

RICHARD MAYSON



PORT AND THE DOURO

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AND THE
DOURO

Richard Mayson entered the wine trade as a result of living and working in Portugal, which he first visited as a child in 1970. He read Geography at the University of Sheffield where part of his degree was a study of the microclimate of Port vineyards in the Douro Valley. He entered the UK wine trade in 1984 and spent five years working for the Wine Society, the world's oldest mail-order wine club. In 1987 he was awarded the Vintners' Company Scholarship and spent three months in the vineyards of Iberia. Now based in the north of England, Richard has been working as a freelance wine writer and lecturer since 1989. His first book, the award-winning *Portugal's Wines and Wine-Makers*, was published in 1992, followed by a second edition in 1998. He also wrote *The Story of Dow's Port*, published to coincide with the company's bicentenary in 1998. The first edition of this book, published in 1999, was shortlisted for the André Simon Award and the second edition, published in 2004, won the Symington Award of Excellence. Richard's book *The Wines and Vineyards of Portugal*, published by Mitchell Beazley, won the André Simon Award for the Drinks Book of the Year in 2003.

Richard has contributed to a number of publications, including the *Oxford Companion to Wine* and the *Larousse Encyclopaedia of Wine*. He writes regularly for *Decanter* and the *World of Fine Wine*, and lectures to students at the Wine and Spirit Education Trust and Leith's School of Food and Wine in London. Richard currently divides his time between his home and business interests in the Derbyshire Peak District and the Alentejo in Portugal where he owns a vineyard. In 1999 he became a Cavaleiro of the Confraria do Vinho do Porto.

Leo Duff was born in Belfast and studied Illustration at Brighton College of Art and the Royal College of Art in London. Over the past fifteen years she has combined commissions with her personal practice to create work for five exhibitions based on Northern Portugal and its unique and distinctive land- and cityscape. Her speciality is in creating a sense of place, and clients have included Sainsbury, American Express, *Elle*, *Vogue*, Penguin Books, BP Oil, *The Times*, Nord Deutsches Landesbank and Saatchi & Saatchi. She also illustrated *The Wines and Vineyards of Portugal*, published by Mitchell Beazley. Leo Duff is currently Course Director of MA Drawing as Process at Kingston University, Surrey, England.

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with illustrations by Leo Duff

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First published in 2013 by

Infinite Ideas Limited

36 St Giles

Oxford

OX1 3LD

United Kingdom

www.infideas.com

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-908984-17-3

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Pictures facing pages 52, 53 and 180 and jacket photos of Quinta de Vargellas, sustainable viticulture and Douro panorama courtesy of Fladgate Partnership.

Pictures facing pages 85, 181, 212 and 213 and jacket photo of ageing Reserve Port courtesy of Symington Family Estates.

Cover designed by Cylinder

Text designed and typeset by Nicki Averill Design

Printed in Britain

To the late Jorge Maria Cabral Ferreira,
who first inspired my interest in Port and the Douro

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to a huge number of people who have helped me since I first arrived in Oporto over thirty years ago. The following roster of names, which reads almost like a wine list, is by no means exhaustive but I hope that all those who have assisted directly with the preparation of this book are included. Over the years, many have become good friends.

In preparing this edition, I am especially grateful to the following individuals: Paul Symington, Charles Symington and Pedro Leal da Costa (Symington Family Estates); Adrian Bridge, David Guimaraens and António Magalhães (Fladgate Partnership), António Agrellos (Quinta do Noval), Luís Sottomayor (Ferreira), Professor Nuno Magalhães and Dirk Niepoort.

In the Douro I am especially indebted to the Symington Family and to Jorge and Tita Roquette (Quinta do Crasto) for regularly providing me with luxurious lodgings from which to conduct my research.

I also wish to express my heartfelt thanks to: Fernando Alves (ADVID), Tim, Philip and Sophia Bergqvist (Quinta de la Rosa), Miguel Corte Real (ex-Cockburn), Nick Delaforce (Niepoort), Johnny Graham (Churchill Graham), Euan Mackay (Symington Family Estates) Vasco Magalhães (Sogrape), João Nicolau de Almeida (Ramos Pinto), Jim Reeder (ex-Cockburn, now Dalva), George Sandeman (Sandeman), Christian Seely (Quinta do Noval), Peter Symington (ex-Dow, Graham, Warre, etc.) for providing me with so much technical detail from *quinta*, *adega* and *armazém*. In the Douro and Vila Nova de Gaia, it goes without saying that they also provided some great hospitality. There are many others in Portugal to whom I also wish to express my thanks: Manuel Angelo Barros, Pedro Branco (Quinta do Portal), Iolanda Carneiro (Wiese & Krohn), Peter Cobb (ex-Cockburn), José Maria Soares Franco (Ferreira), Carlos Magalhaes (Quinta do Silval), Vito and Francisco Olazabal (Quinta do Vale Meao), Luisa Olazabal (Rozès), Jorge Pintão (Poças), Jorge Dias (Porto Cruz), Pedro Silva Reis (Real Companhia Velha), Guilherme Alvares Ribeiro (Quinta do Vallado), Jorge Rosas (Ramos Pinto), Alistair and Gillyanne Robertson (The Fladgate Partnership), João Roseira (Quinta do Infantado), Henry Shotton (Symington), Domingos Alves de Sousa (Quinta da Gaivosa) Álvaro and Fernando van Zeller (Barão de Vilar) and Cristiano van Zeller (Quinta Vale Dona Maria). Without their help and co-operation this book would not be complete.

Oporto and the Douro has always been something of a cultural melting pot and a number of Australian winemakers have recently started to have an impact on the region.

X ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My thanks are due to David Baverstock and Dominic Morris, particularly for their help with the chapter on Douro wines.

I am also grateful to the Instituto dos Vinhos do Porto e Douro (IVDP) for supporting this book at the outset and for all the information that they have subsequently provided.

In the UK, I am grateful to the members of the Port Forum for their support and for inviting me to so many of their wonderful tastings and sharing so many of their wines. A number of people have been on hand when I needed information and I am especially grateful to David Delaforce, Sue Glasgow and Raymond Reynolds. I am grateful to William ('Bill') Warre MW for his input into the first chapter on history and to Dr Derek Bunting for supplying me with so much fascinating information on the Whitehead family. Leo Duff, whose work I have admired ever since she illustrated The Wine Society's list in 1992, has provided evocative illustrations of the Douro, Oporto and Vila Nova de Gaia.

I am very grateful to the team at Infinite Ideas, especially to Richard Burton and Rebecca Clare for having the confidence to publish the third edition of this book. Kate Santon has been a patient and diligent editor and Emma Anderson an assiduous proof reader. I am also grateful to cover designer Darren Hayball, text designer Nicki Averill and Catherine Hall, the indexer.

I would also like to thank my Personal Assistant Diana Burgess for her patient proofreading. She has saved me from making a large number of mistakes.

Finally I would like to thank my wife, Katrina, and my children Edward, Jamie and Isabella who have given me encouragement when I sometimes thought the book would never be finished. No book is ever entirely finished. In a world increasingly dictated by fashion, views and opinions change. Any factual inaccuracies, on the other hand, are entirely my own responsibility.

Richard Mayson, 2012

PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

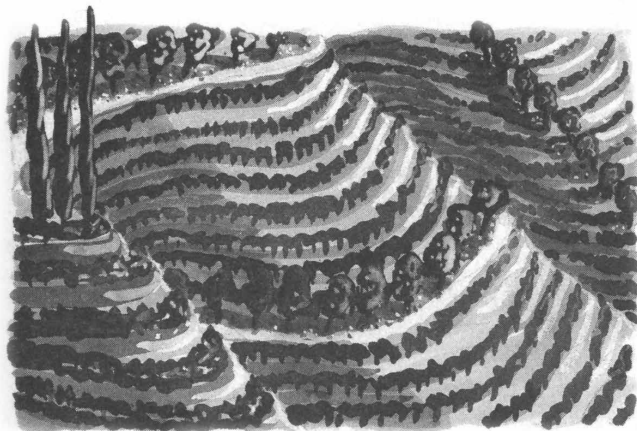
All books start somewhere. This one began on 24 March 1980, the day that I was invited to lunch in Vila Nova de Gaia by Jorge Ferreira, then a director of the Port house A. A. Ferreira. Fresh from school at the time, I vividly recall being in awe of the atmosphere in Oporto, Gaia and the Port lodges. With a glass of Ferreira's ethereal Duque de Bragança Twenty-Year-Old Tawny in hand, I remember thinking that it would be a good idea to take more of an interest in wine. It was two years later that I really came to know the Douro when I was given free run of Ferreira's *quintas* for a university dissertation on microclimate within Port vineyards. Jorge Ferreira was killed in a tragic car accident on the way to the Douro in 1992. This book is dedicated to him.

My first visits to Oporto and the Douro coincided with a period of rapid change. Six years earlier, on 25 April 1974, a political revolution in Lisbon changed Portugal's outlook on the world. Having shed her African colonies, Portugal began to look towards Europe for socio-economic development and growth. But conditions in the Douro and much of rural Portugal had not changed for centuries. Having suffered from decades of under-investment and neglect, the rural infrastructure had fallen apart and many inhabitants of the Douro endured medieval standards of living. Although the revolution may have changed the outlook of a metropolitan minority, attitudes in the countryside remained much as they were.

Over the last three decades, the pace of change has accelerated and penetrated even the most remote corners of rural Portugal. In the late 1970s Jorge Ferreira was one of a number of pioneers of new labour-saving viticultural techniques that have now been adopted by grape growers throughout the Douro. The face of the region has altered as a result, perhaps more than at any time over the past three hundred years. These changes are more than surface deep. Since Portugal became a fully-fledged member of the European Union in 1986, the country has been transformed and the consequences continue to be far-reaching.

The opportunity to rewrite, revise and update a book that was last published nine years ago impresses upon me again just how profound this transformation has become. There are changes and innovations everywhere: in the vineyard, in the winery, among the shippers and in the institutions which regulate and govern the Port and Douro wine trade. There are new faces, too, and with them come new attitudes. I have tried to include these in this edition of the book.

The premise of this, the third edition of *Port and the Douro*, remains the same as the first. Whereas in the past books on Port tended to focus on the two cities of Oporto and



Terraces, Cima Corgo

Vila Nova de Gaia and the rather clubbable lifestyle of the Port shippers, this book seeks to put Port wine in context. It gives the Douro, the vineyards, growers and the region, equal if not greater weight. I have included a great deal of new information on the cultivation of the Douro's vineyards. Portuguese grape varieties, once a treasure trove waiting to be uncovered, are now more widely known and I have included up-to-date material and opinions here. Change continues in the winery and a discussion of the latest vinification methods can be found in Chapter 3. I have dedicated an entire chapter to vintage Port, including harvests as recent as 2011 and information on vintages back to 1844. With the passing of time I have reappraised vintages to bring them up to date. The structure of the trade has also changed in recent years with the withdrawal of the multinationals and the sale and amalgamation of a number of famous Port firms. These are included in the comprehensive directory of Port producers and shippers that makes up Chapter 6. Finally, I have written a new postscript to the book which attempts to address some of the challenges and changes that might affect Port and the Douro in future.

Once again I have set out to make *Port and the Douro* a 'good read' for wine drinkers and wine trade students alike. Individual chapters, some of them longer than in the previous edition, have been broken down into shorter sections. Throughout the book I have inserted short profiles on the men (and one woman) who have shaped the Douro into the region it is today. I have also added some anecdotes from my own involvement with Port. Technical information on legislation, viticulture and vinification is confined to specific sections of the book. Where Portuguese terminology or technical terms require a detailed explanation, they may be found in the separate glossary at the end of the book. For anyone intending to visit, addresses and websites of shippers and producers are included. Chapter 8 gives directions for visitors to Oporto and the Douro.

In this interactive age I welcome feedback from readers, and I hope that this book will help you to enjoy and appreciate Port and Douro wines to the full.

Richard Mayson, Ashford-in-the-Water, Derbyshire – 2012
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PORT AND THE DOURO, UP TO DATE

EARLY HISTORY: PORTUS AND CALE

There is no Taylor's Quinta de Terra Feita 1998. The harvest was successful, the wine was made and transported from the Douro to Vila Nova de Gaia. But at the end of the day on Wednesday 3 January 2001, a great roar was heard in Fonseca's lodge, followed by a river of wine. The winter was already one of the wettest on record and torrential rain which had been falling since the end of October caused a landslide and the collapse of part of the building. Such was the force of a thousand pipes of Port (the equivalent of almost three quarters of a million bottles) pouring along the corridors that it was difficult to remain standing. Alongside Terra Feita 1998, many of Fonseca's best wines from the 1999 vintage were lost as wine flowed out of the building and down the street.

The landslide exposed a fragment of Cale, the Roman fortress that, along with Portus on the north side of the river, gave its name to Portucale. Although the Phoenicians are credited with bringing the vine to western Iberia, it is likely that the Romans introduced viticulture to the Douro around the turn of the second century AD. As they subdued the tribal Celts, they abandoned the defensive *castros* (hill forts) and began to cultivate the valleys where they established the first lines of communication. There is archaeological evidence of an *apotheca* (winery) in the Douro at the *castellum* of Fonte de Milho near Régua dating from the latter part of the Roman Empire.

Christianity reached Portugal a century later and vineyards were planted around the bishoprics to provide wine for the Christian rite. With the fall of the Roman Empire, successive tribes of Suevi, Visigoths and Moors overran the Iberian Peninsula. The Suevi and Visigoths who occupied the northern part of Iberia continued to defend the Christian faith, establishing new dioceses at Portucale and Lamecum (modern-day Lamego). The granite mountains north and south of the Douro are punctuated by small troughs dating

from this period which are known as either *pias* or *laragetas*. It is likely they were used for making both olive oil and wine.

In 711, Iberia was invaded by Muslims from the south and within five years most of the peninsula had been conquered by Islam. Viticulture clearly suffered under Islamic rule. Although winemaking was tacitly permitted during the early part of the occupation, it was certainly forbidden by the Almoravids, who took a more orthodox line. The Douro itself was described by the Moorish geographer Al Idrisi as 'a big river with a rapid, rushing current, full and deep' and the landscape between the Rivers Douro and Minho as 'a populous land with towns, castles and many tilled fields'. There are remains of Moorish castles above the Douro at Numão and Lavandeira that kept the Christians at bay until the middle of the ninth century. As they drove south from Galicia they established a new seat of government at Portucale, one of the first towns to be repopulated and which lent its name to the surrounding *terra* or province.

Portucale became the embryo of a new kingdom when it was awarded to Henry of Burgundy, who married Teresa, daughter of the king of neighbouring León in 1094. Henry, a cousin of the Duke of Burgundy, was reputed to have brought the Pinot Noir grape to Portugal (a name which lives on in the Douro under the guise of a variety called Tinta Francisca) but otherwise made little impact on his adopted territory. He died in 1112 leaving his powerful wife and a young son, then no more than five years old, named Afonso Henriques. For a time the nascent Portugal was governed by the boy's mother, the scheming Countess Teresa, who favoured her new Galician husband over and above her son. However, the Portuguese barons took sides and backed the young Afonso Henriques against his mother, thereby consolidating his court at Guimarães and extending his authority into the mountains as far east as Bragança. The first Douro *quintas* date from this time. Properties like Quinta da Folgosa (now Quinta dos Frades, on the front cover of this book), Paço de Monsul and Quinta do Mosteiró were established by the powerful Cistercian order to supply monasteries at Santa Maria das Salzedas, São João de Tarouca and São Pedro das Águias.

In 1128 Teresa's forces were defeated. She was exiled to Galicia and Afonso Henriques became the first ruler of Portugal. He immediately graduated from plain 'Portugalensium princeps' to become the self-styled 'Alphonsus gloriosissimus princeps et Dei gratia Portugalensium rex'. Having consolidated his rule in the north, Afonso Henriques embarked on a series of campaigns to expel the Moors from their territory to the south. He was greatly aided by English, German and Flemish crusaders who already knew something of the coast of western Iberia from the time of the First Crusade. By all accounts, the English were about as welcome as today's football hooligans, and the pirate crusaders gained a distinctly unsavoury reputation as plunderers, drunkards and rapists. Afonso Henriques succeeded in diverting their misdemeanours from the Christians in northern Iberia to the Muslims immediately to the south. In around 1140, a fleet of seventy ships carrying English and Norman crusaders bound for Palestine sailed into the Douro and the soldiers agreed to join the Portuguese in a combined attack on the Moors. Induced to stay in Portugal with the promise of good cheap wine and spoils ahead, they

went on to ransack Lisbon, capturing the city for Afonso Henriques in 1147. The new kingdom of Portugal received official recognition from Pope Alexander III in 1179 with the final conquest of Faro in the Algarve taking place under Afonso III in 1249, over two centuries before the Moors were finally driven out of Andalusia in neighbouring Spain. Thus Portugal took its present shape: a long, narrow country roughly 600 kilometres long by 200 wide, dissected by two great rivers, the Douro and Tagus (Tejo), rising on the central Iberian *meseta*. Portugal's borders have since survived virtually intact, making them among the oldest on the continent of Europe.

PORTUGAL AND ENGLAND: TRADE AND TREATY

By the mid-thirteenth century, a good understanding had developed between the Portuguese and English monarchs and various, albeit unsuccessful, attempts were made to formalise this friendship by marriage. Against a background of relative peace, trade began to prosper with English merchants selling wool and manufactured cloth in exchange for olive oil, fruit and wine. The status of Oporto under the control of its bishop was called into question by Afonso III (1248–1279) and the crown established a competing royal borough at Gaia (Cale) on the south bank of the Douro. It was decreed that a third of all ships descending the river and half of those arriving from abroad should unload at Gaia. The Bishop of Oporto rejected this and appealed to the Pope but was unable to prevent Afonso from establishing the separate *conselho* (municipal council) of Vila Nova de Gaia in 1255.

Civil strife began following Afonso's death in 1279 and this was followed by war with neighbouring Castile in 1295. Portugal joined forces with Aragon to divide León from Castile. The result was greatly to the benefit of the Portuguese who were granted a strip of territory between the Rivers Côa and Águeda, both tributaries of the River Douro, in the Treaty of Alcanices of 1297. Now part of the Douro Superior, the tiny River Águeda still forms the frontier with Spain.

A period of peace and prosperity followed the Treaty of Alcanices. Under King Diniz (1279–1325), Portuguese became the nation's official language and the royal court became a centre of culture, Diniz himself being a gifted poet. As substantial English mercantile communities grew up in the Portuguese ports of Lisbon, Oporto, Gaia and Viana, the traders of both nations saw the advantage of securing concessions for each other. Letters from Portugal's Diniz to Edwards I and II of England illustrate the intervention of the crown in an effort to obtain safe conduct and protection for Portuguese merchants in England in return for reciprocal rights. A series of commercial treaties were signed, beginning in 1294 and concluding in 1353 when the merchants of Lisbon and Oporto, led by Afonso Martins *Alho* ('garlic'), negotiated a treaty with England's Edward III that guaranteed the safety of the traders of both nations, allowing free access to each other's markets.

It took an invasion of Portugal by Castile to formalise the alliance between England and Portugal. With the Hundred Years' War raging between England and France and the

French taking the Castilian side, first Edward III then Richard II of England plunged into battle alongside the Portuguese. An alliance between Fernando I of Portugal and John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster was sealed in 1373 with the express intent of defeating the usurper King Enrique de Trastamara of Castile. However, when Fernando I died in 1383, leaving his only daughter married to Juan I of Castile, the Castilians laid claim to Portugal. With the help of five hundred English archers, the Castilians were soundly defeated at the Battle of Aljubarrota in Portuguese Estremadura, thereby securing independence for Portugal in 1385. In the meantime, Portugal's ambassadors remained behind in England and, after detailed negotiations, put their signatures to a new military, political and economic treaty at St George's Chapel, Windsor on 9 May 1386. Six hundred years later, on the morning of Monday 12 May 1986, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II joined His Excellency President Mario Soares of Portugal at St Georges Chapel for a service of thanksgiving. I was fortunate to be among the congregation and, as we rose to sing the hymn 'All People that on Earth do Dwell', thoughts turned back six centuries to when Dom João I of Portugal and Richard II of England put their names to this 'solid, perpetual and real league, amity, confederacy and union ... on behalf of themselves and their heirs and successors'. After the service we retired to toast the health of British and Portuguese heads of state, present and past, with a glass of Port.

The Treaty of Windsor, the oldest and most enduring alliance between two nation states, was reinforced when the new Portuguese king, João I, Mestre de Aviz, married Philippa of Lancaster, the daughter of John of Gaunt, in Oporto the following year. It yielded the enduring special relationship between Portugal and Great Britain. The story of Port and the Douro is inseparable from Portugal's emergence as a trading nation, in which England, another rapidly developing mercantile power, played a crucially important part.

WINE AND CODFISH

The marriage of João and Philippa was a great success. There were eight children, the most significant of whom was their third-born son who was named after his English uncle, later Henry IV. Born near the waterfront in Oporto in 1394, the Infante Dom Henrique became much better known by the English name of 'Henry the Navigator'. He was encouraged by the scholarly Philippa and led a studious life. From the isolation of his observatory at Sagres near Cape St. Vincent, Prince Henry instigated Portugal's golden age of discovery (and ultimately her impoverishment) with his courageous exploits along the west coast of Africa. His mantle was inherited in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by a long line of Portuguese explorers, among them Bartolomeu Dias, Vasco da Gama, Fernão Magalhaes (Ferdinand Magellan) and Pedro Alves Cabral, who discovered Brazil for Portugal in 1500. Ships returned with sugar from Madeira, spices from India and gold from Africa's Gold Coast reinforcing Portugal's attraction to English traders. Under the reign of Manuel I, 'the fortunate' (1495–1521), Portugal reached the apogee of its overseas influence with the blue

and white Portuguese flag planted on four continents. The Cantino map of 1502 shows that Portugal even laid claim to the barren wastes of Greenland, Newfoundland and Labrador as Portuguese ships ventured ever further into the cold waters of the North Atlantic in search of that most precious of Portuguese commodities: cod.

Cod (*bacalhau*) had become – and still remains – a staple in the day-to-day life of Portugal. From the time of Edward III (1327–1377), codfish from the waters around the British Isles, dried and salted to preserve it on the voyage home, was particularly highly prized in Portugal, and wine from the vineyards of the Minho in the north of the country became the principal currency in this trade. With a taste for bigger, full-bodied wines from southern climes like the Spanish *Lepe* – famous, according to Chaucer, for its ‘fumositee’ – these northern wines were never particularly well regarded by the English. In fact Chaucer’s French contemporary, Froissart, records that the wines from north-west Iberia were so ‘ardent’ that the English could scarcely drink them. In his scholarly book, *The Story of Wine*, Hugh Johnson recounts how archers sent by John of Gaunt had already come across the wines of ‘Ribadavia’ and attributes them to Galicia rather than Portugal. The modern-day Ribadave is an industrial belt corresponding to the valley of the River Ave between Vila do Conde and Guimarães to the north of Oporto. It therefore seems highly probable that the first Portuguese wines to reach English shores in any volume were similar in style to the thin, rasping, red Vinhos Verdes that are produced in the region today.

