

CAVAMOMENTS



Colin Payne

CAVA
MOMENTS

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08720 Vilafranca del Penedès
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PROLOGUE

RAFAEL ANSÓN

President of the Real Academia de Gastronomía



Pepe Carvalho, the famous detective born from Manuel Vázquez Montalbán's imagination, is a great lover of Catalan gastronomy and food. He often took advantage of his visits to the Barcelona cocktail bar Boadas to enjoy a cocktail of cava, where the sparkling wine was mixed with brandy, vodka, sugar, angostura and triple sec.

I mention this great character of our literature to demonstrate the chameleonic nature of cava, a drink of glamour and literary anti-heroes, special celebrations and everyday life, an ingredient of home recipes and haute cuisine, as local as it is universal, a gastronomic panacea that began its journey several centuries ago.

Above and beyond any other paraphernalia, the "king of Spanish sparkling wines" made according to traditional methods, the one that was launched in the French Champagne and which led the Benedictine Dom Pierre Pérignon, in charge of his abbey's cellar in Hautvillers, to exit the bodega declaring that he was "drinking stars". I am talking about the method in which it is necessary for the second fermentation of the wine to take place within the bottle itself.

The first bottles of this Catalan sparkling wine began to be produced in the second half of the 19th century. This was the start of a highly successful history of winemaking, probably based on the selection of three of the white varieties that were cultivated in the valleys of Anoia at that time, and which form the base of the main cavas: macabeo, parellada and xarel·lo. These three grapes form the sacred trilogy of cava, to which other vines were later added (today, some of these also include chardonnay, malvasia, monastrell, trepat and even pinot noir).

Macabeo, originally from Asia Minor, has been cultivated in Spain since ancient times and is also known by other names such as viura or macabén. It is widespread mainly in Catalonia, as well as in the Alto Ebro, Valencia

and La Rioja. It is a very productive strain, presenting good-sized clusters and small seeds.

The parellada, which at the end of the 19th century was considered the most representative grape of the city of Barcelona, is also known as montonec or montonega. Growing in large clusters and dark green in color, its production is still concentrated in the Catalan wine regions, although it also appears in areas of the Alto Ebro and El Duero. It prefers a cool climate, so it tends to occupy high altitudes, which gives it greater aromatic finesse that compensates for its low alcohol content.

Finally, xarel·lo is a very traditional Mediterranean grape that is present in different white and rosé varieties. It was introduced in Catalonia by sailors from Greece and Carthage who sailed along the region's coasts, although it was the Romans who defined its cultivation. The white xarel·lo, also called white cartuja, grows in medium clusters with large, not very compact grapes.

We can say that the history of cava begins with these grapes, on a journey that is much longer than previously acknowledged, for indeed, we sometimes forget that cava is not one but many, one for each occasion, and this is precisely what accounts for its impressive gastronomic quality, as this book very successfully reveals.

The nexus between the various chapters is the versatility of a beverage able to harmonize with any scenario and, unquestionably, with all of the world's cuisines. Cava is so versatile, adaptable and complex that it is slowly but surely becoming less seasonal as its consumption extends far beyond its traditional Christmas success.

To enjoy it, it is enough simply to know it.

Cava-lovers say that a good cava is the one that when uncorked makes a dry, muted sound, does not spill over with foam and always keeps it in the

glass. They also say that the bubbles (perhaps one of the most universal symbols of joy) should be small and form a thin row that ascends quickly to the surface. If a cava satisfies both conditions, its quality will be practically assured, but you also must know something else to enjoy a complete dining experience.

One should know - and these pages are in charge of this - that, taking into account the period of aging and according to the more or less official designation, we can distinguish between traditional cava, reserva cava, gran reserva cava and Cava de Paraje Calificado (qualified site cava), and that, depending on the added sugars per liter, we will find brut nature, extrabrut, brut, extra-seco, seco, demi sec and sweet - the addition of sugar ranges from 0 grams per liter in the brut nature to 50 grams per liter in the sweet cava. And also, that the possible harmonies for each type of food must be defined according to these basic variables: acidity, sweetness, and structure and effervescence.

