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Publication of a communication of approval of a standard amendment to a product specification for a name in the wine sector, as referred to in Article 17(2) and (3) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/33

(C/2024/3122)

This communication is published in accordance with Article 17(5) of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2019/33 ⁽¹⁾.

COMMUNICATING THE APPROVAL OF A STANDARD AMENDMENT

‘Cava’

PDO-ES-A0735-AM12

Date of communication: 23 February 2024

DESCRIPTION OF AND REASONS FOR THE APPROVED AMENDMENT

INCLUSION OF A NEW SMALLER GEOGRAPHICAL UNIT (‘ZONE’)

Description

A new smaller geographical unit, specifically a ‘zone’, has been established with the name of ‘Requena’. Its demarcation corresponds to the municipality of the same name in the province of Valencia.

The specific code identifying the new ‘zone’ of origin for the grapes appears on the crown caps on the bottles of wines eligible to display the term. The code consists of the letters RE.

Sections 4 and 8(b)(iii) of the product specification and Section 6 of the single document have been amended accordingly.

It is a standard amendment because it does not fall into any of the categories provided for in Article 105(2) of Regulation (EU) No 1308/2013 (single CMO).

Reasons

A standard amendment to the product specification was approved in 2021 (PDO-ES-A0735-AM10). Among other points, three smaller geographical units – ‘zones’ – were added. In addition to ‘zones’, smaller geographical units may be ‘sub-zones’ or ‘parajes calificados’ (single estates). A fourth ‘zone’ was envisaged, but the Regulatory Board making the application did not agree with regard to the name. Operators based in that area were only willing to use the name ‘Requena’. This was not accepted when it became clear that using that name would contravene the protection afforded to wines with the registered PDO ‘Utiel-Requena’.

However, the aforementioned operators took the matter to court and have recently obtained a final ruling in their favour. This amendment is being made in compliance with that ruling.

The ruling in question is No 494/2022 of 30 November 2022 of the High Court of Justice of Madrid. It concerned the administrative appeal lodged by various bodies against the decisions of the Technical Secretariat-General of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food of 13 August and 2 September 2021 dismissing the appeals lodged, and against the decision of the Directorate-General for the Food Industry of 3 September 2021 rejecting a request for revocation and amendment prior to the administrative appeal procedure against the decision of the Directorate-General for the Food Industry of 10 June 2021 approving publication of the ruling in favour of the standard amendment to the product specification of the ‘Cava’ protected designation of origin. Ruling No 494/2022 struck out only the ban on the inclusion of ‘Requena’ as a smaller geographical unit (‘zone’) from the aforementioned decisions, with the court recognising the right of the appellants to create the zone in question by amending the product specification, as the only option acceptable in law.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 9, 11.1.2019, p. 2.

Furthermore, with regard to the original contested decision of 10 June 2021, the eleventh legal basis for the ruling states: 'The power exercised here by the State Administration therefore allows the question to be resolved by the inclusion of that smaller geographical unit, as requested'.

In addition, under Spanish law (Law 39/2015 of 1 October 2015 on the common administrative procedure for public administrations), striking out a part of an administrative act does not mean that other, unrelated parts are also struck out. Acts and procedures are retained where their content would have remained the same without any infringement being committed.

With regard to the date of entry into force of this amendment to the product specification, and in line with the aforementioned ruling, it must be back-dated to the date of entry into force of the decision of the Directorate-General for the Food Industry of 10 June 2021, published in the Official State Gazette on 15 June 2021.

This means that, in the decision of 10 June 2021 approving amendment AM10 to the Cava PDO, the only parts that have been struck out by the 2022 ruling are those prohibiting use of the term 'Requena' for the smaller geographical unit in question. All of the other amendments to the product specification approved by that decision remain unaffected. In other words, the ruling's only requirement is the inclusion of 'Requena' as a smaller geographical unit ('zone') in the relevant sections of the 'Cava' PDO product specification, by means of this amendment AM12.

