


WINE ADVOCATE

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“Spain: The Sparkling Wines from Cataluña - Where's the Spark?”



LUIS GUTIÉRREZ · ISSUE 227 · OCTOBER 2016

How Leaders Work

Quality leaders, not volume ones, that is! Well, these are focusing on vineyard work, when a huge percentage of the bottles sold comes from the same base wine purchased from a handful of volume producers, who buy grapes and churn out millions of liters of anonymous white wine. I've already mentioned it before. Do you wonder why so many Cavas taste the same? It's because they really are the same wine!

(...)

I'm slowly visiting my favorite growers adding new names in each iteration of each region and this time I finally paid my long overdue visit to Recaredo, who to me are the absolute quality leaders in the Cava appellation. I visited not because I wanted to see their cellars, but because I was especially interested in seeing the Turó d'en Mota vineyard, which is the source for their best Cava and the best wine in the appellation.

The company laid its foundations in 1924, when Josep Mata Capellades himself built a wine cave underneath his house in the village of Sant Sadurní d'Anoia. His father's first name was Recaredo, and that's what he used as a brand name. The third generation, lead by Ton Mata, arrived at the business in 1990 and I think he's the one who has taken quality to a different, higher level.

The flagship wine is a single vineyard Xarello named after a small slope, Turó d'en Mota, where the vines were planted in 1940. The north-facing vineyard is only 0.97 hectares on limestone-rich soils (14% active limestone), where the vines are head-pruned and each guided with the help of a stick. They have produced and sold this wine as a separate label since the 1999 harvest and are currently selling 2005, so it's still a newcomer. Not all vintages are produced and they are not necessarily released following a chronological order. For example, they have kept the 2004, which they consider a superb vintage in need of a longer time in bottle, so 2005 was released first.

But let me make this clear. We talk about Turó d'en Mota because it's a unique, world-class wine, and we tend to talk more about this kind of wine more than others, but we end up drinking the others. The name Recaredo on ANY label is an absolute guarantee of a top quality wine and I order them whenever I see them on restaurant lists, as they never let me down. Maybe it has something to do with what I'm going to explain next...



www.recaredo.com



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Recaredo's Creed: 100%!

No, I'm not going to talk to you about the still wines from Recaredo that are produced under a separate company called Celler Credo (Creed), which appear in the still wines from Cataluña article. But the pun was intended; this is about what they do, what they believe in, and what their promise is to their customers.

Recaredo only produces Brut Nature (no sugar added), single vintage Cava, and every single bottle carries the vintage, the disgorgement date and the time the wine has been in bottle in contact with the lees. The production method follows these strict principles:

- 100% grapes from their own vineyards in the Alt Penedès**
- 100% organic and biodynamic viticulture (certified since 2015)**
- 100% manual harvest**
- 100% aging in bottle with lees under natural cork**
- 100% minimum aging of 30 months sur lie**
- 100% hand turning (remuage) of the bottles**
- 100% manual disgorgement without freezing the lees**

Furthermore, they do not produce wines for any other winery and they have audited yields. For example, in 2015 the average yield from their vineyards was 4,900 kilos of grapes per hectare, when the maximum permitted yield from the appellation of origin Cava was 12,600 kilos per hectare. In fact, all of the above points have been certified yearly by Bureau Veritas... since 2003! How about that as a quality promise?

