



CLOS FIGUERES

Priorat

Christopher Cannan purchased Clos Figueres in 1997 on the advice of René Barbier of Clos Mogador. The vineyards cover some 10 hectares. There are about 2500 old Carignan and Grenache vines planted more than 20 years ago for the Clos Figueres label. The remainder, about 50% Grenache, 20% Syrah, some Cabernet Sauvignon and Mourvèdre were planted in 1998 and are used for the production of Font de la Figuera. The location is just to the north of Gratallops on terraced slopes of pure schist, the soil responsible for the finest wines of Priorat. From these high terraces, the views are wonderful...in one direction the famous Ermita vineyard and the craggy Montsant mountain range behind it; in the other a long-distance vista featuring the Ebro Valley and more mountains beyond.

René Barbier's team takes care of the vineyards as well as the vinification and ageing of the wines. Clos Figueres now ranks with the best of Priorat, while the second wine, Font de la Figuera, represents remarkable value for the region. Recently, they have also launched production of a unique and exciting white Priorat, based on rich Garnacha Blanca, with 10% Viognier to add lift and aromatic complexity.

Notes on the property :

A superb vineyard site, with classic 'llicorella' soil, in the famous Gratallops zone of the Priorat appellation - close neighbours include Clos Mogador, Clos Martinet, L'Ermita and Clos Erasmus. The property was acquired in October 1997 by Charlotte and Christopher Cannan on the recommendation of René Barbier, owner of the renowned Clos Mogador estate and founder of the "new wave" Priorat movement during the late 1980's. An initial purchase of about 10 hectares of abandoned terraces was followed by a further acquisition in 2000 to complete the 18 hectares estate.

From the original vineyard a small plot of old Carignan vines was saved. The remainder was replanted with Grenache, Syrah, a very small quantity of Cabernet Sauvignon, Mourvedre and Viognier. The second purchase included some 2 500 old vines Carignan and Grenache, some of which are more than 60 years old. Later some Touriga Nacional, Grenache Blanc and Chenin Blanc was added. The final blends, with the various grape varieties, are chosen by Christopher Cannan with the advice of Alain Graillot of Rhone Valley fame.

The site of the vineyard is magnificent with sweeping views over towards the Ebro river valley and the mountains of Bajo Aragon beyond. To the rear looms the massif Montsant mountain range and the famous Hermita hill, topped by an ancient and still inhabited chapel. Apart from the well tended terraced vineyards, about 135 Arbequina olive trees contribute to the production of the superb Clos Figueres - DOC Suirana olive oil. While still in its youth Clos Figueres has a promising future, ranking with the leading names of the appellation. The poor schist soil maintains production at an extremely low level. The vineyards are tended with ecology in mind and as little intervention as possible.

A note on the names : Figueras / Figueres are fig trees in Spanish and Catalan respectively. Long before Christopher Cannan purchased it, the estate was known by the locals as Figueres, but national regulations (dating from the Franco era) required Spanish spellings on all official documents...hence the company name Clos Figueras S.A.

Red Wines :

Serras del Priorat (from young vines)

Font de la Figuera

Clos Figueres (from old vines)

Location : The vineyards are planted on steep terraces overlooking the Montsant river valley, just outside the village of Gratallops, in the heart of Priorat. Initially, the wines were vinified and aged in René Barbier's Clos Mogador cellars. Today a small vinification cellar has been established in the heart of Gratallops.

Size of the Vineyards : 12 hectares from a total of 18 hectares.

Soil : Classic "llicorella" - the famous schist soil of Priorat. A small plot close to the river has more clay and alluvial soils.

Grape Varieties :

Font de la Figuera: 60% Grenache, 10% Carignan, 30% Syrah, Mourvedre & Cab Sauvignon.

Clos Figueres : 70% Grenache & Carignan from old vines; 20% Syrah, Mourvedre and Cabernet

Average age of the vines: 30 to 60 year old Carignan & Grenache vines, for the ***Clos Figueres*** cuvée. The reminder of the vineyard was planted in 1998 and 2001.

Average production: Around 25 000 bottles per year.

Vinification and ageing:

Serras del Priorat: in 25 hl vats followed by 8 months in 500 litre 2 years old French oak casks.

Font de la Figuera: Gentle vinification in 25 hl vats ; 12 months ageing in 500 litre 'demi-muid' casks (Allier oak, mixture of new and second passage)

Clos Figueres: 'Microvinification' in 500 litre oak casks (turned on their side with the top removed to form a small open-topped vat); regular hand pigeage and extended maceration on the skins. 13 months ageing in a selection of new and 1 year old Allier oak barriques and casks (225 litres & 300 litres)

Tasting notes :

Serras del Priorat: a younger version of Font de la Figuera with plenty of forward, bright red fruit flavours, with balance and a classic mineral Priorat finish. This wine is ready to drink, but will continue to improve for at least 2 to 3 years. Overall ageing potential 8 to 10 years. Ideal with classic Mediterranean cuisine, white meats, vegetables and rice dishes.

The ***Font de la Figuera*** from young vines has an excellent deep ruby colour with an open sweet bouquet of black cherries and the classic Priorat mineral tones. Soft and approachable on the palate this wine can be enjoyed young but will continue to gain in stature for 10 to 12 years after bottling.

Clos Figueres has a denser rich ruby colour with wonderful scents of ripe blackberries and blueberries intermingled with the rich mineral flavours of a great Priorat. On the palate ***Clos Figueres*** is approachable with pure intense flavours and a lush smooth texture. Loaded with fresh red and black fruit, intermixed with minerals and spices, the finish is long and smooth. A delight for drinking over the next 12 to 15 years.

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