Cava harmonizes with any form of gastronomic pleasure: a traditional brut is perfect with aperitifs, salads or cooked seafood; a sweet or demi sec gives a magnificent touch to desserts, pastries or chocolates, and a reserva brut and brut nature goes splendidly with complex aperitifs, pâtés, fish or white meats, while a Paraje Cualificado is ideal for very elaborate and complex dishes, and an aged rosé with rice dishes and white meats. And these are just a few examples of *Cava Moments*.

Through this more than necessary volume, the Regulatory Board of the Cava Designation of Origin, presided over by Pedro Bonet - one of the great surnames in the history of Spanish sparkling wines - confirms that cava moments are all moments, depending on each cava and the sensory variables that each one contributes, as indicated in some chapters of this

“CAVA HARMONIZES WITH ANY FORM OF GASTRONOMIC PLEASURE.”

book, among which I highlight the one by Jaume Estruch: “To perceive is to live”. In addition to Dr. Estruch, a large number of top experts have joined the group, such as the prestigious sommeliers Juan Muñoz and Guillermo Cruz, the bartender Damià Mula, the wine tourism specialist Josep Forns, the well-known journalist Ramón Francàs, as well as the Fundación de la Dieta Mediterránea and the Fundación Española de la Nutrición (FEN), chaired by Gregorio Varela Moreiras.

Also, and of course, the Real Academia de Gastronomía, has wished to participate in this project, aware that cava is already part of our tradition and is a gastronomic jewel whose primary representation is in Catalonia, although we must not overlook the existence of wineries attached to the Designation of Origin located in other areas of Spain. This is why we can speak of a great national treasure, a wonder when it comes to combining the solid with the liquid.

There is a wonderful and enriching diversity in this scene, precisely what is demanded by lovers of good food, for whom cava is as versatile as it is extraordinary. To support this gastronomic reality, there is nothing better than the fantastic collaboration of renowned chefs and bartenders, who bring their enthusiasm and knowledge of recipes and harmonies to the projection and diffusion of cava.

After once again congratulating the true promoter of this book, the Regulatory Board of the Cava Designation of Origin - whose members demonstrate a revolutionary and active attitude, unafraid of innovation -, I can now only encourage the reader to savor these pages and make a toast to the quality and strength of a beverage that deserves our praise and which surely awaits a splendid future in each of the gastronomic moments of our life.

INTRODUCTION

PEDRO BONET FERRER

President of the DO Cava

This book, *Cava Moments*, is not an essay in the name of a designation of origin to discuss territory, history, methods, varieties and characteristics, etc., although all of these are brought up in a synthetic way (all this information can be found in detail in previous books and, of course, on our web, www.docava.es). This book, fruit of conversations with Rafael Ansón on the role of cava in gastronomy, speaks of *cava moments*. Needless to say, we are grateful for his valuable aid in the gastronomic chapter and for his invaluable interest in realizing this work.

We have wished to talk about the product at its peak moment, the moment the consumer chooses cava as a beverage and expects this drink to produce the desired satisfaction. But what kind of cava to choose? How to group cavas by their organoleptic characteristics? When to drink it? And... how and with what? With whom is the affair of each individual and is of course also very important. Indeed, cava accompanies us and is present at the best moments of our life. Unquestionably, the finest way to enjoy the special foamy quality of a glass of cava is in company, and this is why cava over its history has been present at all kinds of celebrations and meetings, whether intimate and familiar, or larger gatherings.

This book also aims to show aspects of cava that are not very well known, such as its nutritional aspect, which is of great importance even if not widely known; indeed, its nutritional properties are becoming more and more valued, thanks to the contribution the Fundación Española de Nutrición is making in this area, a task we would like to thank them for now in this book.

