

**MONTSANT****CELLER LAURONA****Owner:**

Christopher Cannan (founder of Europvin), in association with René Barbier (owner of Clos Mogador in Priorat)

Products:**Red Wines:**

Montsant, Laurona
Montsant, Laurona, Seleccio de 6 Vinyes

(The debut 1999 vintage predated the creation of the DO Montsant, so those wines are labelled D.O. Tarragona-Falset)

Location:

A dedicated winery has been created in the town of Falset, 40 km due west of Tarragona, and just south of the prestigious Priorat (Priorato) appellation. The grapes come from the best hillside vineyards around Falset, where climate and soils create similar conditions to those in the neighbouring vineyards of Priorat.

Size of the Vineyards :

Laurona works closely with about a dozen local growers, selecting the best parcels, advising on viticultural practices throughout the growing season, and setting the date of harvest to ensure optimum ripeness.

Soil:

The soils are varied and complex, featuring schist (as in Priorat), clay, sand and gravel.

Grape varieties

Laurona: 30% Grenache
30% Carignan
15% Syrah
15% Merlot
10% Cabernet Sauvignon

Laurona, Seleccio de 6 Vinyes: 80% Grenache
20% Carignan

Average age of the vine

The vines are between 15 and 80 years old.

The grapes for the "Seleccio de 6 Vinyes" cuvée come from vines on average 50 years in age.

Average production:

Laurona : around 50 000 bottles per year, depending on the vintage

Laurona, 6 Vinyes : 5 to 10 000 bottles per year, depending on the vintage

Vinification and ageing:

The winemaking is directed by René Barbier and his son, René Jnr. Beginning on the sorting table, they check that no sub-standard grapes make their way into the fermentation vats. For the most part, vinification is classic, with long macerations and regular pigeage, followed by 12 months ageing in new and one year old 500 litre French oak barrels. Malolactic fermentation in barrel and reincorporation of the lees add extra complexity. 20% of the production (including all the Seleccio de 6 Vinyes cuvée) is microvinified in barrel, with the new 500 litre casks turned on their sides and the top removed to form a miniature high-quality oak vat. This gives particularly fine extraction, great





complexity and a velvety texture to the resulting wine.

Marketing:

The wines are marketed exclusively by Europvin in export markets. Increasingly, they can be found on top restaurant wine lists throughout the world - particularly in Spain, the USA, UK, Switzerland & Germany.

Tasting notes:

Both Laurona wines display an appealing opaque black-purple colour. Laurona itself has a fresh, expressive nose bursting with crushed berry fruit, licorice, mediterranean herbs and spice notes from the oak. The palate is well-balanced and harmonious, with smooth tannins and refreshing acidity. There is good concentration evident from attack through to finish, and genuine complexity.

The Seleccio de 6 Vinyes is perhaps less approachable in its youth, but amply demonstrates the fine potential of the wine. Dark and brooding on the nose, with very complex aromas of black fruits, expresso coffee, chocolate, roasted meat and dried herbs. These flavours are repeated in the mouth, amplified by the intense concentration of the wine, and framed by clean, balanced acidity. Weighty tannins are nevertheless ripe and rounded, giving the wine a fine silky texture. Long and satisfying on the finish.

Notes on the property:

Over the years, Christopher Cannan has developed an intimate knowledge of this part of Spain, and an unshakable belief in its potential as a genuine fine wine source. Inspired by the extraordinary progress made in Priorat over the last decade, Christopher and Rene Barbier, the owner/winemaker of the prestigious Clos Mogador, decided on a project to produce wines from old vines in the mountainous vineyards of Falset, just south of the Priorat DO. The poor rocky soils and climate are similar to those of its illustrious neighbour, but the absence of individual estates in Falset had left the area eclipsed by Priorat, its full potential never exploited.

Both the mayor of Falset and the regional Catalan government gave the project their full support from the outset. A building was found and a winery created within a few short months, in time for the 1999 harvest. Agreements were made with a dozen or so growers to supply Laurona with a proportion of their best old vine grapes, from plots carefully chosen by Rene Barbier and his team. In spite of more being paid for the grapes than the grower would have received from the cooperative, it is still possible to make world class wines in the area at very reasonable prices - less than half the cost of the best Priorats.

Once Priorat was awarded the coveted D.O. Calificada in early 2001 (Rioja is the only other appellation in this premier quality category), the authorities turned their attention to the vineyards of Falset and other neighbouring villages. To distinguish them from the less prestigious Tarragona DO, the area has now been awarded its own DO...Montsant, named after the mountain that dominates the whole region. Montsant DO appears on the labels from the 2000 vintage onwards.

The name Laurona refers back to an illustrious past, when Tarragona was the capital of the vast Roman province of Iberia (Spain and Portugal). According to Pliny the Elder, the finest wine exported to Rome from the region was from a local vineyard called Laurona. Now in the 21st Century, Christopher and René are making every attempt to revive the excellent reputation enjoyed by Laurona some 2000 years ago.

