining the consistency to become truly alive; its Moulin-à-Vent has the spice of a Morgon, and its Fleuries are vibrant and floral.

Rather than depending mainly on carbonic maceration to create fruity, but simpler wines, winemakers are now looking to follow a more Burgundian style by fermenting de-stemmed grapes and ageing in barrels to bring out more depth and diversity.

The emergence of an exciting new breed of younger winemakers has also, crucially, got the wine grapevine talking again about what is now available in Beaujolais.



Richard is an award-winning business journalist. Former editor of Harpers Wine & Spirit he now runs his own website (The-Buyer.net), looking at trends and analysis of the premium on-trade. He also produces a fortnightly insights newsletter on the global wine industry called Grapevine for the London Wine Fair. You can follow him at [@richardsiddle](https://twitter.com/richardsiddle).

Capitalising on Burgundy

We can't talk about the rise of Beaujolais without putting it in context with the problems up the road in Burgundy. A series of near disastrous harvests have put Burgundy right on the back foot. It might still have quality wine, but it's at prices a lot of buyers aren't willing to pay. Thus, there are now some serious gaps to fill on top wine lists – holes that Beaujolais with its relaxed, approachable, affordable wine is ideally placed to fill.

It is the flexibility and reliability of Beaujolais that buyers are returning to, both on the high street and in premium restaurants.

This demand was reflected in a 31% rise in sales of Beaujolais Crus and 12% increase for Beaujolais Villages in the 12 months to December 2016.
(*Inter-Beaujolais*)

Then there is Gamay. It might be a long way from challenging Pinot Noir as one of France's most recognised signature grapes, but its delicate, soft flavours are proving popular with customers and trade buyers alike.

The challenge for Beaujolais is how much of this new-found fame it can hold on to once the Burgundy machine powers back in to action.

As with all classic French wine regions it is the families that keep the traditions alive, while being more prepared than any to evolve and adapt. Bibendum is lucky to work with both Lucien Lardy and his son Yohan, who collectively are making some of the finest wines in Beaujolais.

Yohan Lardy



Click here to watch Lucien and Yohan Lardy talk to us about what makes their corner of the world so special



The Lardy story

Lucien Lardy was one of only four children to follow his father into winemaking and he very much sees his role as both winemaker and “keeper of a French heritage”. A role he has taken on by setting up the Terroirs Originels, an alliance of fellow-minded winemakers – including his son Yohan – to look after their soils and vines in the most sustainable way.

One of his many stand-out wines include the Fleurie Les Moriers, which is made from vines that were 1er Cru-classified as far back as 1874. It has all the lovely relaxed, velvety fruits that really makes Beaujolais such a credible and relevant alternative to Burgundy.

Lucien believes Beaujolais is starting to be taken more seriously, because the region is “stepping away from that image of Beaujolais Nouveau”. He says, “We’re making wines, like in Burgundy, that are single varietal, from Gamay, but from different terroirs, from all the Crus in Beaujolais.”

At 30 years old, Yohan Lardy is one of a new generation of terroir-focussed producers in Beaujolais. He has the opportunity to work with two hectares of vines dating back to 1911 and 1950, situated on the heights of the Moulin-à-Vent. This is where he makes his ‘Les Michelons’ wine named from this unique plot of land. He only uses natural yeasts and no sulphites to bring the most out of what are (in his own words) “very thin, meagre” soils.

Gergely's favourites:

Lucien Lardy Fleurie Le Moriers 2014

A complex, balanced wine made from vines planted in 1911 on the east side of the Cru Fleurie. Wet soil and soy sauce blends with the red fruit flavours on the nose. The aromas are very concentrated, but structurally the wine is very light and fresh.

Yohan Lardy Moulin-à-Vent Cuvée 1903 Vieilles Vignes 2014

Made from vines planted in 1903. Concentration took place in the vineyard to produce a fairly robust wine. Great fresh red fruit combines with earthy notes. It's perfumy and meaty on the palate – unquestionably a great wine.

New from the Rheinhessen

There's a new group of premium producers - both traditional and modern in approach - creating very exciting wines across Germany and we've added three new names to our range: Weingut Kopp in Baden, Joh. Bapt. Schäfer in Nahe and Weingut Peth-Wetz in Rheinhessen.

