

The wine industry in Portugal has undertaken a transformation in the last 20 years. Not only wine producers, but also companies and bodies linked to the industry, have made great efforts towards restructuring and modernisation, combining to achieve significant results in the process.

Key factors in the success now being enjoyed by Portuguese wines include the expertise of the wine makers, modernisation of wine cellars, quality control of the vines and investment in effective sales and marketing.

The increase in sales volume in almost every export market reflects the heightened level of awareness of the high quality wines being produced, although it is acknowledged that the industry aspires to continued improvement in performance.

The market in the United Kingdom represents a very individual and particular case. The ancient relationship between the 2 countries has a role to play in the wine sector as in any other business. The statistics speak for themselves; Portuguese wines have registered an increase of around 10% in volume and 14% in value, which far exceeds the average growth in the UK market.

This year marks the 5th anniversary of the "50 Great", an event that has without doubt served to significantly enhance the reputation of Portuguese wines in the UK. Reputed media figures Richard Mayson, Charles Metcalfe, Simon Woods, Jamie Goode and Sarah Ahmed have all been involved with the event and therefore contributed to the reputation of Portuguese wines as a whole.

My sincere thanks to you all for your efforts.

I also wish to acknowledge the unstinting effort and professionalism of the entire ViniPortugal team in the UK over the past 12 years, and in particular Judy Kendrick, who has represented us with great enthusiasm and commitment.

Furthermore, APWI has consistently supported our work and Portuguese wines in general. Their contribution has been a cornerstone of our endeavours, particularly in respect of advice on the Annual Activities Plan.

In conclusion, special thanks to Ambassador António Santana Carlos, who has so kindly given permission for his splendid residence to be used for the annual awards dinner.

Francisco Borba
President ViniPortugal

INTRODUCTION TO SARAH AHMED'S 50 GREAT PORTUGUESE WINES, 2010

The Portuguese wine scene is as dynamic as it's diverse. Diversity, its most celebrated trait, has been a double-edged sword. For some, Portugal's oasis of unique grape varieties makes for a refreshing alternative. For many, it's simply too challenging. But through dynamism - winemaking bravado wed to viticultural excellence - Portugal is successfully unleashing the full potential of its diverse terroir and grape varieties. Better packaging is another aspect of the ever-broadening appeal of its wines.

As the roll call of great Portuguese wines gets longer and longer, I have no doubt that Portugal can demonstrate how to live and thrive by the sword. Here's how I went about making my selection.

The brief

The Oxford English Dictionary defines 'great' as of an intensity or quality considerably above average. For this year's 50 Great Portuguese Wines, my choices encompass:

- "Coups de Coeur" - heart-stopping wines at the pinnacle of Portuguese winemaking prowess.
- Groundbreakers - wines of vaulting ambition that surpass the regional norm, including the first wines from the Algarve and Colares to make a 50 Great selection.

I limited myself to a maximum of two wines from each producer. Otherwise, I cast the net widely, spending six weeks last year tasting across the length and breadth of Portugal, as well as sampling and re-sampling hundreds of wines at home.

When I first visited Portugal in 2004, international varieties and Portuguese 'improving varieties' were being (block) planted in earnest, matched with a similar fervour for single varietal wines. These measures have contributed to the great strides Portugal's wine industry has made in recent years. However, my selection largely reflects something of a shift back towards blends, a greater show of confidence in Portuguese varieties and the championing of old vines.

Trends

You'll find detailed notes about each of my choices in the body of this booklet, but first I'd like to flag two outstanding examples of Portugal's dynamism which have informed my selection.

White wines

Richard Mayson's inaugural 50 Great selection in 2005 comprised solely red wines. My inclusion of a record-breaking 14 white wines is testament to a revolution in the quality of Portugal's white wines. In a remarkably short period of time, world class whites have emerged from across Portugal and there's been a quantum leap in overall quality. Vinho Verde has enjoyed the most dazzling transformation, with Alvarinho at the vanguard. Like Touriga Nacional for reds, it has spread its munificence from north to south and Alvarinho looks set to take up the mantle of Portugal's flagship white variety.

The Douro from nose to tail

The Douro's wines are fabulously consistent. The region's track record at the 50 Great tastings is second to none. For my 50 Great, I wanted to communicate how diverse the Douro has become. It's not just about port and big red wines. Rather, the "nose to tail" possibilities presented by this 100km stretch of the Douro, together with its multi-faceted slopes and elevation range, shape an increasingly glorious array of wines - red, white, sparkling and sweet, oaked and unoaked.

It's been an honour and thrill to select 50 Great Portuguese Wines. I can think of only one downside - the withdrawal symptoms after a year's feasting on such a rich kaleidoscope of aromas, flavours and textures!

With thanks to ViniPortugal, the APWI, JK Marketing and all the producers and distributors who supported the selection process and made this tasting possible.