SINGLE DOCUMENT

1. **Name(s)**

Cava

2. **Geographical indication type**

PDO – Protected Designation of Origin

3. **Categories of grapevine product**

5. Quality sparkling wine

4. **Description of the wine(s)**

Quality sparkling wine

CONCISE TEXTUAL DESCRIPTION

Cava – White or Rosé: Clean and bright wines, with a continuous release of carbon dioxide in the form of small, bead-shaped bubbles. The colour of white Cava ranges from pale yellow to straw yellow; the colour of rosé Cava varies in intensity, with the exception of the violet-coloured rosés. Cava has characteristically fruity, slightly acidic, fresh and balanced aromas with hints of yeasty flavours coming through in the nose.

Cava 'Gran Reserva' – White or Rosé: Balanced wines, with nuances of ripe fruit and roasted nuts, with complex and clean aromas and hints of the lengthy lees contact.

Cava 'Paraje Calificado' – White or Rosé: Complex aromas with perfectly blended nuances of the area's own minerals, together with roasted nuts. On the palate, it presents a perfect structural balance, creaminess and acidity.

The relevant EU legislation will apply with respect to the analytical parameters, where the limits are not set in this Single Document.

General analytical characteristics

— Maximum total alcoholic strength (in % volume):

— Minimum actual alcoholic strength (in % volume): 10,8

- Minimum total acidity: 5 g/l expressed as tartaric acid
- Maximum volatile acidity (in milliequivalents per litre): 10,83
- Maximum total sulphur dioxide (in milligrams per litre): 160

5. **Winemaking practices**

5.1. *Specific oenological practices*

1. Specific oenological practice

The base wine for Cava may be made using only the first press juice, with a maximum yield of 1 hl of must/wine for every 150 kg of grapes. Depending on the 'zones', healthy grapes with a minimum natural alcohol content of 8,5 % vol. or 9 % vol. must be used. The base wines are produced using only the first press juice and no other parts of the grape; when producing rosés, at least 25 % of the grapes used must be red grape varieties.

When making Cava 'Paraje Calificado':

- the maximum extraction yield is 0,6 hl of must for every 100 kg of grapes.
- the following are prohibited: artificially increasing the natural alcoholic strength of the musts and/or base wine, acidification, and discolouration.
- the minimum total acidity of the base wine must be 5,5 g/l (5 g/l for other Cava wines).
- the maximum pH of the base wine must be 3,3 (3,4 for other Cava wines).

2. Cultivation practice

Vineyard plots are considered to be producing grapes suitable for Cava production as of the authorised variety's third growing season. The density of plantation must be from 1 500 to 3 500 stocks per hectare, using the traditional goblet or trellis methods of training.

Grapes used in the production of wines that are authorised to bear the indications 'Reserva', 'Gran Reserva' and 'Paraje Calificado' must come from vineyards that are at least 10 years old and certified as organic by the competent authority.

5.2. *Maximum yields*

1. Cava

12 000 kg of grapes per hectare

2. 80 hl per hectare

3. Cava 'Paraje Calificado'

8 000 kg of grapes per hectare

4. 48 hl per hectare

5. Cava 'Reserva' and 'Gran Reserva'

10 000 kg of grapes per hectare

6. 66,66 hl per hectare

6. Demarcated geographical area

The geographical area in which the grapes may be grown and the base wine and Cava produced is located within the boundaries of the following municipalities, set out by province in the text:

— Álava:

Laguardia, Moreda de Álava and Oyón.

— Badajoz:

Almendralejo.

— Barcelona:

Abrera, Alella, Artés, Avinyonet del Penedès, Begues, Cabrera d'Igualada, Cabrils, Canyelles, Castellet i la Gornal, Castellvi de la Marca, Castellvi de Rosanes, Cervelló, Corbera de Llobregat, Cubelles, El Masnou, Font-Rubí, Gelida, La Granada, La Llacuna, La Pobla de Claramunt, Les Cabanyes, Martorell, Martorelles, Masquefa, Mediona, Mongat, Odena, Olérdola, Olesa de Bonesvalls, Olivella, Pacs del Penedès, Piera, Els Hostelets de Pierola, El Pla del Penedès, Pontons, Premià de Mar, Puigdalber, Rubí, Sant Cugat Sesgarrigues, Sant Esteve Sesrovires, Sant fost de Campsentelles, Vilassar de Dalt, Sant Llorenç d'Hortons, Sant Martí Sarroca, Sant Pere de Ribes, Sant Pere de Riudevitlles, Sant Quintí de Mediona, Sant Sadurní d'Anoia, Santa Fe del Penedès, Santa Margarida i els Monjos, Santa Maria de Martorelles, Santa Maria de Miralles, Sitges, Subirats, Teià, Tiana, Torrelavit, Torrelles de Foix, Vallbona d'Anoia, Vallirana, Vilafranca del Penedès, Vilanova i la Geltrú and Vilobí del Penedès.