Weingut Peth-Wetz

epitomises the new face of German wine. Having travelled extensively, husband and wife Christian and Maja returned to the Rheinhessen to make what they describe as "internationally-styled wines of distinct regional character".

Founded in 2001, their 30ha of vines are located between Worms and Alzey. Their wines range from an unfiltered Riesling and Spatburgunder, to estate Grauerburgunder. Showing utmost respect for the environment, they are in the process of obtaining organic certification.



Christian Peth

Extreme Winemaking

By Sophia Godyn, Bibendum
content coordinator

Doing things the
hard way and why
it's worth it

There's winemaking the easy way: in a temperate climate, on nice flat ground with lots of machinery and chemicals to help. And then there's the hard way...

A world away from the cosy restaurant or hip bar where that bottle of complex, elegant and deliciously moreish wine is poured, there's a group of reckless individuals battling the elements in the pursuit of creating something great.

They might be working at the very limits of where it's climatically possible to

grow grapes, scrabbling on hands and knees to tend vines on vertigo-inducing slopes, or harnessing the power of Mother Nature to battle vineyard pests. But one thing they all have in common, is the desire to make truly remarkable wine, regardless of how physically, mentally (and financially) draining that might be.

Let's spare a thought for those mavericks out there hand-ploughing steep, stony vineyards or protecting their vines from frostbite. Meet the Extreme Winemakers...

Battling extreme cold

Below 10°C is too cold for a vine's cells to function. That's why vines lie dormant in winter throughout most of the winegrowing world, before waking up again, refreshed, in spring. But if the temperature falls to under -20°C? It's bad news. Norman Hardie from Canada's Niagara Peninsula explains, "with temperatures below -19°C to -21°C on vinifera, the primary bud will die; underneath the primary is a secondary bud that will die between -21°C and -23°C, while the tertiary bud that sits below the secondary will die between -24°C and -25°C. If that happens, there will be no green tissue the following year and the whole plant will perish."

Ningxia province in China, while warm and sunny in summer, can regularly plummet to -25°C in the winter. Lenz Moser from Chateau Changyu Moser XV tells us how they avert disaster: "We tackle the danger by burying the vines. This is a very labour-intensive process, which involves pruning the vines right after harvest. Then the vineyard is watered for solid moisture and freezing potential. After this, in early November, the vines are buried with soil, simply by holding the vines down manually and then ploughing in around 30cm of soil needed for full protection."

Norman uses a similar technique to protect his vines in Niagara, but feels the extra labour is worth it.



"I would rather do this extra work in those incredible soils than work less, and less expensively, in an easy, warm climate with sandy soils. The best wines have always been made on the edge, it's a combination of terroir and climate. I would rather be on the edge for climate and have the best terroir than the opposite."

Norman Hardie

Snowy vines at Norman Hardie, Niagara



The power of Mother Nature

‘Sustainability’ is bandied about rather a lot these days, but some winemakers are taking it to the next level by harnessing the power of nature to help fight vineyard irritations and even replace the need for electricity.

Joch Bosworth from Battle of Bosworth in South Australia’s McLaren Vale has discovered a secret weapon in the form of *Oxalis pes-capra*, or the ‘soursob’ – a pretty yellow flower that features on all Battle of Bosworth labels. Joch describes how soursobs “have the reverse lifecycle of the grapevine, growing rapidly after winter’s opening rains then dying off in spring/summer as the vine exits dormancy. They outcompete

other weeds and are the only weed control you need!” Considered a weed in itself throughout the rest of South Australia (and hated by gardeners), it takes a lot of work moving the bulbs around to get them established, but once they are in, this humble little flower does the work of gallons of herbicide.

Once they are established, the humble little soursob does the work of gallons of herbicide

Bertie Eden from Chateau Maris in southern France’s Minervois La Liviniere is passionate about creating a natural, chemical-free environment where his vines

can thrive, and believes this experience should continue into the winery. “When you invest that amount of time in looking after the plant,” he explains, “you want to make sure that the grapes from that plant aren’t going into a building that totally negates or destroys all the work that you’ve done in the vineyard.”