Sarah Ahmed **The Wine Detective**

You can find detailed reports of Sarah's visits to Portugal on her website at <http://www.thewinedetective.co.uk/regional-reports/portugal/>

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1. **Arinto by Quinta de Chocapalha 2008, Vinho Regional Estremadura (W)**

QUINTA DE
CHOCAPALHA

Grape Varieties: Arinto
Production: 9.300
Producer: Quinta de Chocapalha - Casa Agrícola das Mimosas, Lda
Winemaker: Sandra Tavares & Diogo Sepúlveda
Importer: Corney & Barrow

The tiny DOC of Bucelas specialises in Arinto but this cracking example (the maiden vintage) comes from the wider Vinho Regional, Lisboa (the new name for Estremadura), to be precise, the oldest north-facing vineyards at Chocapalha. With its Riesling-like zingy citrus fruit and crisp acidity, it's one of my favourite Portuguese white varieties. The flute bottle underlines this stylistic connection.

notes

2. **Quinta do Ameal - Loureiro, 2008, DOC Vinho Verde (W)**

£12.00

Grape Varieties: Loureiro
Production: 45.000
Producer: Quinta do Ameal
Winemaker: Anselmo Mendes
Importer: Raymond Reynolds



Alvarinho has well and truly made the break from its Vinho Verde locale and is fast emerging as Portugal's lead white grape variety. But let's not forget Loureiro which, like Alvarinho, can produce magnificent single varietal Vinho Verde. In 2008, perhaps as a result of adopting biodynamic practices, Ameal seems to have shot up a gear in quality from its already very high quality base. The 2008 has stunning minerality and persistence.

notes

3. Contacto, 2008, DOC Vinho Verde (W)

Grape Varieties: Alvarinho
Production: 6.000
Producer: Anselmo Mendes Vinhos Lda
Winemaker: Anselmo Mendes
Importer: Looking for importer



W I N E M A K E R
ANSELMO MENDES

Smart modern packaging and a smart modern wine from leading Vinho Verde winemaker/consultant Anselmo Mendes. Skin contact produces a flavoursome, fruity wine with great persistence for an entry level Alvarinho - grande compra indeed!

notes

4. Poema, 2007, Vinho Regional Minho (W)

£15.95

Grape Varieties: Alvarinho
Production: 7.800
Producer: Quinta do Louridal
Winemaker: Sofia Silva & Maria de Fátima Silva
Importer: Castas



ALVARINHO

I presented this lees-aged Alvarinho at last year's Wine Show. It received a fantastic reception from an audience who had pretty much written off Vinho Verde. With its bright packaging and an aroma and flavour spectrum like Viognier, but much lighter on its feet, it sold like hotcakes. No wonder Francois Lurton is making an Alvarinho Vinho Verde!

notes

5. Soalheiro Primeiras Vinhas, 2008, DOC Vinho Verde (W)

£20.00

Grape Varieties: Alvarinho
Production: 4.000
Producer: VinuSoalleirus, Lda
Winemaker: Luis Cerdeira
Importer: Raymond Reynolds



Made from this estate's oldest vines, Jamie Goode chose the 2007 last year and I make no excuses for selecting the 2008. First, I agree with Jamie that they're probably the leading Vinho Verde producer, but also because though 2007 is the higher rated vintage, I think this wine is even better in 2008. Like the 2002 I tasted in late 2008, it will age well.

notes

6. Vale d'Algares "Selection", 2008, Vinho Regional Ribatejano (W)

£15.95

Grape Varieties: Alvarinho & Viognier
Production: 6.600
Producer: Vale d'Algares
Winemaker: Pedro Pereira Gonçalves
Importer: Castas



VR Ribatejano has had a makeover – Tejo is its new name and the region is turning over a new leaf on the ground too. New plantings of premium varieties, including uber-trendy Alvarinho, are focused away from the highly fertile “Campo” soils to the “Bairro’s” clay and limestone or the “Charneca’s” poor sandy soils. Vale d'Algares are upping the stakes even higher with their super-premium positioning and a flashy winery to match. Vines were planted as recently as 2004 & 2005 so it's early days, but the results already look promising.

notes

7. Quinta das Bageiras Garrafeira, 2007, DOC Bairrada (W)

Grape Varieties: Maria Gomes, Bical
Production: 2.836
Producer: Mário Sérgio Alves Nunes
Winemaker: Rui Alves
Importer: Looking for importer



Quinta das Bageiras

Luis Pato's whites, especially Vinha Formal, have always impressed me and, given the region's facility for taut, ageworthy Baga reds, perhaps no surprises that its best whites are built like Paula Radcliffe – lean and mean, at least in their youth. This has a wonderful thrust of acidity that carries a super-long, complex and mineral finish. Stunning.

notes

8. Quinta do Cardo Síria, 2008, DOC Beira Interior (W)

£8.50

Grape Varieties: Síria
Production: 10.400
Producer: Companhia das Quintas - Vinhos S.A.
Winemaker: João Corrêa & Nuno do Ó
Importer: Portovino