— Girona:

Blanes, Capmany, Masarac, Mollet de Perelada and Perelada.

— La Rioja:

Alesanco, Azofra, Briones, Casalarreina, Cihuri, Cordovín, Cuzcurrita de Rio Tirón, Fonzaleche, Grávalos, Haro, Hormilla, Hormilleja, Nájera, Sajazarra, San Asensio, Tirgo, Uruñuela and Villalba de Rioja.

— Lleida:

Lleida, Fullea, Guimerà, L'Albi, L'Espluga Calva, Maldà, Sant Martí de Riucorb, Tarrés, Verdú, El Vilosell and Vinaixa.

— Navarra:

Mendavia and Viana.

— Tarragona:

Aiguamúrcia, Albinyana, Alió, Banyeres del Penedès, Barberà de la Conca, Bellvei, Blancafort, Bonastre, Bràfim, Cabra del Camp, Calafell, Creixell, Cunit, El Catllar, El Pla de Santa Maria, El Vendrell, Els Garidells, Figuerola del Camp, Els Pallaresos, La Bisbal del Penedès, La Nou de Gaià, L'Arboç, La Riera de Gaià, La Secuita, L'Espluga de Francolí, Llorenç del Penedès, Masllorenç, Montblanc, Montferri, El Montmell, Nulles, Perafort, Pira, Puigpelat, Renau, Rocafort de Queralt, Roda de Berà, Rodonyà, Salomó, Sant Jaume dels Domenys, Santa Oliva, Sarraí, Solivella, Vallmoll, Valls, Vespella, Vilabella, Vila-rodona, Vilaseca de Solcina, Vilaberri and Vimodí.

— Valencia:

Requena.

— Zaragoza:

Ainzón and Cariñena.

Four 'zones' have been established for this entire area ('COMTATS DE BARCELONA', 'VALLE DEL EBRO', 'VIÑEDOS DE ALMENDRALEJO' and 'REQUENA'); the first two are divided into 'sub-zones'. 'Parajes calificados' can also be demarcated. All are smaller geographical units.

7. **Wine grape variety(ies)**

ALARIJE - SUBIRAT PARENT

CHARDONNAY

GARNACHA TINTA

MACABEO - VIURA

MONASTRELL

PARELLADA

PINOT NOIR

TREPAT

XARELLO

8. **Description of the link(s)**

8.1. *a) Natural and human factors*

NATURAL FACTORS: The soils are mostly limy, not very sandy and relatively clay-based. They tend to have a low organic material content and are not very fertile.

The area has general characteristics typical of a Mediterranean environment: a very long summer season with long hours of sunshine and high temperatures through spring to summer, also producing wide temperature variations which allow the grapes, including varieties with longer cycles, to ripen well. In addition, rainfall is low and poorly distributed over the seasons. This means that, during the period of plant growth, rainfall is scarce and relative humidity is very low. As a result, there is a pronounced water deficit, particularly in the ripening phase. The Mediterranean climate in the area is transitional between the milder climate on the coast, due to its proximity to the sea, and the harsher continental climate of the inland areas, which is cold in winter and hotter in the summer. The annual rainfall is on average 500 mm, with more frequent rainfall in autumn and spring. The area is very bright, with an average of around 2 500 hours of sunlight, which is sufficient for the grapes to ripen properly.

