

In Small Packages

As it is said in Catalan, “Al pot petit hi ha la bona confitura” which roughly translated to English means, “big things come in small packages”. I bring this up as every waking moment of my last two months has been consumed with the wines of DOQ Priorat as I prepare the second edition for the Vinologue series. Priorat is a small region with even smaller cellars in it. In fact there are single cellars in Penedès that produce more than the entire region of Priorat.

But nestled amongst the slate and 13th century villages are these small cellars producing their small quantities of wines. Of course when producing so little of something, it's very easy to ensure that the quality of each item is the highest possible and so we find these hidden little gems tucked away.

Escoda Pallejà – Palet Most de Flor 2013

The owner of this cellar, Pere Escoda is responsible for a good 90% of the authentic village-ness of Torroja del Priorat. Get him started and he'll tell you all manner of history about wine and local politics but he can also make a hell of a wine in his 3,000 bottle a year cellar and this new, rustic, more “ancestral” wine is worth a taste.

Strong notes of orange peel, lilies, earthy slate, figs, wild bramble, clove, cumin and dark fruits in the nose. The body is big and rustic with hearty tannins. 18€

Solà d'Ares - Bessons 2012

Antoni Sánchez-Ortiz and David Barriche are two seasoned enologists that have worked at various cellars in Catalonia as well as around the world (Antoni is in New Zealand working the harvest) and together they create this line of wines and have another under DO Montsant. But Bessons has gotten to be one of my favorite although at around 1,200 bottles made each year, it's definitely tricky, albeit worthy to get your hands on.

Dark fruits with notes of plums, figs, lactic, and smooth. Good acidity in the mouth, relatively fresh with good aging notes and a persistent finish. 18€