

**Gloria Ferrer****1996 Carneros Cuvée
(Carneros ~ Los Carneros)**

More than a decade ago, Gloria Ferrer viticulturalist Mike Crumley, working closely with the winery's wine making team, decided it was time for the winery to look closely at the clones it was using for its base material for sparkling wines. To test a series of special French clones that seemed better adapted to making classic sparkling wines, Crumley planted a number and by the mid-1990s it was clear that he had made the right decision.

The benefits were apparent soon after the first new clones began to bear fruit. There were brighter aromatic notes, stronger acidity on which to build the wines, and a fascinating spice character that hadn't been seen before. The first result of these trials was a wine that was harvested in 1996, and showed such penetrating fruit that wine maker Bob Lantosca decided it would be the start of a new late-disgorged project. The designation Carneros Cuvée had been used earlier for a long-aged-in-bottle wine, but what the 1996 proved was that a decade in the bottle was barely enough time for it!

This wine's structure is brilliant, with an aroma of citrus and faint yeast, a hint of minerals and a classic crisp finish. The wine is a blend of 55% Pinot Noir, 45% Chardonnay and is nearly a perfect bubbly. A limited bottling, it is still available at the winery (707-933-1917) and in select wine shops.

Reviewed December 20, 2007 by [Dan Berger](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Gloria Ferrer](#)

Vintage: 1996

Wine: Carneros Cuvée

Appellation: [Carneros ~ Los Carneros](#)

Grapes: Pinot Noir (58%), Chardonnay (42%)

Price: \$50.00

THE REVIEWER**Dan Berger**

Dan Berger has been reviewing wine for 30 years, always seeking character related to varietal type and regional identity. He has never used numbers to rank wine and doesn't plan to start any time soon. He believes that weight and concentration aren't the only worthy aspects of wine and is especially smitten by cool-climate and food-friendly wines that offer distinctiveness.