OLÉ & OBRIGADO

WINE & SPIRITS WITH HEART & SOUL

Portal Tinto

Portal is an estate-bottled wine made by Celler Piñol with grapes grown in the region of Terra Alta, located south of Barcelona. This small-production cuvée's pure and precise flavors make it a compelling wine value. Terra Alta's high elevation vineyards coupled with Piñol's viticulture produces a wine that clearly communicates the spicy, mineral character of this rewarding region, relatively unknown until now. 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 winemaking methods to make the finest wines possible. Similar to 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 by the fourth generation of the Piñol family. Less than 3,500 cases are produced for the world. Made from vines that are traditionally head pruned, dry farmed (no irrigation), and grown in clay soil. The vineyards are located within Batea, a town at 356 m (1,168 ft) elevation, 65 meters (213 ft.) higher than the village of Gratallops, situated at 291 meters (954 ft.) elevation, in the neighboring wine region of Priorat.

RATING HISTORY: 2019 93WE; 2016 92IWR; 2015 91VM; 2014 91VM

GRAPE: 50% Garnacha, 20% Carignan, 10% Merlot, 10% Syrah, 10% Tempranillo. Vines planted in 1987. Tended in calcareous clay soil at 356 m (1,168 ft) elevation

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: This wine's ripe, sweet and juicy character is easy to drink and very easy to pair with foods. Most casual American fare (burgers, wrap sandwiches, burritos) and spicier foods with a Latin American influence will match very well, as well as hard cheeses like aged Manchego.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: The grapes are brought to the winery in the early morning hours before being de-stemmed and crushed. Prior to fermentation, the must is macerated at a cool temperature (43F) for four days in large tanks of 5,000-10,000 liter capacity. Fermentation starts utilizing neutral yeasts from Levuline (used mostly in Champagne) and the skins mix with the juice for 22-28 days. Malolactic fermentation takes place in stainless steel tanks. The wine is aged for 12 months in 300L French and American oak barrels.

Nuestra Señora del Portal

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. In this remote region, the winemaking tradition dates back to the Romans, around the 2nd or 3rd Century. The winery and vineyards are in the town of Batea, situated at 356 meters (1,168 ft.) elevation. The soils are composed of 75% limestone and 25% calcareous clay. Yields are low (24.5 hectoliters per hectare, or 3,500 kilograms per hectare), which enhances the concentration and complexity in the grapes. 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. These conditions produce bright purplish-garnet hued wines with greater weight and ripeness than wines from other areas within Zone 5. The low average yearly rainfall of 16.3 inches is less than neighboring regions.

TASTING NOTES Ruby-red. Vibrant blackberry, potpourri and peppery spice scents are complemented by suggestions of candied licorice and smoky minerals. Concentrated black and blue fruit flavors show very good clarity and a touch of sweet floral pastilles. Silky, slow-building tannins add shape and grip to the long, sweet finish, which leaves a note of dark fruit liqueur behind.-- Josh Raynolds.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 14.5%

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