

OLÉ & OBRIGADO

WINE & SPIRITS WITH HEART & SOUL

Portal Blanco



Nuestra Señora del Portal Blanco is an estate-bottled wine made by Celler Piñol with grapes grown in the region of Terra Alta, located south of Barcelona. To understand how Portal Blanco relates to the world of wine, it's important to note that the birthplace of the Garnacha Blanca grape is Terra Alta. Today, Terra Alta's beautiful panoramic landscape is home to 35% of the world's Garnacha Blanca vineyards and 70-75% of those in Spain. Portal Blanco contains a small percentage of Sauvignon Blanc and Viogner, but its essential identity is derived from Garnacha Blanca.

This limited production wine is made in stainless steel tanks to emphasize purity of fruit and terroir. Here, Garnacha Blanca makes a gutsy, full-bodied wine with a character similar to a red wine. This white is a perfect complement to all seasons. With lots of dry herbs, it's not an overly ripe "tropical wine."

The story of Celler Piñol mirrors the ascendance of Spanish wines in world markets over the past ten years, a story of how a reverence for old, treasured vineyards and the best family traditions have been combined with new wine-making methods to make the finest wines possible. Like Yecla and Vinos de Madrid, Terra Alta is one of Spain's up-and-coming wine regions with an identity built on exciting projects and progressive innovation. Juanjo G. Piñol and Cristina Borrull are the winemakers. Juanjo's mother Josefina remains in charge of the family cellar.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: This wine is made from old vines of the Garnacha Blanca grape, indigenous to this area. The estate-owned vineyards are planted in limestone soils and are dry farmed (no irrigation). This "all-season wine" is made by the fourth generation of the Piñol family.

RATING HISTORY: 2023 90D; 2022 91WE 'Hidden Gem'; 2020 90WE; 2019 91VM; 2018 90WS

GRAPE: 90% Garnacha Blanca, 5% Sauvignon Blanc, 5% Viogner. Vines planted since 1990. Tended in limestone and clay soil at 356 m (1,168 ft) elevation.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: Portal Blanco pairs well with pan-roasted hake with almonds, plank roasted salmon or grilled swordfish with herbs. This wine also has the stuffing and acidity to compliment wonderfully intense, "stinky" cheeses like Valdeón and Serena, as well as flavorful and aromatic Monte Enebro, Queso Azul Asturiano and Morbier with vegetable ash.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Hand harvested in the cool morning hours, the grapes are brought to the winery in small, 15kg boxes. After de-stemming, the grapes are crushed and go into 10,000-liter stainless steel tanks. The unfermented juice mixes with the skins at cool temperature (4C or 39F) for about 8 hours to maximize the extraction of flavors from the skins. The grapes ferment with neutral yeast (from Levuline in Champagne), which is optimal to ferment grapes with high sugar levels. The wine is aged in stainless steel tanks on the lees for two months. No malolactic fermentation.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: The vineyards are located a few miles southwest of Priorat, within the Terra Alta DO (Zone 5) in Catalunya's Tarragona province in northeastern Spain. The winery and vineyards are in the town of Batea, situated at 450 meters (1,476 ft.) elevation. The soils are composed of 95% limestone and 5% clay. For climate, the average temperature from April-October is 67.3F. The hot day and warm-to-moderate night temperatures make Terra Alta a drier and warmer region than Montsant or Priorat. The low average yearly rainfall of 16.3 inches is less than in neighboring regions.

TASTING NOTES Light bright yellow. Meyer lemon and green apple on the incisive nose, joined by hints of chalky minerals and ginger that emerge with air. Juicy and focused on the palate, offering lively orchard and citrus fruit flavors that open up and turn spicier on the back half. Finishes on a dusty mineral note, showing very good persistence and a lingering suggestion of honeysuckle. There's something Chablis-like going on here.-- Josh Reynolds.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13.5%

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