One of the higher (700m above sea level) and higher calibre players in Beira Interior, Quinta do Cardo is owned by the quality and terroir-focused Companhia das Quintas. It owns seven quintas across Portugal. This is a great example of the Síria variety. Piña Colada tropicality and a touch of residual sugar is kept in check by racy, Riesling-like citrus acidity.

notes

9. Quinta dos Currais Colheita Seleccionada, 2007, DOC Beira Interior (W)

Grape Varieties: Síria, Fonte Cal, Arinto
Production: 6.667
Producer: Quinta dos Currais, Sociedade Agricola, Lda.
Winemaker: Vines & Wines, Lda
Importer: Looking for importer



Much as I like the region's typically tropical Siria whites, this blend allows for greater complexity, putting me in mind of Santorini's Assyrtiko from Greece with its struck match and mineral, racy character – apparently that's the Fonte Cal.

notes

10. Quinta de Saes Reserva, 2008, DOC Dão (W)

Grape Varieties: Encruzado, Cercial, Malvasia, Gouveio
Production: 15.000
Producer: Quinta da Pellada - Unipessoal, Lda.
Winemaker: Álvaro Castro
Importer: Castas



Alvaro Castro is at the vanguard of modern, terroir-driven Dão wines. His wines have intensity and lift. This wine brims with insouciant character, its vitality underscored by a runaway finish. I love the way its different notes come at you in counter melodies and riffs.

notes

11. Pó de Poeira, 2008, Vinho Regional Terras Durienses (W)

Grape Varieties: Alvarinho & Gouveio
Production: 4.000
Producer: Jorge Moreira
Winemaker: Jorge moreira
Importer: Fields Morris and Verdin



Jorge Moreira strives to make elegant reds, marked more by acidity than tannin, hence the north-facing site responsible for one of the Douro's most finely-honed reds, Poeira – stunning, I might add in 2007. Inevitably, he's started making a white too and one based on Alvarinho. I hesitated to choose this wine because it really comes into its own on day two, showing a wonderful slatey minerality that really speaks of the Douro.

notes

12. Redoma Reserva Branco, 2008, DOC Douro (W) £29.00

Grape Varieties: Rabigato, Codega, Donzelinho, Viosinho, Arinto and others
Production: 9.800
Producer: Niepoort (Vinhos) S.A
Winemaker: Dirk Niepoort & Luis Seabra
Importer: England and Wales: Raymond Reynolds.
Scotland: Raeburn Fine Wines

Multiple varietal blend from old, mixed vineyards, most importantly Rabigato, Codega, Donzelinho, Viosinho and Arinto. The Douro's whites are very exciting, especially in 2008, which Dirk Niepoort describes as "unusual for its very fresh, high acidity but with the ripeness we wanted." Super-long, limpid and textured with a reverberating finish this is a fantastic illustration of the great strides Portuguese white wines have made, though, for the record, Niepoort made the first Redoma Branco in 1996 which I tasted last September – it had become positively Burgundian.

notes

13. Vila Santa, 2008, Vinho Regional Alentejano (W) £12.99

Grape Varieties: Antão Vaz, Arinto & Verdelho
Production: ----
Producer: J. Portugal Ramos Vinhos, SA
Winemaker: João Portugal Ramos
Importer: Oakley Wine Agencies



J. PORTUGAL RAMOS

If the Alentejo has a traditional white, it's single varietal Antão Vaz from Vidigueira in Lower Alentejo. The variety can be a little too rich and ripe for contemporary tastes. For my money, the best whites are a blend of Antão Vaz with Arinto, Verdelho and even Vinho Verde's Alvarinho for added zip. J. Portugal Ramos' maiden Vila Santa Branco is bang on the money and a great response to the surge in demand for Alentejo whites.

notes

14. Pêra-Manca, 2007, DOC Alentejo (W) £29.99

Grape Varieties: Antão Vaz, Arinto
Production: 58.400
Producer: Fundação Eugénio De Almeida - Adega Cartuxa
Winemaker: Pedro Baptista
Importer: Atlântico UK



2007 was a big vintage for this traditional, established producer. Production moved from 17th century cellars to a state-of-the-art winery and it's paying dividends for reds and whites. The cooler 2007 vintage has produced a terrific Pera Manca Branco whose aroma and flavour spectrum, not to mention complexity and power, put me in mind of a top Hermitage. My observation prompted winemaker Pedro Baptista to reveal that he's experimenting with Roussanne next year. A producer to watch.

notes

15. M.J.C (Manuel José Colares), 2005, DOC Colares (R)

£15.65

Grape Varieties: Ramisco (100%)
Production: 1.300
Producer: Quinta das Vinhas de Areia - Soc. Agrícola Lda
Winemaker: Paolo Fiúza Nigra
Importer: D&F Wine Shippers



