

Torre Oria Cava Brut N.V.

Torre Oria, founded in 1897 in the Utiel Requena DOC near Valencia by the Oria de Rueda family, is a relative newcomer to the production of Cava. Originally founded to be close to the area's thriving silk industry in which the family had financial interests and to produce premium still wines, Torre Oria did not fashion Cava until 1981. However, as recent medals and accolades attest, Torre Oria has quickly mastered the art of producing world class Cava.

All of Torre Oria's vineyards are dry-farmed and tended using sustainable methods. Very little machinery or sprays are used in the vineyard. Only Macabeo grapes flow into Torre Oria's Cava and all are manually harvested from mineral-laden vineyards during the month of August. The grapes are then pressed and vinified at cold temperatures and stored for up to a month in large steel vats. The wine is then blended with a selection of yeast and natural sugar when it is bottled (dosage) to insure the secondary fermentation that gives the Cava its fine bubbles. Torre Oria Cava Brut is aged in the winery's temperature and humidity controlled cellars for a minimum of 18 months before release, longer than required by law. The result is a supple, silky Cava with long, lingering flavors.

Cava: Spanish Bubbly

Cava may not sound like Champagne, but it tastes a lot like it. Produced by the traditional champagne method of fermenting the wine in the bottle, Cava is Spain's answer and some would even say rebuke to Champagne. More fine champagne method sparkling wine flows out of Spain than anywhere else on earth, including Champagne. Grown in limestone and mineral rich soils, the finest Cava is born of native Spanish varietals, most notably Xarello-lo, Parellada, Viura, and Macabeo grapes. With the addition of champagne yeasts during the fermentation, the acid rich musts of Cava yield sparkling wines of rich flavor, softness and finesse to rival those of Champagne itself. Where Cava may even have the "edge" is in its soft, round, lingering finish – the antithesis of French Champagne which can often possess just a bit too much acidic verve in its aftertaste or finish to suit some tastes.

Although the distinguished Cava houses of Catalonia, centered in Penedès near the town of San Sadurni de Noya, were some of the first Spanish houses to fashion world class Cava, excellent Cava now flows from Utiel Requena and other distinguished DOCs throughout Spain. Moreover, since the early 1980s, the production and export of Cava has grown from a relative trickle to Spain's leading wine export; Cava is presently the world's number one selling champagne method sparkling wine.

Tasting Notes: Every now and then a wine we have never heard of, let alone tasted, simply blows us away. Such is the case with the Torre Oria Cava Brut, a Gold Medal recipient at the prestigious Concours Mondial international wine competition in Brussels. Made entirely from Macabeo grapes that are fermented in the bottle, Torre Oria Cava captivates from the moment the cork pops and this delightfully frothy bubbly graces the glass. The wine's pretty sunshine-imbued color and full floral bouquet of berries and wildflowers set the tone for a delightful interlude. With delicate, tiny bubbles that glide gracefully across the palate Torre Oria carries its magic. It offers a wealth of complex, elegant flavors: savory peach, tropical fruit and spring flower tones slip easily down the thirsty gullet. Supple and medium-bodied throughout, Torre Oria exits with a long, lingering finish that makes the imbiber beg for more. Refreshingly dry, one has to wonder just how long one bottle of this delicious Cava can last, so you may want to have another on ice. Enjoy!

Food Pairings: In our experience, the finest Cavas, like preeminent Champagnes, are at their best at the start of festivities or early in the evening when the pâté is fresh. Consequently, Cava's dry, delicate flavors are most suited to begin the festival or the feast, rather than finish it. Therefore, appetizers offer some of the most rewarding accompaniments to Torre Oria Brut. Sahnnon mousse, stuffed mushrooms, sautéed oysters, foie gras, and sushi constitute some of our favorite starters with this wine. As entrees, white fish, scallops, steamed crab legs, and light poultry dishes offer outstanding companionship to Torre Oria as well. In Spain, paellas are often paired with Cava, too. Nonetheless, some may still be tempted to save Torre Oria for dessert. Instead, we suggest serving the versatile Torre Oria Cava Brut with a plate of soft, ripe cheeses that will highlight the soft, savory aspects of the wine, something sugary treats cannot do ... but as you like it.