

2001 BODEGAS BALCONA PARTAL I

RATING: 90 POINTS

DRINK: 2007-2013

The 2001 Partal I is a blend of 60% Monastrell, 15% Syrah, 10% Tempranillo, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 5% Merlot aged 12 months in French oak. Dark ruby-colored, it offers up an excellent nose of forest floor, mushroom, pepper, black currant, and blackberry. Full-bodied, the wine has gobs of fruit, well-concealed ripe tannin, and is seamless on the palate. Enjoy this forward wine over the next 4-6 years.

—JAY MILLER (FEB 2007)

1998 BODEGAS BALCONA PARTAL CRIANZA

RATING: 90 POINTS

DRINK: 2001-2008

A new discovery by Spanish wine broker Jorge Ordonez, this blend of 60% Mourvedre and the balance Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Syrah, from a vineyard planted sixty miles from the Mediterranean Sea, was aged in 70% French and 30% American oak. It boasts a dense ruby/purple color as well as a sweet nose of black cherries, vanillin, and spice. This 1998 Crianza is admirably rich and impressively chewy, with a thick mid-palate as well as a long, spicy, moderately tannic finish. Though it comes close to being rustic, there is a lot of finesse underneath. Drink it over the next 6-7 years.

—ROBERT PARKER (AUG 2001)