LLAURADOR WINES
JOSÈ PASTOR SELECTIONS

CASA BALAGUER

CARRO DE LA MATA

ORIGIN

Alicante, Spain

VARIETIES

Moscatel de Alexandria

VINEYARDS

The El Carro parcel is the oldest in the Parque Natural de La Mata in Torrevieja close to the Mediterranean Sea, with own-rooted *en vaso* vines estimated to be 125 years-old growing in fine sandy limestone soils.

VINIFICATION METHOD

The grapes were hand-harvested, destemmed and fermented whole berry in clay tinajas of varying sizes (200-500L) with skin maceration lasting 30 days and a few punch-downs during that time. The skins were then removed without pressing, and the wine completed malolactic fermentation and aged on fine lees for 6-8 months during which a veil of flor developed. The finished wine was then combined in stainless steel tank, lightly filtered and given a small dose of SO2 before bottling.

PRODUCER PROFILE

Originally established in 1750, the Casa Balaguer estate is located on the high plains of Villena, Alicante. Formerly home to Bodegas Bernabé Navarro (a JPS import many years back), Marta Ribera and Andrés Carull are the estate's current owners and caretakers. The couple both trained in enology at the University of Valencia, spending time working at various wineries, and eventually catching the natural wine bug while working in Bordeaux in the late aughts. Born and raised in Villena and a third-generation winegrower, Marta knew of Casa Balaguer and, seeking a project of their own, jumped at the chance to farm and make wine at this historic estate. Since taking over from the retiring Rafa Bernabé, Marta and Andrés have done enormous work on their 40 hectare estate (30 dedicated to vineyards, plus olive & almond trees, cereals and forest) grafting over the French varieties to many near-extinct indigenous grape varieties and taking the farming to organic and then most recently Demeter certification. Embracing the *mar y montaña* mentality of eastern Spain, they work in two areas – the continental-influenced Villena (montaña) and the Mediterranean sea-influenced Parque Natural La Mata (mar) where they manage 8ha of vines – to produce around 100,000 bottles yearly in a resolutely low intervention style, only utilizing a bit of added SO2 or light filtration when needed. In their words, "a personal project dedicated to producing stripped-back, honest wines that truthfully express our countryside, heritage and people. Vibrant wines from living vines."