

CELLER de CAPÇANES, do montsant



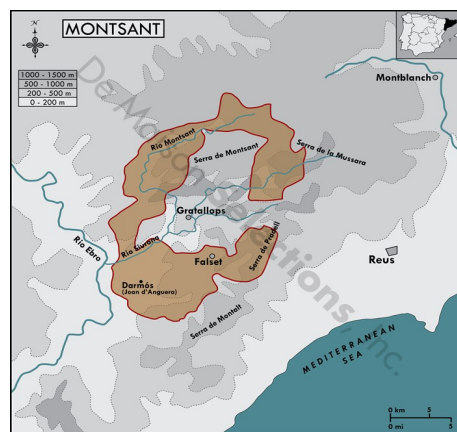
Capçanes is both the name of a small village in DO Montsant, south-east of the region's main town, Falset, and also the name of its wine co-op. Celler de Capçanes manages 190 hectares, largely organic, controlled by 75 growers. Yields are as little as 12 hl/ha on 100yo Garnatxa vines, which account for 55% of the co-op's holdings, and another 20% is old Samsó.

This is no mere co-op; or at least not as commonly conceived! Historically, Montsant has been typified by producing bulk wine. However, by the 1990s, it was reduced to being a mere grower of fruit which was sold off un-crushed in bulk to producers elsewhere, Torres in particular, who bought about 80% of the Capçanes crop. Worried their future was not secure, the growers banded together to create their own brand.



Run since 1997 by a visionary German, Jurgen Wagner, Capçanes makes estate-style wine from within a co-op system. Extraordinarily strict fruit selection criteria sees the co-op's yield classified into six distinct tiers, with reward per kilo increasing significantly at each step up the pyramid. The top couple of tiers are fruit reserved specifically for the export-oriented Capçanes wines, and the quality strictures are self-imposed by unanimity between the growers ... when this change was affected in the 1990s, those who did not wish to grow in accordance with, and submit their rewards to these new standards defined themselves out of the co-op. The remaining growers banded together to co-sign a loan of 2 million Euros to finance construction of a winery, completed in 2001 (but underway when I first visited Capçanes in September '00). Quality viticulture and severely reduced yields increased the reward to growers from about 30cents/kilo for standard co-op quality fruit, up to 4 Euros/kilo for old vine Garnatxa of quality suited to the flagship wine, Cabrida.

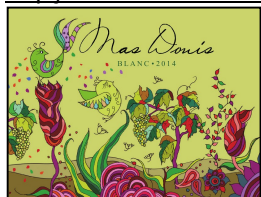
Ironically, in this deeply Catholic region, the first Capçanes wine was a kosher wine, Peraj Ha'abib, or Flor de Primavera (the name under which a non-kosher portion of this wine is released). The first of these was produced for the Rabbi of Barcelona in 1995, and achieved big scores from Parker and Jose Peñin (behind only Pingus and L'Ermita as the top wine of the year). The success, including the price, of this wine helped get the growers across the line and committed to a quality-driven path. Nowadays, Capçanes produces a significant range of estate-style wines. Detailed back story of Celler Capçanes, and detail on DO Montsant, it's soils and so on follow the wine tasting notes.



THE WINES OF CELLER DE CAPÇANES

Garnatxa Blanca and 30% Macabeu, stainless steel, 4 months cold maceration.

Capçanes 'Mas Donis' Garnatxa Blanca screwcap



Garnatxa Blanca at its most elegant - Macabeu in the blend helps reduce viscosity and alcohol power. The limestone soil and Mediterranean botanicals evident in the wine speak of place, but in all honesty, sheer ease of enjoyment is the thing in this wine. Perfectly mid-weight, utterly savoury and with no winemaking on show, this will please lovers of Chablis, Soave and the like. Great texture, nice spice - delightful, reliable pleasure. Has the natural weight of Garnatxa Blanca, leavened by acid zap balancing out a wine of slightly tart stone fruit.

Capçanes 'Mas Donis' Rosat de Garnatxa

75% Garnatxa, with 5% Syrah and 10% Merlot. 10% of Lasendal Tinto is free run bled after 8 hours' skin contact.