This lucrative trade – *bacalhau* for wine – grew after the English Reformation, launched in 1536, and was given still greater impetus by the Commonwealth over a century later. With fish no longer obligatory in Britain on Fridays and saints’ days, Portugal soon became the principal market for British fish. English and Scottish merchants or ‘factors’ settled in the northern port of Viana do Castelo at the mouth of the River Lima, sourcing and shipping wine from the hard granite country between Monção (called ‘Monson’ by the English), Melgaço and Ponte de Lima. Known as ‘Red Portugal’, these light red wines must have been inherently unstable and spoiled long before they reached British shores.

EARLY WINES FROM THE DOURO

In Portugal, the wines of the Douro region were gaining ground. The vineyards on the south side of the river around the city of Lamego were some of the most prolific in the country. Rui Fernandes, writing in 1531–1532, describes these vineyards as some of the best in the kingdom producing ‘fragrant’ wines that would age ‘4, 5 and 6 years ... the older the better...’. Evidently the production of wine was not merely limited to the area around Lamego, for João de Barros writing in 1548 refers to ‘good’ or ‘excellent’ wines from the northern margin of the Douro around Penaguião and Mesão Frio (the modern-day Baixo Corgo) as well as wines from the ‘Riba Pinhão’ in today’s Cima Corgo further upstream. Most of this wine was shipped to Oporto from where, according to Fernandes, it found a ready market in the cities of Lisbon and Aveiro, in the countryside of Entre

Douro e Minho, on the islands of Madeira and the Azores and with the Portuguese military. By the end of the century it is likely that wines from the Douro even found their way to Brazil. These wines sold for five *reis* per *quartilho* (pint) as opposed to three *reis* for the inferior wines from the Minho.

During the course of the sixteenth century, Portugal stretched herself to the limit. Not for the last time in its somewhat chequered history, the overseas empire almost bled the country to death. As able-bodied men migrated to Lisbon or journeyed overseas, fields were left uncultivated and the country was forced to import even the most basic foodstuffs. With all their salt beef used up, the hapless citizens of Oporto were forced to eat offal, gaining a taste for tripe that continues to this day. The dish *tripas á moda do Porto* features prominently on the menus of most Oporto restaurants and the city's inhabitants are known in jest as *Tripeiros* – tripe eaters.

The crisis point in Portugal's century of over-expansion was reached when the hapless King Sebastiao, 'the regretted', was killed fighting the Moors at the Battle of Alcazar-Quivir in 1578, leaving no heir to the throne. After a brief interregnum under Dom Henrique (the somewhat decrepit cardinal-king), Philip II of Spain marched into Portugal, initiating sixty years of national humiliation. Despite England's bitter antipathy towards Spain, English and Scottish merchants (Protestant as well as Catholic), continued to live in occupied Portugal, albeit without any of their former privileges. Lured perhaps by the security of the larger city, or possibly as a result of the silting up of the port at Viana, it was during this period that the majority of English merchants began to move south to Oporto.

FROM WINE TO PORT

It is a strange irony that Oliver Cromwell, the Puritan, effectively laid the foundations of the Port trade. However the defining moment came a decade and a half later as a result of England's deteriorating relations with France. In 1667, Louis XIV's minister Colbert instituted a protectionist policy that eventually closed the French market to imports of English cloth. In a tit-for-tat trade war, Charles II then prohibited the importation of all French goods, including wine. Only 120 tuns (about 120,000 litres) of Portuguese wine had been imported to London in the mid-1670s but during the embargo, between 1678 and 1685, recorded annual shipments rose sharply to 6,880 tuns (6.81 million litres). But the English continued to favour the refined taste of claret over the wines of northern Portugal and much of the wine that reached London during this period was almost certainly French masquerading as Portuguese.

When war broke out between France and England in 1689, it became virtually impossible to buy French wines. This sent the Oporto merchants in search of all the 'Red Portugal' they could find. Although the early shippers were not in the habit of visiting vineyards, their quest probably sent them upstream into the Douro valley. Hard as it is to imagine today, the steep terraced slopes of the Douro were then mainly producing cereals.

THE ENGLISH ‘FACTORY’

By the late sixteenth century, Portugal’s second city was already home to a well-established community of foreign traders including Dutch, Flemish, French, and Germans, most of whom were engaged in selling cloth and *bacalhau* to the Portuguese in exchange for oil and fruit rather than wine. They had their own *feitorias* or factories, a term that in its original sense meant a body of factors or merchants carrying out their business in a foreign country. The Portuguese already had their own *feitorias* in India by the end of the fifteenth century and it is probable that the English usage of the term derives from the Portuguese. Certainly by the mid-seventeenth century there were English Factories in India as well as in Portugal at Lisbon, Oporto and Viana.

Following the restoration of the Portuguese monarchy in 1640 under the Duque de Bragança, João IV, treaties were concluded with the Dutch, French and Swedish giving them preferential trading rights in Portugal in return for their support of the continuing war against Spain. However, relations with Holland quickly deteriorated and when the Dutch finally made peace with Spain in 1648, they changed from being equivocal allies to undeclared enemies. The English, who had already negotiated one accord since the restoration, then exacted huge privileges from the Portuguese in the Commonwealth Treaty of 1654. This made the English traders in Oporto more powerful than the Portuguese themselves. The English were granted their own judge-conservator, were exempted from any new taxes and, upon death, the Portuguese courts were to have no jurisdiction over their property. They were free to hold Protestant services and acquire land for an English cemetery. With their own judges, consul and chaplain, the English Factories in Lisbon and Oporto became independent colonies in their own right. Their special status was further reinforced following the restoration of the English monarchy when Charles II married Afonso VI’s sister, Catherine of Bragança, in 1662. In another treaty concluded in 1661, the English committed themselves to defend Portugal ‘as if it were England itself’.

Although vineyards had been planted in the region in the thirteenth century during the reign of Dom Diniz, ‘the husbandman’, wine was still very much a secondary product. Vines grew from *pilheiros*, small holes specially constructed in the vertical terrace walls, thereby leaving all the available flat land for essentials like corn. Writing just over a century later, F. P. Rebello de Fonseca remarks that ‘in 1681 there were no large plantations of vineyards’, adding that they mostly comprised small plots of land scattered amidst the scrub. The region was ‘one of the poorest in the kingdom, as is shown by the wretchedness of the buildings’. The Visconde de Villa Maior, writing in 1876, adds that with ‘the English taste inclining to sweet wines’ growers were obliged ‘to rear vines in choice seats on the banks of the streams more exposed to the solar action, these comprising small areas scattered here and there in the woods’.

POETIC TASTING NOTES

Winemaking conditions in the seventeenth century must have been unhygienic in the extreme. The first wines to be exported from the Douro, known as 'portoport', were a poor substitute for claret. An oft-repeated ditty written by Richard Ames in 1693 went:

*Mark how it smells, methinks a real pain
Is by the odour thrown upon my brain.
I've tasted it - 'tis spiritless and flat,
And has as many different tastes,
As can be found in compound pastes...
But fetch us a pint of any sort,
Navarre, Galicia, anything but Port.*

In the last decade of the seventeenth century England's drinking habits became less a matter of personal whim and more a symbol of political loyalty. In the years that followed James II's expulsion from England in 1688, the Jacobites would toast 'the king over the water' in claret, whilst the loyal Whigs raised their tankards of Port to King William and the Glorious Revolution. Thus the Scots who remained loyal to the exiled Stuart king recited a sad ditty:

*Firm and erect the Highland chieftain stood,
Sweet was his mutton and his claret good,
'Thou shalt drink Port,' the English statesman cried;
He drank the poison, and his spirit died.*

South of the border, even the English Tories needed some persuading by a patriotic Jonathan Swift:

*Be sometimes to your country true,
Have once the public good in view;
Bravely despise champagne at court
And choose to dine at home with Port.*

In the same year Swift probably came nearer to the truth when he wrote 'I love white Portuguese Wine more than claret, Champagne or Burgundy; I have a sad, vulgar appetite.'

THE FIRST PORT SHIPPERS

In the latter part of the seventeenth century the foundations were laid for some of the great Port-shipping firms that continue to prosper today. One of the first English families to be mentioned among those gathered at Viana and Oporto were the Newmans. Based in the English West Country port of Dartmouth, they began trading in *bacalhau* in the fifteenth century. By 1679 they had their own fleet of ships bartering Newfoundland cod for Portuguese wine, which was found to have been greatly improved by the long sea voyage. This suggests that their wine was already of considerably better quality than the light, run-of-the-mill reds from the Minho which spoiled so readily. The Newmans' wine-shipping company went on to become Hunt Roope (subsequently bought by Ferreira) and the family owned an important property in the Douro, Quinta da Eira Velha, until 2007.

The oldest Port shipper still trading today is the firm of C. N. Kopke & Ca Lda. This was established in 1638 by Christian Kopke, son of the Lisbon consul for the Hanseatic towns. Like many of these firms, Kopke began as a general merchant and only started specialising in wine a century later. The English shipper with the longest continuous lineage is the firm of Warre & Ca. founded in Viana do Castelo in 1670 (the Warre family themselves joining nearly sixty years later). It was followed by Croft, established in 1678 under the name of its partners Phayre and Bradley, and Thomas Dawson who settled in Oporto in 1680, whose firm subsequently became known as Quarles Harris. It was around this time that the Oporto Customs first registered a shipment of wine from the Douro as *Vinho do Porto* or 'Port Wine'.

Portugal's favoured status as a source for wine for the English was firmly established by the Methuen Treaty of 1703. In an effort to deter Portugal's brief flirtation with France, Sir Paul Methuen (envoy to the King of Portugal 1697–1705 and Ambassador to Portugal 1706–1708) concluded a military treaty in which England promised to defend Portugal in the War of the Spanish Succession. In the meantime his father, diplomat and cloth merchant John Methuen (Lord Chancellor of Ireland and envoy to Portugal in 1691 and 1703, and Ambassador Extraordinary to Portugal in 1703), succeeded in securing preferential treatment for English textiles in Portugal in return for a duty levied on Portuguese wines that would be a third less than on those from France. Rather like Cromwell's treaty fifty years earlier, the Methuen Treaty proved to be a rather hollow deal for the Portuguese. Wines from Portugal already enjoyed lower rates of duty in England than those of any other country and the importation of French goods was in any case severely restricted. Methuen's provision for a preferential rate of duty did survive for over 150 years until it was finally dropped by Gladstone in 1866, and there can be no doubt that the Treaty greatly advanced the Port trade.

The early years of this trade are well documented in the letters and diaries of Thomas Woodmass, who arrived in the north of Portugal from England in 1703, the same year as the Methuen Treaty was signed. He landed at Viana and met Job Bearsley, founder of the firm that subsequently became Taylor, Fladgate and Yeatman. Woodmass was taken to see the vineyards at 'Monson' (Monção) before making for Oporto. He wrote 'O Porto

is much larger than Viana and here are more English and Scotch families. The wine of the Duro [sic] is much praised by Mr Harris and others.’ (Mr Harris was presumably the partner who joined Thomas Dawson, whose firm subsequently became Dawson and Harris and Harris Stafford & Sons, before taking on the name Quarles Harris). Woodmass came across a number of other merchants, among them a Mr Clark (probably John Clark, a forerunner of Warre) and Mr Phayre of Phayre & Bradley. During the vintage at the end of September he wrote ‘the heat is so great that breathing is difficult. Wine is at 13 *millreas* the pipe, but of this vintage there will not be abundance’. Apart from the price, it could almost be an extract from a modern vintage report.

Those pioneer travellers to the Douro must have suffered appalling privations. There were no roads over the mountains of the Marão and the inns and taverns were apparently so flea-infested that travellers preferred to sleep on the tables. The River Douro itself became a means of transport but it was an unpredictable torrent. Floods were commonplace and in 1727 the Douro swept away over a hundred people along with boats, vineyards, *lagares* and buildings at a cost of millions of *cruzados*.

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

Job, Peter and Bartholomew Bearsley

The Bearsleys arrived in Portugal in 1692. Job Bearsley owned the Ram Inn in London’s Smithfield and went to Viana do Castelo in search of wine. His son Peter settled in Portugal, becoming British Consul in Viana before moving to Oporto where, by 1709, he was established as a shipper. At a time when wine was brought to Oporto by intermediaries, Peter Bearsley was among the first of the English shippers to endure considerable privations in order to visit the vineyards of the Douro. Three sons, Bartholomew, Chares and Francis, joined him in the business. In 1744 Bartholomew Bearsley purchased a property at Lugar das Lages just downstream from Régua. It is the first recorded British-owned property in the Douro and it still belongs to the Bearsley’s successors, Taylor, Fladgate and Yeatman. The property is recognised today in Taylor’s ‘First Estate’ Port.

Portugal remained at war with Spain until the Treaty of Utrecht was signed in 1713. Apart from the local highwaymen who attacked Thomas Woodmass near ‘Villadecon’ (Vila do Conde) there were also dangers from Lord Galway’s interfering troops who went on a drunken rampage in Viana, forcing the English merchants to shut themselves in their houses. However, as the century wore on, life improved greatly for the growing British community in Oporto. The wines also began to improve and demand steadily increased. Queen Anne placed an order for ten pipes of Port and farmers began to command higher prices for their wines. ‘Red Oporto’ was described as ‘deep, bright, strong, fresh and neat’ and in 1712 a merchant advertised the wine at 5s 6d a gallon. However the Port trade still

faced competition from Lisbon and 'Red Barrabar Lisbon' ('very strong, extraordinarily good and neat') commanded 6d a gallon more than Red Oporto.

Most of the Ports shipped to England in the early years of the eighteenth century were dark and austere reds, fermented to dryness, earning them the name 'black-strap'. In a determined effort to make sure that the wines arrived at their destination in good condition, many merchants would add a generous measure of brandy probably raising the level of alcohol to around at least 15 or 16% by volume. An early winemaking handbook, *A Agricultura das Vinhas* published in 1720, recommends the addition of three gallons (13.6 litres) of brandy to each pipe of wine although this rose to between 36 and 48 litres per pipe during the course of the eighteenth century. (This compares with the 115 litres per pipe added to arrest the fermentation and produce Port today).

WHO INVENTED PORT?

In 1678 two wine merchants apparently found the abbot of Lamego monastery adding brandy during the fermentation rather than at the end. This would have killed the active yeasts, thereby leaving some of the natural grape sugar in the wine. No names are recorded – but if they had been, the abbot at Lamego would surely be as famous as Dom Perignon, the monk at Hautvillers who is credited with fixing the natural sparkle in Champagne.

BAGA AND BULLOCK'S BLOOD

Such was England's control over Portugal during the first half of the seventeenth century that, at times, it was treated like a colony. Thomas Woodmass reports as much at the turn of the century warning of 'bad feeling against us ... as the principal trade of the country is in our hands, but that the treaties of commerce are in our favour'. As annual shipments rose to around 25,000 pipes, an association of shippers was formed in 1727 to regulate the wine trade and control the prices paid to growers. This led to accusation and counter-accusation as experimentation led to adulteration. The use of elderberry (*baga de sabugueiro* or merely '*baga*' for short) became widespread. This controversial practice crops up time and again in the history of the Port industry (see page 137). According to John Croft, who wrote *A Treatise on the Wines of Portugal*, it began in the early 1700s when Peter Bearsley found that elderberry juice greatly enhanced the colour of the wine. By the 1730s sugar was also being added and *baga* came to be used to bolster both the colour and flavour of wines overstretched by poor-quality spirit. Worse still, wine from Spain ('like bullock's blood') and raisin wines mixed with British spirits extracted from malt were passed off or blended into Port. Villa Maior quotes Rebello de Fonseca who blames the English merchants for having 'ruined the purity, great reputation and credit of the wine of Alto Douro enjoyed in the north [i.e. England], by blending with it weak, raw, colourless and inferior wines of Valle de

Besteiros, S. Miguel do Outeiro, Anadia and other places' (i.e. Vinho Verde and Bairrada), making up for the 'lack of natural goodness with elderberry, pepper, sugar and other admixtures'. These wines arrived in England 'devoid of taste, body, colour or goodness of any kind; so that having gained preference over all others for strength, colour and delicacy of flavour it came to pass that not every other wine was preferred to it, but every other beverage'.

This unprincipled over-production brought about a slump in the trade and prices came down dramatically. A pipe of wine worth 60 escudos at the turn of the century fell to 48 in 1731 and just 6.3 escudos after 1750. With supply outstripping demand, the farmers could not find any buyers. In September 1754 the shippers didn't even bother to visit the Douro, contenting themselves with a circular to the growers accusing them of adulteration and threatening to expose the culprits. The wines were described as having 'a fiery spirit like gunpowder alight, the colour of ink, the sweetness of Brazil and the aromas of India'. Provided that the 'aromas of India' referred to spice, the tasting note doesn't seem too derogatory. The residual sweetness in the wines of the day was controversial, for the Factors (members of the Oporto Factory) wrote that growers were 'in the habit of checking the fermentation too soon, by putting brandy into them while still fermenting, a practice which must be considered diabolical'. They clearly didn't use enough spirit for 'after this the wines will not remain quiet, but are continually tending to ferment and to become ropy and acid'.

Over the preceding years, the small Douro farmers had clearly done well from the wine trade for, as John Croft invidiously observes, they strutted through the streets of Oporto 'like so many peacocks ... and thus vied with each other in gaudiness of apparel'. Now they came down to Oporto cap in hand pleading with the shippers to buy their wines. Needing no more, the British shippers refused and repeated their accusations. The Douro growers, desperate at the loss of their livelihoods, took their complaint to the highest authority: José I's autocratic Prime Minister, best known as the Marquês de Pombal.

POMBAL AND THE EARLY REGULATIONS

Pombal acted to quell the problems in the Douro with characteristic decisiveness. In 1756, with the backing of a number of significant Portuguese growers, he created the Real Companhia das Vinhas do Alto Douro. The new Companhia or Company was all-embracing. It was empowered to fix prices, protect the authenticity of the product, raise taxes and even to grant rights as to which taverns could sell Port wine in the city of Oporto and three leagues beyond. It had exclusive trading rights with Brazil, and all other Port wine for export had to be bought from the Companhia. A decree dated 10 September 1756 fixed prices at 25 to 30 escudos a pipe for Port of primary quality and 20 to 25 escudos a pipe for secondary wines. Pombal's Companhia was effectively a state monopoly that seems to have been constituted like a rather bureaucratic co-operative. The board of directors was

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, Marquês de Pombal (1699–1782)

Son of a country squire from Pombal near Leiria, Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo was born in Lisbon, educated at Coimbra and served briefly in the army. With good connections through marriage, he received his first public appointment in 1738 and was posted as ambassador to London. He was thought of as 'busy and pettifogging' during his time in London, but Carvalho e Melo seems to have developed a certain jealous respect for the British and formed the opinion that their ability to provide goods cheaply stifled the Portuguese. He served as ambassador to Austria before being recalled as Minister of Foreign Affairs by José I in 1750. Carvalho e Melo already had a reputation for ruthlessness when he was appointed to the post; the royal secretary Alexandre Gusmão, who coveted the position himself, exclaimed 'the people will suffer for it'. The ineffectual José I (1750–1777) steadily entrusted more power to Carvalho e Melo, and shortly after the catastrophic Lisbon earthquake of 1755 he effectively became Prime Minister.

In government, Carvalho e Melo was a reformer who believed in making Portugal a strong and economically self-sufficient nation. He believed in creating companies or guilds in order to regulate commercial activity, much like Salazar two centuries later. In the Douro he created the world's first demarcated wine region in 1756 (see below). As his power grew, Carvalho e Melo became increasingly authoritarian, imposing strict laws upon all classes of Portuguese society. He made enemies among the nobility who viewed him as a social upstart. In 1759 he expelled the Jesuits, creating the basis for secular education in Portugal, and introduced new taxes on all levels of society to pay for his reforms. The same year he was made the Conde de Oeiras and in 1770 he became the Marquês de Pombal. This is the title by which he is best known.

Pombal continued to exceed the powers vested in him until his royal patron, José I, died in 1777. José was succeeded to the throne by his rather more proactive daughter, Maria I, whose first act was to dismiss Pombal from office. On the day after the king's funeral, the prisons were opened and 800 victims of Pombal's reign of terror emerged. Reminded of a resurrection of the dead, the Spanish ambassador wrote that 'Pombal deserves the general hatred of the public for his cruelty'. He died at his estate in Pombal in 1782.

made up of a president, twelve deputies, a judge-conservator, a fiscal attorney, a secretary and six advisers, all of whom were linked to the industry. A grower and Dominican monk named Frei João da Mansilha became Pombal's right-hand man. The British shippers were excluded.

The foundation of the Companhia provoked howls of anguish not just from the British Factory but also from the tavern owners, who blamed the government for the steep rise in the price of wine. On 23 February 1757 (Ash Wednesday) a protest took place in the streets of Oporto which quickly descended into a bloody riot. Christened the 'Tippler's

Revolt', it ended with the arrest of 407 men and women, around twenty of whom were hanged and over a hundred banished.

The British, who were blamed for inciting the revolt, raised objections with Pombal and their own Prime Minister, William Pitt. Pombal told them in a high-handed manner that he refused to recognise the British Factory and that a circular to the growers treated Portugal as though 'it was not a Kingdom that had an indisputable right to make its own domestic laws'. If it had not been for the Seven Years' War with France and Spain, the Anglo-Portuguese alliance, so carefully nurtured over the past four hundred years, might have come to an abrupt end. In the event, Pitt was far too anxious to remain on good terms with Portugal to pick a fight and he turned a deaf ear to the shippers' complaints.

The establishment of the Companhia was accompanied by a series of measures to regulate the production of Port. A commission was set up to draw a boundary around the Douro region, restricting Port production to vineyards within the demarcation. Like most subsequent legislation in the Douro, this was not without controversy and three demarcations were proposed before the scheme finally came into effect in 1761. It established two zones: one producing wines merely for domestic consumption, so-called *vinho do ramo* or 'branch wine', and another for export, known as *vinho da feitoria*. Marked out by sturdy granite posts, over a hundred of which still stand, this region extended from Barqueiros in the Baixo through Lobrigos/Cambres along the River Douro upstream to Pinhão. The *altos* (high land) west of Pinhão around Gouvães, Provesende, Celeiros and Sabrosa were designated for *vinho branco de feitoria* (high-quality white wine for export). The area upriver from Pinhão to Tua, now the location of some of the region's most famous *quintas*, was classified merely for *vinho de ramo*. It is a source of considerable pride to the present-day owners of Douro *quintas* that their vineyards fell within the original *feitoria* demarcation.

Good wine needs no bush

The term *vinho do ramo* (branch wine) originates from the tradition of indicating a tavern by hanging a branch (a grapevine, or bunch of ivy) outside the premises. This was also used in England at the time, hence the proverb 'good wine needs no bush' – meaning that if a product is of sufficiently good quality it does not need advertising.

