



## FAMILIA OLIVEDA CAVA, CATALONIA

### **Background**

Cava is a Greek term that is used to refer to “high end” table wine or wine cellar. Comes from the Latin word “CAVA” which means cave in English. Caves were used for the preservation or aging of wine. The constant, slightly chilly temperature and high humidity that most caves possess makes them ideal for such use.

Unlike wines from D.O.s such as Rioja and Ribera del Duero, Cava is not a delineated geographical region as such. In fact Cava can (in theory) come from anywhere in Spain, provided the vineyard is listed, the wine is made with specified, approved grape varieties and in a particular way i.e. the traditional method of producing a sparkling wine by fermentation in the bottle. The French call this “methode champenoise”. Thus the simple, intrinsic difference between Cava and Champagne is of provenance and grapes used.

In practice, 95% of Cava is made in Catalonia. The grapes used are restricted to the indigenous Parellada, Macabeo, Xarel-lo, Malvasía and Chardonnay. For Rosé Cava or Cava Rosat, Monastrell (Mouvedre), Pinot Noir, Garnacha or Trepat are used. For these reasons in particular, Cava does not taste exactly like Champagne, nor does it aspire to or pretend to be, preferring to have an individual style of its own and often preferred to its illustrious neighbor.

By law, Cava must spend at least 9 months in bottle maturing, with Reserva’s spending 18 months in bottle maturing and Gran Reserva’s 30 months minimum in bottle maturing. The result is a fresh, citrusy, bubbly wine, now renowned the world over. Cava is produced in a range of dryness/sweetness from Brut Nature (bone dry), to Brut (dry) right up to Semiseco (medium sweet).

As stated on the lintel stone over the entrance of the Oliveda house, wine production on the estate dates back to 1764, although at that time it was only for the family. In 1948, Josep Oliveda Casanovas and his wife, Joana Rigau Ros, founded a company for the production and sale of wines and cavas. In 1995, their wines were awarded two gold medals in Madrid, and thus joined an elite group of “The One Hundred Best Wines in Spain”.

Familia Oliveda is still family owned and is located in Capmany, northeast of Barcelona inland from the Costa Brava at the foot of the Pyrenees. They produce a full range of Cava styles, *blanco and rosat*. This comarca, or rural district, is a land of legends, spirits and traditions situated in the northeast of the Principality of Catalonia, receiving the caresses of the Tramuntana winds and the kiss of the Mediterranean Sea.

Familia Oliveda tend 50 hectares of their own vines and have invested in new technology over the years to extract the very best from their quality fruit – all this whilst not abandoning the traditional winemaking techniques they have nurtured, which give their wines a singular character. Their underground cellars for maturing the Cavas are impressive, as is the unique museum of ancient wine making artifacts such as wooden wine presses, hand pumps and Spain’s biggest collection of brass barrel taps dating back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Dali, who worked nearby in Figueres, would surely have enjoyed the occasional flute of Oliveda cava!

Faithful to the *méthode Champenoise*, discovered in the 17th century by Dom Perignon, the Familia Oliveda cellars produce the most delicate Cavas, extraordinary and unique. Must from Macabeu, Xarel-lo and Parellada grapes, and must for the Rosat from Pinot Noir and Grenache grapes are fermented in the bottle, which sees them transformed into light, elegant and exquisitely aromatic cavas.