Colares' fame rests on the fact that it's unique Ramisco variety, planted on sand dunes, withstood the phylloxera devastation of the 1800s. That's old news! These days, surviving property developers is the issue. Good news then that Fundação Oriente, a charitable foundation, is breathing new life into the region. It bought the largest vineyard in Colares in 1999 and has been carrying out trials of the Ramisco grape to improve know-how. This is a modern yet true take on Ramisco/Colares. It shows a subtle intensity of incense spice edged red fruits with a rub of pomegranate-like pithy tannins.

notes

16. Maria Selection, 2007, Vinho Regional Algarve (R)

Grape Varieties: Alfrocheiro, Bastardo & Alicante Bouschet
Production: 2.550
Producer: Monte da Casteleja
Winemaker: Guillaume Leroux
Importer: Looking for importer



Wine-wise, the Algarve may have less history than Colares, but property development is also an issue for its growing band of wineries, 16 last count. Frenchman Guillaume Leroux took over his grandfather's Algarve farm, Monte da Casteleja in 2000, producing his first wines in 2004. Rather than seeking to pander to the tourist market with easy drinking quaffers, Leroux is focusing on quality. Vines planted on clay and limestone are tended organically and he foot-treads his reds. Though it's early days, his wines show lots of character and promise.

notes

17. Quinta do Monte d'Oiro Reserva, 2006, Vinho Regional Lisboa (R)

Grape Varieties: 96% Syrah & 4% Viognier
Production: 10.000
Producer: José Bento dos Santos
Winemaker: Graça Gonçalves
Importer: Looking for importer



The maiden 1997 vintage made waves on its release in 1999. Consultancy from Maison Chapoutier (with whom Monte d'Oiro make Ex Aequo, a Touriga Nacional/Syrah blend), underlines that the focus on Syrah and Viognier is no fad. In this, the earliest picked vintage to date, the light touch of winemaker Graça Gonçalves works to great effect. New oak has been reduced to 30-40% from 100% and the wine spent less time in barrel. A finely wrought wine, worth sitting with while it unfurls.

notes

18. Quinta dos Currais Colheita Reserva, 2003, DOC Beira Interior (R)

Grape Varieties: Touriga Nacional, Castelão, Tinta Roriz, Jaen
Production: 10.000
Producer: Quinta dos Currais, Sociedade Agricola, Lda
Winemaker: Vines & Wines, Lda
Importer: Looking for importer



Bookmarked by the Douro Superior to the north and Alentejo to the south, Beira Interior is a large region, significantly warmer to the south where this wine comes from. Production was traditionally driven by co-operatives and focused on white table wine but this is changing fast with some exciting pockets of ambition. Currais are a great example.

notes

19. Lokal Silex, 2008, Vinho Regional Beiras (R)

Grape Varieties: Touriga Nacional
Production: 2.000
Producer: Filipa Pato
Winemaker: Filipa Pato
Importer: Clark Foyster Wines

Touriga Nacional easily dominates a blend, sometimes overplaying its rich hand. In Filipa Pato's talented hands, this wine shows off Touriga at its heady yet elegant best, with Dão terroir and blending partner Alfrocheiro providing their signature lipsmacking acidity. Joyous. Clark Foyster

notes

20. Vinha Barrosa, 2005, Vinho Regional Beiras (R) £25.00

Grape Varieties: Baga
Production: 5.600 - 0,75l, 100 - 1,5l & 50 - 3l
Producer: Luis Pato
Winemaker: Luis Pato
Importer: Raymond Reynolds



Luis Pato doesn't need much of an introduction but, despite his ingenuity with Baga and the variety's Nebbiolo or Pinot Noir-like traits, Baga has failed to gain the kudos of Barolo or Burgundy. It's a worry, because recent changes in the law mean that Baga is becoming dangerously niche. This single vineyard wine, from the oldest vines, bears a striking resemblance to the rather more expensive Poderi Aldo Conterno Bussia Barolo 2001. I'd like to see good Baga wines just as popular and feted as good Barolo and given the chance to evolve with time. Not produced in 2006 or 2007, but 2008 and 2009, both terrific vintages, also promise to make an eloquent case for the variety.

notes

21. Encontro 1, 2007, DOC Bairrada (R)

Grape Varieties: Baga & Touriga Nacional
Production: 2.000
Producer: Quinta do Encontro
Winemaker: Carlos Lucas
Importer: Clark Foyster and Atlântico, UK



This is the modern face of Bairrada and a terrific example, fleshed out with Touriga Nacional, it's perfect for those with less patience or without the storage to let pure Baga reveal its charms. It shows cool Atlantic precision and poise combined with firm but fine, savoury tannins.

notes

22. Quinta da Dôna, 2004, DOC Bairrada (R)

£24.99

Grape Varieties: Baga
Production: 6.717
Producer: Aliança, Vinhos de Portugal
Winemaker: Francisco Antunes
Importer: Boutinot



From a parcel within Quinta da Rigodeira, one of Aliança's Bairrada estates, this flagship wine comes from a well-exposed slope. Only made in best years, it's quite forward compared with Luis Pato's Barrosa and has a lovely saturation of Baga plum and cherry fruit with a mineral undertow.

