

L'Avi Arrufi Tinto



L'Avi Arrufi is an estate-bottled wine made by Celler Vinos Piñol with grapes grown in the high elevation region of Terra Alta, located south of Barcelona. The Piñol family has been wine growers for four generations. L'Avi Arrufi means, "Grandfather Arrufi," the man who founded Celler Piñol in 1945. Today, less than 800 cases are produced of one of the family's most distinctive wines, made from vines over seventy years old. L'Avi Arrufi is "liquid geography," a wine that sings the special music of Terra Alta's terroir composed of phrases and notes of the specific flavors of the Mediterranean climate. The story of Celler Vinos 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 Toni Coca are the winemakers. Juanjo's mother Josefina remains in charge of the family cellar.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: This limited production wine is made from vines over seventy years old that are tended in dry farmed (no irrigation) vineyards. L'avi Arrufi will easily age for more than a decade.

RATING HISTORY: 2014 92VM; 2011 91WA; 2010 90WA; 2009 92IWC; 2008 91RP & IWC; 2007 91+RP; 2005 91RP; 2004 91+RP; 2002 92RP

GRAPE: 60% Cariñena, 30% Garnacha, 10% Syrah. Vines planted in 1970. Tended in limestone and clay soil at 460 m (1,509 ft) elevation

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: This red has a mineral, herbal, spicy and black fruit character that shows wild berries, red currants and garrigue. This wine's bold, burly and big structure is a great match for spicy BBQ, beef brisket or smoked pork. Red and white meats prepared with a little "heat" (five spice, Mediterranean rubs or some Indian curries) will be a good pairing.

VINIFICATION AND AGEING: The wine is aged for 14 months in French, American and Hungarian oak.

PRODUCTION: 739 cases (6 pack)

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 400 meters (1,312 ft.) elevation. The soils are composed of 95% limestone and 5% clay. Yields are low (24.5 hectoliters per hectare, or 3,500 kilograms per hectare), which enhances 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 in neighboring regions.

TASTING NOTES Brilliant ruby. Highly perfumed red and blue fruit and violet aromas are enlivened by a peppery nuance and a strong suggestion of smoky minerals. Juicy and seamless on the palate, offering gently sweet black raspberry and cherry flavors that spread out steadily with air. Finishes sappy, sweet and very long, featuring lingering spiciness and firming tannins.-- Josh Reynolds.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 14.5%

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