In a concerted effort to stamp out the fraud and adulteration of earlier years, Pombal ruled that all elderberry trees were to be uprooted and every vineyard should be registered. Production quotas were issued based on an average of the previous five years' yields. On top of this, Pombal handed the Company the exclusive right to supply the spirit or *aguardente* used in Port production, fixing the price according to quality.

Pombal's dictates had implications for Portugal's wine industry well beyond Oporto and the Douro. He ordered that vineyards in regions as far apart as the Ribatejo and Bairrada be grubbed up, both to protect the authenticity of Port and to boost the



Noble house, Vilariça

production of cereals and rice. Any contravention of the rules would be met by stiff penalties ranging from six months in prison to deportation to Angola. But there is no doubt that the Real Companhia das Vinhas do Alto Douro proved to be a lucrative exercise for Pombal himself, who often flouted his own regulations. The Prime Minister had a country residence at Oeiras just to the west of Lisbon and stipulated that grapes from his Carcavelos vineyards could be blended into Port. The Companhia also became corrupt and many of the officials used it as a means of lining their own pockets. Villa Maior, writing in 1876, describes them as a 'true oligarchy' adding that 'to this day their *quintas* in the Alto Douro are distinguishable on account of the magnificence of the buildings and by the escutcheons proudly displayed over the principal gates of the mansions'. Many of the fine eighteenth-century houses which can still be seen in the streets of Mesão Frio and Provesende were built by officials working for the Companhia. Nonetheless, Pombal's measures were as far-sighted as they were far-reaching. They continue to have an impact on the Douro and in other European wine regions two and a half centuries later.

Pombal's measures were successful in the short term. Exports to England immediately began to rise from a low of just over 12,000 pipes in 1756 to an average of around 17,000 pipes just four years later. Prices also began to pick up, reaching around 40 escudos a pipe in 1765. Two years earlier the Companhia had intervened to buy up wines 'preferably from the poorest farmers' in order to prevent a collapse in price due to the huge stocks of wine sitting in the London docks. In 1766 a number of Port shippers failed, among them Adam Standard, Ricardo Tisuel and Estevão Heraut, but the majority weathered Pombal's legislation.

Pombal continued issuing decrees and dictates including, in 1776, a complete ban on exports of wine from Viana, Monção, Bairrada and the Algarve in order to protect those from the Douro. This didn't last long; he was dismissed from office the following year and some of his more draconian legislation was immediately relaxed. Frei João da Mansilha

was exiled and, in a royal decree of 9 August 1777, the Real Companhia das Vinhas do Alto Douro lost the monopoly over sale of wine to Brazil. In the same year growers, small and large, were given the freedom to sell their wines on the open market. The wines of Monção could once again be exported, although only Port wine itself could be shipped over the bar of the River Douro.

THE EXPANSION OF THE DOURO

Up to this time the majority of Douro vineyards were located in the westerly reaches of the region, particularly around Régua, Godim, Lobrigos and Cambres in the area known today as the Baixo Corgo ('Below the River Corgo'). The town of Régua, well situated on a broad curve in the river, became the undisputed centre of the wine region, having been the administrative headquarters of Pombal's Companhia. The building, painted pink, now houses the Museu do Douro (Douro Museum).

Relatively few vineyards were to be found upstream from the River Corgo (the Cima Corgo) and almost none beyond Pinhão which still marked the easternmost limit of quality wine production. On a map of 1761 demarcation, the land corresponding to Quinta do Bomfim and Quinta da Roêda remained unplanted. Apart from those vineyards around Cambres and Penajoia opposite Régua, the south side of the Douro was virtually uncultivated. Beyond the River Têdo the landscape was described as 'wild scrub inhabited by wolves and wild pigs which sometimes cross to the other side of the Douro causing considerable damage in the vines'. The one notable exception was Quinta de Roriz, which was leased from a religious order, the *Tresminas da Ordem de Cristo*, by a Scotsman named Robert Archibald. Villa Maior, writing a century later in 1876, says that 'being very much addicted to field sports and used to scouring the hills and glens of Scotland, [Archibald] found the savage wilds and rugged steepes of the Douro very well suited to his tastes. His sporting excursions having carried him to the place of Roriz, it came into his mind to build a shooting box... This lodge was the beginning of Quinta do Roriz'.

Further upstream, Cachão de Valeira (the Valeira Rapids) were the natural limit of the eastward expansion of the wine region. Compressed into a narrow white-water torrent by huge slabs of granite, the Douro ceased to be navigable. Beyond Cachão de Valeira, the Douro Superior formed a distinct region in its own right. With its agriculture based on cereals and cattle, the hardy populace had traditionally looked towards Spain and the fairs at Salamanca as an outlet for their produce. Some Portuguese from the towns and villages near the border had even gone to study at Salamanca University. From the mid-seventeenth century onwards, successive skirmishes between Portugal and Spain had led directly to the isolation and impoverishment of this once prosperous region. The need to integrate the Douro Superior motivated the Companhia to begin the monumental task of clearing the Valeira rapids.

Work began in 1780 and lasted twelve years. It was financed by a tax of 400 *reis* for every pipe of Port, *aguardente*, vinegar or 'any liquid' transported by river. As the

work progressed, more vineyards were planted in the Cima Corgo upstream from Régua. The English preference for stronger wines was reflected by a significant increase in the production of Port from the hotter, more arid parts of the region around Pinhão and Tua. During the Pombaline era the Cima Corgo had produced barely a quarter of first grade wine, but by the end of the eighteenth century the Baixo Corgo had been overtaken as the main source of premium quality Port. Pombal's vineyard registration merely recorded the name of the owner of the vineyard and not the name of the property itself, but by 1800 it can be supposed that a number of now famous properties as far upstream as the present day Quinta da Tua and Quinta dos Aciprestes were already well established. Villa Maior attributes the foundation of nearby Quinta dos Malvedos to his maternal grandfather who began planting vines on the site at the end of the eighteenth century.

The first vineyard in the Douro Superior appears to be Quinta do Silho at Barca d'Alva on the Spanish border, planted by Miguel António Ferreira in 1820. This was closely followed by Quinta das Figueiras (subsequently Quinta do Vesúvio) which had been acquired by the so-called 'capitalista da Régua', Bernardo Ferreira. In 1827 he wrote proudly of his new property: 'all the English have praised my *armazém* [warehouse]... adding that they had not seen another *adeiga* [winery] in the Douro like mine which has reinforced their belief in my passion for good wines, so much so that they openly say that nobody in Oporto or the Douro has better wines...' As these properties fell outside the 1761 demarcation, the wines were still technically illegal although highly regarded for their quality. Around 1832 the first Visconde Vilarinho de São Romão wrote that 'almost all the wines from Arnozelo upstream to Villarinho de Castanheira, as well as those from the other side of the river, are being brought each year into the *Feitoria* Demarcation. This wine is really very good...' By the middle of the century, Quinta dos Canais, Quinta da Telhada, Quinta do São Xisto, Quinta de Vargellas and Quinta do Arnozelo were already well established.

THE FIRST VINTAGE PORTS

The rapid expansion of the Port trade in the second half of the eighteenth century had much to do with the science of the bottle. The first bottles had merely been used as a convenient vessel to convey the wine from the cask to the table. Short and squat in shape, they were totally impractical for laying down. As the eighteenth century wore on, they began to be more elongated in shape with a longer neck until by the 1770s a bottle could be cellared on its side without too much difficulty.

This brought about an entirely new approach to wine in general and Port in particular. Instead of being acclaimed as 'new' as it had been earlier in the century, it was now possible to age Port in bottle, with a cork providing an effective seal against oxidation and bacterial spoilage. The cylindrical bottle was available for the great 1775 vintage so, claims H. Warner Allen in *The Wines of Portugal*, 'it seems a fair guess that the best Douro wine of 1775 profited by it to become the first great vintage Port in history'. However, the first mention of a vintage Port appeared in a Christie's catalogue of 1773 when a

wine from 1765 was sold. Both these years were certainly well regarded, for Vila Real magistrate, Bernardo José de Sousa Guerra, wrote that the wines of 1775 'are strong, rich and full, similar to those of the year 1765, whose great and memorable goodness has met with the general approval of intelligent people'. Certainly by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Douro could boast a number of fine vintages. Sandeman claim to have produced their first vintage Port in 1790 and George Sandeman, dining with the Duke of Wellington at Torres Vedras in 1809, declared the 1797 to be 'the finest Port year within his experience'. It was not until 1810 that the first shipper's name – Croft – appeared in a Christie's catalogue.

These early wines were clearly nothing like today's vintage Port. They were certainly lighter in style and probably aged for longer in cask before being shipped and bottled, being more akin to *colheitas* than the vintage Ports of today. According to T. G. Shaw, who wrote *Wine, the Cellar and the Vine*, published in 1863, it was common for the wines to be 'fined and racked a number of times before bottling, a process which would have stripped the young Port of much of its body and character'. The first vintage about which there is any real certainty is the so-called 'Waterloo Vintage' of 1815, and it is apparent that by 1820 vintage Port was eagerly sought by the British wine trade. Contemporary advertisements from the London wine auctioneers Christie's indicate that the 1820 Ports were bottled three and five years after the vintage, and T. G. Shaw describes a wine from the same year as having 'plenty of crust and plenty of colour'. It seems likely that most of these wines were, in effect, single-*quinta* Ports sourced by shippers from individual estates and bottled bearing the name of a British wine merchant. The brand names of individual shippers only became prominent towards the end of the nineteenth century.

THE BRITISH COLONY AND THE FACTORY HOUSE

By the 1790s Port shipments to England alone had increased to 55,000 pipes, and the British merchants could afford to live 'much better than the same persons would do in London', according to one visitor. In complete contrast to Thomas Woodmass, who described the privations of the English and Scottish eighty years earlier, Captain Costigan writes in 1778 of a civilised lifestyle of dancing, hearty eating and drinking, and playing at cards. He goes on to say that they 'are certainly no great attraction to the generality of Englishmen; neither have they time, even if they had any inclination, to study the country they live in'. The British families in Oporto intermarried with each other, keeping their distance from the Catholic *fidalgos* or Portuguese nobility. Such was their isolation from the local population that by all accounts the British merchants spoke the most execrable Portuguese. Portuguese is not an easy language to master, but the Anglicised pronunciation of some British shippers is still a matter for mirth and mimicry two centuries later!

There was a certain amount of migration in the opposite direction. According to Charles Sellers, writing in *Oporto Old and New*, there was at the time a Portuguese

community in almost every major city in England. Some were political refugees from the Pombaline period but others were traders and entrepreneurs. One such individual was Bruno Evaristo Ferreira da Silva who, through contacts in his native Oporto, obtained consignments of Port wine along with other Portuguese produce and quickly built up a thriving trade in England. According to Sellars, like the British in Oporto, Mr Silva ‘was not able to master the language of his adopted country’ but it did not prevent him from setting up a firm in 1798 which subsequently became Silva & Cosens, better known as the producer of Dow’s Port.

Back in Oporto, the social gap between the British and the Portuguese is represented by the Factory House. This gaunt but handsome building standing on the corner of the then Rua Nova dos Ingleses and Rua de São João was initiated by John Whitehead, Consul to the Factory, in 1785–6. Whitehead must have been a remarkable character: a dilettante diplomat, geographer, astronomer and, above all, architect. He was born in 1726 at Ashton-under-Lyne in Lancashire (coincidentally the birthplace of the author of this book, who also stood there as a parliamentary candidate in 1997), and came to Oporto with his father in the late 1750s. Whitehead’s sister, Elizabeth, had previously married William Warre, then one of the leading members of the British community in Oporto. Warre was no doubt instrumental in arranging John Whitehead’s appointment. Inspired by buildings in the north of England (and possibly helped by John Carr of York, 1727–1803), Whitehead drew up grandiose plans for a clubhouse that was completed, albeit somewhat scaled down, in 1790. Much of the exterior architectural detail is similar to the Santo António Hospital, Oporto, designed by Carr, and the interior arrangement resembles English spa town architecture of the period, with communicating reception rooms and a ballroom. Although on a much larger scale, the Crescent at Buxton in Derbyshire – designed by Carr and completed in 1784 – shares a certain affinity with the Factory House with its colonnade and heavy rustication at ground level. Certainly, as James Murphy observed in 1795 in *Travels in Portugal*, the Factory House is decidedly ‘anti-moorish’ and still looks curiously at odds with other buildings on the Rua Infante D. Henrique. At the time of its completion at the end of the eighteenth century, the solid grey granite facade symbolised the confidence and permanence of the British Port shippers in Oporto. It nearly proved to be short-lived.

A map drawn in Port

Six weeks before fighting his last battle at Trafalgar in 1805, Vice-Admiral Viscount Nelson bought three pipes (1,150 litres) of Port for which he paid a total of £308 2s 0d. This seems like a small fortune; forty years later, the finest vintage Port was only selling at £63 a pipe. Port also featured in Nelson’s battle plans. Shortly before the Battle of Trafalgar itself, Lord Sidmouth was visited by Nelson, who apparently dipped his finger in a glass of Port wine and sketched a plan of action on the table top.

WAR AND UNREST

For the first half of the nineteenth century, Oporto was shaken by invasion and rebellion. In November 1807, the French marched into Lisbon under Marshal Junot, reaching Oporto under the command of Marshal Soult two years later. The British, sworn enemies of the French, packed their bags and returned home, leaving their firms in the custody of the Portuguese. Soult wasn't to remain in Oporto for long. Less than three months after taking control he was surprised by an attack from Sir Arthur Wellesley (later the Duke of Wellington), who approached the city from the Serra de Pilar convent in Vila Nova de Gaia. So swift was the recapture of Oporto that Wellesley apparently ate the meal that had been prepared for Soult in the Palácio das Carrancas (now the Museu Soares dos Reis) a few hours earlier.

Eleven courses on 11 November

During their occupation of Oporto, the French had taken over the Factory House and leased it as a coffee shop. The premises were returned to the British in 1811 devoid of most of the contents. A celebratory ball was held on 4 June for which chandeliers, cutlery and chairs were hired, followed later in the year by a dinner attended by eleven members of the Factory House; this took place on 11 November. The 'Factory' itself had ceased to exist as an official entity following a treaty between George III and João (subsequently João VI), Prince Regent from 1799 to 1816, who had left Portugal for Brazil when the French invaded. In 1812 the Factory House became the home of a new body, the British Club. The name was changed two years later to the 'British Association', the preserve of British Port shippers who form the membership of the Factory House today. Two hundred years later, on 11 November 2011, the members of the Factory House sat down to a lunch of eleven courses and eleven wines.

Although Oporto had been recaptured for the Portuguese in May 1809, the Peninsular War continued to rage in Portugal until May 1811 with a long stand-off north of Lisbon around the town of Torres Vedras. Wellington's officers drank the local wine. Lt. General Sir William Warre, who had a short career in the family's Port firm (see page 242), took part in nearly every major battle of the war and kept Wellington well supplied with vintage Port. In the years that followed the war, Portuguese wines like Bucelas, Carcavelos, Lisbon and Port became popular in Britain. The shipping firm of Sandeman, established in Jerez and Oporto in 1790, set up cellars at Cabo Ruivo near Lisbon, and new firms were established, among them Cockburn (1814) and Graham (1820).

In the power vacuum that followed the Peninsular War, Oporto became a ferment of radical politics. In 1820, inspired by Masonic Lodges and Portuguese Jacobinism, a revolt broke out in the city to persuade João VI (enjoying a self-imposed exile in Brazil) to return to Portugal. This was accompanied by a demand for an assembly or *cortes* and a liberal

constitution, which was reluctantly acceded to by the regents in Lisbon. João eventually returned, leaving his heir, Pedro, to govern Brazil where he became the constitutional emperor in 1822. Following the death of João VI in 1826 and Pedro's accession to the Portuguese throne, the country was pitched into turmoil by his younger brother Miguel, who led the absolutists in revolt against the liberal constitution. The citizens of Oporto supported the constitutionalist Pedro against the usurper Miguel and in 1832 the city erupted into civil war. Pedro's troops held the centre of the city which the Miguelites bombarded from Vila Nova de Gaia.

Caught in the midst of the fighting, the British Port shippers, who tended to side with the liberal constitutionalists, did their best to visit their lodges located in Miguelite territory on the opposite side of the river. Joseph James Forrester described this perilous situation:

'Those who have been made familiar with danger will confess that familiarity soon produces indifference to it. Soon after the entry of the Constitutionalists into Oporto the city was besieged by the Royalists [Absolutists] from the south side of the river. At first, the greatest alarm and anxiety prevailed amongst the inhabitants but as the shells were bursting over their heads at almost every instant of day and night, I assert without the smallest exaggeration that many persons arrived at such a pitch of ability in calculating the curves each shell would take that they were enabled to decide with the greatest nicety where the destructive engine would fall...'

There were few casualties among the Port shippers, many of whom rather enjoyed the diversion. A Mr Wright of Croft & Co. lost an arm when a shell penetrated the ceiling of his dining room as he was enjoying a post-prandial glass of Port. But as the siege wore on the situation deteriorated and the poorer inhabitants of Oporto lived in the most intolerable conditions. Even tripe became a luxury and many resorted to eating cats and dogs in order to survive. When the supply of pet animals was exhausted, large numbers died, either from starvation or cholera.

There was considerable upheaval in the Douro with armed militias terrorising the towns and villages. In the wilds of the Douro Superior, bands of guerrillas like the Marçais de Fozcôa attacked Pesqueira, Moncorvo and Fozcôa and raided the most affluent of the new *quintas*. As the constitutionalists gained the upper hand, vineyards belonging to the Miguelistas and religious orders were seized and auctioned off and records (some dating back to the thirteenth century), were destroyed. Reflecting the French Revolution some forty years earlier, the whole structure of Portuguese agricultural society changed. Medium-sized landowners and bourgeois merchants paid low prices for *quintas* expropriated from religious orders.

In Oporto, after eighteen months of continual siege, the Miguelites finally retreated under attack from Pedro's troops supported by the British. In a final desperate act of defiance in August 1833, the Miguelite Conde d'Almer ordered that the lodges belonging to the Companhia should be burnt and over 20,000 pipes of Port were lost, much of the

wine flowing into the Douro which turned a rather murky shade of purple. Pedro duly entered Lisbon in July 1833 and re-established the liberal regime. On 30 May 1834 Pedro IV extinguished 'all privileges, authority, prerogatives and protuberances' of the Companhia which was now given the same rights as any commercial firm. The same decree also opened the bar (mouth) of the River Douro to all Portuguese wines subject to a tax of 12 escudos per pipe. Pedro died of consumption in September the same year and his heart was buried, according to his wishes, in front of the high altar at the Church of Lapa in Oporto. He was succeeded to the throne by his daughter Maria II who, aged 15, became Portugal's first constitutional monarch.

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

Joseph James Forrester (1809–1861)

Born in Hull, England in 1809, Joseph Forester joined his uncle's Oporto-based firm Offley Forrester in 1831. Forrester was a bluff Yorkshireman who, like many from 'God's own county', became known for his blunt opinions. He mixed on equal terms with the Portuguese, keeping company with everyone from the noble *fidalgos* in Oporto to the farmers in the Douro. Unlike most British shippers, he spoke fluent Portuguese.

At a time when few shippers ventured upstream from Oporto apart from during the vintage, Forrester travelled considerably and came to know every twist and turn in the river. He frequently based himself at the Barão de Viamonte's Quinta da Boa Vista, a property that now belongs to Offley. Forrester held some controversial views on Port (see below) and did little to endear himself to the British establishment with his forthright expressions; unusually for a British shipper, he was never invited to join the Factory House. Although he came to Portugal to sell Port, Forrester's considerable achievements were outside day-to-day commerce. In his biography of Forrester, John Delaforce concludes that 'there is no doubt that he was more interested in the production side of the Port trade than in the marketing of the wines'.

Forrester was an accomplished artist, cartographer and, later, photographer. Motivated by his wish to make the Douro more accessible and improve the local economy, his survey and mapping of the regions are, without doubt, his finest works. Forrester was honoured many times during his life and his numerous medals from different countries appear on successive editions of his maps. He was granted a barony by D. Fernando, Regent of Portugal in 1855. Forrester had a close friendship with Dona Antónia Ferreira (see below) and the two of them were travelling down the Douro when he was killed in an accident in 1861.

FORRESTER AND THE DOURO

Joseph Forrester's arrival in Portugal coincided with the height of the civil war so his movements were greatly curtailed. Once the war was over, Forrester turned to drawing and painting and in 1834 (a year after the end of the conflict) he published a remarkably detailed watercolour of the Rua Nova dos Inglezes with a key identifying thirty-four British and nine Portuguese merchants. The original painting was destroyed in the London office of Offley Forrester during the Second World War, but a number of engravings survive.

Forrester also produced two detailed maps of the Douro, the first of which, a relief map entitled *The Wine District of the Alto Douro*, was published around 1845. His second, larger, map is dated 1848 and charts the course of the River Douro from the Salto da Sardinha ('Sardine Leap') on the Spanish–Portuguese border to the mouth of the river at São João de Foz. On it he portrays the river as:

'...for the most part a fine stream, of considerable breadth, but impetuous in its course and abounding in obstacles which render navigation difficult and dangerous. These obstacles are of very various kinds – some are shallows, some rocks, projecting from the banks, or rising in the stream, many are sudden falls, in some cases of several feet and continued during reaches of 80 to 200 yards, causing powerful and dangerous rapids.'

Forrester goes on to state the case for improving the navigability of the river 'as an effective means for the amelioration of the ... whole agricultural population of the District of the Douro and the province of Trás-os-Montes'. At the time he records that 'the voyage from Oporto to Barca d'Alva [on the Spanish border] occupies, on an average, fifteen days'. He notes the difficulties of travelling in the Douro region, something that he experienced first hand. In a letter addressed to his friend Robin Woodhouse he describes the conditions at a *venda* or inn on the way to the Douro in December 1846:

'In the chimney, immediately over the wood fire (for here coal is not known) hung a few sausages well seasoned with garlick [sic], having on either side a bunch of nettles to keep off the rats – or other intruders who might attempt to touch this savoury viand, at unlawful hours... The night being bitterly cold I seated myself in the nook of the chimney, and with my hostess' permission commenced cooking my supper – for there was nothing whatever in the house ready cooked. The only meat that I could procure was some tough cow beef; this I proceeded to beat with a mallet (rolling pins being scarce)... I ate my supper upstairs; in a sort of hay loft ... I then retired to rest on a miserable sacking stuffed with straw... The sheets were coarse but clean; the pillow a cylinder filled with bran and as hard as a stone, and the night was cold, but in spite of my accommodation and myriads of active companions, I slept tolerably well. In the morning I rose about 7 o'clock – and had actually to employ at least ½ an hour in freeing my person, linen and clothes from the intruders which had persecuted me during the past night.'