notes

23. T-Nac by Falorca, 2007, DOC Dão (R)

£13.40

Grape Varieties: Touriga Nacional
Production: 3.500
Producer: QVE - Soc Agr Silgueiros,SA
Winemaker: Carlos Figueireido
Importer: Armit



A snappy title and, for Touriga Nacional, a snappy wine – unoaked, floral, elegant and silky, with the variety's trademark chocolate.

notes

24. Cabriz – Colheita Seleccionada, 2007, DOC Dão (R)

Grape Varieties: Alfrocheiro, Touriga Nacional & Tinta Roriz
Production: 900.000
Producer: Dão Sul
Winemaker: Carlos Lucas
Importer: Clark Foyster and Atlântico, UK



GlobalWines

Dão Sul are one of the region's great innovators with a range that encompasses both quantity and quality. This trends the tightrope brilliantly between heady and serious – a hire wire act at which the Dão excels.

notes

25. Quinta da Pellada Reserva, 2006, DOC Dão (R)

Grape Varieties: Touriga Nacional, Tinta Roriz
Production: 10.000
Producer: Quinta da Pellada - Unipessoal, Lda.
Winemaker: Álvaro Castro
Importer: James Swann - La Vinya del Senyor



Alvaro Castro's intense but not dense reds always impress and my choice wavered between this wine and the impressively structured Carrocel 2007, a "200% oaked" Touriga Nacional. I plumped for this wine because it's a terrific ambassador for modern Dão in the more difficult 2006 vintage (September rains). It has succulent fruit to flesh its bones, floral lift and an undertow of minerality to its long, persistent finish.

notes

26. Vinha Paz Reserva, 2005, DOC Dão (R)

Grape Varieties: Touriga Nacional, Tinta Roriz, Alfrocheiro
Production: 5.500
Producer: António Canto Moniz
Winemaker: Vines & Wines
Importer: Looking for importer

A fine example of modern Dão from a very good vintage. Foot trodden in lagares and aged in French oak it has fine tannins behind gobs of red and mostly black cherry and berry fruit. Nonetheless, it retains an underlying freshness typical of the region.

notes

27. Quinta dos Roques Garrafeira, 2003, DOC DÃO (R) £30.00

Grape Varieties: Touriga Nacional (65%), Alfrocheiro (15%), Tinto Cão (10%)
& Tinta Roriz (10%)
Production: 3.500
Producer: Quinta dos Roques
Winemaker: Rui Reguinga
Importer: Raymond Reynolds



Roques have forged a reputation for high quality wines and this illustrates why, not least because this is the most recent vintage – it's only made in exceptional years from a barrel selection of best wines. That suits me, because I wanted to show a powerful wine from an older vintage which is starting to show more tertiary, savoury notes. Despite the August heatwave, this wine shows deft balancing acidity, a great Dão strength.

notes

28. Quinta de S. José, 2007, DOC Douro (R)

Grape Varieties: Touriga Nacional, Tinta Roriz, Touriga Franca
Production: 5.000
Producer: João Brito e Cunha
Winemaker: João Brito e Cunha
Importer: Looking for importer

João Brito e Cunha's maiden Colheita label is a great example of a new breed of high quality entry level Douro wines. Like Passadouro's Passa or Niepoort's Drink Me, it lets the terroir do the talking rather than oak do the flattery (only 50% is oaked, and in 2-3-year-old barrels). Pure, fresh and mineral, it has a wonderful vibrance and immediacy to its young vine fruit.

notes

29. Quinta do Coa, 2007, DOC Douro Superior (R)

£14.99

Grape Varieties: Touriga Nacional, Tinta Roriz, Touriga Franca
Production: 40.000
Producer: CARM
Winemaker: Rui Madeira
Importer: Raymond Reynolds



The Douro Superior's star is rising – it's seeing an explosion of plantings from leading Upper Douro players like Quinta do Crasto, Quinta do Vallado and Quinta de la Rosa. This wine from the river Coa Valley is a great example of a spicy, dark red from the hot and arid Douro Superior bordering Spain. Coming from a certified organic, schistous vineyard at 130 to 300 metres in the Douro, it has great balance.

notes

30. Cedro do Noval, 2007, Vinho Regional Duriense (R)

£13.99

Grape Varieties: Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz, Syrah
Production: 54.000
Producer: Quinta do Noval
Winemaker: António Agrellos
Importer: Gonzalez Byass UK



Another class entry level wine with judicious oak use. As Christian Seeley puts it, "you don't need make up in the Douro, oak is used for that and it's not necessary nor is it a positive." Its minerality and lift is even more remarkable given that around a third of this wine comprises Syrah. Together with Labrador 2007, Noval's maiden 100% Syrah, it provides compelling evidence that Syrah is well adapted and sympathetic to the Douro's terroir and native varieties.