A beautiful Garnatxa Tinto in miniature ... It's everything about the berry but lighter, fresher and zippier. Beautiful red fruits of the forest with an appley crunch, a dash of limestone and delicate fruit tannins buzzing in a herbal register. Mas Donis has a juicy and refreshing primary feel without sugar heft. It fits and sits in the middle of the palate, leaving a perfect amount of space. Cut with earthy acidity, the rosehip and maraschino palate is vibrant with neat lines.

Capçanes 'Lasendal' Garnatxa blend

'La Sendal' = 'the path', indicating the site halfway up the mountain to the towering Cabrida vineyards (Cabrida being the nimble mountain goat going up the high mountain passes where the old limestone Cabrida vineyards reside). Lasendal is based on 60 year old high altitude bush vines of Garnatxa with 30% Merlot, 20% Syrah. Vinification in stainless, maceration 8-14 days, malo in tank, natural cold stabilisation in barrel after ageing 9 months in neutral clean old oak. Un-racked, it's bottled un-fined after light filtration. Lasendal is extremely elegant and restrained Garnatxa.

Capçanes 'Lasendal' Garnatxa blend



Briary, rosehip florals in blackberry/black raspberry punchy fruit. Ink, herb, stone and spice elements run around in velvet-plush fruit reminiscent of small, sweet skinsy plums. Fruit concentration is countered by a line of acidity and chalky minerality in almost crunchy earthen tannins. Lasendal is round without heft and releases evenly and easily. There are nuggets of warm, earthen mineral spice (nutmeg and clove) and a scent of apple tree for interest.

Capçanes Garnatxes, sòl per sòl

Although we define Montsant as a DO based on limestone (in distinction to the slate of Priorat), the region has several soil profiles:



- The dominant Calissa (limestone, giving fresh and floral wines from very deep-rooted vines)
- Llicorella (schist-slate soils which yield rich and very mineral wines)
- Argila (clay, producing edgy and wild wines as vines battle in the dense soil)
- and Panal/Calcare (sand soils - washed out alluvium from the limestone, called Calcares if pebbly – these give fruity, easy wines marked by chalk)

Capçanes have vinified Garnatxas separately from each of these soils, which are now bottled and released to show the terroir effects. All are vinified similarly: cool fermentation and maceration over 28 days in 500litre French oak, and ageing 4 months in new French barriques.

Capçanes Garnatxa, sòl de Panal (arena in castellano, or sand)

The sand is limey, and the most acid of the soils. This fruit ripens earliest on old desert sand filled with silt. Panal wines are delicately structured, smooth, light, perfumed: easily understood, easily drunk.

Apple-wood and blackberry cane florals in a fine, linear cherry-raspberry wine. It's light, but darkly spiced (nigella, licorice root, fennel seed), clear, fine and nervy.

Capçanes Garnatxa, sòl de Calissa (calcares, limestone)

The limestone is relatively low-acid fragmented bedrock, free-draining, open to the roots' search for deep water. Laden with marine fossils, Calissa gives delicate, open, long, floral, fragrant wines that are complex, fresh, subtle. Open and red-berried with apple-tree floral, it's smooth, nicely concentrated and radiates spice from the centre *Floral and restrained, it's full and persistent, with subtle drive, excellent line and finesse. Violet petals above and chalky lime below dark sweetly-perfumed berries.*

Capçanes Garnatxa, sòl de Argila (argile, clay)

The clay soils are old lake basins, compact and anaerobic, with high ferrous content and medium acid. Vines really struggle to root and find water. These green-red clays yield an abundance of fragrant richness and tannic structure. *Earthy on nose and mouth, with briary florals lift. Shiny spices radiate from dark red earthen held low on the palate by robust tannins. With a deep imprint of forest undergrowth, it's bosky, wild and characterful. "Un vi Salvatge!"*

Capçanes Garnatxa, sòl de Llicorella (pizzara, schist, or slate)

The slate is the most acid of these soils, open and crumbly allowing passage for the roots, but it's all fractured rock, there is no 'soil' as such. The resultant wine has body, freshness, great acidity and tremendous minerality. Character with complexity and nerve. Goosegump territory.

