

Tastings - Finca Bell-Lloc

The valley of Bell-Lloc is a curious place. Located on the other side of the highway from Palamós it's not the easiest place to find in Baix Empordà although at some point after my Empordà book explorations in 2012, they added very nice signs along the road to help guide would-be visitors. And visit it you should as it's a combination of an extremely nice 17th *masia* that's been turned in to a rural hotel (you can rent rooms or the whole house) that's attached to a historic hermitage of the same age. Several years ago the family who owns all of this planted vineyards and built a modern wine cellar to make their own wines.

Now, if you're going to have a winery in a small valley that translates to "pretty place", then the cellar had better be something special. In having visited an ungodly amount of wine cellars around the world, I've never seen one like this. It was designed by the Catalan firm, RCR and built from repurposed steel panels of a cargo ship that were then driven in to the ground. It forms an underground structure that feels akin to a blend of Futurism and the type of wine cellar that an older James Bond would have. Despite the very old structures on the property, the constant refreshing wash of the sea breezes that waft up the valley, and the old castle ruins that sit just above the property, it all works.

It also helps that despite the very modern look to the place, the wines are not some over-oaked, heavily extracted offer as you would expect from a place that seems so in to being modern. Enologist Xavier Vidal oversees production using natural fermentation to make incredibly honest wines with a definitive sense of place.

Blanc 2012 14€

Aromatically, it's a touch floral with citric peel and bitter melon notes. Light in the body it has a touch of oxidation to the finish and is overall clean and fresh with a good deal of strength to it although the bitterness in the finish as it opens up might appeal to some more than others.

Negre 2010 24€

Easily one of their best vintages yet with lovely round dark fruits in the nose along with wild herbs, forest floor, and a touch of sea salt. Very well balanced in the body and dry in to the finish with lingering fruit notes that are incredibly pleasing.