

"The Best"

There is an annual Catalan wine award called, "Els Premis Vinari" which are put on by the local wine publication Vadevi. While I wasn't able to participate as a judge last year due to scheduling issues, I was somehow able to squeeze it in this year.

Essentially, a number of people involved in wine in Catalonia (sommeliers, journalists, oenologists, etc.) gather to taste various groups of wines that have all been hidden so that you're tasting blind. This is so no favouritism can come in to play and in theory the playing field is levelled.

There are various winners in each category and this year, there was strangely a tie in the "Best Aged Wine" category but even stranger was that this carried over to be the same tie in the "Best Overall Wine" category and saw the Mas de la Rosa from Vall Llach and the Vd'O 1.10 from Vinyes d'Olivardots both receiving the award. But, maybe it's not as strange as it seems as both wines are old vine Carignan and from slate soils which goes to show that despite being from opposite ends of Catalonia, this combination makes for one hell of a wine.

Vinyes d'Olivardots - Vd'O 1.10 2010 40€

From DO Empordà, the wine holds smoky dark cherry notes and a touch of graphite that translates into a full, round, and seductive wine on the palate with a long finish. A very age-worthy vintage that is just now showing its excellent.

Vall Llach - Mas de la Rosa 2013 105€

From DOQ Priorat and one of the "Vi de Finca", qualified estate wines. Wet stone minerality and crisp red fruits leap out of the glass as well as light, delicate floral notes. In the mouth, the acidity is perfectly balanced and lifts the generous body of the wine. It's showing extremely well now and will age for 10 years or more.