



MARQUÉS DE MURRIETA

ESTATES & WINES

Robert Parker
WINE ADVOCATE

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Castillo Ygay Gran Reserva Especial 2012

The 2012 Castillo Ygay Gran Reserva Especial was produced with a blend of 81% Tempranillo and 19% Mazuelo (Cariñena) from the plot La Plana in the Ygay estate, which was planted in 1950 at 485 meters above sea level, the highest in the Ygay property. The Tempranillo was picked between September 17th and 19th, and the Mazuelo was harvested on September 25th. The bunches were destemmed and lightly crushed and put to ferment in stainless steel for 10 days with constant pump-overs and délestages. The Tempranillo matured for 34 months in American oak barrels, and the Mazuelo also matured for 34 months but in French barriques. It was then blended and put in concrete for a further 20 months. It has 14% alcohol, a pH of 3.65 and 5.8 grams of acidity (measured in tartaric acid per liter). It seems to follow the style of the 2011, perhaps somewhere between the 2010 and 2011—very classical, with notes of earth, cedar, spice and meat. The palate is polished, sleek and elegant with a touch of earthy rusticity. 103,216 bottles, 3,121 magnums and some larger formats produced. It was bottled in May 2019. No 2013, 2014 or 2015 will be produced, so from here, they will jump to 2016 to be released in 2026 or 2027. I look forward to it, and I'm intrigued about what I'm going to find when I taste it.

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Dalmau 2020

The 2020 Dalmau Reserva was produced with a blend of 82% Tempranillo, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon and 6% Graciano from Pago Canajas within the Ygay estate, nine hectares planted in 1950 on red stony soils where they seek low yields to achieve concentration. It's a powerful red, with 14.5% alcohol, a pH of 3.45 and six grams of acidity. The varieties were destemmed, then fermented separately in 13,900-liter oak vats with pumping over and délestage. The Tempranillo was picked on the 24th of September and the others on the 27th. They also matured separately in French oak barrels for 17 months, then blended and put in concrete for another 13 months, something that started in 2019 and continued, for even a longer time in 2020. This vintage continues the change towards freshness and elegance that I saw in 2019 but takes it even further. The wine is beautifully perfumed, floral and elegant, refined, clean, expressive and showy. It has a very subtle balsamic twist, a very harmonious and balanced palate and velvety tannins, superbly crafted. This has freshness and balance like I have never seen in Dalmau before. Bravo! It's approachable already and should continue evolving in bottle for a long time too. 14,962 bottles, 900 magnums and some larger formats produced. It was bottled in May 2023

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Marqués de Murrieta Gran Reserva 2016

A barrel selection of the most age-worthy wines from the vintage make the 2016 Gran Reserva Limited Edition, this year a blend of 82% Tempranillo, 10% Graciano and 8% Mazuelo selected from their 300 hectares of vineyards. The grapes were picked between October 10th and 18th. The destemmed and lightly crushed grapes were fermented by plot and variety in stainless steel, and the varieties were aged separately in American barrels for 26 months. It has 14% alcohol, a pH of 3.56 and 5.4 grams of acidity. Tasting this in the context of the current vintages, it's clear that we're talking about a different era—more traditional, meatier, not as precise as other wines from more recent years, quite balsamic but with a solid palate, texture and balance, halfway between tradition and modernity. 67,045 bottles produced. It was bottled in July 2019.

94+

Marqués de Murrieta Reserva 2020

The 2020 Rioja Reserva, their flagship wine, comes from the 300 hectares of estate vineyards. Here, Tempranillo is the backbone, making up 82% of the blend in the low-yielding vintage of 2019, complemented with 8% Graciano, 7% Mazuelo and 3% Garnacha. It has controlled ripeness at 14% alcohol, with a pH of 3.65 and 5.1 grams of acidity. I loved the aromatics here—floral and elegant, more in the style of the 2018 than the 2019. It's lighter, more elegant, fine-boned and has a silky texture and very fine tannins. Both 2019 and 2020 are very good, but 2020 is more my style. 980,000 bottles produced. It was bottled after 21 months in American oak barrels.

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Marqués de Murrieta Reserva 2019

The 2019 Rioja Reserva, their flagship wine, comes from the 300 hectares of estate vineyards. Here, Tempranillo is the backbone, making up 87% of the wine in the low-yielding vintage of 2019 and complemented with 6% Graciano, 5% Mazuelo and 2% Garnacha. This is the second vintage in the new winery. It's a balsamic and spicy version—a wine with muscle that they aged for a longer time in barrel, and it's more traditional and serious. It's ripe at 14.5% alcohol, a pH of 3.65 and 5.3 grams of acidity. They seek balance between fruit and oak, looking for freshness. A more powerful year.