As wine, cava is considered a food and, as such, because of the qualities of its components, it is recognized as an element of the Medi-

terranean diet with beneficial properties, as long as it is consumed with moderation. Various research studies have shown that cava is a recommended beverage from a nutritional perspective because it has a high content of polyphenols, compounds biosynthesized by plants with antioxidant properties that help to delay aging, prevent Alzheimer's disease and promote proper cardiovascular function, and because, furthermore, its caloric contribution is not excessive as the Fundación de la Dieta Mediterránea tells us in its article.

On the other hand, as a gastronomic partner, cava is undoubtedly a great protagonist. Thanks to the Real Academia de Gastronomía (RAG), this book includes an extensive chapter of recipes made with cava and/or to be accompanied by cava, prepared by great Spanish chefs of international renown, who enrich these pages with their presence and to whom we greatly appreciate their participation in the creation of this attractive, practical and important chapter of *Cava Moments*.

For greater gastronomic satisfaction at the time of consumption, the RAG advocates an organoleptic classification of the different types of cava, and to this end we have had the assistance of Dr. Jaume Estruch, founder of Percepnet, a specialist in sensory analysis. Thanks to this collaboration, the organoleptically arranged cavas have been classified according to their greater or lesser intensity of the basic flavors, so that, in conjunction with the aging time and the expedition liqueur in each case, Estruch and his team propose a simple table in which the different types of cava are classified to recommend the appropriate harmonies with products and/or cooked dishes. It is not a matter of performing sensory surgery to guess the components of the cava or its similarities with

“CAVA ACCOMPANIES US
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other products (fruit, pastry, spices, etc.), but simply to give a practical and simple definition of each type of cava and make a recommendation to harmonize it with certain dishes.

In this book, we do not want to overlook the cocktail section, which has become so fashionable lately. Unquestionably, cava, due to its versatility and carbonated content, is a first class mixer, as Damià Mula, professional bartender and professor at CETT tells us. We also have the experience of great cocktail makers who have shared with us several of their recipes to open up this universe to curious consumers.

A book like this could not be without a chapter on practical advice, to know how to conserve, prepare and serve cava properly, taking into account the different types of cava and the latest trends of the great sommeliers in terms of temperature and glasses. And for its creation, we have had the experience and knowledge of Guillermo Cruz, the first Best Sommelier in Spain in Cava, who informs us about purchasing cava, its conservation, consumption and service, as well as the bodega, temperature, and types of glasses..., taking into account the different types of cava and the current trend set by the sommelier.

Other collaborators, who for us are friends, have also collaborated in this book, contributing their expertise in different fields. This is the case of

Ramón Francàs, a great connoisseur of the cava sector and its history, and Josep Forns, who tells us how the wine tourism sector is doing in respect to cava. Finally, the sommelier Juan Muñoz, introduces us to the very best proposals that any expert in harmonies with cava would agree with.

This book, finally, does not deny the nature and long festive history of cava as a quality sparkling wine that is and has followed in its own way the wake of that other great sparkling wine, champagne. Cava has been present at the best moments of our lives, enriching them and making celebrations special.

All of the above is described extensively in the following pages. We hope you will enjoy it and acquire a better knowledge of cava, the quality sparkling wine produced by the traditional method most exported in the world.

From the DO Cava, we would like to thank all the people and institutions that have collaborated in the creation of this book, *Cava Moments*.





Cava

An identity of its own different from any other wine

THE ORIGINS OF CAVA

RAMON FRANCÀS I MARTORELL

The history of cava has never been other than that of the history of the restless and tenacious character of an enterprising region, the Penedés, with its winemaking tradition dating back more than 2,000 years. Walt Disney once said that all dreams can come true if you have the courage to pursue them. Moreover, as the attorney and treaty-maker Peter Drucker stated, wherever there is a successful company, someone once made a courageous decision. In Sant Sadurn d'Anoia, the cava capital, a group of winegrowers and winemakers, including Marc Mir and Manuel Raventós, placed their bets on that courageous decision: a rapid renewal of the vineyard, focusing the vineyards on improving the sparkling wines, at the time recently established in Spain, specifically in Sant Sadurn d'Anoia, after the devastating plague of an insect, the phylloxera, immune to the American vine stock, devastated European vineyards.