Bertie’s winery is made entirely from hemp, which gives it the ability to control its own temperature. “The basis of the bricks is that they breathe,” says Bertie, “so they inhale and they exhale, controlling the temperature without the need for electricity. Our cellar never really changes more than five or six degrees in temperature, whereas outside it’s changing up to 20-25 degrees.”

Soursob at Battle of Bosworth in McLaren Vale



Working at dizzying steepness

There are benefits to growing grapes on a slope: increased air flow through the canopy, better soil drainage, enhanced sun exposure. And the steeper the slope, the greater the benefits, but also, the greater the hazards...

Lucia Rodríguez de la Fuente from Adegas Algueira works with vineyards in Ribeira Sacra, where the average elevation is 45° and, in places, a dizzying 85°. “We can’t use any kind of machinery in the mountains,” she explains, “since we don’t have any physical space to place it”. The only thing they have is a single track rail that winches the loaded grape crates up onto the road, but first they must be hand

harvested (without falling down the mountain!) and carried up to the rail itself.

At the vineyards in Ribeira Sacra the average elevation is 45° and, in places, a dizzying 85°

When asked if all that hard work is worth it, Lucia replies, “If we have to answer this question halfway through the harvest everybody would say no, for obvious reasons! But at the end of the day it’s totally worth it.” Fantastic soil drainage keeps problems like mildew at bay without the need for chemical intervention, which means they can hold

on to the indigenous yeasts attached to the grape skins, bringing natural vineyard aromas to the finished wines.

And beyond this, Lucia explains, “It improves the quality of our viticulture, since we don’t rely on machines which don’t have the same sensitivity as hands, eyes or feet. We carry out a very ‘human’ viticulture, a mentality that extends into the winery – crushing the grapes with our feet in wood barrels, with a very patient control over the fermentation process. It’s hard, absolutely, but the feeling we get when we have the bottle in our hands at the end of the process makes this whole adventure worth it.”



An electric winch at Adegas Algueira

Rejecting all mod cons

It's like the Industrial Revolution never happened in some parts of the winemaking world. But is it worth forgoing the ease and practicality of machinery to embrace a more traditional way of working?

David Sampedro from Bodegas Bhilar in Rioja follows a biodynamic approach to farming, so returning to the use of horses in the vineyard seemed like a natural step. It might be a lot slower to work the vineyard by horse, but as David explains, "horses have helped us better understand our vines, as you

walk each and every line in the vineyard. You are able to see the health of the vines, the soils, the ecosystem, whereas riding inside a tractor, you can't even see the grapes and often don't even have to set foot in the vineyard. The use of horses forces us to be more thoughtful."

For Yohan Lardy in Beaujolais the need to work the vineyard by hand rather than machine comes from necessity as well as philosophy. His steep, rocky terroir is integral to the complex flavours in his wines, but means it is impossible to use machinery. Six hectares of

Yohan's Fleurie, Chénas and Moulin-à-Vent vineyards are ploughed entirely by hand, which means weeding takes four times longer than using herbicides. But there are benefits to this back-breaking work. "It respects the soil and the microbial life," says Yohan, "which also enables us to preserve the indigenous yeasts for a natural vinification without any added yeast. It enables us to get wines that truly capture the essence of the terroir as it was done originally, back in olden times."

Favourite wines from our extreme winemakers:

Chateau Changyu Moser XV
Cabernet Sauvignon

Norman Hardie Chardonnay

Battle of Bosworth Puritan Shiraz

Chateau Maris La Touge

Adegas Algueira Pizarra

Bodegas Bhilar Phinca Abejara
Single Vineyard

Domaine Yohan Lardy Moulin-à-Vent
Les Michelons





David Sampedro, Bodegas Bhilar



For the Love of Honest Food & Empty Plates

A morning with Bryn Williams

By Elona Hesseling,
Bibendum marketing

Odette's in London's Primrose Hill may have three Rosettes, but for chef patron Bryn Williams it's all about honest food and keeping it simple. Having recently opened Bryn Williams at Porth Eirias on the North Wales Coast – close to his hometown of Denbigh – Bryn tells us more about his love affair with veg, the British food scene and why seasonality is everything.