On his 1848 map he comments on the excellent roads around Zamora, Salamanca and Valladolid, but in comparison 'the roads in northern Portugal are so bad that it takes eight days to go from Oporto to the Barca d'Alva, a distance of 120 miles!' He adds in a well-intentioned but characteristically forthright manner that 'of course in such a state ... it is impossible for the Portuguese farmer to compete with the Spanish smuggler'.

FORRESTER AND FORTIFICATION

These observations on the problems in the Douro are nothing when compared to Forrester's outspoken views on Port in general. In 1844 he published an anonymous pamphlet entitled *A Word or Two on Port Wine*, the author being described as being 'A Resident in Oporto for 11 years'. Needless to say it wasn't difficult to uncover his identity. 'A Word or Two' is something of an understatement, for this is a lengthy essay addressed to 'the British publick [sic] generally, but particularly to private gentlemen showing how, and why it [Port] is adulterated, and affording some means of detecting its adulterations'. In the preface to the seventh edition of the pamphlet published in 1848, when Forrester finally owns up to his authorship, he explains that one of the reasons why the first edition was anonymous was that 'my partners and myself would not draw the attention of the consumer immediately to our house' and that 'we were resolved to maintain our positions without further reference to it, until we should have silenced, if not shamed, our antagonists'. There can be little or no doubt who Forrester had in mind when he referred to 'antagonists', for these were the members of the Factory House. In the seventh edition he even goes so far as to mention Messrs. H. & Co. (probably Harris & Co. forerunner of Quarles Harris): 'the ring leaders of our British adversaries in Portugal'.

Forrester's pamphlet caused uproar at the Factory House when it was first published. Indeed Mr James Dawson Harris (of the aforementioned firm) wrote to Offley, Webber & Forrester in 1846 stating that 'the conduct of your Mr Joseph James Forrester, both in public and private life, has for some years and on many occasions been so diametrically the reverse of what I conceive that of a Gentlemen to be, that I peremptorily decline further communication of any kind or sort with him'.

A Word or Two on Port Wine was a characteristic act of plain speaking, for its purpose was 'to enable the consumer to discriminate between *pure* and *impure* wine', presupposing that 'he will prefer what is genuine'. In the opening paragraphs Forrester is an early advocate of *terroir*, evoking pure wine as one made 'naturally according to the kind of grape, the soil, the height, and aspect of the vineyard where it is grown...' as well as one that reflects the season, 'good or bad'. But, he continues:

'...the practice of wine-merchants has been to disregard all the circumstances just mentioned, and try to produce in all seasons, wet or dry, hot or cold, from grapes in every variety of situation, and of all qualities, wines of one and the same kind only; viz. — what is called by some full, high coloured, and fruity' but by others, more properly, 'black, strong and sweet'.

Forrester dates this fashion for full, sweet Port wines as coming from the extraordinarily fine 1820 vintage and that, witnessing their popularity, merchants wanted to have such wines each and every year. Encouraged by 'petty inn-keepers, retail dealers, and others', Forrester goes on to say how merchants are want to mix Port 'with Benecarlo [a strong wine from Spain], or other 'harsh inferior red wine' as well as elderberry. Forrester details how elderberry was used in colouring Port adding 'that the dye, thus formed, is applied according to the fancy of the owner; from twenty-eight to fifty-six pounds of dried elderberry being used to the pipe of wine!' The pamphlet lists other complaints that were no doubt equally valid, namely the lack of any means to control the quality of the wine from the farmer, the absence of a legal starting date for the vintage which meant that grapes were being harvested unripe and the widespread use of *jeropiga*.¹

Much less valid, however, were Forrester's complaints about the use of *aguardente* or 'brandy' in Port. Although *aguardente* spirit was no doubt abused on occasion, Forrester's assertion that Port should be a dry, unfortified wine was clearly wide of the mark and prevailing consumer taste. In *A Word or Two on Port Wine* Forrester acknowledges that 'the qualities of Port wine most prized, have been different at different periods' but his definition of a 'pure wine' is clearly one made without recourse to fortification. He states that 'the custom of stopping the fermentation is now common, but a *real* wine of any kind, cannot be formed by those who have adopted it, still less Port-wine...' His opposition to the rich, sweet style of Port wine that we know (and love) today is plain, for:

'...they [the Port shippers] state as an axiom, that "the richest wine requires the greatest quantity of brandy" – a statement very far from being correct. In fact rich wine requires little or no brandy, except for the purpose of preserving it from the ill effects of the agitation on board ship during the voyage to England, and the change of climate; and an admixture of a large quantity of brandy with such wine is highly injurious, many years being necessary for the complete incorporation of the spirit with it, so that the real vinous qualities may again appear.'

In the furore that followed the publication of the pamphlet Forrester claimed that his opinions were backed by 102 out of the 121 *freguesias* or parishes that then made up the Douro wine region. He also elicited the support of a number of leading opinion-formers (including the Church) whom he had lobbied in advance. In November 1844 he even received a letter from the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon supporting his stance, although Forrester had no doubt kept His Eminence well informed of his forthright views through letters and speeches published in the *Periódico dos Pobres*.

One of Forrester's more vocal supporters was Thomas Shaw, a wine merchant at Leith in Scotland. In a book entitled *Wine, the Vine and the Cellar* published in 1864, Shaw had 'no hesitation in the conviction that he was right' for he adds that 'it cannot be denied that no man knew better and few as well as he, the port wine country, the people and everything connected with the Douro, from Foz to Spain'. But Shaw goes on to say of Forrester, 'he was constantly at warfare, which appeared to be the delight of his life...'.

Certainly the altercation generated by his pamphlet in 1844 continued until his death seventeen years later.

Apart from Shaw (who was said to favour French wines anyway), few of Forrester's backers, from small growers to His Eminence the Cardinal, can have been in any way conversant with the British market and the growing demand for a sweet, fortified style of Port. Indeed Forrester's own firm was accused by others of shipping wine that was unstable and had to be returned by his customers. Oswald Crawford, the British Consul in Oporto, summed up the debate with the benefit of hindsight in *Portugal Old and New* (published in 1880):

'The true point at issue has always seemed to me to be, not whether port can be made without the addition of distilled wine, but whether wine so made is worth making or worth drinking. Such wine is an unmarketable product, and I think deservedly so. It is a strong, rough and comparatively flavourless liquor. If a man were to add six drops of ink to a glass of very common red burgundy he would get something exceedingly like unfortified port. Every Oporto wine merchant has tried the experiment of unfortified Port Wine. It is a pity they cannot sell it for they would quickly make their fortunes; but the plain truth is that it is an abominable drink.'

Forrester's idiosyncratic views on Port died with him and unfortified wines from the Douro received little or no attention until Fernando Nicolau de Almeida revived the tradition with Barca Velha a century later. The subsequent history of the Douro's unfortified wines is taken up in Chapter 6.

DEATH ON THE DOURO

Although Joseph Forrester married in 1836, his English-born wife died of typhus in 1847 shortly after having given birth to their seventh child. He never remarried but sought female company from Antónia Adelaide Ferreira. The nature of their liaison will always be open to interpretation, but there can be no doubt that they supervised the planting of vineyards together and spent a considerable amount of time in each other's company. Dona Antónia was clearly a strong and single-minded character and this side of her personality must have appealed to Forrester.

Dona Antónia accompanied Forrester on 12 May 1861 when he left Quinta do Vesúvio travelling downstream by boat. At Cachão de Valeira, a narrow and forbidding stretch of the river that was then a white-water rapid, the boat capsized. Forrester was said to have been wearing a money belt laden with gold sovereigns that must have weighed him down as he struggled to swim to the riverbank. He apparently reached the side and grasped a rock but was pulled down by the fast-flowing current and never seen again. Dona Antónia and the other members of the party survived, the ladies buoyed up by their crinolines. There are a number of versions of this tragic episode and the circumstances surrounding

WOMEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

Dona Antónia Ferreira (1811–96)

Port is often viewed as a male fiefdom and, until recently, very few women were involved in the production or shipping of Port. Dona Antónia Ferreira is a notable exception and her influence is still felt in the Douro today. Born at Régua in 1811, Dona Antónia, as she became known, was born into a Port-shipping family whose business had been established since the middle of the eighteenth century. She was a small but powerful woman, known locally by the affectionate diminutive 'Ferreirinha' meaning 'Little Ferreira'. Over the course of her life she became the largest landowner in the Douro with a domaine stretching from Peso da Régua in the Baixo Corgo (where she lived) to Quinta do Vale do Meão in the Douro Superior. She amassed a total of twenty-four *quintas* including some of the best estates in the Douro such as Quinta do Porto, Quinta de Vargellas and Quinta do Vesúvio. The entrances to her properties are distinguished with elaborate stone and wrought iron gateways, many of which are standing today. Charles Sellers, writing three years after her death, portrays Dona Antónia as 'the richest of landed proprietors, but there are few ladies in the land who had seen so little or knew so little of the world. Her thousands of acres of mountain land covered with vines were her chief thought...'.

She was married twice, firstly to her cousin António Bernado Ferreira II and, following his death, to her estate manager Francisco José da Silva Torres. Sellers records that 'there were never two men who spent more money in the Douro than the two husbands of Dona Antónia'. Dona Antónia survived an accident on the river in 1861 in which her friend and companion, Joseph James Forrester, was drowned. When Dona Antónia died at Quinta das Nogueiras near Régua in 1896 her properties were producing more than 1,500 pipes of Port a year and she left her company, A. A. Ferreira, with a stock of 13,000 pipes.

the incident will never be precisely known. Forrester's son William was said to have been told that the corpse was found downstream at Pinhão, robbed of the gold by a local who subsequently confessed to the crime on his deathbed. One fact is indisputable: a notice in the deaths column of *The Times* dated Thursday 23 May 1861: 'On the 12th inst., accidentally drowned while descending the River Douro by the upsetting of a boat at the Ponto do Cachão, Joseph James Forrester Esq. Baron de Forrester in Portugal, in his 52nd year.' Ironically, a small engraving of the Ponto do Cachão appears on Forrester's 1848 map. Denied a place in the British Cemetery in Oporto, a plaque mounted on the granite rock above the rapids is his only memorial. Although the river was subsequently tamed by a series of dams built in the 1970s, Cachão de Valeira, now calm, still feels dark and forbidding.

THE GOLDEN DECADES

The mid-nineteenth century proved to be something of a golden age for Port. Production reached 100,000 pipes in the early 1840s, of which around a quarter was exported, mainly to Britain. Port, mostly drunk young and often mulled, became a commonplace drink at all levels of society. At Oxford it was known as 'Bishop'. At one stage the Companhia intervened in order to stem over-production, purchasing 20,000 pipes of lower-quality wine from Douro farmers. But at the opposite end of the spectrum, the practice of declaring wines from exceptional years gained momentum with 1847, 1851, 1858, 1863 and 1868 proving to be some of the finest vintages of the century. These wines came to be appreciated not so much for their youthful vigour but for the character and complexity that they gained with age. An auction catalogue from Christie's dated 3 December 1860 lists 120 dozen of 'Rare 1820 Port Wine' from Burmester.

Under the constitutional monarchy of Maria II, life became easier for the British community in Oporto and they began to mix much more freely with the Portuguese. Following the demise of the *ancien régime*, society became more open and much less inclined to the extravagances of religious devotion that had affronted the foreign mercantile community in the past. According to a visitor at the time, the British 'moved in the higher circles of Oporto society' and 'inhabited some of the best houses in the most airy parts of the city'. In the mid-1840s, firms like Sandeman, Martinez and Quarles Harris were regularly shipping well in excess of 1,500 pipes of Port a year.

DISEASE AND DEVASTATION

The good times did not last. In 1852 oidium (powdery mildew) first made an appearance near Régua, spreading rapidly throughout the Douro. It began, according to Henry Vizetelly who visited Portugal in the 1870s, by imparting 'a strange bitter flavour' to the wines. Vineyard yields began to fall but due to an excess of production the disease did not greatly affect the Port trade. However, the growers suffered. Unable to survive three poor harvests in a row, a number of properties (among them Quinta do Noval) changed hands. Production at Dona Antónia's Quinta do Vesúvio fell from an average of 313.5 pipes in 1853 to 69 pipes of mostly poor-quality wine in 1856. In order to stem the fall in production, new vineyards were planted in the Douro Superior where the oidium attack was less virulent. A number of papers were written on the subject of oidium including one by Port shipper James Dow entitled *An Inquiry into the Vine Fungus with Suggestions as to a Remedy*. He issued a farsighted 'warning' to the Portuguese people reminding them that 'we hold no production of the soil by fixed tenure' and that 'apathy ... must be the worst fungus of the two; for while *Oidium tuckeri* may be converted into a friend, the other must be for ever a deadly enemy'. Although oidium could never in future be described as 'a friend' it was brought under control fairly quickly by the use of sulphur (*enxofre*).

There was much worse to come. The advent of the steamship meant that hitherto unknown pests and diseases were able to survive the voyage across the Atlantic. By far the most devastating of these was phylloxera, which was first discovered in a Hammersmith

greenhouse in 1863. In his book, *The Great Wine Blight*, George Ordish records that an academic interest in plants and insects combined with the improvement in transportation unwittingly helped to disperse this tiny, almost microscopic, aphid. In ten years phylloxera spread throughout Europe, feeding on the roots of *Vitis vinifera* vines. At first yields were merely reduced, but eventually the vines just withered and died.

It is thought that phylloxera probably arrived in the Douro in 1863 when António de Melo Vaz de Sampaio, owner of Quinta dos Montes at Gouvinhas, imported some American vines. Production at this property, which normally averaged sixty to seventy pipes a year, fell to fifty-five pipes in 1865, nineteen in 1869, eight in 1870 and just one pipe in 1872. Phylloxera spread slowly in the 1860s, affecting the Covas area before the end of the decade, but many growers probably credited the decline in yields to the weakness of the vines following oidium. However, panic set in when, in 1872, it was found to have affected vineyards at Sabrosa, Santa Marta de Penaguião, Régua and São João de Pesqueira. It then spread quickly, reaching the Douro Superior by 1877. Growers went to extraordinary lengths to try and save their vineyards. In his book Henry Vizetelly describes how ‘the Baron Roêda has tried, among other remedies, phosphate of lime, coal tar, sulphate of potash, natural magnesium and sulphate of carbon, all being applied to the roots of the vines, but with little effect’. By the late 1870s yields had declined catastrophically, Vizetelly commenting that ‘the ravages of the phylloxera ... have very far surpassed any damage done by the oidium’. There was a lack of wine for distillation. Facing an acute shortage of *aguardente* for fortification, firms either resorted to using grain spirit or imported quantities of highly rectified spirit from England.

Lacking any knowledge of how to combat the plague, the people of the Douro appealed for Divine Intercession in order to survive. The *Jornal de Régua* of 10 July 1880 reported on ‘a procession of atonement, organised by the residents of Cambres, to implore Divine protection from the damage caused by phylloxera’. Facing financial ruin, many smaller growers simply abandoned their vineyards. An unnamed British wine merchant visiting the Douro in 1874 compared the effects of the disease to ‘the nature of that which destroyed potatoes in Ireland’, such was its impact on the local populace who had nothing else to depend on for their livelihood. Despite extensive replanting programmes in the 1890s and 1980s, huge swathes of abandoned terraces known as *mortórios* still provide powerful evidence of the extent of the phylloxera catastrophe.

TRAVEL IN THE DOURO: ‘STEAM HORSE’ AND SAILING BOATS

It would be hard to underestimate the impact of the railway on the Douro. Construction began in 1873, just twenty-five years after Joseph Forrester had complained about the paucity of communications in the region and a mere twelve years after he met with his death trying to navigate the river. The railway arrived at Pinhão in the heart of the Cima Corgo vineyards in 1879 and at Tua in 1882. By the time it reached Barca d’Alva on the

Spanish border in 1887, it had become a lifeline for the remote communities of the Alto Douro, cutting the journey time to Oporto from days to hours. The small steam train became known to all as the *paciência*, such was the need for patience with its frequent stops for loading and unloading. But anyone who has visited the Douro will appreciate that the railway, following the river for most of its course, is a considerable feat of engineering. Its construction during the years of the phylloxera crisis must have helped to alleviate some of the suffering among the local populace. In fact, one of its first major uses was to deliver large quantities of copper sulphate and carbon disulphide, heavily subsidised by the government, in an attempt to control oidium and phylloxera.

In spite of the obvious benefits, the railway had its detractors. Writing ten years after its completion, Charles Sellers complains that the 'steam horse has not added to the beautiful though wild scenery of Tráz-os-Montes' (the archaic spelling), adding that it has 'diminished the number of picturesque flotillas of wine boats so familiar to all those who know the region'. Nevertheless, the long Viking-inspired boats known as *barcos rabelos* continued to ply the Douro until as late as the 1960s. Screeching bullock carts brought the wine down from the *quintas*, many of which maintained their own riverside quays. Some of the larger *barcos rabelos* could ship as many as seventy or eighty pipes of wine at a time. Ropes were used to drag them on board and the pipes were stacked three high. The journey by boat was hazardous in the extreme.

Depending on the flow of the river, a fully laden *barco rabelo* would take about two days to travel downstream from Pinhão to the quayside at Gaia. During the voyage, the crew would converse to each other in song, improvising their own chant as they went along. This would occasionally be interrupted by a yell as they approached some rapids. The helmsman, standing on a high poop above the main deck, would grip the tiller and look ahead for half-submerged rocks while the remainder of the crew sounded the bottom of the river with long poles. The hardest task of all was the return journey to the vineyards, ascending the river with a boatload of empty pipes. This could take anything between eight and fifteen days, with navigation completely impossible during the winter floods. Making use of the Atlantic westerlies which funnel upstream, the mast would be raised and a square sail allowed to billow forth. Oxen were tethered to the boat to drag it up through the rapids. Some *barcos rabelos* have survived, powered incongruously by little outboard motors while the skeletons of others can be found rotting on the river bank. A small fleet of *barcos rabelos* has been mothballed and moored alongside the quay at Vila Novade Gaia. Once a year they set sail in a good-humoured race to celebrate the feast day of Oporto's patron saint, São João.

Apart from making the region more accessible, the construction of the railway had a significant and lasting impact on settlement patterns in the Douro valley. Until its arrival in the late 1870s, nearly all the established towns and villages were located well above the river, away from disease-carrying insects and the stifling summer heat. But with railway stations at Régua and at the mouth of the Pinhão river, these places gradually became important service centres in their own right. Although the railway had not yet reached Pinhão when he visited, Henry Vizetelly provides the first detailed description of the place:

'The village of Pinhão comprises a cluster of small houses, and some half-a-dozen wine stores, grouped indiscriminately on the banks of the Douro. It boasts a straggling, undulating praça, planted with a few trees, on one of which there was usually hanging a newly slaughtered sheep, which the butcher would be cutting up, while women waited to secure the primer parts for their husbands at work on the railway in the course of construction on the opposite bank of the Douro,² and on the railway bridge that spans the River Pinhão. A venda, a barber's shop, and one or two general dealers' stores look on to the praça, and in the short winding streets of the village, children, pigs, dogs and poultry mingle indiscriminately before the cottage doors. Such are the main features of Pinhão, which, from its central position, is a place of some importance in the Alto Douro region.'

Writing nearly twenty years later in his book *Viticultura e Vinicultura*, Villarinho de São Romão describes Pinhão (with some optimism) as 'an important place with a great commercial future'. A contemporary photograph of Pinhão in the same publication shows the terraces at Quinta da Foz destroyed by phylloxera.

Other villages in the Douro were clearly picturesque but insanitary. Vizetelly visited Celleirós (archaic spelling) where he notes:

'...the squalid houses, rudely built, are too frequently grimy on the outside and foul within. The roads are often filthy in the extreme, smells undefinable assail one's nostrils as much from the open doorways as from the refuse littered street ... Turning from the houses the eye lights on dirty children, yelping curs, emaciated poultry and, above all, long-legged pigs, basking at full length in the middle of the road, disdaining to move out of your horse's way...'

Nearly a century and a half later, pigs are no longer in evidence but the famous Douro dogs still bask in the middle of the road, moving grudgingly when a car draws close.

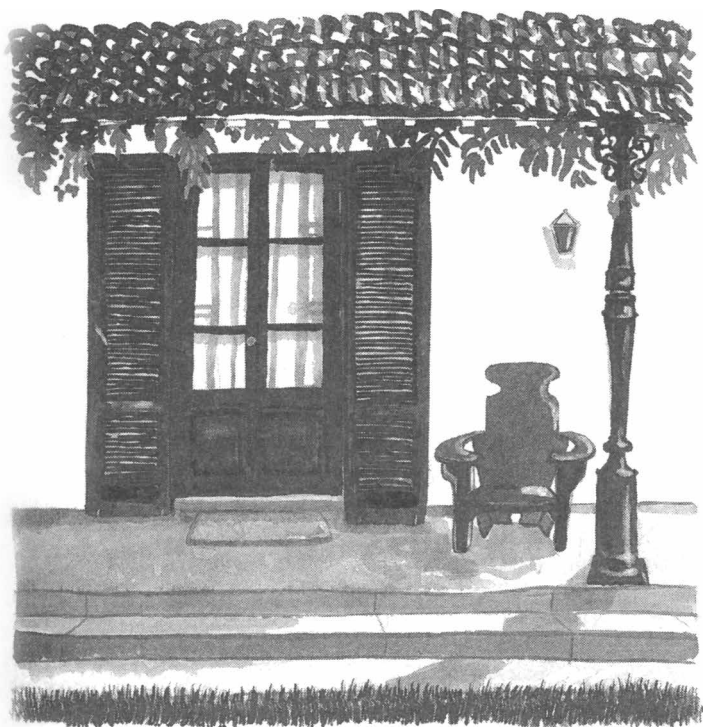
NEW WEALTH

Such was the devastating impact of phylloxera on European vineyards that the French government offered a reward of 300,000 francs to anyone who came up with a remedy. The prize was never paid, for no remedy as such has ever been found. The solution came instead from the North American vines that had almost certainly been the carriers of phylloxera in the first place. American species like *Vitis labrusca*, *berlandieri*, *riparia* and *rupestris* were able to resist phylloxera in a way that the European *Vitis vinifera* could not. By grafting native vines on to American rootstock, it was established that European varieties could survive and indeed flourish.

The replanting of vineyards was a slow and somewhat erratic process. For a time the Portuguese government prohibited the importation of American vines, believing them to be the cause of phylloxera rather than a cure. However, some clandestine replanting on

American rootstock undoubtedly took place at Quinta de Val de Figueira near Covas in 1876 and four years later at Offley Forrester's Quinta da Boa Vista. Following pressure from both growers and shippers, the ban was lifted in 1883 and replanting began in earnest. But even as late as 1896, in a detailed manual on viticulture in the Douro, Villarinho de São Romão recommends flooding the vineyards as a means of asphyxiating the phylloxera aphid.

