LLAURADOR WINES
JOSÈ PASTOR SELECTIONS

CASA BALAGUER

RAMBLA PELIGRES

ORIGIN

Alicante, Spain

VARIETIES

95% Garnacha Negra, 5% Garnacha Gris

VINEYARDS

This single parcel *La Rambla del Peligrés* was planted in 2004 at 550m elevation toward the upper end of the estate, and a half-meter deep into the soil is a calcareous layer which blocks the vine roots from penetrating deeper. Luckily adjacent to the parcel is a rambla (old riverbed) which carries rainwater down from the mountains, but this horizontal root system means these vines behave differently from other Garnacha vines elsewhere on the estate.

VINIFICATION METHOD

The grapes were hand-harvested, 70% destemmed and fermented whole berry in 2000L concrete tanks with skin maceration lasting 3 weeks and a frequent punch-downs during the first 10 days. After pressing, the wine completed malolactic fermentation and aged on fine lees for 12 months in one 3000L concrete tank. 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."