

At Roca Classic Penedes & Pascal Janvier Jasnières



Think of wine appellations as brands. Their names evoke specific flavors, even emotions. By grouping the wines of a region together under the same appellation, consumers also group their experiences with those wines together. Had a great Burgundy last night? Maybe pick up another for that dinner towards the end of the week. It's in this way the appellation system reinforces the branding of regions by allowing producers to group themselves together while helping consumers navigate and rely on the 'great wines' of the world.

Europe has a more robust appellation system given it's history of viticulture and the indigenous nature of many of it's grape varieties. So, regions like Bordeaux, Chianti, and Rioja have become household names through centuries.

But, just as you might rely on an appellation in choosing wine, a producer might rely on an appellation ... to exploit it. I see this happen all the time. Bad wines sold under recognizable appellations. The more ubiquitous the region's name, the higher chance someone has taken advantage of that to sell an unworthy wine. One might think, "what's needed is more regulation to ensure quality across the board," but it's hard to tell winemakers how to make wine ... or find a one-size-fits-all, farm-to-bottle methodology. A systematic hierarchy of quality within an appellation can address some of these issues but they persist, nonetheless.

The two wines we have included this month provide insight into the appellation system and its effect on the industry.

At Roca - Started by Agustí Torello Roca only a few years ago with an emphasis on vineyard expression. They bottle under the Cava D.O. and Classic Penedes D.O.

Pascal Janvier - Pascal is trying to breathe life into a tiny Loire appellation (Jasnières) that lives in the shadow of Vouvray, Saumur, and Savennières

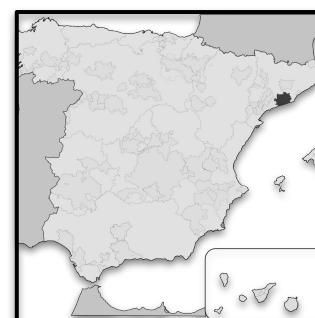
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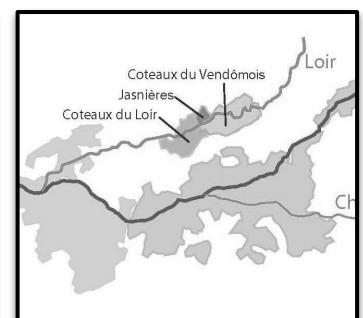
Agustí Torello Roca talking viticulture



Penedes in Spain



Pascal Janvier



Jasnières in Northern Loire

At Roca Classic Penedes '2016 Reserva'

Blend: 50% Macabeu, 30% Xarel-lo, 20% Parellada **Region:** Penedes, Spain
certified organic · 30+ year-old vines · indigenous yeast primary fermentation in stainless steel · 20+ months bottle-aging · zero dosage

Essentially, Agustí and his family produce Cava, the sparkling wine of Spain. The Cava D.O., however, allows regions across the wide expanse of Spain to use the moniker regardless of physical boundary imposed by most appellations. Struck by the wishy-washy 'branding', a band of producers started 'Classic Penedes', an appellation which requires organic farming, 20 months of aging sur lie (6 more than Cava), and fits under the Penedes D.O. physical boundaries. This is a powerful wine. Piercing acidity sets the tone for an otherwise classically toasty, fresh-fruited Classic Penedes!

Pascal Janvier Jasnières

Grape: 100% Chenin Blanc

'lutte raisonnée' farming · mix of clay and limestone soils · 35+ year old vines · finished in steel · total winery production: 2,100 cases

Region: Jasnières (Loire Valley, France)

You'll hear Chenin Blanc described as a grape for wine nerds. It can manifest itself in a number forms, sweet or dry. Few grapes support the range — from markedly clean and lean, to honeyed and creamy... even taking on nutty, earthy elements with grace. For numerous appellations in the Loire Valley, Chenin Blanc is the sole grape allowed under their designation. Jasnières is the northernmost of these regions and Pascal's Jasnières sheds some of the riper, honey-peach notes found in warmer parts of Loire for a mix of brighter, fresher pomme-fruit, and lighter white peach. Even so, this wine is grounded by waxy texture and a round, weighty feel so classic to Chenin. Nerd