For a time, phylloxera had a positive effect on sales of Port and Portuguese wine in general. With France the first country to be affected, wine merchants in Great Britain looked to Iberia to make up the shortfall. During the 1880s, when the damage was at its greatest, exports of Portuguese wines rose sharply. France, which had barely registered as a market for Portuguese wine in the 1860s, imported nearly a million hectolitres a year between 1885 and 1889, at a time when the country's total production struggled to reach four million hectolitres. A large proportion of this wine was exported from Viana do Castelo, briefly reviving a trade that had died when the English transferred their allegiance to Oporto and the Douro two centuries earlier. In Oporto, a number of new firms were in a good position to capitalise on the crisis in production, among them Wiese & Krohn, Delaforce, Cálem and Ramos Pinto, all of which were established between 1859 and



Verandah, Quinta do Bomfim

1880. Brazil became an important market, importing as many as 20,000 pipes of wine a year until the country was hit by a severe financial crisis in the mid-1920s.

The increase in turnover put a number of important shippers in a strong position when it came to purchasing property in the Douro. Until this time, few shippers had owned land but with the local economy in ruins, *quintas* changed hands at rock-bottom prices. In 1890, W & J Graham bought Quinta dos Malvedos; Taylor, Fladgate & Yeatman purchased Quinta de Vargellas in 1893; in the same year Quinta da Eira Velha was bought by Cabel Roope (Hunt, Roope, Teage & Co) and Robertson Bros. bought Quinta do Roncão. One of the leading entrepreneurs of the era was George Acheson Warre, who was then in charge of the winemaking at Silva & Cosens. Between 1887 and 1896 he purchased three prime *quintas* starting with Quinta do Zimbro just upstream from Tua. Warre began replanting and monitored the results. He records '...the '88 planting to be infected with phylloxera – badly – must replant. [American] vines good, but Portuguese bad'. But by 1896 when grafting on to American rootstock had become accepted practice, Warre wrote 'this year's wines are I consider better than any since 1878 and will, I hope and believe, start a new era in the Port wine trade'. Warre's most astute purchase was undoubtedly Quinta do Bomfim close to Pinhão, which was developed with its own railway siding to transport the wine downstream to Gaia.

By the turn of the century, the Douro valley was a hive of activity once more. Vieira da Costa, writing in *Uma Ilustração Portuguesa* in 1906, describes the Douro as 'engaged in an immense, indescribable, never before seen activity. Legions of workers, numbering in the thousands, busy as ants, dug deep into the sterile womb of barren land ... life, in all its potency and creativity began to emerge and bear new fruit, a new wealth'.

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

The Galegos

In the nineteenth century, Galicia in north west Spain was much poorer than the north of Portugal. Consequently there was a steady migration of *Galegos* (Galicians) to the Douro in search of work. Joseph James Forrester recorded that the Douro 'is very unwholesome and thinly populated' and that 'the soil about the vines is turned and the grapes are trodden entirely by Gallegos of whom 8,000 are employed each season'. The replanting of the Douro's vineyards following phylloxera provided permanent work for the Galegos who were responsible for building many of the stone-walled terraces (*socalcos*) that can be seen today. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Galegos literally shaped the Douro.

OPORTO AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The new wealth in Oporto was much more conspicuous. The same British wine merchant who had compared the phylloxera crisis to the Irish potato famine visited Oporto in 1874 and wrote that arriving by sea is a 'positive danger, for the entrance [to the Douro] is at best no more than 150 yards wide, is very shallow and the tide tears in at a tremendous rate while the course is continually changing by shifting sand'. He goes on to describe the city of Oporto itself with its 'crooked, rugged narrow streets', adding 'how the horses got along and how the springs stood the jolting is a mystery. Up as well as down hill the hardy beasts galloped to the tune of a cowhide whip played in a manner that would flay the skin of horses at home: while wheels rattled over boulders planted where they were for generations'.

By the end of the century much of this had changed. Charles Sellers considers how 'Oporto has very much improved during the last forty years.' A new seaport was built on the coast 8 kilometres to the north-east at Leixões and a system of tram lines extended around the city although 'the Rua dos Ingleses was one of the very few streets paved right through'. (In 1893 it was renamed the Rua Infante D. Henrique.) The Ponte Dom Luíz, the impressive two-tier bridge linking Oporto with Vila Nova de Gaia, was opened in September 1886.

Life for the British community also continued to improve for, as Sellers recounts in his 'personal reminiscences', many of the shippers had built houses on the coast at Foz do Douro or Leça da Palmeira where they spent the summer months, taking their furniture with them. They frequented a beach at Foz which became known as the Praia dos Ingleses (English Beach – a name which survives today), although police regulations stipulated that all bathers in public places must be 'completely clad as if going for a walk'. Bathing gradually became fashionable among the Portuguese. In order to encourage the inhabitants of the city to wash more regularly, the Portuguese clergy declared that everyone should have taken at least thirty-three baths by 24 August, St Bartholomew's Day. Needless to say, many people assembled at the new seaside resorts to take all the prescribed baths on the same day!

Still keeping a distance from the Portuguese, the British maintained their national sporting traditions. Cricket had been played in Oporto for as long as anyone could remember and the shippers had their own cricket field and clubhouse near the Palácio das Carrancas where they assembled on Saturday afternoons. One of the most important social events at the time was the annual cricket match between the teams of Mr W. R. Teage and Mr H. Murat, both prominent Port shippers, which invariably ended with a dinner at the Factory House. At one stage in the late nineteenth century the British also had their own pack of foot beagles for hunting hare which, according to one visitor, 'had turned out well, and was at the time maintained in good style'. Horse racing and fox hunting had been tried according to Sellers but 'the turf was a dead letter to them [the Portuguese] as was hunting'.

Across the river in Gaia a minor industrial revolution was underway. Although generally conservative in their approach to change, Port shippers built new lodges to

house increasing volumes of wine, equipping them with new labour-saving devices like steam pumps and tramways. Another important significant innovation was the steam cooperage. At the end of the nineteenth century, nearly all Port was shipped in pipe (mainly to Britain) where it was bottled by individual wine merchants. Prior to shipment, all but the finest vintage Ports would be transferred from the vats or oak casks in which they were matured to cheaper chestnut shipping pipes, few of which were ever returned. The turnover in the cooperage, therefore, came to symbolise the success of a business and became an integral part of every Port-shipping firm. A novelty at the time of his visit in the 1870s, Henry Vizetelly describes a newfangled steam cooperage:

'In front of the lodge is a steam cooperage, where a sixteen-horse engine sets in motion saws which divide the planks into three, reduce the staves to their proper length, give to the heads of the casks their circular form and neatly bevel their edges. There are also cutting machines, certain parts of which perform their 3,000 revolutions a minute, which after rough shaping the staves, finish them off and bevel their joints, and finally give them their convex and concave form. Here, too, the rough shaped staves are steamed in a tank to extract all colouring matter and flavour from the wood, the completed pipes being also slightly steamed in order to detect any imperfections in them. A crane is employed for letting down the casks to a long store, situated on a lower level, where they undergo the requisite seasoning with wine.'

The industrial revolution in Gaia was not without its Luddites. When Silva & Cosens decided to merchandise casks in 1894, the other coopers – fearing for their jobs – hijacked the new boiler imported from England and rolled it into the river.³

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

Andrew James Symington (1863–1939)

It was against this backdrop of industriousness and enterprise that a certain Andrew James Symington arrived in Oporto from Glasgow in 1882 at the age of nineteen. He began working for the Graham family's textile concern but was immediately attracted to the Port trade. In 1894, twelve years after first setting foot in Portugal, Symington was asked by the Lisbon government to take part in the 'Great Burnay Port Sale' comprising 20,000 pipes which had been taken as surety from the Burnay family when their bank failed. Symington subsequently became a partner in the firm of Warre & Co. and, nearly a century later, after some astute business deals along the way, his successors are collectively the largest Port shippers with six firms to their name (see Chapter 5).

PLAGUE AND POLITICS

The turn of the century was a particularly turbulent time for Portugal. An outstandingly good and well-received vintage in 1896 declared by the majority of shippers came to be viewed in retrospect as the calm before the storm. The first calamity hit in August 1899 when cholera broke out, there having been previous scares in 1892 and 1884. A 'sanitary cordon' was imposed on Oporto, restricting the movement of the city's inhabitants. As vintage approached, the Port shippers appealed through the British Consul for the right to visit their properties and growers in the Douro. The Minister for Foreign Affairs in Lisbon replied that 'he could not consider such a question' and that 'as no exceptions were allowed in the case of the native Portuguese, they could grant no favours to foreigners'. Writing in *Port Wine and Oporto* (published in 1949), Ernest Cockburn argues that the regulations were both 'unreasonable' and 'absurd', but with the Port shippers effectively imprisoned in Oporto, the vintage took place without them.

In the meantime, Portuguese politics were once more in ferment. Throughout the latter years of the nineteenth century, republicanism had been gaining momentum, encouraged by the overthrow of the Brazilian monarchy in 1889. In the Oporto military garrison feelings ran high enough for a republican revolution to be attempted two years later. It brought an end to over half a century of settled politics. In 1907 the beleaguered Portuguese king Carlos I reacted to the growing political upheaval by appointing João Franco as Prime Minister and effective dictator.

The same year saw the loss of the lucrative Russian market which had favoured sweet white Ports. In an effort to boost sales of their own wines, the Russian authorities raised the duty on Port to the equivalent of £60 a pipe. Shipments had fallen sharply in the early 1900s as other wine-producing nations recovered from phylloxera, and with stocks piling up in their lodges the shippers themselves had no need to buy wines from growers in the Douro. Tobacco became an important crop in the Douro with 207 hectares in cultivation by 1907, concentrated especially around the towns of Armamar and Santa Marta de Penaguião. There were also legitimate concerns about the amount of so-called 'Port' reaching the market from regions other than the Douro. Californian 'Port', Tarragona 'Port' and Australian 'Port', some bearing the Portuguese coat of arms, were also being sold alongside wines from southern Portugal masquerading as Port.

João Franco responded to the growing crisis in the Douro by enacting new protectionist legislation. In an attempt to control exports and stamp out fraud, the government stipulated that any wine with the right to the name 'Port' must be shipped either across the bar of the Douro river or from the new port of Leixões. But as a sop to the growers in southern Portugal who had the most to lose from this, the new regulations prohibited the distillation of wine from the Douro. In future nearly all the *aguardente* used to fortify Port wine would originate from outside the region. Franco also extended the Port demarcation as far as the border with Spain. It included the entirety of the municipalities of Mesão Frio, Régua, Sta Marta de Penaguião, Vila Real, Valpaços, Murça, Sabrosa, Alijó, Carraceda de Ansiaes, Vila Flor, Mirandela, Alfandega da Fé, Torre de Moncorvo, Freixo Espada-á-

Cinta, Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, Meda, Vila Nova de Foz Côa, São João de Pesqueira, Tabuaço, Armamar and Lamego. Much of the territory included in the new demarcation was at high altitudes with poor granite soils incapable of producing high quality wines. The minimum alcoholic strength of Port wine was fixed at 16.5%.

The new demarcation provoked a barrage of complaints from the Port shippers but much of João Franco's legislation proved to be short lived. On 1 February 1908, as they crossed the Terreiro do Paço in Lisbon in an open landau, the royal family was assailed by a group of assassins. In the one and only regicide in Portugal's history, Carlos I was killed together with his eldest son, Prince Luís Filipe. The throne fell upon his second son, Manuel ('the unfortunate'), who at only eighteen years of age was in no position to quell the troubles. The dictatorial and unpopular João Franco resigned from office and the new government of Admiral Ferreira de Amaral decided to demarcate the Port wine region parish by parish. The 1908 demarcation, much reduced in size, remains (with the exception of minor alterations in 1921) the same to this day. But a succession of fractious coalition governments were incapable of saving the monarchy. Two years later, in the face of a naval revolt, Manuel II abdicated and left quietly for England. On 5 October 1910 Portugal became a republic.

THE FIRST REPUBLIC AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

The sixteen years of Portugal's so-called 'First Republic' were some of the most turbulent in the country's history. Between 1910 and 1926 there were no less than forty-nine different administrations with over sixty ministers of agriculture. Serious rioting broke out in Oporto in 1910 and, concerned for their safety, the British residents requested naval protection from the government in London. A ship duly arrived but, to everyone's consternation, was too large to cross the bar of the Douro.

Anti-clericism quickly took hold in Lisbon, alienating the deeply Catholic populace in the north of the country. At Pinhão one of the main characters in the area was Abel de Carvalho, an ardent monarchist and devout Catholic who managed Silva & Cosens's interests in the Douro. Seeing an anti-ecclesiastical protest in the village shortly after the proclamation of the Republic, he walked over to one of the demonstrators who was mocking a local saint and exclaimed 'the only thing missing here is blood' before rapping him smartly on the head with a walking stick and marching off!

Uprisings, protests and bankruptcies occurred with bewildering frequency both at a national level and in the Douro. Some shippers had to seek the protection of armed troops after the story surfaced that they had been buying in cheaper wines from the south to blend with Port. The regional commission created by João Franco to oversee viticulture in the Douro was powerless to intervene. Legislation introduced to help farmers, including the reorganisation of agricultural credit institutions to encourage the formation of co-operatives, was unenforceable in the unstable political climate.

The First World War provided the British community with an unwelcome diversion from their problems in Portugal. The able-bodied men in the Port trade left to fight in the trenches while the women, remaining behind in Oporto, spent their time knitting socks and scarves for the troops. But November 1914 was chiefly remembered by the Port shippers for the Anglo-Portuguese Commercial Treaty Act which established the first legal definition for Port wine. Quotas were introduced in the following year, forcing an increase in the price of Port. The First World War also brought an end to a fifty-year-old practice of sending Portuguese eggs to Britain along with Port. According to Ernest Cockburn, whose book is full of anecdotes from the time, they were usually sent over in baskets containing about a hundred eggs and, despite having no more than a piece of canvas tied over the top, breakages were apparently rare. The eggs were kept fresh by sealing them with insinglass or milk (both fining agents) before shipment and were much appreciated in the United Kingdom. Cockburn adds that 'it was usually found for culinary purposes that two such Portuguese eggs would do the work of three English eggs'. Much the same could be said of Portuguese eggs until large battery farms were set up in the 1980s.

Fearing that the African colonies would become bargaining pawns among the combatants, Portugal entered the First World War on the side of the Allies in 1916. In August of the same year the second of the commercial treaties was signed between Portugal and the United Kingdom, prohibiting the importation of Port unless it was accompanied by a Certificate of Origin from the Portuguese authorities. This effectively closed the lucrative UK market to the multitude of 'lookalike' wines from other destinations. Although shipping became increasingly hazardous and insurance costs rose dramatically owing to the activities of enemy submarines, Port grew steadily in popularity. The tax on spirits was raised in Britain to the extent that many people gave up whisky or gin for a glass of Port. Port and lemon (a shot of inexpensive ruby Port let out into a long drink by the addition of fizzy lemonade) became an everyday drink at thousands of pubs throughout the land. This new-found commerce helped to revive business for both growers and shippers in the years immediately following the war. Despite the loss of the remaining Russian market in 1917, Port began to enjoy a minor boom. Shipments to the UK alone reached 70,000 pipes in 1918, and some growers near Mesão Frio were expressly permitted to bring in grapes from outside the demarcation in order to satisfy demand. So great was the demand for Port that wines were offered to the British trade on the basis of 'PRWS' – Price Ruling When Shipped.

The political instability that had dogged Portugal since the beginning of the century continued well into the 1920s. Inflation was rampant and the lodgemen and coopers frequently came out on strike for higher wages. A minor civil war was taking place around Vila Real and a monarchy was briefly proclaimed in Oporto, but came swiftly to an end after Republican troops filled the centre of the city. The state of Portugal's economy, deeply damaged by the war, went from bad to worse. Senior officers in the Portuguese army became increasingly restless when the junior officers and sergeants received pay increases of up to 1,200 per cent compared to their own meagre rises of 144 to 306 per cent. On 26 May 1926 they rose in rebellion and the liberal First Republic collapsed. For a time, the economic and political instability continued. In February 1927 a revolt broke

out against the military government of General Oscar Carmona. Fierce fighting took place in Oporto and the local correspondent for the London-based *Wine Trade Review* stated that the bombardment that took place across the River Douro from the heights of Arrabida (now the site of the Arrabida bridge) ‘was as good as any I’ve heard on the Western Front’. A number of stray shells fell on Port lodges but, apart from shattered nerves, the shippers themselves survived unscathed.

One unusually enduring piece of legislation from these unsettled times was the creation of the *entrepoto* or entrepôt in Vila Nova de Gaia. From the spring of 1927, all Port wine destined for export had to be shipped through a tightly delimited area where the lodges were situated, effectively handing the established shippers complete control of the industry. Needless to say, it caused a good deal of dissatisfaction among growers, 750 of whom went to lobby the minister in Lisbon. In the spirit of the age, their views fell on deaf ears and the *entrepoto* continued to hold a monopoly on exports to the detriment of single *quintas* until Portugal joined the European Union in 1986.

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

George Massiot Brown and Walter Sandeman

In October 1928, a representative of the Lochend Printing Company in London called on Sandeman’s Advertising Manager, Eric Marshall-Hardy, with a business proposal for posters to promote Port. Sandeman had been using posters for some time and Marshall-Hardy assured him that he would be interested to see a design.

The task was given to a Scottish artist in Lochend’s design studio, George Massiot Brown. Brown was aware of the vogue for French poster artists and signed his work G. Massiot to hide his Scottish origins. He produced a silhouetted figure, dressed in a Portuguese student’s cape and wide-brimmed hat, holding a glass of Port. The work was accepted by the Chairman, Walter Sandeman, who purchased the artwork and the rights for 50 guineas. ‘The Sandeman Don’, as he became known, was used in the 1930s on posters, letterheads and abels. In 1935 Sandeman launched a tawny Port named Dry Don. The Don developed into one of the world’s most recognisable logos and effectively marked the launch of the first, and one of the strongest, brands of Port and Sherry.

THE STRONG ARM OF THE STATE

Such was the desperation with the state of the Portuguese economy that almost no one took any notice when Prime Minister Colonel José Vicente de Freitas appointed the demure son of a Dão smallholder, António de Oliveira Salazar, to the post of Finance Minister in April 1928. On being sworn in as a minister he uttered the ominous phrase which eventually

became his epitaph: 'I know quite well what I want and where I am going.' Salazar was given complete control of the country's purse strings and, by pruning expenditure and raising taxes, he accomplished what had been previously thought to be impossible and balanced the nation's books. This put him in an extremely strong position and in 1932 he became Prime Minister, a post that he held on to as virtual dictator for thirty-six years.

Due to Salazar's combined financial prowess and increasing isolationism, Portugal survived the world slump of 1929 to 1931 almost unscathed. The same, however, could not be said of the Port trade, which had been steadily losing out to the 1920s fashion for cocktails and Sherry as well as facing competition from the so-called 'Brandy Wines' of the British Empire. Prices fell and a number of firms encountered serious financial difficulties although, as always, the growers were hit hardest. With the notable exception of Quinta do Noval, nearly all the major shippers passed over the outstanding 1931 vintage, which is almost certainly the finest year in the twentieth century never to be widely declared (see page 194).

Although by no means autocratic in temperament, Salazar behaved like a neo-Pombaline saviour of the Douro. In 1933 (the same year as the constitution of his *Estado Novo* or 'New State' came into force) Salazar created the three corporate organisations which survive more or less intact to this day. Based in Oporto, the Instituto do Vinho do Porto (IVP) was to be the senior body with responsibility for the general supervision and administration of the industry but also maintaining a particular interest in the day-to-day business of the Gaia *entreposto*. The Casa do Douro was set up as a secondary authority to monitor and supervise the 30,000 growers within the Port demarcation. Housed in a gloomy building that looks remarkably like a 1930s cinema on the main street in Régua, the Casa do Douro continued to operate with impunity even when it was severely compromised by a questionable business deal in 1990 (see page 49). In order to balance the equation, all Port shippers had to belong to the Grémio dos Exportadores do Vinho do Porto or Exporters' Guild to which the IVP granted the Certificates of Origin that accompanied shipments abroad. However, in order to be registered as a shipper (i.e. exporter), two onerous conditions had to be fulfilled. Firstly, the company had to maintain a stock of at least 150,000 litres (just under 275 pipes) and, secondly, it had to be in possession of a lodge in the Gaia *entreposto* capable of holding an amount in excess of this quantity of wine. With the exception of one or two flagrant abuses in recent years, Salazar's tripartite arrangement, which later produced the annual *benefício* system (explained in Chapter 2), has served the industry reasonably well for over eighty years. Back in the 1930s, when over-production had become a serious problem, the Casa do Douro's power to buy up excess stocks of wine from growers certainly helped to bring supply back in line with demand. Prospects for the Port trade improved in the mid-1930s, helped by the lifting of Prohibition in the United States and a growing market for inexpensive tawny in France – however, nearly 50 per cent of all Port produced still went to the United Kingdom. Some of this was re-exported, for Ernest Cockburn records that on one occasion in 1934, 20,000 cases of Port were sent to the United States by one firm just two and a half days after the wine had arrived in cask from Oporto. In the last of many anecdotal entries in his book *Port Wine and Oporto*, Cockburn records how at

the end of May 1938, the Port lodges closed 'to enable their staff to participate in the great festivities organised ... in celebration of the new regime in Portugal which had now reached its twelfth year of success'.

WINE AND THE SECOND WORLD WAR

When war broke out in September 1939, the Port trade effectively came to a standstill. Although Portugal technically remained neutral throughout the hostilities, all British families were advised to leave Oporto and a destroyer was sent to Leixões to oversee the evacuation. Many of the older members of the trade chose to remain behind and enjoyed a life of relative comfort and plenty at a time when the rest of Europe was on its knees. Compared to Lisbon, which was a hotbed of intrigue and espionage, Oporto remained a quiet backwater. In the Douro, where food was in relatively short supply, Pinhão and the vicinity were kept from going hungry by an enterprising local family who ran a flourishing black market in essential supplies. Wolfram was mined in the Douro near Sabrosa and at Quinta do Vesúvio, and was exported directly to Germany. Perhaps sensing the outcome of the war, Salazar finally suspended wolfram shipments in 1944. In 1943 the British briefly toyed with the idea of invading the Azores but, in the spirit of the Treaty of Windsor and sensing an Allied victory, Salazar granted them the use of the islands as a naval and air base.

Annual shipments of Port to the United Kingdom fell to just 1,500 pipes (compared to 30,000 to 40,000 pipes in the 1930s) but most shippers continued to maintain a London sales office throughout the war. Many arrived at their offices to find they had been blitzed the previous night, and there were stories of streams of precious vintages from the 1920s and 1930s running down the streets near London Bridge. When one shipper visited his bombed-out office, he found builders pouring the remaining bottles of pre-war vintage Port (probably *estufado* from the heat) into an old kettle and drinking it from tin mugs! Port shipments began to recover slightly after the Grémio negotiated a quota system with the Minister of Food, Lord Woolton, in 1942. The quota system divided Port into two grades: grade one for inexpensive Ports and grade two for 'superior wines' like vintage Port and aged tawny. The quota remained in force until 1949, at which time the latter represented a mere 5 per cent of annual shipments.