How has the British food scene changed in recent years?

“The focus has returned to ‘less is more’. Seven years ago, it was all about complex purees and foams, but now it’s more about honest cooking, with imagination and flavour. It’s about keeping it simple and highlighting the ingredients.

“It’s also – thankfully – more about seasonality now. 95% of what we use in the kitchen is British. While supermarkets have played an important role in bringing lots of good food to the public, they have gotten rid of seasonality. You can get any ingredient at any time of the year – it’s like having Christmas every day!

“Seasonality is what it’s about. When something comes into season, it’s exciting. We’ve come full circle to how our grandparents used to do it. We preserve seasonal foods, we pickle it and ferment it, so we won’t have to order out of season. Seasonality shouldn’t be a PR word; it’s just how life should be. When it’s growing, eat it. If it’s not in season, it’s not meant to be.”

What is your favourite British ingredient? “It’s a tough choice between Welsh lamb and scallops, but I have to go scallops. It’s the most amazing and simple raw ingredient – I just love prepping them and cooking them. We get our scallops hand-dived from the Scottish West Coast. I love diving and I’ve even dived for them myself in North Wales once; I’ve learnt what to pick and to respect the ingredient.”

How do you like to serve scallops? “They’re so versatile! While they are delicious raw in the shell, my favourite recipe is Seared Scallops with Braised Chicken Wings, Jerusalem Artichokes and Hazelnut Jus.”



“The focus has returned to ‘less is more’. Seven years ago, it was all about complex purees and foams, but now it’s more about honest cooking, with imagination and flavour.”

*Bryn Williams, Odette’s,
Primrose Hill*





Seared Scallops with Braised Chicken Wings, Jerusalem Artichokes and Hazelnut Jus

What would you drink with it? “A classic choice would be a good Chablis, like the Guillaume Vignaud Fourchaume Chablis 1er Cru. Another interesting option will be something more aromatic, with a hint of sweetness – like the Markus Molitor Haus Klosterberg Riesling. Scallops is a simple ingredient with a lot of flavour, so goes really well with a more complex wine.”

You’ve written a book ‘For the love of veg’ – tell us more about this love affair. “I do love veg. People tend to think vegetables are there just to fill the plate – the old ‘meat and two veg’ adage. But vegetables can be the hero of the dish. It’s a lot to do with how you prepare them. Instead of cooking them in a lot of water, rather salt bake, roast or steam your veggies to get maximum flavour.

“We grow our own vegetables in Wales for the restaurants, which has really taught me to respect these ingredients. It’s very hard work and you have to treat raw vegetables with the same respect you would meat or fish.”

What are the worst things about being a chef? “The worst? You sometimes have to miss out on family occasions – you just can’t always get away. But the best thing? You meet amazing people. Your customers and people you work with become your friends.

“I’ve known I wanted to be a chef since I was 10. At school we visited the local bakery to learn how to make bread. I loved it and got a job at that bakery when I was 12. It’s great to see how something goes full circle, from raw ingredients to final product, like when you make bread.

“Being a chef, all I really care about is making people happy – an empty plate and someone saying ‘that was nice!’ is all I need. Food is the best way of showing love, affection and friendship. All you need is family, friends, good food and good wine – it’s quite simple, that’s life.”

Click here for the recipe of Bryn’s Seared Scallops with Braised Chicken Wings, Jerusalem Artichokes and Hazelnut Jus

The Discerning Alternative

How Cava is finding its niche

By Sophia Godyn,
Bibendum content coordinator

In a category dominated by the extremes of Rap Star Champagne and Girls' Night Prosecco, it's not easy to be Cava. But can this Spanish fizz capture the imagination of those wanting something affordable, authentic and distinctive?

With its second fermentation in bottle, mandatory cellar ageing (which gives the wine its name) and dry, complex flavour profile, Cava has more

in common with Champagne than Prosecco. But what makes premium Cava stand out from the cheaper examples that have given it a bad name?

John Graves, Bibendum Channel Director and Cava groupie, explains, "When I started in the wine business, Cava was cool. However, over time – and until recently – it has become a commodity; something to steer well clear of. With producers getting back to basics and focusing

on a terroir-driven approach, this category is going full circle.

