

SINCE 1963  
**JEANLEON**  
A MAN. A TIME. A WINE.



Many words have been used to describe the life of the charismatic Jean Leon. A dreamer. A visionary. A non-conformist. However, his life will perhaps be best remembered as one of success in the face of overwhelming odds. Today the passion that drove that success is still reflected in the wines that bear his name.



Jean Leon, who was christened Ceferino Carrión, was born in Santander and experienced a difficult childhood, set against a background of poverty and hardship. In 1941, a terrible fire raged through the city, burning down his family’s home and destroying all of their belongings, forcing the family to move to Barcelona.

This incident had such a profound effect on the young Ceferino Carrión that he decided to take his life in a completely new direction. So, at the age of 19, and without a nickel to his name, he set off to establish a new life. After a brief stop-off in Paris, he tried to cross the Atlantic as a stowaway on seven separate occasions and finally succeeded on the eighth. When he eventually reached New York he changed his name from Ceferino Carrión to Jean Leon and looked for work, taking any job that he could find in order to make ends meet. They included driving a cab – something that always filled him with a sense of pride – and working as a busboy and waiter.

*The stars were aligned in his favour when he landed a job at Villa Capri, the restaurant owned by Frank Sinatra and the legendary baseball player Joe Di Maggio*



It was whilst working at the restaurant in the Rockefeller Centre that he became spellbound by its opulent décor and the actors who dined there. Driven by a desire to become part of this glamorous world he set off for Hollywood – the home of show business.

It was here that his luck changed when he landed a job at Villa Capri, the restaurant owned by Frank Sinatra and the legendary baseball player Joe Di Maggio.

**IMAGES** This Page – Above – Jean Leon in the Cellar of La Scala Restaurant. Below – Vinya La Havre Vineyard. Bottle – Jean Leon 3055 Chardonnay, Jean Leon 3055 Rosé, Jean Leon 3055 Merlot. Opposite Page – Jean Leon Visitor centre.

Jean Leon's discretion and professionalism had its rewards, and he quickly became one of Sinatra's most trusted assistants. In return, Sinatra taught him how to move in a world where he would meet many of the biggest stars of Hollywood's Golden Age, including Natalie Wood, Grace Kelly and James Dean. In fact, it was with James Dean that he fulfilled his first big dream by opening La Scala, which was soon regarded as the most prestigious restaurant in Hollywood.

La Scala, located in the very heart of Beverly Hills, opened on April 1, 1956. The restaurant epitomised the 1950s and 1960s like no other place on Earth, and every detail of the décor exuded elegance and sophistication. His clientele included the era's most influential names

in Hollywood, the music industry, politics and high society: people like Marilyn Monroe, Zsa Zsa Gabor, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, Marlon Brando and Robert Wagner.

Jean Leon and La Scala became so famous that bestselling romance novels by the likes of Jackie Collins and Judith Krantz featured him as a character and the restaurant as a setting in their books.

The era marked the height of the American Way of Life and a time when everything seemed possible. Rock'n'roll was born, the jazz aesthetic was everywhere, and man landed on the moon. Such circumstances created the perfect opportunity for the young, idealistic Jean Leon to make his dream come true.

**IMAGES** This page – Bottom left – Vinya Palau vineyard.  
Top right – Vinya La Scala vineyard.  
Bottom right – Jean Leon.

*His pioneering spirit and his colourful life story have been a powerful influence in the creation of this unique range of wines*





Jean Leon was meticulous in selecting wines for his dinners, lunches and banquets. The restaurant had an underground cellar where he stored close to 25,000 bottles, where one could easily find some of the best wines in the world.

Driven by this passion he embarked upon his second great ambition: to create a wine bearing his name with which to delight his select clientele. He began travelling the world in search of an area with the specific characteristics that would allow him to produce a signature wine with a unique personality and identity. He found what he was looking for in Catalonia, Spain, in the very heart of the Penedès. In 1962, he purchased 150 hectares of the best land in the region, and a year later he founded his winery in the authentic style of a Bordeaux château. To the great surprise of the region's winegrowers, he replaced existing local varieties with scions of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Chardonnay vines from renowned French wineries.

This most unusual decision resulted in the first Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay wines produced in Spain.

Jean Leon wines were the precursors of what we now call Chateau or Single Vineyard wines. The certification guarantees that the wine originates from grapes grown in a specific vineyard and that it displays a unique personality, born from the interplay between the soil, the vines, the microclimate and the human hand. In 2008 the Jean Leon winery began applying organic farming methods and from the 2012 vintage onwards all of their wines have been labelled as certified organic. In addition, all of the wines are produced in limited quantities, and every bottle is numbered. Jean Leon entrusted his legacy to the Torres family in 1994 and since then the winery has stayed faithful to the philosophy of its founder, remaining true to the history of a self-made man who fought tirelessly for his dreams.

**IMAGES** This page – Above – Jean Leon Cellar. Bottles – Jean Leon Vinya Gigi Chardonnay, Jean Leon Vinya La Havre Cabernet Sauvignon Reserva and Jean Leon La Scala Cabernet Sauvignon Gran Reserva.