A slate sandwich! Llicorella's shiny metal-mineral smell and feel run the nose and palate, with floral black raspberry Garnatxa inlaid like a fossil-memory. Lot of balsam, lots of mineral: the stone-in-tannin is extraordinarily refreshing despite the density of experience. Great length and a savoury finish.

DOQ Priorat and DO Montsant

PRIORAT COMARCA – the council name of the region

SIERRA MONTSANT – the name of the mountain range circumscribing the region

DOQ PRIORAT – wine appellation in the centre of the Montsant range's valley, defined by schist soils and named after the Priory of the bishops at the village of Scala Dei, on land gifted to Carthusian monks by King Fernando the 1st in the 12th century.

DO MONTSANT – wine appellation encircling DOQ Priorat within the Montsant range, based on limestone soils and named for the mountain range which encompasses both wine appellations.

90 minutes south of Barcelona, in the province of Tarragona and just 20 minutes in from the coast, Priorat and Montsant are wine regions that ought not be discussed in isolation from one another. They are a pair of interwoven, soil-difference-based appellations occurring together within the Sierra Montsant, in the Comarca (regional council) of Priorat. Bound by Montsant itself to the north, and other Mountains west and east, the southern boundary opens to the Rio Ebro and ultimately the Mediterranean. So, Priorat the area is framed by the Montsant range and contains both DOQ Priorat and DO Montsant wine regions.

GEOGRAPHY, CLIMATE AND SOIL

Remote, sere, craggy-rocked and extremely beautiful, the Montsant range frames 17,000 hectares covered in red pines, olive, almond, hazelnut, chene and encina growing in soils 300-400 million years old. The limestone of the Montsant range is cut by the Rio Siurana coming in from the East and the Rios Cortilla and Montsant from the west. The three rivers converge at the central-western town of el Lloar and flow out southwest to join the mighty Rio Ebro as it flows down from la Rioja through Tarragona and out to the Mediterranean, just 20 kilometres away. Afternoon heat is often relieved by this coastal proximity, as *Garbinada* breezes freshen from the south-west. The soils are mainly limestone and schist slate, with pockets of sand, granite and clay.

Of these, the schist and limestone are the most important, and determine the identity of the two DOs - Priorat and Montsant. DOQ Priorat is almost pure schist, locally known as Llicorella, of which there are several blue and brown variants. DO Montsant's soils are about 70% limestone matching the heart-rock of the Sierra Montsant. The soils, and resultant appellations are easily conceived of as a fried egg. The yolk in the centre of the valley is a discrete and coherent patch of slate, appellation DOQ Priorat, while the white around it is the limestone of DO Montsant.

At their best, these warm country wines are relieved from outright bigness and overt warmth by the cooling effects of altitude and minerality (and sensitive growing and winemaking). You will, however, easily find many Priorats and Montsants which are still clumsily made, hot and muddled affairs with poor extract and oak marring their lines.

BASIC WINE CHARACTERISTICS

Ripe fruit: red and black forest fruits, ripe small berries – blueberry, blackberry, raspberry, gooseberry

Balsamic: essential oils of aromatic plants carry fresh pungency of the landscape – aniseed, mint, thyme, rosemary

Mineral: soil aromas of dry stone, sand, clay, truffle, and licorice

Toast and Spice: nuts, smoked wood, incense, clove, nutmeg, cinnamon

MONTSANT: fresher character, berry and briar with florals, lifted fruit and breezier acidity

PRIORAT: Riper fruit with lots of balsamic aromatic herbs and deeply mineral

MEANWHILE, IN MONTSANT ... (ENTER THE POST-MODERN CO-OP)

After a long decline in the fortunes of the region, fame came to DOQ Priorat in the 1990s, but the poor farmers of Montsant, typified by the Capçanes co-op, were doing it really tough. In 1933, five families in Capçanes village joined

together to found a co-op. However, this development was almost immediately followed by the Civil War, during which time political divisions were felt within the village, even within families - a fragmentation which really only saw a process of forgiveness and healing start after Franco's death in 1975 and the subsequent, gradual restoration of democracy. Pursuant to the war, the devaluation of grape/wine prices, and the global trend of rural de-population (the move towards mines, the army and the city for the youth of the countryside) were multiple hits during the mid-20th century, on top of the ills of war.

