

# CELLER COOPERATIU D'ESPOLLA VI RANCI SEC 'ESPODOL'



From old vine Garnatxa blanca and Garnatxa rosat. Tangy, tactile, and lifted; the Vi Ranci Sec is simultaneously vibrant and irascible, with flavors of flamed orange, jamon iberico, hazelnut, acorn squash, and sage. Delicious as an aperitif; with Spanish ham and Marcona almonds; or with grilled vegetables—quintessentially Catalan. It keeps well for 4-6 weeks and should be served lightly chilled or at cellar temperature.

While the tradition of Vi Ranci and Rancio sec has survived on both sides of the French-Spanish Catalan border, the large majority of those now produced in Spain are fortified. Espodol Vi Ranci Sec is the rare unfortified expression: Old-vine Garnatxa blanca and Garnatxa rosat, hand-harvested and fermented under the rafters in epoxy-lined concrete tanks. After two years, a portion of the slowly oxidizing wine is transferred to large wooden foudres (where it remains for 3-4 years), and then into a six-tier solera of demi-muids that was originated in 1950.

Founded in 1931 in the heart of the Alt Empordà, the Celler Cooperatiu d'Espolla emerged from the local growers' union established at the turn of the century in the aftermath of phylloxera. The proximity of the Mediterranean Sea, the Albera mountains, and the fierce, dry tramuntana together shape a climate and landscape that gives rise to what the locals call the "Wines of the Wind." The vineyards of its fourth- and fifth-generation growers are almost exclusively goblet-trained "bush vines," their roots sunk deeply into the granite and licorella (black schist) soils. Focusing on traditional varieties—old vine Garnatxa blanca, roja, and tinta; Cariñena and Cariñena blanca; Muscat de Alexandria and Macabeu—viticulture is a mixture of organic and *lutte raisonnée* (the reasoned struggle). Under the direction of winemaker Pau Albó i Carles, Celler Espolla produces a full range of wines, but it is most celebrated for its Vi Ranci and Solera Garnatxa d'Emporda, which continue the tradition of oxidative wines first made over two millennia ago during Greek and Roman settlement of the area.

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## Tasting Note:

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## Shelf Talker:

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