"Quality producers have refused to compromise and continued the traditional production methods. They have a real provenance and are making these wines the artisanal way. Cava can truly be a great alternative discovery for those willing to look beyond the commercial offer and spend a little more."



A point of difference

In order to adhere to the regulations of the DO, all Cava must be made using the 'traditional method' of sparkling wine production, with a minimum of nine months lees ageing. So even entry-level Cavas will exhibit a degree of depth and complexity over that of, say, tank method wines like Prosecco. Reservas and Gran Reservas (requiring a minimum of 15 and 30 months' lees ageing respectively) can indicate higher quality still, but the focus, nonetheless, remains on what is happening in the cellar, rather than on the grapes themselves. Like most premium wines, though, the real difference starts in the vineyard.

DO Cava (the region's regulatory body) has recognised this with the recent introduction of a new single-estate designation: Cava del Paraje. In addition to a minimum 36-month required bottle fermentation, Cava de Paraje classification wines must be made from hand-harvested grapes, from minimum 10 year-old vines, with a maximum yield of 8,000 kg per hectare.

The Llopart story

Tiny yields of quality fruit from old vines? That's old news to the Llopart family of Subirats. They've been making Cava this way since the 19th century. At 87, Pere Llopart is the fourth generation of his family to follow this winemaking philosophy, which he is now passing on to his five children. "Llopart vineyards are the essence of the Llopart Cava character," he says.

The average age of Pere's vines is 40, with some reaching 60, 70 and even 85 years old.

This, along with rigorous viticultural practices such as green pruning and selective manual harvesting, means Llopart has some of the lowest yields in the area. It produces a tiny 5,000-5,500 kg/hectare, when the maximum requirement for Cava DO is 12,000.

The family also hold a deep respect for the land, farming completely organically since 2000 and obtaining the EU's Organic Certification in 2013. Pere explains, "The idea is to make the vines naturally resistant to disease, create a balanced environment and encourage biodiversity, so that the ecosystem regulates itself."





An exceptional place

But it helps if you have great terroir. At an elevation of 1,000-1,300 feet in the Subirats sub-region of Cava DO, Llopart's 500ha of vineyards benefit from cooler temperatures than in the town below, but are protected from extreme cold by the Montserrat mountains. At 15km from the coast, the vines are also protected from any humidity. The area's shallow, calcareous soil, uneven slopes and terraces stress the vines and, along with their significant age, contribute to Llopart's extremely low yields of high quality fruit.

Gastronomic cava

The vineyards are harvested in 'levels' according to variety and altitude, ensuring that only fruit that has reached optimum ripeness reaches the winery. From the pressings only 50% of the first free run juice is kept and used to produce Llopart Cava, while the remaining 50% is sold on.

All the wines are aged for a minimum of 18 months, so all their Cavas are no less than Reserva (for which the minimum ageing requirement is 15 months). The Gran Reservas are riddled by hand.

Pere tells us, "Our Cavas are very gastronomic, they pair perfectly with the main courses of any meal. We like to explain that every Cava has its moment: the Rosé Brut is perfect as a welcome glass, paired with some appetizers (both sweet and salty), with a fruit salad, even with chocolate; pair the Brut Reserva with a tuna tartar for an unforgettable experience; the Imperial Panoramic matches perfectly with sheep cheese, pork brochettes, grilled steak or taste it with Asian-style chicken broths."

Already poured in some of Spain's top Michelin-starred restaurants, like Celler Can Roca and Lasarte, isn't it time to see more premium Cava on wine lists closer to home?

GO SHOPPING WHILE EVERYONE SLEEPS #CELLARSWEEP

Fill your cellars for Christmas with our Fine Wine #cellarsweep, a super limited offer that will run from midnight to 9am for one night only this October. Keep an eye on your emails for more information.

A taster of the amazing wines that will feature on #cellarsweep:

Rusden Estate Black Guts Shiraz 2006

Molitor Zeltinger Sonnenuhr Auslese White Cap 2008

Pichon Longueville Baron 2000

Opus One 2009 Magnum

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