



Corney & Barrow's Portuguese Release 2008 & 2009 Vintages

For many years we have been flying the Portuguese flag, citing the fact that the best wines of Portugal combine high quality with excellent value for money. In increasingly fashionable "green" terms we have in Portugal a world class producer on our doorstep. To dismiss Portuguese wines on the basis of injudicious purchases whilst on holiday is sheer folly.

We are fortunate to be working with serious people making very serious wines which enjoy considerable third party endorsement. It was not ever thus and I have experienced as many over-wooded, oxidised nonentities as the next man but there has been a sea-change in quality over the last fifteen years or so. Our first eye-opener came from arguably Portugal's most eloquent ambassador, Cristiano Van Zeller. Cristiano first presented me with the 1997 vintage of Quinta Vale Dona Maria, from the Douro back in 1998. We fell in love with the wine, only to be told that he had nothing left to sell! Despite this Cristiano has remained a great friend and we have been able to witness first hand, in the intervening years, how he has worked tirelessly and selflessly not only for his own estates but also promoting the wines of his friends and cohorts, most notably in the Douro Valley. The new generation of talented winemakers which has emerged combines the best of tradition and modernity to produce slick, rich, balanced wines with a classical feel.

Changes began in cellars, so that wines began to be made fresher, cleaner and better balanced. That said, the real secret of Portugal's burgeoning quality came with the understanding that quality begins in the vineyard, allied to the realisation that Portugal is uniquely endowed with a spellbinding array of high quality grape varieties. Respecting and harnessing this individuality has been key and these producers are inspired by the ingredients they nurture throughout the growing season.

These are world-class wines, by anyone's standards.

Alison Buchanan
Associate Director, Buying
March 2011

TASTING GUIDE

Our tasting notes provide full details but, at your request, we have also introduced a clear and simple marking system. We hope these guidelines assist you in your selection.

14-16 A very good to excellent wine.

16-18 An excellent to outstanding wine.

18-20 An outstanding to legendary wine.

• Wines are judged within their peer group.

• A definitive score of a young wine is almost always impossible. We usually offer a 'spread'

(e.g. 14 - 16) which relates to the potential to achieve a higher mark. A '+' adds further to that potential.

• A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes.

To order please call 020 7265 2430 (London) or 01875 321 921 (Edinburgh)

2009 Vintage

The growing season was rather dry with rainfall between 20% and 40% lower than average. Temperatures were normal except for a cold spell at the beginning of winter and, importantly in April when the cool weather delayed the vines' growth cycle. The summer proceeded without incident until a heat wave towards the end of August accelerated the maturation process and the drive to pick- the better to ensure a good balance of ripeness and acidity. The weather at harvest smiled on the growers, delivering mild, dry conditions.

2008 Vintage

'Of the 2000's I said "In my opinion 2007 is one of the three or four best years since 1970 – the best Douro wine year so far" That was before I saw the 2008's.'

Cristiano Van Zeller

2008 was a rather benign, mild year. Winter was a little colder than average but also drier. Spring was advantageously wetter than average which served to replenish much needed water reserves. Summer was beautifully sunny, though cooler than normal, with an average rainfall. Flowering was a few days later than usual which, combined with the mild temperatures and water reserves in the soil allowed for a prolonged maturation period, intensifying the flavour components of the individual varietals whilst retaining balanced levels of acidity. The wines are concentrated and wonderfully aromatic. Quantities in the Douro were 10% lower than the average of the past ten years and 5% lower than in 2007.

Lemos & van Zeller Quinta do Vale Dona Maria

This wonderful, dramatically sited property belonged to the family of Cristiano Van Zeller's wife Joana and it used to be let out to the Symington family on an extended lease, with much of the produce destined for Quinta do Vesuvio. Cristiano bought it in 1996, having parted company with Quinta do Noval in 1993. Situated in the Torto Valley, this is a very complex vineyard with many different slopes and aspects. In addition, some 41 different vine varieties have been identified. This used to be seen as one of Portugal's great drawbacks. In fact, whilst this presents a challenge, it also provides the most wonderful palette of flavours, textures and aromatics with which to create a blend. Cristiano and his team, including fellow winemaker Sandra Tavares, are convinced that Portugal's future lies mainly in sharpening up viticultural practices, in tandem of course with ongoing improvements in the winery. Certainly there is a talent in blending, but the ingredients, as any *chef de cuisine* or *de cave* knows, must be the best quality possible. Vale Dona Maria has been making award winning table wine and port, both LBV and vintage, from the outset and we are delighted to follow this impressive estate.

At Dona Maria the 2008 harvest started on the 15th September and the grapes, as always, were foot trodden in *lagares* for one to three days before fermentation. The grapes are always separated into the individual parcels which have been identified and then fermented for seven to ten days with *pigeage* by hand. The wine is then racked into French oak barrels, from a variety of coopers, where they undergo malolactic fermentation and are aged, the individual fermentations still kept apart, until the final blending takes place before bottling.