THE OPORTO TIME WARP

In the immediate aftermath of the war, the Port shippers fully expected a recovery similar to that which followed the First World War. In preparation for a surge in shipments the Port Wine Institute authorised a *benefício* of 70,000 pipes. The shippers bought heavily and in 1945 they had accumulated stocks amounting to 300,000 pipes (165 million litres). They were sorely let down. Port shipments rose steeply in the year after the war to 280,000 hectolitres, only to fall sharply again thereafter. A trio of exceptional post-war vintages (1945, 1947 and 1948) failed to stimulate much interest; the outstanding 1927 vintage,

WAR AND ROSÉ

Port shipments fell to the lowest level ever recorded in 1942 with just 11,000 pipes shipped abroad. There was a huge surplus of grapes in the Douro and the growers were desperate. Sensing a commercial opportunity, an employee of Port shippers Martinez Gassiot, Fernando van Zeller Guedes, joined up with a group of Oporto businessmen to establish a new company with the aim of exporting wine to Brazil. During the 1942 vintage, Guedes bought over a thousand pipes of wine from Douro farmers. In a letter to his brother written that October Guedes states that 'the firm has been launched in the region ... the farmers speak well of us, even very well, especially those who do not hide their satisfaction at having done business with us'. It was whilst travelling in the Douro that Guedes had a brainwave:

'I went through the Douro on a scruffy little donkey, or walking the entire day long. You hadn't time to have a bath, assuming it was possible to have a bath, and you went straight to bed when you arrived at the hotel. During the night at this particular establishment I was woken by bed bugs, and I had to get out of bed and sit on a stool in the room. Having been awakened, I had to do something so I looked at the notes I had made during the day setting out my ideas for the present and the future. I was always making notes and thinking about brands...'

And in June 1943 the new company launched its first brands: a Vinho Verde named Cambriz, red and white Douro wines named Granado and Vila Real – and a fizzy rosé named Mateus. The company, subsequently named Sogrape, became the largest wine producer in Portugal, buying up Port shippers Ferreira in 1987 and Sandeman in 2002.

which was still trading at pre-war prices, had a dampening effect on their pricing. Most British wine merchants were not interested in using up their valuable import quotas with vintage Port, so the shippers bottled the 1945s themselves and held the wine until the good times returned. A disparaging story was put about by the English wine trade that the corks used for the Oporto bottlings were of poor quality. This story was without foundation, as I found in 1998 when I had the opportunity to compare the London and Oporto bottlings of Dow's 1945 vintage Port side by side. Due to the post-war glass shortage, much of the latter was bottled in brown sherry bottles.

At this time just 2 per cent of all Port was bottled in Oporto. The remainder continued to be shipped in cask and bottled at its destination, either accompanied by appropriate labels from the shipper or under the merchant's own name. The creative marketing and public relations that has done so much to promote Port brands in the 1980s and 1990s was almost non-existent. When Sandeman advertised their brand on London buses before the war, Walter Berry, a partner in the famous firm of Berry Bros. & Rudd, described their wine disparagingly as 'omnibus Port'! But in the post-war period the Port trade sank so low that there was no money for promotion.

Unlike much of Europe, which underwent a social revolution in the wake of the Second World War, Portugal, under the firm authoritarian grip of Salazar, seemed to go backwards in time. One Port shipper who returned to Oporto after war service remembers a 'time warp' with an 'upstairs-downstairs world' of domestic service. William ('Bill') Warre, who first went to Oporto in 1948, recalls a feeling of comparative luxury along with 'Victorian service'. He reached Oporto by cargo steamer which crossed the bar of the Douro when the tide permitted and moored at the quayside at Vila Nova de Gaia, stacked high with pipes of Port. With trade remaining slack Warre spent much of his time shooting partridge either on the Aveiro marshes south of Oporto or in the Douro. Wyndham Fletcher of Cockburn's records 'There was no new business ... we spent our time examining stock; in other words tasting through our old vintage Ports!'

In the Douro, the *quintas* continued to make their wines in the time-honoured manner, trodden by foot in granite *lagares*, most of which had been built in the nineteenth century or earlier. Cars were still something of a rarity and, until the late 1950s, many shippers preferred to visit outlying properties on foot or by mule rather than risk their vehicles on the appalling roads and tracks. Sarzedinho, a village in the Torto valley producing some outstanding wines, was only accessible by stepping stones. Despite the difficult times, a number of Port shippers clubbed together to build a bridge across the river in order to reach the vineyards. Between 1945 and 1949 the Salazar government continued to legislate, adopting Álvaro Moreira da Fonseca's points system to classify vineyards from grade A to I, a system that is still in use today (see pages 58–62). At the same time the Casa do Douro laid the foundations for the formation of co-operatives to create an outlet for hard-pressed growers.

The continuing depression in the late 1940s and throughout 1950s meant that many shippers fell on desperately hard times. Michael Broadbent, former head of Christie's Wine Department in London, recalls the gloom that pervaded his first visit to Oporto in 1953:

'The view from the old British Club was splendid, but not the surroundings. The poverty in Oporto was appalling with barefoot children in rags. More to the point, most shippers were on their last legs, some on the point of bankruptcy; also staying at the Club was a management consultant who was as glum as his clients across the river. The feeling we all had was that the Port trade was on the verge of extinction.'

Throughout the 1950s Port shipments remained static at a little over 200,000 hectolitres per annum. Exports of inexpensive Ports to France and Belgium/Luxembourg increased but with the Americanisation of taste, shipments to English-speaking markets remained static or fell. With less than 20 per cent of the Douro's production fortified to make Port, Mateus Rosé was the main beneficiary. The Port shippers were further wounded by the sudden imposition of the so-called Lei do Terço in September 1959, which required each shipper to maintain a three-to-one stock ratio. In other words, for every pipe of Port sold in a year, a shipper needed to have two in the cellar in order to comply with the law. Port producers

fell over each other trying to acquire stocks before the law came into force just a year later, stretching themselves further just to stay in business. Some sold *quintas* in order to survive; others folded or merged.

Of the eighty-three registered shippers in existence at the end of the war, there were around fifty remaining in 1970, many of which had either been taken over by multinationals (Croft, Delaforce, Cockburn and Sandeman) or amalgamated into private groups. By the early 1970s, the only British shippers remaining in private family hands were Taylor/Fonseca and the Symington-owned houses of Dow, Graham, Warre, Quarles Harris, Gould Campbell and Smith Woodhouse. One small independent shipper always kept on good terms with Royal Oporto as they assumed that they would be taken over by them at some stage.

NOT-SO-SWINGING SIXTIES

Flower power, miniskirts, rock music and all the other cultural icons of the 1960s virtually bypassed Portugal, which was still kept on a tight leash by the elderly and idiosyncratic Salazar. But however much he protected the country from the outside world, Portugal was forced to change. In 1961 a guerrilla war began in Angola and rapidly spread to the other colonies in Africa. As the young and able-bodied left Portugal, either to fight in the wars or emigrating to escape military service, the country suffered an increasingly debilitating drain of its resources. Over a million people emigrated – mainly to France and Germany – between 1960 and 1970, with the rural districts of Vila Real, Viseu and Bragança (corresponding with the Douro) registering the highest rates of depopulation. It is estimated that the region lost 20 per cent of its population in ten years. Thousands of small farms were abandoned, and whole villages left virtually deserted with only a few elderly crones in charge.

In these circumstances, the traditional *lagares*, which required between one and two people per pipe (a total of twenty to thirty men) in order to tread the grapes effectively, were no longer viable and it fell to the shippers to come up with alternatives. Some adopted the so-called *movimosto* (see p. 132), an ill-fated adaptation of the traditional *lagares*, whilst others built huge centralised wineries equipped with autovinification tanks (see Chapter 3). Although electricity had reached Pinhão in the mid-1930s, supply remained erratic and many outlying properties were still without power. Conventional extraction methods like pumping over with electric pumps (*remontagem*) were not a viable alternative.

In the Douro, as in other Portuguese wine regions, Salazar promoted the formation of centralised co-operative wineries. The first of these was established at Mesão Frio in 1950 and a total of twenty-two were built over the following sixteen years. The co-ops were set up to attract small farmers in the Baixo Corgo and on the higher margins of the region. By the early 1990s they registered nearly 13,000 members, just short of half the total number of growers in the Douro. The largest co-operative at Santa Marta de Penaguião has 2,000 members, 85 per cent of whom tend less than a hectare of vineyard.

During the 1960s the Port trade began to see signs of recovery. The outstanding 1963 vintage (declared in 1965) was well received by the trade. According to Michael

Symington, 'we began to realise that things were picking up when we sold more 1963 vintage Port than the 1896, making it the most successful declaration for over sixty years'. Declarations in 1966 and 1970 were similarly well received. From around 280,000 hectolitres per annum at the start of the decade, total shipments increased to 350,000 hectolitres between 1965 and 1969, finally overtaking pre-war levels in the early 1970s. Over the same period, the value of Port exports almost tripled as exports of wine in bottles increased in share. Accounting for just 6 per cent of shipments at the start of the 1960s, exports of bottled Port grew to 24 per cent by 1974. By 1970, most vintage Port was now being bottled in Gaia and in 1973 a law was passed making it obligatory for all future vintage declarations to be bottled at source.

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

Alistair Robertson, 1937–

Alistair Robertson had to be persuaded to come to Oporto in 1966. The Port trade was at a low ebb and his Aunt, Beryl Yeatman, had recently been left with two Port houses, Taylor and Fonseca. She had two alternatives: bring in her nephew or sell up. Alistair, working in the brewing industry at the time, admits that he was reluctant to take it on but finally agreed to 'give it a go'. Despite the company's excellent reputation for vintage Port, it was not selling enough wine to make a profit. Alistair Robertson had the idea for a new category of Port: wine from a single year or vintage, fined and filtered so it could be drunk by the glass without decanting. Taylor launched their 1965 LBV (late bottled vintage) in 1970, accompanied by a letter to the wine trade signed by Alistair. It had a mixed reception to start with, one detractor saying 'it will kill the Port trade, but it will kill Taylor first'. It did the opposite, and within a few years other shippers had followed with their own LBVs; sales of LBV now add up to half a million cases a year. Alistair Robertson retired as Managing Director of the Fladgate Partnership in 2000.

FLOODING THE DOURO

The River Douro had long been an unpredictable torrent, prone to serious floods or *cheias* in the winter months. One of the most devastating floods occurred in December 1909. Ernest Cockburn records how the lodges close to the river in Vila Nova da Gaia were completely flooded and steamers broke from their moorings such was the force of the current. One much-loved steamer, the *S.S. Douro*, was swept out to sea and wrecked on rocks near Leixões. When the *cheia* was at its height, it nearly covered the lower deck of the two-tier bridge linking Oporto and Vila Nova de Gaia, and at one stage it was feared the entire structure might collapse. Conditions were no better in the Douro where pipes of Port were washed downstream and out to sea, being found – sometimes still full of wine – as far up the coast as Viana do Castelo. An entry in the visitors' book at Quinta

do Bomfim records that the flood ‘carried away lodges, olive trees and vineyards ... the river rose with extraordinary rapidity, on the 23rd it reached the lodge here and the iron work of the Pinhão bridge’.

In the 1950s and 1960s plans were drawn up to harness the force of the river with a series of monumental dams equipped with hydroelectric stations. The last working *barco rabelo* descended the Douro in 1964 and the first dam was completed at Carrapatelo, just upstream from Oporto, in 1971. Other dams at Bagauste (Régua), Valeira, Pocinho and Crestuma followed in quick succession, transforming the mighty Douro into a series of placid finger lakes. Apart from the obvious loss of land and the inconvenience of rerouting part of the railway and the Régua to Pinhão road, the main concern among the Douro growers and Port shippers was the possible increase in humidity and the effect it might have on the vines. In the event, few noticed much difference apart from the incidence of cold winter fogs which become trapped in the narrow valley during stable atmospheric conditions.

However, the building of a dam in the Côa valley, a wild and remote tributary in the Douro Superior, proved to be much more controversial. First mooted by Salazar, the scheme only began to take shape in the 1980s when EDP (the Portuguese electricity company) decided to create a reservoir which would cover over 1,700 hectares of land, including most of Ramos Pinto’s Quinta de Ervamoira. Apart from the ecological implications, the dam would undoubtedly have transformed the climate in this part of the Douro where summer temperatures sometimes reach 50°C. Initial protests fell on deaf ears, with the government of Aníbal Cavaco Silva seemingly determined to go ahead with the plan. Then in 1995 archaeologists discovered Palaeolithic engravings on the schistous rocks by the side of the River Côa. Hundreds of pictures of wild animals were found etched into the rock, testifying to human habitation in the area as far back as 26,000 BC. For a time the authorities refused to give in to demands to halt the dam, which was by now under construction, suggesting that some of the engravings could be either copied or moved. A leading article in *The Times* newspaper in London accused the Portuguese government of living in the Third World, and in October 1995 the Côa dam became an election issue with the Socialists promising to put a stop to the project if elected. Following their victory, construction was indeed halted and the entire Côa valley opened to visitors as a ‘parque archeologico’ (see page 269). Three years later the valley was designated as a World Heritage site. The building of another dam downstream in the Tua valley is now proving equally controversial.

REVOLUTION

When the tanks rolled into the streets of Lisbon on the morning of Thursday 25 April 1974, the establishment was taken by surprise. Salazar had died four years earlier and in the early 1970s his successor, Marcelo Caetano, had begun to liberalise the regime. Caetano’s reforms were insufficient to satisfy the younger officers in the Portuguese armed forces, who were

coming to believe in a political rather than military solution to the long-running colonial wars. There was little resistance and much jubilation in the streets when the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) brought an abrupt end to fifty years of totalitarian rule. The *coup d'état* itself was good-natured with very little bloodletting and, in the immediate aftermath, life continued much as it had before. Oporto was calm on the day of the coup and the British played their customary game of cricket on the Saturday after the military had seized power.

At first it seemed as though the new military junta would do no more than tinker with the existing institutions. All Salazar's Grémios were abolished, the Grémio dos Exportadores do Vinho do Porto being replaced by a voluntary Port Wine Exporters' Association (AEVP). Otherwise, apart from the inevitable *saneamento* (purge of figures from the old regime), business continued as usual in the months following the coup. However, the 1974 vintage took place against a political showdown when President António Spínola – who had only taken office five months before – resigned, warning the Portuguese people of a 'new slavery'. Throughout the winter of 1974 and 1975 left-wingers in the armed forces, many of whom had learnt their politics from the African liberation movements, made a concerted bid for power. It culminated in the so-called *verão quente* (hot summer) of July and August 1975 when the ostensibly democratic revolution ran completely out of control.

Throughout this volatile period, Portuguese firms were more vulnerable than foreign companies, most of which managed to keep a low profile. Much of the economy fell into state ownership when the banks and insurance companies were nationalised in March 1975. Two Port shippers were seized. Borges & Irmão was nationalised along with the bank of the same name, and Royal Oporto was taken over by its own workforce. In April 1975 the employees of Sogrape at Avintes near Vila Nova de Gaia set the fire hoses on an approaching revolutionary mob to prevent them from taking control. The following month, remote and often conservative villages in the Douro and Trás-os-Montes were subject to a programme of *Dinamização Cultural* ('Cultural Dynamisation') by the military. This was described by General Morais da Silva, Air Force Chief of Staff, as a campaign where 'the military will work, spade in hand, alongside the local populace to win their confidence and, having raised the blockades, make them take part in the revolutionary process'. At the same time Committee of Management was appointed to oversee the Casa do Douro, led by Captain Pardal, a member of the MFA. This was not well received by the generally conservative growers in the region, who took to the streets of Régua to protest, and the military were eventually forced to climb down.

When in August 1975 Otelio Saraiva de Carvalho (one of the members of the ruling military triumvirate) returned from Cuba and implied that there might be a need to round up all Portugal's counter-revolutionaries and extinguish them in the Lisbon bull ring, many leading Portuguese families decided it was time to pack up and leave. Fully expecting to have to abandon the country in a hurry, one Port shipper decided to send all his family photograph albums to England just to retain a record of life in Oporto and the Douro. The owner of one Douro *quinta* told me how he and his young family fled the country to escape arrest, crossing the River Guadiana to Spain in the dead of night

and driving a battered Alfa Romeo to one of the Biscay ports before journeying by sea to England. Like many other leading Portuguese families, they re-emerged in Brazil, only returning to Portugal in the 1980s. In the summer of 1975 it was rumoured that the entire Port trade was on the point of being nationalised but the dismissal of the pro-Communist Prime Minister, General Vasco Gonçalves, prevented the papers from being signed; others say that the British Prime Minister, James Callaghan, intervened. There can be little doubt that but for the strong foreign presence in Oporto, the Port trade would have been nationalised.

In the midst of all this revolutionary fervour, a scandal broke which would have been deeply damaging to the Port trade had the world not been more concerned about the Portuguese political climate at the time. German authorities carrying out routine carbon-dating tests found that the three previous vintages (1972, 1973 and 1974) had been fortified with industrial alcohol instead of *aguardente* distilled from wine. At the time the Portuguese government exercised a monopoly in the distribution of fortifying spirit through the Casa do Douro. Eventually the fraud was traced back to an agent in France but, with the Portuguese regime in turmoil, there was little that the shippers could do to claim recompense. Though it was completely harmless, the Casa do Douro intervened and bought up large quantities of spurious Port wine. For the following vintage, the Casa do Douro doubled the price of *aguardente* from 11,000 escudos to 22,000 escudos a pipe.

During the autumn of 1975, a violent backlash took place in northern Portugal which nearly paralysed the country. For a few weeks it seemed as though civil war might erupt but, after another bid for power by the left-wing of the armed forces on 25 November when guns were mounted on the Arrabida bridge between Oporto and Gaia, Portugal's political mainstream returned to power. The African colonies were now gone, and on 25 April 1976 the revolution ended peacefully with the first genuinely free elections for over fifty years. Portugal emerged with a democratically elected Socialist government under Prime Minister Dr Mario Soares. In 1977, seeking both political and economic stability, his government took the first important step to becoming a member of the European Union. Nearly forty years on, the revolution is now a fading memory for most people, recorded in countless street names, 'Rua 25 de Abril' having been substituted for 'Rua Dr Antonio de Oliveira Salazar' throughout Portugal. As President of Portugal, in 1988 Mario Soares dined with the Port shippers at the Factory House, the first head of state to do so since Manuel II visited Oporto in 1908.

ALL CHANGE

Over the last quarter of the twentieth century, the Douro landscape changed more rapidly than at any time since the phylloxera epidemic of the 1870s. Reflecting the Portuguese love of acronyms, the first major development was the PDRITM (Projecto de Desenvolvimento Rural Integrado de Trás-os-Montes) supported by the World Bank. Commonly known in English as the 'World Bank Scheme', this ambitious project offered low-interest loans to farmers in one of

THE CASA DO DOURO SAGA

In 1990, 40 per cent of the shares in one of the largest shippers of the time, Real Companhia Velha (also known as 'Royal Oporto') were bought by the Casa do Douro. The deal provoked strong opposition from the majority of Port shippers who felt that the acquisition of shares in Royal Oporto by an organisation with statutory powers amounted to a massive conflict of interest. One leading shipper declared that the deal was tantamount to a 'referee turning player'. In spite of a wave of protest, the Portuguese government nonetheless consented to the deal. The scandal, reported (mainly) by the British media, prompted a press conference at the Vintner's Hall in London in February 1991 at which the President of the Casa do Douro, Mesquita Montes, defended his position. 'The aim of the participation of the Casa do Douro in the Capital of Real Companhia Velha is to quickly enable the growers to start trading their own products,' he declared. At the same press conference Manuel de Silva Reis, Chairman of Real Companhia Velha, told the audience that the potential conflict of interest was 'an imaginary problem'. Imaginary or not, the deal did not prove to be beneficial for the Casa do Douro or the growers they purported to represent. By the mid-1990s the Casa do Douro had been effectively bankrupted.

Sadly, successive governments, perhaps fearing the electoral consequences from 33,000 growers and their dependants, have baulked at fundamental reform. But with debts running at 110 million euros in 2003, the government was finally forced to act. A new single inter-professional body, the Instituto dos Vinhos do Porto e do Douro (IVDP) was created to govern and represent the interests of both Port and Douro wine producers. The new organisation is a fusion of several bodies and has sole responsibility for the control and guarantee of both Port and Douro wines. The IVPD also has full control of the *benefício* (the annual authorisation of how much grape must may be fortified to make Port in any one year), leaving the Casa do Douro with the administration and management of the *cadastro* (vineyard register).

Europe's poorest agricultural regions. It was seized upon by Douro growers, relatively wealthy Port shippers included, who were permitted to plant or replant between three and ten hectares of vineyard provided that the land was officially classified as being of A or B grade and that only five prescribed grape varieties were used. In 1982 ten leading Port shippers joined forces to create ADVID (Associação para o Desenvolvimento da Viticultura Duriense). Supported by the new University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (UTAD) in Vila Real, this became the first properly funded vineyard research programme in the Douro. The World Bank Scheme allowed the members of ADVID to put many of their ideas into practice and whole hillsides of traditional stone-walled terraces, many never replanted after phylloxera, were excavated and replaced by modern *patamares* or vertical *vinha ao alto* (see Chapter 2). By 1990, 2,500 hectares of new vineyard had been planted and a further 300 replanted.

Portugal's accession to the European Community (now European Union) in 1986 accelerated the pace of change. In June of the same year, independent growers were permitted to export their wines directly from the Douro without them having to pass through the *entrepoto* at Vila Nova de Gaia. For the first time for nearly sixty years single *quintas* were now permitted to sell Port directly into export markets. By 2004 there were over sixty *produtores-engarafadores* (producer-bottlers) registered with the IVDP (including eleven co-operatives), but their share of Port sales remained small at under 2 per cent. Taking advantage of the legislation in reverse, one prominent shipper, Quinta do Noval, relinquished its lodges in Gaia and moved lock, stock and barrel to new purpose-built *armazéns* in the Douro.

Another important consequence of Portugal's membership of the European Union was the liberalisation of the distribution of the grape spirit or *aguardente* used to fortify Port, which continued to be a state monopoly until 1990. Shippers are now free to purchase *aguardente* on the open market with the result that the overall quality has improved markedly (see page 138).

Since Portugal joined the European Union, huge amounts of capital have been invested in the country's infrastructure, with impressive new mountain-breaching roads penetrating inland from the towns and cities on the coast. A new motorway from Oporto has been under construction since 1995, progressively cutting the journey time to the Douro. When the tunnel currently under construction underneath the Serra do Marão finally opens, it will mean that Pinhão will be an easy commute from the shippers' lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia. Another fast road is also being built to connect the Cima Corgo and Douro Superior.