By the 1980s and Spain's ascension to the EU, Capçanes and its co-op were in dire trouble. Throughout the 20th century, city wine merchants bought in bulk and cashed in at the coast so that by 1980 the region was only producing bulk wines and eventually could only sell grapes in bulk. At prices far below the quality of the fruit. By the mid-1990s, the Capçanes co-op was selling 900,000 kilos of grapes to the big companies whose Penedes wines gained colour, extract, power and character for very little money. At this time, the biggest of these companies, Torres, were buying up all the land they could, particularly in Priorat, while land values remained relatively low and wine prices were exploding. There was a very real fear for the growers of Capçanes that soon they would not even be able to sell grapes in bulk. Economic extinction loomed in Montsant while boom-time erupted in Priorat.

And then, something great happened! A Rabbi and a German helped some Catalans save themselves in the nick of time. German winemaker Jurgen Wagner was working in the region as a wine-buyer for a US importer and saw the potential of the old vines of Capçanes, but it took a crazy twist to achieve the needed change, and which came in the form of the Rabbi of Barcelona. Said Rabbi was looking to source a high quality Kosher wine for wealthy Barcelona Jews, and the old vines of Capçanes were just the thing. Jurgen persuaded the 85 growers in the co-op to take a risk and provide their highest quality, lowest crop old vine fruit to the Rabbi. In 1995 the first 'lo mebushal' Kosher wine was made by the Rabbi (in accordance with Jewish law, the Rabbi was the only one allowed to handle the wine). In 1996, the second vintage of Peraj Ha-abib somehow found its way into Parker's hands, and it was rated behind L'Ermita and Pingus as Spain's highest pointed wine!

Thus, in 1996 the Capçanes co-op stopped selling its top fruit cheap, and value-added it in their Kosher wine, realising their holdings' full value for the first time. Torres responded by cancelling their purchases entirely. Capçanes were, officially, screwed.

Or were they? With no real option, they plunged into the deep end ... a vote was taken and all but two of the 80-odd growers in the co-op elected to follow the urging of Jurgen and Angel, to become a 'post-modern co-op' making export quality wine bottled under the brand 'Celler Capçanes'. These wines were to be viticulturally-driven, based on rigorous yield management and fruit selection from marvellous dry-grown old bush-vines. Celler Capçanes wines began finding their own way to market – grown, made and bottled estate-style by the collective. A second, equally daring risk soon followed, with all 82 growers (by now, this number included Jurgen Wagner and Angel Teixido) co-signing to a capital-raising bank loan necessary to build a clean, modern winemaking cellar. This was an extraordinary risk on the part of extremely poor peasant farmers – a desperate leap of faith, which has paid off wonderfully. Nowadays, Capçanes produces several tiers of wine. There is decent quality cheap bag-in-box wines, there's quite decent co-op plonk you can buy at the cellar door and take home in whatever vessel you bring to fill, and there are about 250,000 bottles of high quality export 'estate' wine. How ironic, Jurgen says that "narrow-minded Catholic mountain farmers would invest in the Jewish community to save themselves from Torres!"

And so, from the late 1990s, thanks to the remarkable occurrences at the co-op of Capçanes, Montsant began to re-energise and to recover economically, and achieved independent DO status in 2000. Prior to 2000, Montsant wines were appellated as a part of the giant DO Tarragona and recognised as a sub-section, called Zona Falset (albeit there was very little Montsant wine bottled as such until the advent of Capçanes in its revolutionary guise from 1996). While Montsant still lives somewhat in the shadow of Priorat, in terms of the top dollar its wines achieve at least, it is much re-invigorated now - led by Celler Capçanes, but with many emergent independent grower-makers entering the scene. Montsant, like Priorat, is beginning to re-interpret and write its own history as it moves through the early part of the 21st century.