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Capellanía 2019

2019 saw an early start of the harvest, with low yields and small grapes with concentration but balance. The 2019 Capellanía, an update on the long-aging whites from yesteryear, was produced with grapes picked on the 10th and 11th of September. The must fermented in concrete and matured in French oak barrels for 23 months, followed by another 13 months in concrete. It did not go through malolactic. They increased the time in concrete after aging in barrel, which seems to have worked very well; the wine is subtler, more elegant and balanced. It's direct, precise, fresh and elegant, with a vibrant palate and certain lightness. It has energy and light. 30,378 bottles and 1,204 magnums produced. It was bottled in May 2023.

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Capellanía 2018

To catch up with the current vintages that I shall review every 12 months from now on, I tasted two vintages of some of the wines, including the whites. The 2018 Capellanía is 100% Viura from the plot that names the wine. The vineyard is six hectares planted in 1945 at 485 meters altitude, the highest in the estate. It fermented in concrete, the first vintage to do so, as it was fermented in stainless steel until then, and matured in second-use French oak barrels for 22 months. It spent a further seven months in concrete, a long *élevage*, with the idea to produce a structured white with aging potential, while keeping the varietal character. The wine is subtle and elegant, following the path of all the wines in the portfolio here, still marked by the *élevage* in oak, spicy and smoky. The palate is balanced, with a nice combination of fruit and oak, with a soft texture, clean, focused and tasty. It has 14% alcohol, a low pH of 3.1 and 6.10 grams of acidity. 21,836 bottled and 688 magnums produced. It was bottled in July 2022. This is now released with the Gran Reserva back label.

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Primer Rosé 2022

The pale rosé 2022 Primer Rosé was produced with Mazuela/Cariñena grapes with the idea to give it body and aging potential in bottle. It was selected from a plot, Pago Lucas, planted in 1985 at 350 meters above sea level. The grapes were picked the 21st of September and fermented in concrete after just a few hours of contact with the skins. It didn't go through malolactic. It has 13.5% alcohol, a pH of 3.25 and 5.3 grams of acidity. It's pale, delicate and elegant—a serious rosé, with energy, very clean and precise, with a dry and chalky finish. 15,985 bottles produced. It was bottled in March 2022.

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La Comtesse Gran Vino de Guarda 2018

The 2018 La Comtesse comes from a vineyard called Cacheiro, 1.4 hectares of their oldest vines (planted in 1965) that deliver lower yields and aim to showcase the aging potential of Albariño. The destemmed grapes were slowly and softly pressed in a pneumatic press, and the juice was let to settle and put to ferment in a 3,000-liter oak vat for some 60 days. The wine was kept in that vat for 12 months, the first two with lees, and then it matured in concrete for a further 12 months before bottling. It has 13.5% alcohol and a pH of 3.4 with seven grams of tartaric acid per liter, very good parameters for a great vintage. It has a bright golden color and a perfumed, complex and elegant nose, with depth and nuance with the complexity of time, moving away from the primary aromas and high acidity of the younger wines. The oak is neatly integrated (the oak is used, and they have reduced the time in oak by two months), and the wine has mellow acidity. It's velvety and elegant, clean, pungent and precise, sharp and electric, very fresh. It has complexity and youth, balance and ingredients to develop in bottle. Time is on its side. 6,672 bottles and 200 magnums were produced. It was bottled in April 2021. It was not released until June 2023, after a good couple of years in bottle. Prices have increased.

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Pazo Barrantes Gran Vino 2020

The 2020 Gran Vino Albariño, the second vintage after the transformation, is a representation of their property, the eight pagos, or vineyards, they have in their 12 hectares of vineyards plus one hectare they rent. The grapes were destemmed and the must let to settle to ferment in stainless steel for 60 days, followed by two months with lees and seven months after being racked off the lees, then a small percentage was put in acacia wood barrels for a short time to search for more complexity, structure and depth. They found that acacia is a wood in harmony with Albariño, even when newer. The bottles were kept for a further 20 months before being released. It has 13.5% alcohol, a low pH (3.26) and notable acidity (7.2 grams of tartaric acid per liter of wine), and it has finesse and elegance. It's sharp, with great aromatic intensity, less explosive and balsamic than the previous year, a remarkable mid-palate and a long, clean and precise finish. 78,533 bottles and 1,596 magnums were produced. It was bottled in June 2021.