'Bombs house', São João de Pesqueira

With an end to the Douro's isolation, the region's commercial prospects have diversified and improved. Inhabitants have returned to villages they deserted in the 1960s, and the rural landscape has been transformed (mostly for the worse) by the construction of anomalous little houses whose architectural styles derive from France and Germany where many of their occupants spent the intervening years. On the outskirts of São João de Pesqueira one such house is famously decorated with bombs, its owner having been engaged in fighting the colonial wars!

At the start of the twenty-first century, measures were finally taken to protect much of the unique Douro landscape from further development. The Alto Douro Vinhateiro was granted UNESCO World Heritage status in 2001. Out of the 250,000 hectares that constitute the demarcated region, 24,600 have been protected, extending from Rede in the Baixo Corgo all the way upstream to Pocinho in the Douro Superior, as well as the lower reaches of the Rivers Corgo, Varosa, Tavora, Torto and Pinhão. It includes nearly all the finest pre- and post-phylloxera walled terraces as well as *quintas*, *adegas*, chapels, villages and ruins, some dating back to before the Pombaline era. The main blot on the Douro landscape is the town (officially the city) of Régua that has grown, seemingly uncontrolled, in all directions, although this is just outside the boundary of the World Heritage Site.

PORT UP TO DATE

In 2011, a total of just over 34,000 growers were farming 45,000 hectares of vineyard in the Douro, mostly in the Baixo Corgo sub-region, just under a third of which is under vine. In common with most of northern Portugal, the Douro region is fragmented into tiny holdings, numbering over 142,000. Over 80 per cent of these are less than half a hectare in size, and a mere 0.01 per cent of holdings have an area greater than 30 hectares. The average area of vineyard per grower is 1.32 hectares, divided between 4.17 plots.

In the five years up to and including 2011, the average *benefício* (i.e. the amount of grape must authorised to make Port) was 110,700 pipes (60.89 million litres) which converts into 76.11 million litres of Port. The production of unfortified Douro wine, which has increased markedly in recent years, averaged 56.27 million litres (2008 to 2011). These figures, however, disguise the huge variation in production between different vintages, which is both a function of the climate and the licensing system or *benefício* (see Chapter 2). Douro wines are covered separately in Chapter 6.

During the 1980s and 1990s, world-wide Port shipments grew strongly, peaking at 10.3 million cases in 2000 (representing a value of 415 million euros) but falling gradually to 9.2 million cases (353 million euros) in 2011. Despite this, the so-called 'Special Categories' of Port, which include reserve, aged tawnies, colheita, LBV, crusted and vintage, have been growing steadily. They currently make up 20 per cent of all sales by volume and 37 per cent by value (see Chapter 4).

France has been the principal market for Port for over thirty years, taking over from the United Kingdom in volume terms in 1963. With sales of 2.53 million nine-litre

cases in 2011, France is followed by Holland (1.34 million cases), Portugal (1.18 million cases) and Belgium (1.07 million cases). The UK comes in fifth place with annual sales of .98 million cases. Of the main markets, Canada registers the highest average price per litre at the equivalent of 9.29 euros, compared with 3.51 euros per litre in France; the latter figure has barely moved in over a decade. In North America (USA and Canada) the Special Categories register over 50 per cent of sales.

With a history dating back nearly five centuries, the future prospects for Port and the Douro are considered in a postscript at the end of the book.

Notes

1. Forrester offers the following 'receipt' or recipe for jeropiga: 'to fifty-six pounds of dried elderberry, and sixty pounds of coarse brown sugar, or treacle, add seventy eight gallons of unfermented grape juice, and thirty-nine gallons of the strongest brandy. Mix all thoroughly together.'
2. Vizetelly is somewhat confused here, as the railway runs on the north bank of the River Douro, the same side as the village of Pinhão.
3. Silva & Cosens' steam boiler was made at Dukinfield near Manchester – and the certificate issued with the boiler is signed by Stanley Politt, a distant relative of the author of this book.

2

VINEYARDS, VINES AND QUINTAS

‘MINHA TERRA’

It is all too easy to be possessive about the Douro. Deep valleys, tiny villages and remote *quintas* engender a strong sense of place among those who live and work there. Ask someone where they come from and they will tell you, with great pride, the name of the *povoação* or hamlet where their family live. This, they will state emphatically, is ‘*minha terra*’ (my land). Centuries of isolation have bred a strong spirit of individuality and self-sufficiency in the people of the Douro. Emotions run deep and, occasionally, so does conflict. Disagreements between parties sometimes fester for generations.

The Douro means different things to different people. Gazing up his pyramid of terraces, a vineyard owner proudly explained to me that it was the ‘eighth wonder of the world’. A growing number of foreign tourists have come to see it in the same light. To the Port shipper who alludes to the Douro as ‘our river’, the region is primarily a place to do business. At certain times of the year when riverboats, speedboats and water skiers ply the water, the river can be something of a playground. But for most of the 35,000 growers who tend the region’s tiny plots of vineyard, daily life in the Douro is plain hard graft.

ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

It is hard to imagine a more challenging place in which to grow grapes and, at first sight, even harder to conceive how the banks of the Douro ever came to be planted with vineyards. Part of the explanation can be found in the underlying geology. The bedrock beneath the greater part of northern Portugal is the grey Hercynian and pre-Hercynian granite that can be seen in the gaunt civic buildings of central Oporto. Rarely very far from the surface, this hard rock frequently penetrates through the poor, thin quartzite soils, making much of the land

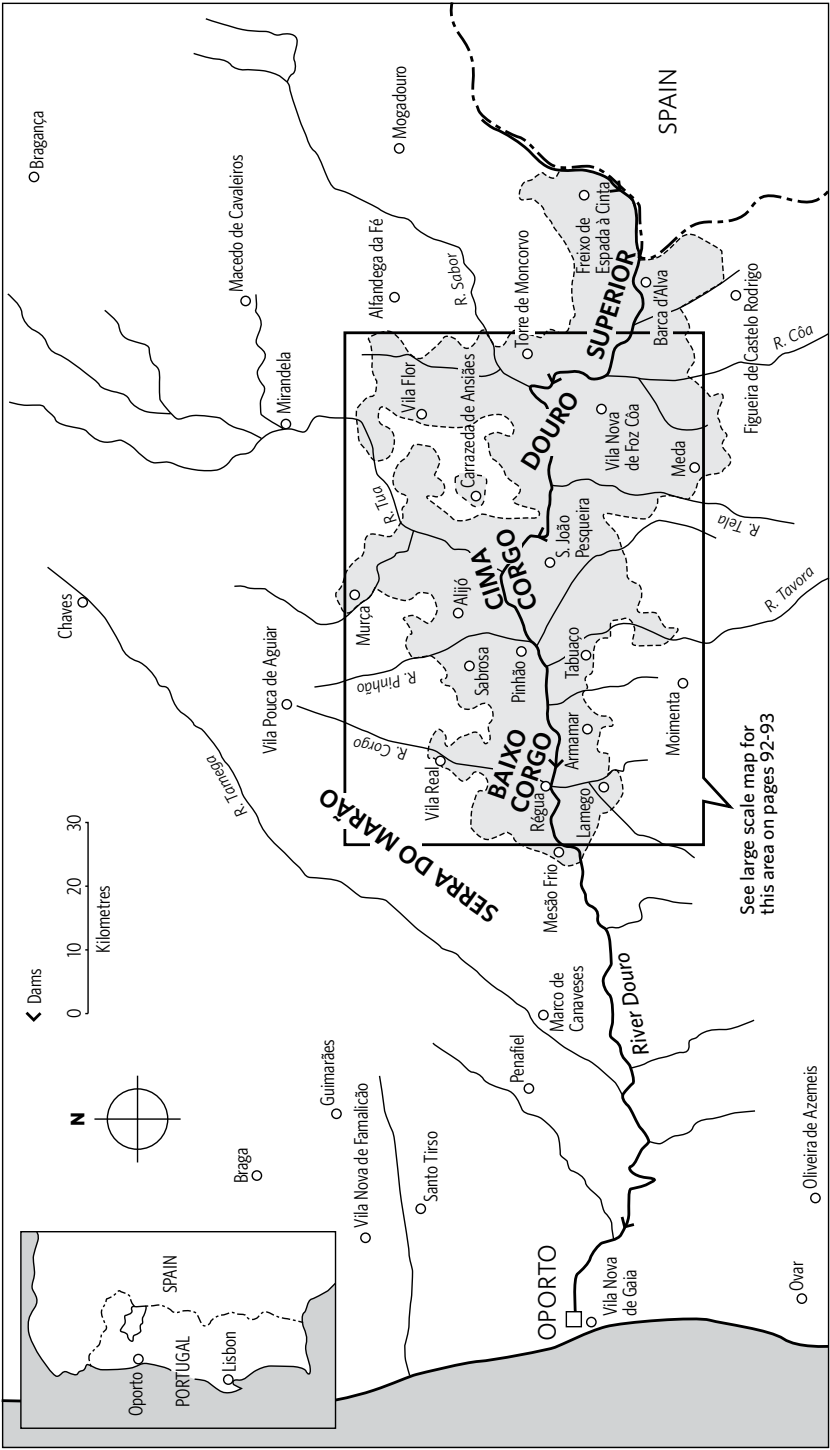
virtually unworkable. Vines, which need to root deeply in order to flourish, are impeded once they reach the impregnable granite. On the *planaltos* or high plateaux to the north and south of the River Douro, growers can do little more than scratch a living from the land.

The geology of the upper part of the Douro valley stands out from the remainder of northern Portugal. The greater part of the region belongs to a geological formation known as the pre-Ordovician Schist-Greywacke Complex or merely 'schist' for short. Unlike the surrounding granite, this foliated, slate-like rock can be worked into a coarse soil. Lumps of schist on the surface shine almost like polished steel in strong sunlight, reflecting and absorbing heat according to the angle of the sun's rays and reducing erosion during heavy winter downpours. Over time the schist weathers into a fine silt-like dust, clouds of which billow up from trails and tracks, covering cars during the dry summer months. The Douro's soils tend to be fairly acid (pH 4.6–5.5), high in potassium but low in calcium and magnesium. This causes a condition known locally as *moromba* (curling and drying of the leaves during the growing season). Originally thought to be a virus, this is now successfully treated by applying borax to the soil. The proportion of organic material in the Douro's schistous soils is low (typically less than 1.5 per cent) and regular application of both organic and inorganic fertilisers is necessary to correct the imbalance of nutrients.

Below the topsoil the schist tends to fracture vertically, facilitating both the infiltration of water and the penetration of roots to depths far beyond those possible with granite. It is not surprising that to those farming the Douro schist is almost a religion, and it is not uncommon to come across an outlying chapel dedicated to São Xisto ('Saint Schist'). Here and there huge outcrops of rugged granite pierce the schist, notably from the town of Carrazeda de Ansiães to the Douro at Cachão de Valeira, which marks the natural boundary of two of the Douro's three sub-regions (see below). There is not much you can cultivate in these intractable soils.

The boundary of the demarcated Port region has been modified a number of times since it was first established in the mid-eighteenth century and now it mostly follows the outline of the schist. Travelling up river from the west, the region starts at Barqueiros, 75 kilometres inland from Oporto, and stretches eastwards to Barca d'Alva on the frontier with Spain, 160 kilometres as the crow flies from the coast. It encompasses a total area of 250,000 hectares, of which just over 45,000 hectares – representing 18 per cent of the total – are planted with vines. This makes the Douro region the largest area of mountain vineyard in the world.

Forming a deep cleft in the rock, the River Douro runs from east to west and forms the natural axis for the region. The river itself, progressively dammed to form a series of placid finger lakes, flows at an altitude of between 60 and 140 metres above sea level. The terrain either side of the Douro is irregular in the extreme, with deeply incised tributaries draining the mountains to the north and south. These rise in places to over 1,000 metres on the margins of the region. With half the region's vineyards planted on slopes with a gradient in excess of 30 per cent, there are few wine regions that are so arduous and costly to cultivate as the Douro.



Map I The North of Portugal and the Douro

CLIMATE: MACRO, MESO, MICRO

The weather conditions in the north of Portugal bear a remarkable similarity to the wine country of northern California. This is explained by their proximity to a large expanse of cold ocean, the Atlantic and Pacific respectively. During the height of summer, the waters of the north Atlantic are still so cold that they cause a bank of fog to build up just offshore. It lurks there after sunset and rolls in silently during the night, frequently leaving Oporto shrouded in fog at daybreak. Occasionally it will cover the entire *litoral* of northern Portugal, gradually burning off progressively towards the coast as the sun penetrates. Mark Twain's observation 'the coldest winter I have ever spent was a summer in San Francisco' might apply equally to Oporto.

In winter, spring and autumn Atlantic depressions bring rain-bearing westerlies causing frequent heavy downpours on the hills and mountains that rise from the narrow *litoral*. Oporto, by no means the wettest place in northern Portugal, receives an average of 1,200mm of rain a year. By way of a comparison, the annual rainfall in Manchester, north-west England (the butt of many a wet joke), amounts to 800mm. It is therefore no coincidence that the coast north of Oporto is known as the Costa Verde (Green Coast) and the local wine is the distinctly cool climate, high acid/low alcohol Vinho Verde.

Although the Vinho Verde region abuts the Port and Douro demarcation, no two wines could be more different. Surrounded on three sides by high mountains, the upper reaches of the Douro are largely protected from the Atlantic, earning it the provincial name of Trás-os-Montes ('Behind the Mountains'). To the north the Serras de Alvão, Padrela and Bornes help to shield the region from cold northerlies. Directly to the west the granite massif of the Serra do Marão, rising to 1,400 metres, casts a rain shadow over the entire region. Along the entire length of the Douro Valley there is a steady but dramatic transition from the temperate, humid Atlantic conditions that prevail on the coast towards the more extreme continental climate of the central Iberian *meseta*. It is not uncommon to leave Oporto shrouded in grey mist, traverse the Marão in a downpour and emerge on the other side in bright sunshine.

At a mesoclimatic level the transition is evident within the 90-kilometre extent of the Port wine region itself. This is most clearly illustrated by the annual rainfall figures along the course of the River Douro. Lying immediately to the east of the Serra do Marão at an altitude of 430 metres, Vila Real (the regional capital of Trás-os-Montes) receives an average of 1,130mm. Down by the river at an altitude of roughly 100 metres, the annual average rainfall at Régua is around 950mm. This figure drops to 650mm at Pinhão in the heart of the Port wine region, 25 kilometres upstream. By the time you reach Barca d'Alva another 70 kilometres upstream on the frontier with Spain, the average annual rainfall total is as little as 380mm a year.

Rainfall in the Douro is strongly seasonal, with heavy rains in the winter and spring sometimes giving way to long periods of unrelenting drought during the summer months broken only by occasional localised thunderstorms. During the wettest months (December and January, March in some areas), average monthly rainfall varies from over

200mm at Fontes in the west of the region to 50.6mm at Barca d'Alva in the east. But weather patterns are unpredictable and vineyard yields are easily diminished by relatively cool, wet Atlantic weather at the time of flowering in late May or early June. A westerly airstream prevails for most of the year, but the wind occasionally veers round from the east bringing scalding weather conditions from central Spain during the summer months and dry, biting winds in the winter. This gives rise to the rhyme readily trotted out by locals that '*nem bom vento, nem bom casamento vem de Espanha*' – neither a good wind nor a good marriage comes from Spain!

As rainfall declines inland, so temperatures increase. The annual average daytime temperature in Oporto is 14.4°C, rising to 15.5°C at Régua, 16.2°C at Pinhão and 16.5°C at Pocinho. The highest annual average temperatures are found along the river and fall to as low as 11.8°C on the higher margins of the region, but these averages obscure the extremes that increase markedly towards the Spanish border. During the winter months the thermometer frequently falls below freezing on the northern *planalto*, the area known by the locals as the *Terra Fria* (Cold Land). In summer it has been known to rise to an unbearable 50°C in the deep valleys of the upper Douro; the *Terra Quente* (Hot Land). Since the river was dammed in the 1970s (see page 45), a blanket of freezing fog often hangs over the Douro when atmospheric conditions are stable during the winter. Late spring frosts are not uncommon at higher altitudes, damaging young shoots in the vineyard and sometimes wiping out the potential crop.

Given the contorted terrain, there is also considerable variation in the microclimate – not just within a single vineyard but within a single terrace, right down to micro variations within the vine canopy. Despite an increase in research into the microclimatic ramifications arising from differing methods of cultivation, vine spacing and trellising, most growers still rely on empirical knowledge of their own vineyards. Many larger properties embrace a number of different exposures and can span an altitude range of 300 metres or more. For example, at Quinta de la Rosa, which ranges from 90 to 260 metres above sea level, the difference in temperature between the top and bottom of the vineyard can be as much as 4°C. As a result, ripening and therefore picking dates can vary by as much three weeks within one property.

The climate of northern Portugal also has a bearing on the ageing of Port, and this is considered in Chapter 4.

THE SUB-REGIONS OF THE DOURO

The Douro divides naturally into three sub-regions, each of which has its own distinct mesoclimate and therefore tends to produce a different style and character of Port.

The smallest of the three sub-regions in overall area is the **Baixo Corgo** (below the Corgo). This is the most westerly and therefore most accessible part of the Douro centred on the city of Régua where the Port trade first took hold (see page 10). Covering a total area of 45,000 hectares, it is still the most intensively planted part of the Douro valley with a total of 14,100 hectares, representing 31.3 per cent under vine. With 13,850 registered

growers, the average size of a vineyard holding is just 1.02 hectares. In the shadow of the Serra do Marão, the Baixo Corgo is much the coolest, wettest and most productive of the three zones and therefore tends to produce large volumes of lighter wines for the standard ruby and tawny blends that are the bread and butter for the majority of Port shippers.

Curiously, the River Corgo itself, a tributary that joins the Douro just upstream from Régua, does not quite mark the official boundary between the Baixo Corgo and the second sub-region, the **Cima Corgo** (above the Corgo). This is to be found about 8 kilometres upstream at Covelinhas. With a total area of 95,000 hectares, vineyards amount to 20,800 hectares, representing 21.89 per cent of the total area. With a total of 14,500 hectares, the average holding is slightly larger than those in the Baixo Corgo at 1.43 hectares. Most of the larger properties are to be found on the banks of the River Douro and its tributaries: the Têdo, Távora, Torto, Pinhão and Tua. Representing the zone where the Atlantic influence gives way to the continental / Mediterranean, the climate is considerably warmer, drier and more reliable than it is downstream. All the major shippers own vineyards in the Cima Corgo, and wines from the area form the basis for premium styles of Port, especially aged tawnies, LBV and vintage.

The most easterly sub-region, the **Douro Superior**, is a relative newcomer to Port, having been hampered for centuries by poor access and isolation (see Chapter 1). It is the largest of the three sub-regions, covering 110,000 hectares of land, but still has the fewest vineyards despite a considerable increase in recent years. With 10,200 hectares in 2011, just 9.3 per cent of the region is under vine. With 6,500 growers the average size of vineyard holding is larger here but is still only 1.56 hectares. The climate in the Douro Superior is marked by continental extremes, with drought a recurring problem. A number of growers have resorted to installing drip irrigation in order to make up for the natural deficit. The Douro Superior is capable of producing some fine, powerful wines, most of which are used for premium blends including vintage. There has also been a considerable increase in the amount of vineyard devoted to producing unfortified Douro wine.

VINEYARD CLASSIFICATION: A TO I

No matter how hard I try, it is impossible to find a word either in Portuguese or English with the same extended meaning as the French expression *terroir*. It is an all embracing term that combines soil, aspect, macro-, meso- and microclimate as well as human input and tradition. *Terroir* is frequently held up to justify the difference in the character of a wine produced in one place from another. For want of a better expression, *terroir* forms the basis of a detailed classification of Douro vineyards on which the production of Port is based. Devised by Álvaro Moreira da Fonseca (see opposite), the system has served the region well with only minor revisions since, most recently in 2001.

Each and every vineyard plot within the Douro (and there are over 143,000 separate holdings) is graded according to a system of points. Twelve different physical variables are incorporated into the classification in order of importance as follows:

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

Álvaro Moreira da Fonseca (1902-1980)

A graduate in agronomy (1932) and a grower in the Douro, Álvaro Moreira da Fonseca quantified the *terroir* of the region with his works *O Método para a Elaboração do Benefício do Douro* (The Method for the Elaboration of the *Benefício* in the Douro) and *A Distribuição do Benefício na Região Duriense* (Method for Distributing the *Benefício* in the Douro Region). Devised when most of the world was at war and published by the then Port Wine Institute (IVP) in 1947 and 1954 respectively, these rather dry-sounding titles literally shaped the Douro in the second half of the twentieth century by awarding points to individual vineyard holdings according to twelve physical variables (see below).

Moreira da Fonseca's work was very much a product of the controlling political regime at the time but it has endured to this day and, with minor modifications, still forms the basis of the *cadastro* or vineyard register on which the *benefício* or licensing of Port production is granted today. He wrote a number of books on Port, especially from a historical angle. His last work was as co-author of the remarkable *Port Wine – Notes on its History, Production and Technology*, published by the IVP in 1981. Among the positions he held during his lifetime were Head of the Laboratories and Research of the IVP and President of the Casa do Douro. Few men in the world of wine can have been so successful in putting numbers to the nebulous concept of *terroir*. Given the convoluted politics and conflicts of interest in the Douro region, I fear it would be impossible to implement a comparable system today.

Locality: Reflecting the mesoclimatic differences within the demarcated region, the Douro is divided into five sections, each of which contain a number of different sub-sectors as follows:

Section 1: The higher parishes of the Baixo Corgo north of Régua with the coolest climate: 0 to plus 60 points.

Section 2: From Barqueiros to the River Corgo on the north side of the Douro (including Régua) and from Barro to the River Vilar on the south side (i.e. most of the Baixo Corgo including the Corgo and Tanha valleys): minus 50 to plus 260 points (27 sub-sectors).

Section 3: From the mouth of the Corgo to the River Ceira (near Gouvinhas) on the north side of the Douro and from the Vilar to the Têjo rivers on the south side: minus 50 to plus 460 points (18 sub-sectors).

Section 4: The heart of the Cima Corgo and some of the Douro Superior, extending all the way from the Ceira and Têjo rivers in the west as far east as the Sâo valley (near Pocinho). It takes in all the main tributaries including the Távora, Torto, Caedo, Pinhão and Tua rivers: minus 50 to plus 600 points (38 sub-sectors).

Section 5: From the Saião to Barca d’Alva on the Spanish border, most of the Douro Superior) including the River Sabor and areas away from the Douro around Freixo de Espada and Vila Nova de Foz Côa: plus 140 to plus 460 points (14 sub-sectors).

Altitude: On the basis that altitude has a marked effect on climate, scores vary between 240 positive points for vineyards situated up to 150 metres above sea level to 900 minus points for those above 650 metres. Subdivided by locality (above), this effectively rules out Port production from vineyards on the highest and therefore coolest margins of the demarcated region.

