



RAVENTÓS i BLANC

CONCA DEL RIU ANOIA

NOVEMBER 2012

Press Release:

The Raventós i Blanc estate encompasses 90 hectares of vineyards, woods and a lake in Sant Sadurní d'Anoia that have belonged to the Raventós family since 1497. This is possibly the longest documented winemaking tradition in the hands of a single family in the whole of Spain.

When Josep Maria Raventós i Blanc and his son Manuel Raventós decided to set up a winery in the centre of this historic estate, they considered the purest way of getting the closest possible bond between the grape-growing and winemaking processes –between Nature and Man. Josep Maria Raventós i Blanc, the heir to the Raventós estate and a key name in the history of Catalonia, Sant Sadurní d'Anoia and cava,ⁱ died just a few days after founding the winery.

Raventós i Blanc was created as a result of and to give a meaning to this *terroir*, giving continuity to a dynasty of Catalan country folk who are deeply rooted in their land; not only growing vines but also engaging in forestry, tending pastures for the horses, growing olive trees and producing wood for wine crates for more than 500 years.ⁱⁱ

The histories of our ancestors, closely bound up in country life, where nature was the essence of winemaking; where the continuity of the *Hereu* system (unigeniture or single-heir) has allowed the estate and its heritage to remain intact. Raventós i Blanc aims to recover the long-lost past of this lifestyle in the traditional Penedès *Masia* (farmhouse). The goal is for the land, the vines, the animals and man to work in harmony towards agricultural unity.

As from this autumn, a flock of sheep are grazing on our land, helping to replace part of the machine-driven reaping process, and fertilizing the land with their waste as well as the plant coverage from the vines themselves.

We grow fruit trees –mainly dry-crop varieties such as olive and almond trees, as well as the peach trees so typical of this region; we also grow organic vegetables and breeding Penedès chickens. A few donkeys are clearing the Serral woods and the native plant species of the region will be recovered and replanted: oaks and holm oaks. We will be clearing long-lost paths and burying electricity cables. All of this falls within the framework of the project, which is already underway, devised by the farm and landscaping expert Albert Botey Alier.ⁱⁱⁱ

The historical documents on our estate and the recent studies undertaken by both Olivier Trégoat, an expert on Bordeaux soils, and geologist Lluís Cabrera, cathedric at the University of Barcelona, have helped us to better understand and differentiate our plots, learn about the origin of our soils and use them to their very best advantage to obtain the finest possible wines.

We believe that there is an opportunity for honest wines resulting from a single estate, a specific climate, native grape varieties and a rigorous, well-defined and respectful form of viticulture.

ⁱ "Another of his obsessions: prestige and personality From this springs Cava and everything it represents. He fought for cava right from the start and until his death. At the same time, he took a huge interest in the cohesion of the sector, from the *Sindicato Nacional de la Vid* (Spanish Winemakers' Union) to the *Patronal de los Vinos Espumosos* (Sparkling Wine Producers' Association). It is important to highlight his work in the OIV, on whose board he served for several years, having been offered the presidency shortly before he died." **Lluís Fornés**, *Memòries* 2010. 1966, Josep Maria Raventós i Blanc, president of the "Grupo de Espumosos del Sindicato Nacional de la Viña". 1970. Josep Maria Raventós i Blanc managed to differentiate CAVA in Law 25/1970, the Statute on Vines, Wines and Alcohols. 1986 Josep Maria Raventós i Blanc, president of the Cava Regulatory Board and member of the Office International du Vin, managed to achieve recognition for Cava as a D.O. Member of the Brotherhood of Poblet, the Barcelona Trade Fair Organization and, for many years, the Executive Committee of Caixa de Catalunya.

ⁱⁱ "Even though you hear the names of *Bosc del Forn*, *Prat*, *Camp de les Tres Prunes*, *Les Tires* and *Oliverar*, all you'll see is a sea of vines. Those words are reminiscent of long-gone times, but you won't find woods, or pastures, or crop fields or olive trees here." **La Vida al Camp (Country Life)**, by **Jaume Raventós** (1868-1938). Editorial Balmes, 1962.

ⁱⁱⁱ Pla d'Usos de la Finca (Estate Usage Plan), spring 2012. **Albert Botey Alier**, farm and landscape consultant.



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You will not hear a single detrimental word from Raventós i Blanc or the people involved in this project towards CAVA, whose forerunner, promoter and founder was Josep María Raventós i Blanc. But our dream is that the wines from this new era will have their own name. This is why we want to recover the name of CONCA DEL RIU ANOIA, the name of a small geographical area, in order to help us to better understand and convey our viticultural traditions, the strength of our land, our unique grape varieties and the characteristics of our soils: in short, the way we produce sparkling wines.

Conca del Riu Anoia, the name that associates us with geographical area enshrined in a little corner of the world close to the river Anoia, whose landscapes can be seen from the Serral woods in the northern part of our estate.^{iv}

Conca del Riu Anoia, an IDEA that can be summed up in four main points:

- The geological history of its soil formation
- The climate of the Eastern Penedès
- Native grape varieties
- A winemaking tradition that dates back over one thousand years

The geological history of its soil formation:

"The characteristics of the physical surroundings of Raventós i Blanc are the most immediate outcome of a geological evolution that started 23-24 million years ago with the formation of the semi-basin of the Penedès and the surrounding relief of the coastal and pre-coastal mountain ranges. After 18 million years of erosion of these ranges, the filling-in of the semi-basin with the eroded topsoil, the drying up of the Mediterranean Sea and the consequent dramatic drop in the sea level some 5.7 million years ago caused an early erosive period across the whole of the Catalan continental margin. This initially accentuated the reliefs between the massifs and mountain ranges and the depressions. After a brief period (5.3 - 2.6 million years ago) during which the alluvial sedimentation resumed in the Penedès due to a new rise in the level of the Mediterranean Sea, the final modelling of the sector was shaped by the successive embedding of the recent river network both in the mountain ranges and the sedimentary filling of the Penedès semi-basin. These successive embedding processes took place between 2.5 million and a few tens of thousands of years ago, and were related to drops in the sea level caused by continental freezing. These river embedding processes produced the current relief and the staggered system of fluvial terraces and deposits from ancient slopes situated at the bottom of the existing rivers and streams. This final stage of shaping the land is what has given the sector its relief and diversity in terms of soil substrates."^v

The research conducted by Olivier Trégoat^{vi} has enabled us to differentiate three different zones on our estate, distinguished by their soil composition: Turó del Serral (from the Miocene period –between 20 and 25 million years ago–), with sandy-clay calcareous soils over compact clay; Plana i Barberes (between 1.5 million and 300,000 years ago) with sandy-loamy calcareous soils over a sand and limestone agglomerate; and Els Rius (between 5 and 1.5 million years ago) with sandy-loamy calcareous soils containing stones and pebbles.

^{iv} "Up on the Serral I could make out the villages of the Anoia river basin, from Vallbona as far as Gelida, and I lovingly contemplated and cried out the names of every farmhouse in this little corner of the world." *La Vida al Camp* (Country Life), by Jaume Raventós (1868-1938). Editorial Balmes, Barcelona 1962

^v Concluding summary of the introductory Seminar on the Geology of the Penedès Region: the geological surroundings of the Raventós i Blanc *terroir*. Lluís Cabrera, with the collaboration of: O. Gratacós and E. Roca; July 2012.
To see the full study: <http://www.ub.edu/depqm/ca/directori/personal-academic/26-fitxacabrera>

^{vi} "Olivier Trégoat, expert in Bordeaux soils; a study carried out for Raventós i Blanc between 2009 and 2010".



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A Climate: the Eastern Penedès

The Raventós property has the climatic conditions typical of the Mediterranean interior, with mild Winters and hot, dry Summers, where variations in temperatures are moderated by the nearness of the sea. The Raventós i Blanc estate is situated in the geographical depression located between the coastal mountains to the east and Montserrat to the north, with the Compte hill to the west, in the centre of the Alt Penedès wine-growing region. The surrounding mountains help to create an ideal climate for cultivating grapes. On one side the coastal mountains act as a barrier to the excessive humidity of the coastal areas. On the other, Montserrat and the Compte Hills Project our part of the Penedès from the winds and low temperatures coming from the Pyrenees. The average temperature on our estate is 15 °C and annual rainfall can reach 900 litres per year, being the average 550 l/m². The lowest temperatures in January at around 2°C, and the highest in July, around 28°C it can freeze between 1st November and late April. The climate of the Penedes is sunny, with an average of 2,548 hours of sunlight favouring excellent ripening of the grapes.

Raventós i Blanc has a weather station set up on its property, enabling us to observe and become aware of all the variations which occur over the year. We have climate data going back to 1900, a history which means we know our estate and its climate almost perfectly. The microclimate of the estate is determined by the Serral hill and its contours, which define the direction in which each plot faces, by the lake and by the tracts of woodlands. The coolest plots on the estate lie on the northern and north-eastern sides of El Serral as they have less hours of sun, and all the grapes from them are used to produce our longest-aged sparkling wines. The plots facing south and south-east have higher temperatures and their grapes are mostly used in still wines. The lake and tracts of woodland on our estate act to moderate the temperature, avoiding heat shock and making long-slow ripening possible. This is why the best grapes come from the north side of El Serral, bordered by the woods above and the lake below. These grapes are the ones which retain their acidity best for our long-aged single-vineyard sparkling wines.

We believe that the essence of the wine grower in Conca del riu Anoia is to know better about how to interpretate our different altitudes, slopes, forest, and other aspects that makes our micro climate; to produce sparkling wines which reflect this tipicity; looking for longevity, power and high local expression in our wines.

Native grape varieties

To make wines that most faithfully express our *terroir*, we decided to use only our native grape varieties.

We have started, in our next step from organic to biodynamic, a project to took out all the foreign varieties – Chardonnay in Plana 11 and 12- and replant in the youngest parcels native grapes – Barbera 6 and 7, Serral 9 and 10; Serral 1- with the objective of having a estate 100% natives grapes.

At the same time we keep on investigating about which are the native grapes that have the best potential to produce sparkling wines with high *terroir* expression.

More than a thousand years of winemaking tradition

We know, thanks to historical documents held at Can Codorniu, that the Raventós family's winemaking tradition dates back to 1497 on this estate, where our ancestors used to grow vines for their own consumption and to make musts. These lands have belonged to the Raventós family for more than 500 years, passing intact from generation to generation down the years to the present day. The Catalan tradition known as the *Línia de l'Hereu* (unigeniture or single-heir) has allowed the estates to be kept together, being passed down intact to the eldest child.



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In this line of succession, in 1872 Josep Raventós Fatjó produced the first in-bottle fermentation in Spain using native grapes from our estate.

This exciting road we are embarking on together also entails making qualitative strides in terms of our working philosophy –in short, towards excellence. From the vineyards through to the winery and warehouse, embracing PR and winery tours, administration and sales. All of us work in accordance with a series of values which are intrinsic to this new moment: HUMILITY, HONESTY, RIGOUR, PASSION, ATTENTION TO DETAIL, REFINEMENT AND TEAMWORK.