notes

31. Labrador, 2007, Vinho Regional Duriense (R)

£13.99

Grape Varieties: Syrah
Production: 2.500
Producer: Quinta do Noval
Winemaker: António Agrellos
Importer: Gonzalez Byass UK


QUINTA DO NOVAL
FINE PORTS SINCE 1715

Who would have guessed that Noval would release a critter label or that the Douro could produce such a beguiling expression of Syrah? With its wild Douro nose, wash of minerals and sinewy mid-weight style, the region seems to have yet another ace up its sleeve.

notes

32. Redoma, 2007, DOC DOURO (R)

£29.00

Grape Varieties: Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz, Tinta Amarela, Tinto Cão & others
Production: 30.940
Producer: Niepoort (Vinhos) S.A
Winemaker: Dirk Niepoort & Luis Seabra
Importer: England and Wales: Raymond Reynolds.
Scotland: Raeburn Fine Wines

Niepoort

Old (60-120 years) mixed vineyard plantings include Tinta Amarela, Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz, Tinto Cão. It's a given that Niepoort retain the capacity to surprise. Niepoort's "Projectos" wines include a Pinot Noir and Riesling, varieties which give away Dirk Niepoort's philosophy – the pursuit of elegance. Even the just released Robusto 2005 is fabulously elegant! Grapes for Redoma come from high, north-facing vineyards and, in 2007, a mild summer really played into Dirk's hands. Since its 1991 debut, Redoma has been aged in 228l barrels. In 2007, 40% was aged in 2000 litre oak vats. A particularly fine, lifted, floral vintage.

notes

33. Passadouro Reserva, 2007, DOC Douro (R)

Grape Varieties: Traditional Douro grapes
Production: 6.000
Producer: Quinta do Passadouro
Winemaker: Jorge Seródio Borges
Importer: Richards Walford & Company Ltd

Old (c. 50 to 70 years) mixed vineyard plantings. I very nearly chose the 2004 vintage of this wine, first tasted there years ago and again on the same day as the 2007. Both vintages share a chiselled minerality which somehow captures the energy of vine roots forcing their way through vertical strata of schist.

notes

34. CV-Curriculum Vitae, 2007, DOC Douro (R)

Grape Varieties: More than 25 different varieties
Production: 6.380
Producer: Lemos & Van Zeller, Lda
Winemaker: Cristiano Van Zeller & Sandra Tavares da Silva
Importer: Sales directly to the UK + stockists: Corney & Barrow, Tanners, The Wine Society, Waitrose, Carta Vini



Cima Corgo (Torto Valley): aged (average 60 years old) mixed vineyard plantings. Cristiano van Zeller's CV is one of my favourite 2007s. From an older, north-facing parcel of vines opposite Quinta do Vale Dona Maria with more Touriga Nacional, it sees 100% new oak. Beautifully structured, it has a super-long, saturated finish – a lithe long distance runner.

notes

35. Quinta do Crasto Vinha da Ponte, 2007, DOC Douro (R)

£45.00

Grape Varieties: More than 30 different old vine varieties
Production: 3.500
Producer: Quinta do Crasto
Winemaker: Dominic Morris & Manuel Lobo
Importer: Adnams PLC



Mixed plantings (22 different grape varieties) averaging 90 years old. It's hard to choose just one wine from Crasto's portfolio. The single vineyard Vinha de Ponte, last made in 2004, shows such breathtaking potential in 2007, it was a shoo-in.

notes

36. Quinta de Macedos, 2005, DOC Douro (R)

£12-13

Grape Varieties: 50% old vines & 50% Touriga Nacional and Touriga Franca
Production: 9.000
Producer: Quinta de Macedos
Winemaker: Paul Reynolds
Importer: Raymond Reynolds

Young vine Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz blended with mixed old vines. This Torto Valley red, made predominantly from young vines, may be the baby of the range, but it has tons of character with a mineral core and wild edge to its chunky fruit.

notes

37. Abandonado, 2005, DOC Douro (R)

£49.95

Grape Varieties: Douro grapes
Production: 3.500
Producer: Domingos Alves de Sousa
Winemaker: Anselmo Mendes & Tiago Alves de Sousa
Importer: Top Selection

The family,
Alves de Sousa *The Vineyards,*
The Douro & Port Wines

Old (c. 80 years) mixed vineyard plantings. Abandonado hails from a small, elevated parcel at Quinta da Gaivosa, one of Alves de Sousa's five quintas. Difficult to work, it had fallen into disuse but, since 2004, Alves and his son Tiago have crafted a particularly plush, brooding wine with wild, smoky eucalyptus notes.

notes

38. Quinta do Crasto Reserva Old Vines, 2004, DOC Douro (R)

£12.50

Grape Varieties: Vinhas Velhas 30 +
Production: 70.000
Producer: Quinta do Crasto
Winemaker: Dominic Morris & Manuel Lobo
Importer: Enotria Winecellars Ltd.