Quinta do Vale Dona Maria 2008

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 18+

This is a deep, plum-shot dark ruby-violet - a beautiful, enticing colour. The nose combines an array of red and black berry fruit, black cherries, violets and warm plum compote. The palate mirrors these ripe, sweet aromatics with additional spice, pepper and raspberry refreshment. Seductively textured, the richness is underpinned by ripe, firm tannins, coated in fruit. Intense and concentrated, this nonetheless retains characteristic Dona Maria elegance and charm, remaining focused throughout a protracted. Generous finish.

Recommended drinking from 2012 to 2020 plus

£89/case of 6, in bond UK

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Casa de del Loivos

This manor house, beautifully sited on the hilltop above Pinhão has commanding views of the Douro and the valley. It was originally constructed as far back as 1658 and has been owned by the Pereira de Sampayo family since 1733. Currently Manuel Sampaio Pimintel is at the helm.

This tiny 1.6 ha vineyard has an impressive history. Although small, the grapes from the estate played an important role in what had been Cristiano's family port company Quinta do Noval for a great many decades, certainly as far back as Cristiano's great grandfather's time there. Cristiano Van Zeller and Manuel decided to work together to create a truly great Douro red from the small vineyard. With the help of fellow winemaker Sandra Tavares, Cristiano has selected grapes from older vines, well over fifty years on average. They have been able to apply all of the experience and knowledge they have amassed over successive vintages at Quinta Vale Dona Maria, where, in fact, Casa de Casal de Loivos is made and matured.

The grapes arrive there and are crushed and then foot trodden in small stone lagares before fermentation. This, generally, lasts for about 8 to 10 days before the wines are put into *barriques*, at least 50% new, for around 18 months.

The 2008 harvest began on the 27th September, in perfect climatic conditions

Casa de Casal de Loivos 2008

Corney & Barrow Score 18

A lustrous plum-ruby in colour, this has immediate appeal. The nose is gorgeous, offering an appetising blend of violet-scented red and black fruit with an intriguing savoury note and a heady dash of spice. The palate delivers the promise of the nose with lovely layered fruit character, concentrated and intense, pepper-spiced and beautifully balanced. This has real personality and feminine charm, innate elegance underscored by ripe tannins and refreshed by bright acidity.

Recommended drinking from 2012 to 2019+

£95/case of 6, in bond UK

Wine and Soul

"Our goal is to create wines that express all the character of the traditional vineyards and varieties from the Douro Valley - a balance of concentration, complexity and elegance."

Sandra Tavares de Silva and Jorge Serôdio Borges

Cristiano Van Zeller's business partner and winemaker Sandra Tavares is married to Jorge Serôdio Borges. Ex-Niepoort, he is the winemaker at Quinta de Passadouro as well as being involved in other new projects in the Douro Valley. Sandra, in addition to her work with Cristiano, which she began in 1999, is winemaker at her family's estate in the Estramadura, north of Lisbon – Quinta de Chocapalha.

After hours of driving between Chocapalha and the Douro, it was clearly just a matter of time before Jorge and Sandra laid some foundations of their own. They bought an old port lodge in Vale de Mendiz, rebuilt the lagares and painstakingly selected grapes from the Pinhão Valley. Thus, in 2001, Wine & Soul was established, making its debut with the first vintage of Pintas, the flagship wine. In 2003, they bought the vineyard, seriously tying their colours to the mast. Given their combined talent the wines, unsurprisingly, won accolades from the outset.

The vineyard is, south-facing, a steeply sloped two hectares of seventy-eight year old vines, covering thirty different Portuguese varietals. The age of vines and the variety both contribute to the hugely complex palette of aromatics available. They also however, set challenges which are not seen in other wine producing regions. Ruthless sorting is essential as the different vines mature at different times – a skilled job, rewarded by the resulting quality of the finished wines.

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Red

Pintas

Corney & Barrow Score 18 to 18+

The 2008 harvest began during the second week in September, with perfect weather conditions. The grapes, rigorously selected and de-stemmed, were foot-trodden in the restored lagares during the ten day fermentation. The wine was then transferred to 70% new French oak and 30% one year old *barrisques* for the malo-lactic fermentation and the 20 months maturation period.

An intense, lustrous deep plum in colour, clinging to the glass, this presents a warming, generous combination of sweet dark fruit, warm cherry compote, violets and pepper on the nose. The palate reflects these aromatics, adding blackberry notes, additional spice and hints of dark chocolate, all supported by rounded, ripe tannins. This is a big wine yet supremely elegant, with a flourish of freshness which maintains focus throughout – impressive.