THE WINES OF CELLER DE CAPÇANES

historical vintage notes and notes on wines not currently stocked in Australia

Capçanes 'Mas Donis' Garnatxa Blanca

Capçanes 'Mas Donis' Garnatxa Blanca 2013

Orchard fruits, meadow flowers and sandy soil fill an immediately likeable nose. The palate is simple and sunny-but-fresh, and has good richness and volume without sweetness. It's nicely textured, really easy-going with a touch of gentle skin-tannin grip and very nicely controlled phenolics carried along in limestone's gentle strictness. There's real restraint, rather than Rhoney blowsiness, with linearity and grip - the melding of fruit skins and soil running the show and finishing with a nice metal-mineral acid thread.

Capçanes '1 v/b' Vim Blanc de Garnatxa Negre

Hand crushed white wine made from 100 years old red Garnatxa grapes aged 7 years in barrel.

Capçanes '1 v/b' Vim Blanc de Garnatxa Negre' 2006

1st tasting January 2014, Capçanes : A ravishing white tea tip florality lifts above soft fruits - persimmon, cumquat, pear and jasmine tea - all above and through the affect of the barrel, with sherry nutiness, spice and vanilla. The Calissa soil imbues an oyster shell salt rim on the palate.

Second tasting July 2014, Australia: Laurel, wattle and cumquat skin, vermouth herb, brass and earth on the nose. The palate is replete with limestone perfume and grip, through which wind citric pulpiness, dry toffee and soft open grape tannin in a graceful citric cloud. Oak only apparent as a texture-affecting memory.

Capçanes 'Mas Donis' Garnatxa Tinto Joven (not imported to Australia)

This is simply an unwooded Joven form of the blend which becomes Lasendal. In the US, Lasendal is actually called 'Mas Donis Barrica'. There's a bit of Syrah in the blend.

Capçanes 'Mas Donis' Garnatxa Tinto Joven 2016

Wood-florals, like the smell of a fallen tree, with bright red apple and cherry fruit, apple flowers and a touch of scrubby herb, it's clean and settled with nice chew and spice and good fresh acid nerve.

Capçanes 'Mas Donis' Garnatxa Tinto Joven 2013

Lovely and bright, rosehip and raspberry, fresh soil and touches of bosky wood. Ripe raspberries, buzzing acidity, pretty and crisp fruit tannins, it's very nicely edged and really vibrant, with balsam and floral tuck keeping the fruit in perspective.

Capçanes 'Lasendal' Garnatxa blend 2015

Briary, rosehip florals in blackberry/black raspberry punchy fruit. Ink, herb, stone and spice elements run around in velvet-plush fruit reminiscent of small, sweet skinsy plums. Fruit concentration is countered by a line of acidity and chalky minerality in almost crunchy earthen tannins. Lasendal is round without heft and releases evenly and easily. There are nuggets of warm, earthen mineral spice (nutmeg and clove) and a scent of apple tree for interest.

Capçanes 'Lasendal' Garnatxa 2016

Lots of bosky, heady balsamic regional character: forest berry, earth and balsalm, spicy, mature fruits. The fruit is gently juicy and herb-flecked, with very judicious oak entirely inside the juice, lengthening and structuring the wine adding reach and subtle tension to a wine of excellent mouth-feel. Good dimension, but really deft and effortless.

Capçanes Mas Collet

Garnatxa y Samsó 35% each, Cabernet 25%, Tempranillo 5%, 9 months US barrica

Capçanes Mas Collet 2011

Lovely phenolic maturity, leafy and blackcurranty fruit over deep earth aromas, it's fully juicy-joyous and soft with long lush tannins, tobacco and blackcurrant pastille, gripping tannin and soil depth given nerve and run from the pippy fleshiness of the fruit and the nice squeak of natural acidity.

Capçanes Mas Collet 2010

Deep and balsamic, gamey-earthly with a nice interplay of fruit and earth aromas. Woodsy, with pimiento spice and a nice cool mineral slug suggesting slate in the soil mix more so than the cooler granite-sand aspect of Montsant. Delicious and very stylish, not too serious and far from steroidal.