Cima Corgo: old (average 60 years) mixed vineyard plantings. Crasto were amongst the first Portuguese wines I ever tasted when I worked for Oddbins and the Reserva has always been a great value ambassador for the Douro's unique heritage of old vine fruit. It was first made in 1994. I recently tasted a vertical from 2000-2007. I'm a huge fan of the 2004 vintage and this is a cracker - mineral-laden, long and persistent, well supported by ripe but present tannins.

notes

39. Quinta Vale D. Maria, 2004, DOC Douro (R)

Grape Varieties: More than 25 different varieties
Production: 23.520
Producer: Lemos & Van Zeller, Lda
Winemaker: Cristiano Van Zeller & Sandra Tavares da Silva
Importer: Sales directly to the UK + stockists: Corney & Barrow, Tanners,
The Wine Society, Waitrose, Carta Vini



Cima Corgo (Torto Valley): old (average 60 years) mixed vineyard plantings. Having bought Quinta do Vale Dona Maria in 1996, Cristiano van Zeller reckons that they are now really starting to grasp the site's expression. I think he's being modest. At a vertical tasting from 2001 to 2008, my stand out vintages were the super-structured, precise, persistent and mineral 2001, 2004 and 2008 barrel sample.

notes

40. Herdade dos Grous "23 Barricas", 2008, Vinho Regional Alentejano (R)

£22.00

Grape Varieties: Syrah, Touriga Nacional
Production: 7.000
Producer: Herdade dos Grous
Winemaker: Luis Duarte
Importer: Great Western Wine



Beja in the south of Alentejo is home to some youthful but highly successful producers and this is the first of two that I've chosen. Not entirely coincidentally, they're both made in conjunction with consultant winemaker Luis Duarte who is a master of tannin management and fruit purity. The 2008 vintage produced well-balanced wines and, with Touriga Nacional's trademark elegance and fleshy mid-palate, this is a winner.

notes

41. Terrenus, 2007, Vinho Regional Alentejano (R) £12.50

Grape Varieties: Aragonês, Trincadeira, Alicante Bouchet
Production: 5.000
Producer: Rui Reguinga Enologia, Lda
Winemaker: Rui Reguinga
Importer: Looking for importer



RUI REGUINGA

Sourced from 80-100 year old mixed vineyard bush vines, includes Aragones, Trincadeira, Alicante Bouschet, Castelao, Baga and Touriga Franca. The subregion DOC Portalegre is Alentejo's northernmost outpost. Vineyards are located on the slopes of the Serra de São Mamede which rises to over 1000m. Its elevation, rugged landscape and granitic soils have more in common with the neighbouring Beira Interior than Alentejo. The presence of northern varieties reflects the fact that, a century ago, when there were no vines to speak of in Alentejo, cuttings came from the north. As its name suggests, this wine is veritable expression of terroir (and varieties) – lean and tightly coiled, framed by firm tannins, it benefits from decanting and is best paired with food.

notes

42. São Miguel Descobridores Reserva, 2007, Vinho Regional Alentejano (R)

Grape Varieties: Alicante Bouschet, Touriga Franca & Touriga Nacional
Production: 12.000
Producer: Casa Agricola Alexandre Relvas
Winemaker: Nuno Franco & Paula Tordo
Importer: Looking for importer



HERDADE SÃO MIGUEL
VINHO REGIONAL ALENTEJANO

Located near Evora in northerly Alentejo, schist and granitic soils seem to bring out the rock rose in Touriga Franca, a Douro variety that I've not come across this far south before. Renowned for its fresh, well-delineated fruit, it offers an interesting point of difference from the region's more typically generous styles.

notes

43. Esporão Private Selection, 2007, DOC Alentejo (R)

Grape Varieties: Alicante Bouschet, Aragonês
Production: 45.000
Producer: Esporão
Winemaker: David Baverstock
Importer: Charles Hawkins & Partners



For its size of operation (around 600 ha of estate fruit with a similar quantity bought in), Esporão run a tight ship. Quality from top to bottom is high. In the cooler 2007 vintage, the Garrafeira shows terrific elegance, power and balance.

notes

44. Grande Rocim, 2007, DOC Alentejo (R)

Grape Varieties: Alicante Bouschet
Production: 3.300
Producer: Herdade do Rocim
Winemaker: Catarina Vieira & António Ventura
Importer: Looking for importer



This new, no expense spared, outfit had a swift endorsement of this, its maiden flagship red. Grande Rocim came second to Mouchão 2005 at the FIJEV-sponsored competition at which I judged for best red wine of Vinipax 2009 (a Southern Portuguese-focused event). These results are a great endorsement for Alicante Bouschet, a teinturer, which thrives in the Alentejo heat. Its quality derives less from its fruit (its quite shy and dry), and more from a tannin and acid structure, which helps wines to age and develop complexity over time.