HUMAN FACTORS: In the second half of the 19th century, various wine-making families started making sparkling wines in the countryside of Barcelona province using the method then known as the 'champagne method', in which the second fermentation which produces the bubbles takes place in the bottle. It was in 1872 that the first bottles of Cava were made in the municipality of Sant Sadurní d'Anoia. After tirage, the bottles of sparkling wine were stored in underground caves which had a sufficient relative humidity level and an ambient temperature which remained around 13/15 °C throughout the year, helping to eliminate vibrations, which are to be avoided when making good quality sparkling wines. These are ideal conditions for the second fermentation and the ageing process of sparkling wines to take place correctly. Over time, the name 'cava', which identified the places where the bottles of sparkling wine were stored for ageing, ended up becoming the name of the wine itself. The most widely grown grape varieties are: Macabeo, Xarello, and Parellada, which represent 85 % of those used to make Cava. These three varieties are always present in different proportions in the base wines obtained from the demarcated geographical area. The low density of vines, between 1 500 and 3 500 plants per hectare, helps to improve the quality of the base wine. In addition, the limited rainfall in the area and the gobelet or trellis method of training allow for a moderate amount of productive buds, which limits the maximum yield per hectare to 12 000 kg. Furthermore, the base wine for Cava

may be made using only the first press juice, a maximum of 100 litres must/150 kg grape, and staggered ripening involving the separate harvest of the different varieties with a potential alcohol level for the base wine of between 9,5 and 11,5 % volume, a total acidity of >5 g/litre, and analytical indicators that ensure the sanitary quality of the crop. There must also be an approximate one-to-one relationship between the malic acid and tartaric acid, production conditions that allow for a slow development of the second fermentation, and the interaction between the wine and the yeast (autolysis) which brings delicate aromas to these wines, giving them unique organoleptic qualities.

8.2. *b) Detailed information on the quality or characteristics of the product*

Once the production process is completed with a second fermentation and ageing in the bottle with lees contact, Cava PDO wines have an alcohol content of between 10,8 and 12,8 % vol. Cava is characterised by low pH levels, between 2,8 and 3,4, so the wine ages correctly over time, reducing the risks of detrimental oxidation. These are wines with a low level of gluconic acid, which indicates that healthy grapes were used.

8.3. *c) Causal link between the geographical area and the characteristics of the product*

The soils combined with the climate in late summer and autumn, which is relatively mild and dry, allow the grapes to develop correctly, particularly in the phases preceding their harvest, which encourages the various authorised varieties to ripen at different times, thereby producing good base wines for making a healthy Cava, with moderate alcoholic strength, high acidity and a low pH. The product's rich tertiary aromas and appropriate release of bubbles depend in full on the production process from tirage to disgorging in the specially equipped plants, which allow the second fermentation and the ageing of the wine to develop slowly.

9. **Essential further conditions (packaging, labelling, other requirements)**

Legal framework:

In national legislation

Type of further condition:

Derogation on production in the demarcated geographical area

Description of the condition:

Cava may be produced in five wineries located outside the demarcated geographical area, as these cellars were producing base wine and/or 'Cava' prior to the entry into force of the Order of 27 February 1986 and were thus granted authorisation through the Ministerial Orders of 14 November 1991 and 9 January 1992.

Legal framework:

In national legislation

Type of further condition:

Additional provisions relating to labelling

Description of the condition:

The cork shall display the name CAVA and the number of the bottler.

It is mandatory to use a trademark registered with the Spanish Intellectual Property Registry (RPI) or the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market.

Only Cava 'Gran Reserva' and Cava 'Paraje Calificado' may use the terms 'Brut Nature', 'Extra Brut' and 'Brut'.

It is mandatory for Cava 'Reserva', 'Gran Reserva' and 'Paraje Calificado' to indicate the harvest year.

The indication 'Guarda' is established for Cava wines that are not 'Reserva', 'Gran Reserva' or 'Paraje Calificado'.

The indication 'Guarda Superior' is established for Cava 'Reserva', 'Gran Reserva' and 'Paraje Calificado'.

The term 'Integral producer' is established only for wineries which, as producers of both base wine and Cava, press and produce 100 % of the base wine used in their Cava and produce 100 % of their Cava wines on the same premises (winery) and do not purchase bottles in a horizontal (*en rima*) or inverted (*en punta*) position from other producers.

It is mandatory to use specific control marks.

The indication 'Paraje Calificado' must not exceed 4 mm in height, or the size of the brand, and it must feature alongside the name of the area in question.

Link to the product specification

https://www.mapa.gob.es/es/alimentacion/temas/calidad-diferenciada/dop-igp/htm/documentos_dop_cava.aspx