Capçanes 'Costers del Gravet' Cabernet blend

A single vineyard with north-east facing steep slope and high diurnal temperature range. 50% Cabernet, 30% Garnatxa, 20% Samsó, old vines on Serra de Llaberia. 12 months French oak.

Capçanes 'Costers del Gravet' 2010

1st tasting January 2014, Capçanes : *Blueberry fruits with pip and spice, the mineral tang of the earth, fine and very elegant with extremely long mineral perfume release.*

2nd tasting, July 2014, Australia: *Pruney, glaze dark fruits and shiny metal soil, leathery and bosky, powerful but classy silky fruit with nutty tannin and slow-glide leatheriness, the plush and powerful in very good harmony. Drying tannins at end are appropriately weighted, awaiting the elongation of fruit back out and over for a very long complex finish yet to develop.*

Capçanes 'Vall del Calas' Merlot blend

700m vineyard high up on Serra de Llaberia, 60% Merlot, 30% Garnatxa, 10% Tempranillo. 12 months French barrel.

Capçanes 'Vall del Calas' Merlot blend 2011

1st tasting January 2014, Capçanes : *Deep and soft with violets, sweet pippy skins giving mature tannins and sweet acidity too, there's good fleshiness, a sense of vibration and movement, ripe without any cloying, long, elegant, fresh.*

2nd tasting, July 2014, Australia: *Very Mediterranean despite the French grape, balanced and savoury, mid-weight, nice fruit roundness in middle, red fruit with herbs and brush, alive with mineral and powdery tannin, a touch lean?*

Capçanes Mas Torto 'Vinyes Velles' Garnatxa blend



70% old vines Garnatxa, the oldest, most masculine and dark fruited selection of the mountain top Cabrida material, with 10% each of Syrah, Cabernet and Merlot off schist soil. Aged 12 months in new French oak. Torto is the family name of the co-op member who contributes this wonderful vineyard to the Capçanes holdings.

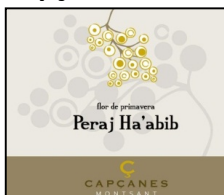
All the elements of Montsant are in play here: finely mineral, bosky-balsam-herbal, earthy and silkily juicy at once, with plentiful lovely fruit tannins and delightfully tucked oak. Medicinal, maritime touches in plush cherry fruit, utterly grooved by fruit tannin and terrific spice leading to a fresh acid end.

Capçanes 'Peraj Petita' Kosher

Capçanes 'Peraj Petita' Garnatxa, Temp, Merlot 2012

Affordable little sister to the killer Kosher wine. Cherry fruit and forest balsam. Palate like nose is a little austere, a bit prim and ungingiv.

Capçanes 'Flor de Primavera' Garnatxa blend (Kosher), aka 'Peraj Ha'abib'



A Garnatxa, Samsó and Cabernet Sauvignon blend (40/30/30), hand-made by the Rabbi of Barcelona. Very old bush vines. Unfiltered, aged 12 months in new French oak.

Capçanes 'Flor de Primavera' Kosher Garnatxa-Samsó -Cabernet 2012

Inky, granitic, fleshy; it's purple and spicy with fabulous depth, leather and earth in wonderful mature tannins. Very much of the earth, very typical of Montsant and Capçanes. There's lovely juice lift and liveliness in a palate drawing down and out in all directions thanks to a deftly accumulated structural hybrid of tannin, acid, wood and bosky local touches. Red fruit spectrum juice is lovely, but it's Montsant that speaks.

Capçanes 'Flor de Primavera' Kosher Garnatxa-Samsó -Cabernet 2011 (also labelled as Peraj Ha'abib)

Rich bouquet of dark bramble fruits: blackcurrant and mulberry, with sweet balsamic and mocha. Palate is long and dry with dense compact tannins, lively acidity and a gorgeous mouthfeel. This is a brooding 'Heart of Darkness' style wine with woody cedar and balsamic notes wrapped around dark dense fruits, exiting palate with a wild spearmint note. There's lashings of cassis and dark cherry, cocoa powder and ground coffee – Black Forest Cake. Chocolate coated blueberries, choc-liquorice bullets and toffee apples. Delightful smoky cedar/ cigar box on the long finish.