notes

**45. Malhadinha Tinto, 2007,
Vinho Regional Alentejano (R)**

£29.00

Grape Varieties: Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Aragonês, Touriga Nacional, Alicante Bouschet
Production: 14.065
Producer: Herdade da Malhadinha Nova
Winemaker: Rui Lopes/Luis Duarte
Importer: Raymond Reynolds



Herdade da
Malhadinha Nova
Alentejo • Portugal

The 2005 vintage in Alentejo has produced plenty of butch wines but Mouchão coax a wonderful fragrance and freshness from their Alicante Bouschet. Long, sensual and heady, this is seductive. Tonel 3-4 is only made in exceptional years; the "standard" Mouchão of this vintage is also deeply impressive.

notes

**46. Herdade do Mouchão Tonel 3-4, 2005,
VR Alentejano (R)**

£69.00

Grape Varieties: Alicante Bouschet
Production: 10.894
Producer: Vinhos da Cavaca Dourada S.A.
Winemaker: Paulo Laureano
Importer: Berry Bros & Rudd



The 2005 vintage in Alentejo has produced plenty of butch wines but Mouchão coax a wonderful fragrance and freshness from their Alicante Bouschet. Long, sensual and heady, this is seductive. Tonel 3-4 is only made in exceptional years; the "standard" Mouchão of this vintage is also deeply impressive.

notes

47. Zambujeiro, 2004, Vinho Regional Alentejano (R)

Grape Varieties: Touriga Nacional, Aragonês, Alicante Bouschet & Castelão
Production: 6.600
Producer: Quinta do Zambujeiro
Winemaker: Alain Bramaz, Luís Lourinho, Nuno Malta
Importer: Looking for importer



Quinta do Zambujeiro
Produção e Comércio de Vinhos, Unipessoal, Lda.

Quality and attention to detail are hallmarks of Swiss watches and the wines from this Swiss-owned winery clearly receive plenty of tlc. Tasting the maiden 1999 through to the 2005, the 2004 vintage stood out to me (also for the second wine Terra do Zambujeiro). Low yielding dry-farmed vineyards, elevation (340-350 m), schist soils and the use of Touriga Nacional and Alicante Bouschet make for a subtly powerful, expressive, elegant wine.

notes

48. Quinta do Mouro, 2004, Vinho Regional Alentejano (R)

Grape Varieties: Aragonês, Alicante Bouschet, Touriga Nacional, Cabernet Sauvignon
Production: 27.000
Producer: Miguel António de Orduña Viegas Louro
Winemaker: Luis Duarte
Importer: James Nicholson in Ireland.
Looking for importer UK mainland



A vertical tasting at Mouro mesmerised for its light and shade - a line up full of character and soul, while remaining thoroughly consistent in terms of quality - high. Though the 2005 is more powerful, during my week's visit in the Alentejo, I generally preferred wines from the 2004 vintage. This, though tightly coiled, shows great balance of fruit, tannin and acidity.

notes

49. Portal Late Hate Harvest, 2007, DOC Douro (Sweet)

£15.00

Grape Varieties: Rabigato, Moscatel, Viosinho
Production: 3.350
Producer: Soc. Quinta do Portal
Winemaker: Paulo Coutinho
Importer: Charles Hawkins & Partners



This wine is the piece de resistance of the "nose to tail" possibilities thrown up by the Douro's fabulously diverse terrain – table wines, pink port have been known to raise eyebrows in some quarters and this sweetie raised mine! I knew Portal made some lifted fortified Moscatels, but confess I was taken aback by the freshness, delicacy and purity of this wine. Moscatel and Rabigato are concentrated on the vine, some Rabigato was affected by botrytis and the Viosinho was made vin de paille-style.

notes

50. Bacalhôa Moscatel Roxo, 1999, DOC Setúbal (Sweet)

£14.49

Grape Varieties: 100% Moscatel Roxo
Production: 16.467
Producer: Bacalhôa Vinhos de Portugal, SA
Winemaker: Filipa Tomaz da Costa
Importer: E. I. Wines (Ehrmanns)



Port and Madeira are justifiably among the world's best-known fortified wines, but Moscatel de Setúbal is a fabulous alternative that offers tremendous pleasure on release. Setúbal's Roxo is a rare treat and, at this level, quality is world class. Bacalhôa's Roxo featured in 2009's Muscat du Monde® Top 10, bagging 1 of only 3 gold medals.

notes

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www.portovino.co.uk

Raeburn Fine Wines

21/23 Comely Bank Road
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e-mail: sales@raeburnfinewines.com
www.raeburnfinewines.com

Raymond Reynolds Wines

Station Road
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Stockport
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SK23 7SW
Contact: Raymond Reynolds & Danny Cameron
Phone: 01663 742230
e-mail: rr@raymondreynolds.co.uk
www.winesfromportugal.com

Richards Walford & Co

Hales Lodge

Pickworth

Stamford

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PE9 4DJ

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Tanners

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The Wine Society

www.thewinesociety.com

Top Selection

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Waitrose

www.waitrosewine.com



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