Recommended drinking from 2012 to 2022+

£195/case of 6, in bond UK

Pintas Character

Corney & Barrow Score 17

In order to meet increasing demand, whilst protecting the integrity of Pintas itself, Sandra and Jorge now source old vine fruit from vineyards surrounding Pintas, also field blends of thirty varieties. The grapes are traditionally foot trodden and fermented, like Pintas, spending 18 months in 50% new, 50% one year old French oak *barrisques*.

Inky plum in colour, this presents a profusion of fresh and cooked fruit on the nose, brambles, cassis, raspberry and candied cherries, with a fresh floral backdrop. The palate is similarly aromatic, rounded and richly-textured with a heady dash of spice.

Recommended drinking from 2011 to 2014+

£89/case of 6, in bond UK

White

Guru made its début performance with the 2004 vintage. It comes from a 49 year old vineyard planted with four varieties. Gouveio, Viosinho, Rabigato and Códega do Larinho. The wine is fermented at low temperatures in new French oak before being aged for 6 months, with *batonnage* (lees-stirring).

Guru 2009

Corney & Barrow Score 17 +

Shimmering gold in colour, this is attractive from the outset. Elegant and aromatic on the nose, it presents a combination of warm buttery pastry, citrus freshness and delicious tropical notes, all underscored by pronounced minerality. Richly-textured, this has an opulence borne of the new oak yet it maintains a fresh vitality – beautifully balanced. This is a serious white which would hold its own alongside wines from more classical regions – highly recommended.

Recommended drinking from 2011 to 2013+

£115/case of 6, in bond UK

Drinking Wines – Available Now

This is a selection of wines available immediately, from Sandra Tavares' family estate Quinta de Chocapalha, which is north of Lisbon in a region which used to be called the Estremadura. Paulo and Alice Tavares da Silva bought Chocapalha in the eighties, totally convinced of its true potential. They immediately embarked on an investment programme, starting in the vineyards. By 2000, the most recent plantings were reaching maturity and quality had already greatly improved. At this time most of the production was sold on to larger cooperatives. Whilst Paulo and Alice were making progress at home, their daughter, Sandra, was fast establishing her reputation as an extremely talented winemaker, working alongside Cristiano Van Zeller at Vale Dona Maria in the Douro. With Cristiano's encouragement, the family elected to refurbish their cellar and start producing their own wines. Quinta de Chocapalha produces a number of wines with real personality and individuality.

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Red

Quinta de Chocalpa Tinto 2007

30% Tinta Roriz, 30% Castelão, 20% Touriga Nacional, 15% Syrah and 5% Alicante Bouschet

Deep plum-cherry in appearance, this has an attractive, intense nose of ripe, concentrated black fruit refreshed by violets and roses. The palate is seductive, rich and fine, supported by gentle, tannins and refreshed by a bright streak of acidity.

Recommended drinking from now to 2012 plus

£47.32/case of 6, in bond UK

Quinta de Chocalpa Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Touriga Nacional

Rich plum-cherry in colour, this combines vivacious cassis fruit with a pronounced mineral undercurrent. It boasts a silky, rich texture complemented by well-integrated and rounded tannins. As ever, Sandra has fashioned a wine which combines a certain breezy freshness with the innate power expected from this region. Beautifully balanced, this has a classical feel – Portuguese style.

Recommended drinking from 2009 to 2013 plus

£57.32/case of 6, in bond UK

Chocalpa Reserva 2007

55% Touriga Nacional, 30% Tinta Roriz, 15% Syrah

Jet-shot cherry in appearance, this Chocalpa reserva, the flagship of the estate, is immediately attractive, richly textured and clinging persistently to the glass. The nose combines warming, spiced fruit, tobacco notes and intense dark, concentrated cherries, refreshed by citrus hints and floral notes. Complex and layered, it is attractively perfumed throughout, elegant and agile– surprising given its weight and density. The palate is opulent and velvet-textured, very ripe, with a persistent layer of vanilla derived from the French oak where the wine matured for 19 months. The balance is very attractive with expansive fruit complemented by rounded, ripe tannins. Though starting to drink well, with decanting, this continues to have good potential.

Recommended drinking from now to 2018+

£94.82/case of 6, in bond UK

White

Quinta de Chocalpa Arinto 2008

100% Arinto

This is a characterful, light and refreshing white from the indigenous Arinto grape. Crisp and mineral, with a citrus streak, it makes an excellent aperitif and accompaniment to shellfish.

Recommended drinking from now to 2012

£41.82/case of 6, in bond UK

Quinta de Chocalpa Branco Reserva 2008

65% Chardonnay and 35% Viosinho

Pale golden straw in colour, lustrous and inviting, this presents honeysuckle and warm brioche notes on the nose, complementing a medley of orchard, citrus and tropical fruit. Layered and complex, this is characterful and enticing. A marriage of 70% oak-enriched fruit, refreshed by the purity of 30% fermented in stainless steel is beautifully pitched and very fine indeed.

Recommended drinking from now to 2012 plus

£79.82/case of 6, in bond UK

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