Capçanes 'Flor de Primavera' Kosher Garnatxa-Samsó -Cabernet 2010 (also labelled as Peraj Ha'abib)

Inky dark, vibrant, bright aromas of black cherry, plums, currants. Rich, seductive cherry fruit, ripe but soft tannins, fresh and minerally with a super long finish.

Capçanes 'Cabrída' old vines Garnatxa

'Cabrída' = mountain goat, and it's serious goat track territory – from 100+yo vines at the peaks of Montsant, above 500 metres altitude, grown in pure Calissa (limestone soil). Fermented in open used 500 litre barrels. Tiny 0.6 kg/vine harvest, aged 12 months new French oak.

Capçanes 'Cabrída' Garnatxa 2011

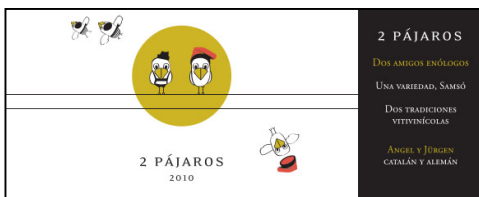


Delicate and haunting, perfumed and pure – it's as much about a walk in a high country forest as it is about grapes - briar, earth and herb are everywhere. The fruit blossoms in the glass, sour cherry mingling among the high country balsam. Supple, rich cherry fruit is silky and fine with great balance. Complex, structured, restrained, focused, delicious. Majestic fruit tannin yields to fantastic natural acid freshness which is textural as well as enlivening. The wine releases beautifully and just glides out back and away ... it's a poem.

Capçanes 'Cabrída' Garnatxa 2008

A gorgeous nose, perfumed and pure, with sweet and sour cherry, earth and anise-clove spice. Supple, sexy mouthfeel, with rich fruit - cherry, satsuma plum, delicious, silky and fine with great balance. Complex, structured and restrained, very focused. As Jurgen Wagner says: "it's sexy ... like instant attraction".

Dos Pajaros Samsó 'Vinyes Velles'



Jurgen Wagner and Angel Teixido, the winemaking-management team responsible for the whole visionary Capçanes thing, are 'los Dos Pajaros'. Jurgen's explanation of why they call themselves the two Pajaros: "Two fun birds - if you call somebody a Pajaro in Spanish it means funny, smart, creative, a survivor, a fighter but also a little bit a bad boy (in a good way)."
Dos Pajaros Samsó 'Vinyes Velles' 2011

Dark and smoky, leathery, pruny and wizened, lovely old-woody smells, carob, chocolate and yesterday's Cohiba. Presenting a giant fat Yang to the ladylike Ying of Cabrída, but equally wonderfully balanced, structured and releases just so. It just does so in the darker, more muscular and leathery manner of Samsó. Must be the best straight varietal of this in any bottle!

Capçanes 'Pansal del Calas' Garnatxa Vi de Licor 500ml



An amazing red wine Vin Dolc Natural, Garnatxa with 30% Samsó. Late harvested, fermented to 12% then fortified to 16.8% a/v (which was its natural sugar level), with about 80 grams/litre residual sugar nestled in super-plush fruit tannin. Pansal del Calas is aged 15 months in new, 1 and 2yo French barriques.

Capçanes 'Pansal del Calas' 2011, 500ml

It smells as if oranges really could grow on almond trees! Vibrant, juicy sweet-spicy berry fruits, lifted by sugar and alcohol. Smells beautifully boozed like liqueur cherries, tamed by magnificent tannin and acid, this is a sweet-savoury multi-dimensional thrill to drink. Just off-dry in effect despite 80 grams/litre residual sugar, and wonderfully balanced.

Capçanes 'Pansal del Calas' 1996, 375ml special barrel reserva

Winemaker, Angel kept this topped for 16 years!

Fine tannin, alcohol and pippy sweetness cohere as a thread, with berry/floral red fruit tea prettiness, sweet-sour herbal macerated berries and a deep toffee layer.