The origin of cava, therefore, is associated with the splendor of Catalan viticulture in the mid-19th century. In this century, several families from Sant Sadurn d'Anoia began to investigate the new elaboration technique with a second, in-bottle fermentation, as applied to the crops of the area, fruit of their studies and tests and linked to the prestigious Instituto Agrícola Catalán San Isidro. This is how cava was born, with its own identity. In 1872, the first bottles of cava were made in the municipality of Sant Sadurn d'Anoia following the traditional method of second fermentation in the bottle, beginning what has now become a powerful business sector and turning the municipality into the nerve center of cava, despite other tests having been previously carried out, described in Vilanova i la Geltrú or Blanes. Agustí Vilaret (Mont-Ferrant) is credited with marketing the first bottles, also in 1872, although it was Codorníu who gave the cava its first great boost. The loss of the Spanish colonies, to which large quantities of eau-de-vie produced in the Penedés were sold, was also decisive.

The great merit was not only to have restored the vineyards after the plague of the winged insect that devastated vineyards throughout Europe, but also to have made the right decision to determine which varieties of grapes would be developed most successfully in these crops. Experimentation was begun with native varieties and with other varieties already cultivated in the area, such as macabeo, xarel·lo, parellada, monastrell and garnacha, as well as with more central European varieties of international prestige, such as chardonnay and pinot noir. The visit of King Alfonso XIII to the Penedés in 1904 was acknowledgement of the fact that the sparkling wines produced there were quality wines, while it also strengthened the self-esteem of the sector and boosted its commercial projection. In this way, little by little, the production of sparkling wines became consolidated.

By the 1920s, cava was firmly established in the Spanish market, achieved great growth in the 1960s and international consolidation in the 1980s, thanks to Freixenet's great drive. In 1911, official statistics show that sales in Spain already exceeded the figure for imports of foreign sparkling wines. Today, more cava is sold in France than champagne in Spain. The 1960s represented the beginning of the great expansion of cava abroad, which has continued up to the present, with a presence now in more than 120 countries around the world and with close to 160 million bottles sold per year. At the same time, exports continue to develop, new technologies are being introduced, quality is evolving in the profession and the work is becoming more and more professional to the extent that cava has now become the undisputed leader in terms of volume of sparkling wines produced using the artisanal method. Commitment to innovation has been key in the cava industry. As Steve Jobs, the father of the first personal computer and Apple's founder, recalled, innovation is what distinguishes the leader from his followers.



“THE ORIGIN OF CAVA, THEREFORE, IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SPLENDOR OF CATALAN VITICULTURE IN THE MID-19TH CENTURY.”

HISTORICAL NOTES

In **1872**, the first bottles of cava were made in the municipality of Sant Sadurní d'Anoia, using the traditional method of a second fermentation in the bottle.

In **1887**, the phylloxera plague came to Penedés, ruining grape crops. This led to a renewal of the varieties used, with the introduction of white vine stock of indigenous quality, replacing black varieties. This substitution facilitated the development of cava, since it acquired its own personality.

In **1904**, the visit of King Alfonso XIII to the Penedés represented the recognition that the sparkling wines produced there were of quality, strengthening the self-esteem of the sector and enhancing its commercial projection.

In **1911**, official statistics show that sales of cava in Spain already exceeded the figure for imports of sparkling wines from outside Spain.

The Decree of 18 April **1932** created “the system of designations of origin for wines” and set a deadline of four months to complete this decree with a General Wine Statute.

Subsequently, in a **1959** order, the first Spanish standards on sparkling wines were promulgated. It was also in this text that the word “cava” was used for the first time in an official document, although this name does not yet have the etymology that would later define a sparkling wine.

Thus, the generic name “cava” would not be applied in a specific way until the promulgation of a new order, in January **1966**, approving the Regulation of Sparkling and Gasified Wines.

