



CUEVAS DE AROM

Tuca Negra

Francisco Mora wasn't born into a winemaking family, but at an early age, he started making wines in an apartment in Zaragoza. A native of Aragon, Francisco realized that the native variety of his place of birth, Garnacha, could be far more than the custom labels and bulk wines upon which the region based its early success. So, first, at Bodegas Frontonio, then launching Cuevas de Arom in Campo de Borja before moving it to Calatayud and partnering with Bodegas San Alejandro, Francisco Mora sought out the most expressive, uniquely situated, high-elevation, and oldest vines of Garnacha to show that the Garnacha from Aragon could be as winsome, complex, and ethereal as any Garnacha made in the rest of Spain if not the world.

Francisco isn't solely a proponent of Garnacha in Aragon, but he holds an MW and, in his thesis, proposed a pricing hierarchy for vineyards in Campo de Borja based on the quality of grapes specific vineyards and villages were capable of producing. This strategy would provide a living wage for growers and combat the race-to-the-bottom mentality that this DO seemed to be embracing. However, without change, this commercial approach to winemaking would result in uninteresting bulk wine and threaten the best vineyards – those most challenging and expensive to work. The add-on effects would be the loss of these dry-farmed vineyards to more profitable crops, erosion, and a higher demand for irrigation in an already dry area.

Francisco Mora launched Cuevas de Arom in Campo de Borja but due to challenges with the DO, moved his project to Calatayud where Yolanda Diaz, the technical director for Bodegas San Alejandro, saw the potential for a partnership with Francisco Mora's drive and enthusiasm combined with her access to the best vineyards in the DO.

Tuca Negra is made from a small 80+-year-old vineyard of head-pruned and dry-farmed Garnacha planted at an elevation of 850 meters above sea level. With stony slate and quartzite soils, an extended maceration of 80-days, and aging in a 250L Clayver ceramic sphere, Tuca Negra isn't just one of Fernando's Grand Cru wines but an expression of Garnacha that is revolutionary in Calatayud. Such a wine could only be made through the partnership of Yolanda Diaz and her team at San Alejandro combined with the genius of winemaker Fernando Mora. A scant 350 bottles are produced in an average vintage.

ORIGIN

Spain

APPELLATION

Calatayud

SOIL

Rocky slate, quartzite

AGE OF VINES

80+

ELEVATION

850 meters

VARIETIES

Garnacha

FARMING

Sustainable

FERMENTATION

Hand harvested, 100% whole-cluster, natural yeast fermentation, daily punch downs by foot at the beginning of fermentation, 80-day maceration

AGING

14 months in a 250L Clayver ceramic sphere

ACCOLADES

96 – 2020 Tuca Negra – Wine Advocate

