

# Azimut 'Cava Brut Nature Blanco' NV

**Producer** - Assis Suriol

**Provenance:** Penedès, Catalonia, Spain

**Farming:** Organic (certified)

**Grape(s):** 30% Macabeu, 40% Xarel.lo, 30% Paralleda

**Vineyard(s):** ½ is from their own 30 hectares of small vineyards, the other ½ from vineyards grown by their friends. Calcareous soils, 250-350 m elevation, usually younger vines for the cavas.

**Fermentation/ Aging:** Parcels processed individually. Destemmed, pneumatically

pressed and settled in subterranean concrete tanks for 1-3 days. Racked to steel for fermentation and MLF. Lots are blended together into concrete tanks for aging. Bottled for refermentation with organic white sugar and preserved cultures or Penedès-specific, government selected yeasts. Disgorged upon order without dosage.

**Sulfite:** added either after MLF or before bottling. Total sulfite is usually ~20 ppm

**Misc:**



## The Producer:

Assis Suriol is a quintessential Catalan 'Pagès,' a farmer whose fidelity to place defines his work. For Assis the goal is simple: "If I can give better land to my daughter, it's as easy as that. It's not important that it's wine or wheat or whatever, the important thing is to live here and to make that organic, biodynamic and sustainable." Located in the Alt Penedès, Assis returned to the ancestral family vineyards in the early 2000's after studying to become a pharmacist. Although the Suriol cellars are known for long-aged, old vine bottlings, Assis started the 'Azimut' project because "make wines as close as we can to the grape." The idea is to offer clean, fresh and eminently crushable wines to the market that don't need to be explained and demystified.

## The Vineyard

After the Phylloxera epidemic of the late 19th, early 20th centuries, at the advent of mechanized farming, the time-honored tradition of polyculture gave way to more homogenized crops. "We change and we say that we are not farmers, we say that we are viticultors" Assis says of the monoculture of the vine. Although Assis' father Francesc had the vineyards certified organic in 1998, Assis tells us they have always practiced ancestral Catalan farming that goes beyond organic principles: "The way we are doing that 300 years ago or 400 years ago without any biodynamic explanation."

After Assis returned from his studies, the family expanded from 25 ha to 30 ha split into over 20 parcels. Their limestone-rich vineyards stretch the Alt Penedès between 250-350 m elevation, a sweet spot for ripening their old vines of Xarel.lo. Half the raw material that goes into the Azimut wines comes from their own vineyards, the other half from farmer friends that grow their wines organically. “They come with us to make the biodynamic preparations,” Assis says “it’s very close.”

### **The Cellar**

The blend of Paralleda, Macabeu and Xarel.lo shifts slightly every year. The Suriol approach to fermentation is always to ferment by parcel rather than by variety so if a plot has Xarel.lo and Paralleda, it’s cofermented, if another has all three they’re fermented together, if another only has Macabeu it’s by itself. The grapes are destemmed and pressed using an immaculately maintained pneumatic press; “it’s more than clean” Assis says “we want each vineyard to make the fermentation with its own yeasts.” The pressed juice goes to subterranean concrete tanks for 1-3 days of settling after which they use a gentle peristaltic pump to transfer the wine to steel tanks for natural fermentation. Assis also notes that the higher temperatures in the steel tanks allow for an expedient malolactic conversion following primary fermentation. After fermentation, the lots are racked away from the lees and combined for blended aging in those same underground concrete tanks. The wines are then stirred 1-2 times per month through the winter. Before bottling the wines are dosed with organic white sugar and either a government selected, Penedès-specific yeast strain or (when possible) with a live culture derived from lees after sedimentation that’s fed with sugar until needed almost like a sourdough starter. The wines are disgorged upon order after at least 10 months bottle conditioning without dosage. Sulfite is added either at bottling or just after malolactic conversion ending up ~20 ppm total sulfite.

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