Specifically, its Second Final Disposition states: “The Junta de Vinos Espumosos, created by Order of the Ministry of Agriculture on 23 April **1969**, is integrated into the Instituto Nacional de Denominaciones de Origen (National Institute of Designations of Origin) and will now be called the Consejo Regulador de Vinos Espumosos y Gasificados (Regulating Council for Sparkling and Gasified Wines).”

In **1972**, faced with the conflict with France over the protected name champagne, the Consejo Regulador de los Vinos Espumosos was set up, which approved the designation of “cava” to name the Spanish sparkling wine, settling the dispute and endorsing and valuing the common name used in the area for this wine, called “vino de cava” (“wine of cava”).

As a result of this need, the Order of 27 February **1986** was published, establishing the reservation of the designation “Cava” for quality sparkling wines produced by the traditional method in the region determined therein. It was in this Order, specifically in its annex, that the production area was defined of the Región Determinada del Cava (Specific Cava Region), which is currently defined in the present Reglamento del Cava (Cava Regulations).

As a necessary step after the incorporation of Spain into the European Economic Community and the recognition of cava as a high quality wine produced in a specific region (Q.W.P.S.R.), in **1991** the Ministerial Order of 14 November 1991 was published approving the currently in force Regulations of the “Cava” Designation of Origin and its Regulatory Board.

In **2015**, the law recognizes that cava can qualify for the category of Cava de Paraje Calificado (Cava of Qualified Site).

In **2016**, the specifications of the Regulatory Board set out the requirements for eligibility for the new category of Cava de Paraje Calificado.

In July **2017**, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food and the Environment promulgated the recognition of certain sites classified under the Cava PDO.

THE CAVA DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN

This official designation is intended to protect and distinguish products whose quality and genuine characteristics are related to the place from which they come, owing to their geographical and human particularities, as well as to the way in which they are produced, transformed and processed in that same zone. Producers and processors who use the designation of origin work with the commitment to maintain the highest possible quality of their products using traditional production methods. In return, they obtain legal protection against similar products produced in other areas, and access to national and international markets.

The Cava Designation of Origin guarantees the consumer a constant level of excellence and ensures the enjoyment of this sparkling wine of specific and genuine characteristics, all of which make it a unique drink: cava.

Definition

Cava is the Spanish designation of origin for quality sparkling wines produced in the Cava Region by carrying out a second alcoholic fermentation, in bottle, from the base wine and according to the traditional method.

The wine must remain in contact with the lees (micro-organisms, mainly yeasts, responsible for carrying out alcoholic fermentation) for at least nine months and in the same bottle in which the second fermentation took place. It can be white or pink.

Territory

The geographical area of grape production and base wine and cava production, known as the Cava Region, comprises 159 municipalities from different provinces: Barcelona (63), Tarragona (52), Lleida (12), Girona (5),

La Rioja (18), Zaragoza (2), Álava (3) and Navarra (2), in addition to those of Requena (Valencia) and Almedralejo (Badajoz).

Sant Sadurní d'Anoia, is known as the capital of cava and it was in its surroundings where the industry began to develop what is today one of the most representative and successful sectors of viticulture in Spain.

The Regulatory Board

Following the publication of the Order of 14 November 1991 issued by the then Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, the Regulations on the Designation of Cava and the Regulatory Board were created, a body made up of a president, a vice-president, six wine growers' representatives, six winemakers' representatives, a representative appointed by each of the autonomous communities of the Cava Region and a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment.

THEIR FUNCTIONS ARE:

- ➔ To guide, supervise and control the production, elaboration and quality of the wines covered by the regulations of the Cava Designation of Origin.
- ➔ To ensure the prestige of the Cava Designation of Origin and impede its improper use.
- ➔ To promote cava for the expansion and improvement of its markets.
- ➔ To develop functions of legal-institutional defense of the designation of origin.

“THE CAVA DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN GUARANTEES THE CONSUMER A CONSTANT LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE AND ENSURES THE ENJOYMENT OF THIS SPARKLING WINE OF SPECIFIC AND GENUINE CHARACTERISTICS, ALL OF WHICH MAKE IT A UNIQUE DRINK: CAVA.”