Productivity (yield): Based on the principle that more productive vineyards produce poorer wines, a maximum score of 120 points has traditionally been awarded to vineyards producing 600 litres per thousand vines to a minimum of minus 900 points above 1,800 litres per thousand vines. However, in the light of the increasing mechanisation of Douro vineyards and consequent lower planting densities (see the section on planting below), the regulation now asserts a regional maximum of 55 hectolitres per hectare. Up to this limit all vineyards receive 120 points.

Soil type: A maximum of 100 points is awarded to schistous soils, minus 100 for soils described as ‘transitional’, minus 250 for granite and minus 400 for alluvium. The latter are virtually non-existent since the valley floor was flooded in the 1970s. The only alluvial soils are to be found alongside the River Vilarica in the Douro Superior.

Vine training: Given that vines trained closer to ground level yield riper fruit, vines grown up to a height of 0.8 metres are awarded 100 points (although an exception is made nowadays for widely spaced vines). Vines growing on pergolas (a.k.a. Vinho Verde) are completely excluded from Port production.

Grape varieties: These are covered in much more detail below, but the numerous varieties planted in the Douro were originally classified by Moreira da Fonseca into five groups ranging from 150 points for grapes described as ‘very good’, 75 points (‘good’), 0 points (‘regular’), minus 150 points (‘mediocre’) and minus 300 points (‘bad’). The system has subsequently been subdivided into varieties that are either ‘recommended’ or simply ‘authorised’. Grapes that are recommended and considered ‘very good’ are awarded 150 points whereas varieties that are authorised yet classified as ‘bad’ score minus 150 points. The full list of recommended and authorised grapes may be found in Appendix III.

Angle of inclination (slope): *Bacchus amat colles* (‘Vines love hills’) wrote Virgil, and it is certainly true that the best vineyards are usually to be found on well-drained slopes. One point is awarded to vines grown on a flat site with an inclination of up to 2 per cent; up to 101 points for slopes in excess of 70 per cent.

Aspect and exposure: The angle at which the sun's rays strike the soil and the duration of insolation are particularly important during the maturation period. In the cooler westerly sub-sections of the Douro, a southerly exposure is favoured over a north-facing slope whereas in a hot year south-facing vineyards in the Douro Superior may suffer from excess heat. For this reason points vary from minus 30 for a north-facing property in sub-section 1 (above) to plus 100 for a slope facing south in sub-section 4.

Stoniness (soil texture): Stonier soils allow rainwater to penetrate, and the schist both reflects sunlight and acts as a heat reserve, thereby modifying the microclimate below the vine canopy. Stony soils are therefore awarded 80 points with no score being given to soils lacking in stone.

Age of the vines: Older vineyards generally yield less but produce more concentrated wines. For this reason vines less than five years old are excluded altogether from Port production (with implications for the methods of grafting outlined below). Those between four and twenty-five years of age receive 30 points and those more than twenty-five years old are given 60 points.

Shelter: The narrow tributaries of the Douro are more sheltered and therefore hotter than the exposed *planaltos* north and south of the river. Consequently, the most sheltered sites are awarded a score of 60 points as opposed to the most exposed, which receive zero.

Vine density: Higher densities generally reduce the vigour of each vine, the theory being that as every plant yields less it produces grapes of better quality. In the past, densities above 5,700 vines per hectare were penalised whereas densities between 4,000 per hectare and 5,700 per hectare were awarded 50 points. Now all vineyards with a density above the legal minimum of 3,000 vines per hectare are awarded 50 points.

After taking each of the variables into account, the maximum number of points that can be awarded to any one vineyard is 2,031, with the minimum being a theoretical (but impossible) minus score of 3,129. After a great deal of number crunching, each holding is classified according to the total number of points, as follows:

- Class A: above 1,200 points
- Class B: 1,001–1,200 points
- Class C: 801–1,000 points
- Class D: 601–800 points
- Class E: 401–600 points
- Class F: 201–400 points
- Class G: 1–200 points
- Class H: 0 – minus 200 points
- Class I: minus 201 points – minus 400 points

The 'A' grade vineyards are almost all located deep in the Douro valley and its tributaries upstream from Covelinhas, with properties rated 'B' to be found at slightly higher altitudes. Many of the 'C' grade vineyards are situated around Régua or on the high ground north and south of the river. Vineyards categorised as 'D' and below are either in the westernmost part of the region downstream from Régua or on the *planaltos* around Vila Real, Murça, Meda and Lamego.

THE *BENEFÍCIO*

The vineyard classification is the basis for the *benefício* or licensing system that determines the amount of Port that may be produced in any one year. Taking into account the previous year's sales and stocks of Port held by the trade, the Oporto-based Instituto dos Vinhos do Porto e do Douro (Port and Douro Wine Institute or IVDP) regulates the total amount of grape must that may be fortified to make Port. The total amount of *benefício* (measured in pipes of grape must of 550 litres) from 2001 to 2011 is shown in Appendix II.

Since 2003, the task of apportioning the *benefício* between the 34,000 growers has been undertaken by the IVDP. With its head office in Oporto and a branch in Régua, the IVDP is a public body representing growers, wine producers and shippers. Amongst its many functions, the IVDP has now assumed overall responsibility for regulating the *benefício* via the *communicado da vindima* or vintage communiqué, which is issued to growers in August before each harvest. Using the *cadastro* or register compiled by the Casa do Douro, the *benefício* is awarded to growers on the basis of their vineyard classification (above). For example, in 2011 an A-grade vineyard was authorised to produce 1,560 litres per hectare of must for fortification, whereas an F-grade vineyard could fortify 523 litres per hectare. Any vineyard with a classification below F had no entitlement to produce Port.

Further information on the responsibilities of the official bodies that regulate and promote Port can be found in Appendix I.

VINEYARD LAYOUT

Planning and planting a new mechanised vineyard in the Douro is as intricate as building a new town. Access, gradients, drainage and density all have to be considered in detail if the property is to function efficiently over a commercial life of fifty or more years. Over the past four centuries, the slopes of the Douro have been sculptured into various shapes and forms according to economic circumstances. The feature that all these methods of cultivation have in common is the initial deep ploughing or ripping of the earth to create a coarse topsoil roughly 1 to 1.3 metres in depth.

The earliest commercial vineyards in the Douro were planted on narrow, step-like terraces supported by retaining dry-stone walls built to a height of between one and two metres (see figure 1a). On the steepest slopes (with gradients of up to 70 per cent) these traditional terraces, known as *socalcos*, support no more than a single row of vines planted at a density

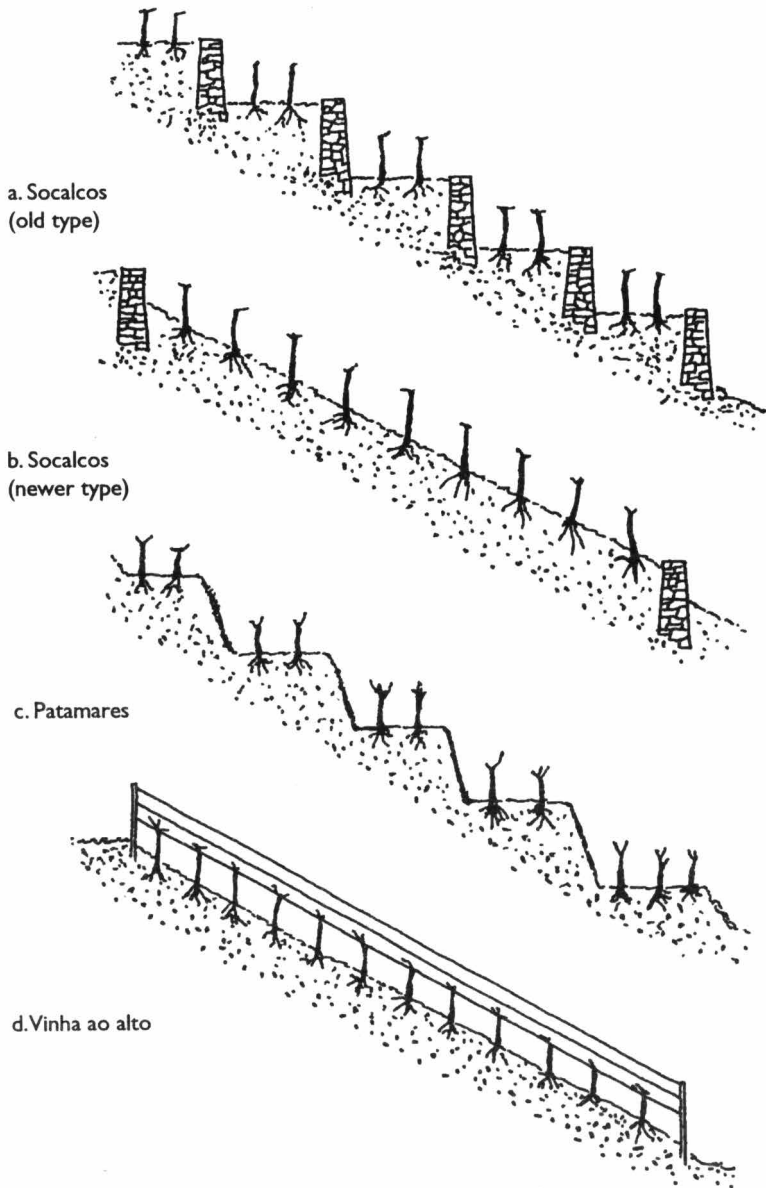


Figure 1. Contrasting systems of cultivation in Douro vineyards

of 3,000–3,500 per hectare. Some of the oldest *socalcos* dating from the seventeenth century still display *pilheiros* or *boeiros*: the regularly spaced square holes in the vertical walls from which vines sprouted, thereby leaving the horizontal surface free for the cultivation of other crops. When phylloxera swept through the region in the 1870s many of these terraces were

abandoned, leaving whole hillsides of *mortórios* (mortuaries), the patterns of which are still discernible under the blanket of scrub that has taken over in the intervening years

The terraces that were rebuilt following phylloxera tend to be broader and inclined, supporting ten or more rows of vines at a density of 5,000 to 6,000 per hectare (figure 1b). Photographs from the 1900s clearly illustrate the extent of the reconstruction with armies of men armed with crowbars hacking away at the schistous bedrock. Much of this rock was used to construct the retaining walls, some of which are up to five metres high and unnecessarily thick, reflecting the amount of stone that had to be removed from the ground. The finest example of contrasting pre- and post-phylloxera terraces can be seen on the Pinhão-São João de Pesqueira road at Quinta do Bom Retiro and Quinta da Corte in the Torto valley.

By the 1960s these traditional methods of terracing were no longer viable. Yields from vineyards replanted in the wake of phylloxera were falling to uneconomic levels, and with sales of Port in the doldrums many growers either sold or abandoned their *quintas*. Labour was also in chronically short supply (see page 44) and mechanisation was the only option for the Port trade to survive. Bulldozers arrived in the Douro in the late 1960s and began carving out new contour-hugging terraces known as *patamares* (figure 1c). The first of these were built at Ramos Pinto's Quinta do Bom Retiro in conjunction with a research organisation called the CEVD (see below). In place of the high retaining walls, which impeded access and had become so costly to construct and maintain, the *patamares* were constructed with a steeply inclined earth ramp known as a *talude*. Tracks angled diagonally across the slope link up the terraces, allowing vehicles into Douro vineyards that had previously been the preserve of man and mule. The earliest *patamares* were densely planted, each terrace supporting up to three rows of vines that could be tended by specially adapted tractors known as *enjambeurs*. This quickly proved to be completely impractical; the *enjambeurs* are designed to straddle a row of vines and consequently have a high centre of gravity causing them to topple over and roll down the slope with predictably catastrophic results. Subsequent *patamares* have therefore been planted with up to 2.2 metres between each row of vines, compared to a spacing of 1.3 metres on the traditional terraces. This allows small caterpillar tractors (many of which are made by Lamborghini) to circulate between the rows of vines.

The Douro's ambitious mechanisation programme gathered pace in the 1980s under the PDRITM or World Bank Scheme. Offering low-interest loans financed by the World Bank, growers were authorised to plant or replant up to ten hectares of land graded A or B (mainly in the Cima Corgo), provided that they were planted with one or more five specific grape varieties (see below) and set out on *patamares*. For nearly a decade the Douro echoed to the sound of earthmovers and explosives as whole hillsides, many abandoned in the wake of phylloxera, were carved up and replanted. Between 1985 and 1990, 2,800 hectares of vineyards were replanted. The scheme proved to be a short-term success and it is a sad fact that after twenty to twenty-five years many of the so-called 'PDRITM vineyards' now need replanting just as the vines have reached their prime. Many of the early *patamares* have suffered from serious erosion on the *talude*, either exposing the roots of the closest row of vines or causing the vines to fall down the

hill. António Magalhães, vineyard manager for the Fladgate Partnership, describes the PDRITM as the 'worst moment of viticulture in the Douro' but concedes that it was a phase the region had to go through to get to where it is today. Most growers now only use *patamares* on gradients over 35 per cent, restricting them to one or two rows of vines. Undoing the mistakes of the PDTRIM is already proving to be a costly but increasingly necessary undertaking. Since 2002 the Fladgate Partnership have been building what they term 'second generation' *patamares* using laser technology. These parallel terraces have an inbuilt incline of 3 per cent into the hillside, preventing excessive run off, and are planned with much better drainage to prevent erosion.

The main drawback of the *patamar* system is the lower planting density of around 2,400 to 3,500 vines per hectare. This induces greater vigour in the individual plants, making the vineyard more difficult to manage. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Port shippers Ferreira and Ramos Pinto, who own adjoining *quintas* in the Rio Torto, came up with a radical alternative: *vinha ao alto* (see figure 1d). By ignoring the contours and planting vines in vertical rows up and down the slope, densities of 5,000 vines per hectare can be attained. At Ferreira's Quinta do Seixo, tracks cross the slope at right angles to the rows of vines giving access to tractors equipped with winches to hoist a plough or the giant cannons used for spraying the vines against fungal diseases. Most producers now use small tractors or quad bikes to work the rows between the vines; the latter work twice as quickly but have to be fitted with speed limiters to curb the Portuguese penchant for fast driving. It is now accepted that *Vinha ao alto* is only viable on slopes with gradients of up to 35 per cent and some of the steeper slopes at Seixo have already been replanted with *patamares*. Although *vinha ao alto* is more challenging to cultivate than the *patamar* system, most growers agree that the higher planting density helps to produce better wine.

Since 1985 nearly 22,000 hectares of Douro vineyards have been replanted and mechanised, but this leaves around 50 per cent of the region's vineyards still planted on traditional unmechanised *socalcos*. As one grower remarked, 'The only machine in the Douro which will go up steps is a mule.' With much of the Douro having been designated as a World Heritage Site, there is now a desire to preserve many of the remaining terraces with their stone walls. In the late 1990s, Quinta do Noval replanted 47 hectares of particularly fine post-*phylloxera* terraces. Wishing to preserve the retaining walls that are such a distinctive feature of the Pinhão valley, Noval constructed miniature or *micro-patamares* within the old terraces. These provide a flat surface for a narrow, lightweight caterpillar tractor known as a 'Multijyp'. Developed in Switzerland, where small, steeply inclined vineyards are the norm, this agile little vehicle can climb a couple of parallel planks to move from one terrace to the next. Noval claim that the Multijyp has been a success but it has not been widely adopted; most other growers prefer to construct access ramps onto the *socalcos* and plant at densities that permit the passage of small tractors among the vines. The iconic terraces at Warre's Quinta do Bom Retiro Antigo have recently been replanted in this way, but 10 per cent of Symington's 1,000-hectare estate is still unmechanised. Few shippers now have their own mule, but with so many old inaccessible terraces still in use, there must be a good business for someone to set up a branch of 'rent-a-mule'!

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

The CEVD: José António Ramos Pinto Rosas (1919–1996) and João Nicolau de Almeida (1949–)

The CEVD (Centro de Estudos Vitivinícolas do Douro) was established in the late 1960s to examine the mechanisation of Douro vineyards. Backed by the leading shippers, two of the main pioneering figures came from the then family-owned Port house of Ramos Pinto. José António Rosas was passionate about the Douro, especially viticulture. His nephew João Nicolau de Almeida recalls going to the Ramos Pinto lodge for his first job interview with 'Tio Tó' after graduating in oenology from Bordeaux University in 1974. The conversation was short: 'Oh pá ('mate'), it is no good talking here in Porto. What if we go to the Douro for the weekend? So we went. In two days of walking up and down he demonstrated his preoccupation about the inertia of the region, he worried, blushed, gesticulated, named those responsible. He showed me, step by step, a vine that was diseased, another poor thing that had died, next to one which was a beauty (Tinta Barroca was his favourite) so that it was difficult to move on as each vine was a living individual to be looked at with love and respect.'

With the backing of the CEVD José António Rosas devised the system of *patamares* that are now widely used in the Douro, the first of which were constructed at Ramos Pinto's Quinta do Bom Retiro in the early 1970s. Gesticulating like a professor who has solved a particularly knotty mathematical problem, João Nicolau de Almeida illustrates the saving in costs: 'One man can now carry out the same amount of work in ten hours that used to take fifteen men a total of fifteen hours.' In 1974, after studying military maps of the region, Rosas established Quinta de Ervamoira on relatively flat land in the Douro Superior and laid it out vertically (*vinha ao alto*) by grape variety. Using their empirical knowledge of the Douro, the two men embarked on a project to select the five best grape varieties (the so-called 'top cinco'). The results of this study were presented in a communication delivered by both men in 1981 at the University of Trás-os-Montes. Despite the controversy this caused at the time, the conclusions of this study were accepted by the World Bank, which supported the planting of 2,500 new hectares of vines. Rosas was well into his seventies when he bought his own property, Quinta da Touriga, which is now run by his son Jorge, who is also Export Director of Ramos Pinto. Together, José António Rosas and João Nicolau de Almeida literally shaped the Douro in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

GRAFTING, TRAINING AND PRUNING

Ever since phylloxera ravaged European vineyards towards the end of the nineteenth century, nearly all *Vitis vinifera* varieties have been grafted on to phylloxera-resistant American roots (see page 28). The choice of rootstock is important, to ensure compatibility between the scion and the root as well as the soil and the environment.

In the Douro a rootstock known locally as Monticola (*rupestris du lot*) proved to be the most popular because of its ability to adapt to the poor schistous soils. This has subsequently been found to promote too much vigour in some varieties, aggravating the recurring problem of excessive vegetative growth combined with poor fruit set. Touriga Nacional was particularly badly affected. Since the 1950s, hybrids of *berlandieri* with *riparia* (420-A, SO4) and *berlandieri* with *rupestris* (R99, R110, 1103 P and 196-17) have been introduced. The best of these seem to be the R110 and 1130P, both of which are resistant to drought and help to limit the natural vigour inherent in certain Douro varieties.

Until the 1990s, American rootstocks were planted directly into the newly prepared soil where the vine would be allowed to establish itself before being cut back and grafted with a *vinifera* variety. Given the fairly arid conditions in the Douro, this method – known as field grafting – resulted in an unacceptable level of failures (over 20 per cent in some places). As vines are only permitted to produce grapes for Port in the fourth year after grafting, field grafting delays the first commercial crop of grapes by a year. Nowadays most Douro vineyards are planted with pre-grafted vines, often bench-grafted (i.e. grafting prior to planting) in France. These are considerably more costly and require a higher initial investment but reduce the number of failures to between 5 and 10 per cent. Bench-grafting actually saves time as well as money, and also makes for a stronger, more regularly shaped vine that adapts more readily to mechanisation. Many shippers are now using plastic grow tubes that protect the young vine and foster growth. Adrian Bridge, Managing Director of the Fladgate Partnership, calculates that vine mortality has been reduced to as little as 2 per cent.

When the ground has been excavated, ploughed and tilled, planting takes place at the end of the winter or in early spring when soil water reserves are usually fully replenished. Slim posts hewn from local slate were traditionally driven into the ground to support the row of vines, but the brittle nature of the slate coupled with increasing mechanisation has led to treated wood or steel being used as a replacement. A new vineyard will normally undergo training and trellising in its second year.

Unlike Australia and New Zealand, little research has yet been undertaken into the implications of vineyard canopy management; however, there is now a general view that a higher vertical training leads to better photosynthesis. Two methods of training are commonly used. The first is an imperfect form of double guyot in which the vine is pruned back to leave two shoots with around ten buds per plant. Nuno Magalhães, Professor at UTAD, believes that the traditional guyot makes vines resistant to drought and increases vine longevity. He laments that few people in the Douro know how to prune a guyot any longer.



Octogenarian vine

Guyot has mostly been superseded by a spur-pruned permanent, unilateral or bilateral cordon with eight buds or twelve buds respectively per vine. Although this is more difficult to maintain, and yields less than guyot, it has a number of advantages, chief among which is the ability to adapt to mechanised pre-pruning. The vine canopy is generally supported on three wires. Depending on the method of training, the canes or spurs are normally tied to a first wire approximately 60cm from the ground, followed by a single or double movable wire 30 to 35cm above to support the year's growth. A final wire roughly 1.6 metres from the ground helps to strengthen the trellis and provides further support for wayward tendrils. Although it is not yet officially permitted, the Fladgate Partnership have been experimenting with a number of training methods including Smart-Dyson and a system known as Tekuta Two Tier (TK2T) both of which, with a greater number of buds per vine, allow for increased planting density and narrower *patamares*. At first sight many of the Douro's vineyards appear unruly compared to the neatly trimmed hedges of vines seen in Bordeaux and Burgundy. In an attempt to achieve greater sunlight penetration, a number of growers now practice summer leaf pruning that gives fruit exposure to some late ripening varieties.

PESTS AND DISEASES

Despite the seemingly arid conditions in much of the Douro, vine diseases are rife. Among the most insidious are oidium and mildew, both of which reached the region in the nineteenth century and are controlled respectively by sulphur dusting (*'enxofre'*) and

systemic sprays. The number of treatments varies according to the year and the location of the vineyard. In the Douro Superior two or three treatments will normally suffice, whereas growers in the Baixo Corgo may have to spray their vineyards as many as eight times in a damp spring and still find themselves fighting a losing battle. Most of the old densely planted vineyards have to be sprayed by hand although in some years a number of larger properties have used helicopters to treat the vines against oidium and mildew; these have now been dispensed with due to high costs. Bunch rot (*Botrytis cinerea*) is endemic throughout most of the region, especially in old mixed vineyards with a high proportion of Tinta Amarela, a variety that is particularly susceptible. This is controlled by spraying with *caldá bordelesa* (copper sulphate, known as 'Bordeaux mixture'). But rot is most damaging when induced by rain late in the growing season, by which time it is often too late to spray as chemical residues might find their way into the wine. The 1993 and 2002 harvests were notorious for producing poor quality pale wines, frequently tainted by rot.

The grape moth (*cochylis* and *eudemis*) can cause severe damage in the vineyard, destroying buds or boring its way into ripe grapes, bringing on bunch rot. In the Douro Superior a leaf-hopper known as *cicadela* has begun to be a serious problem at some vineyards, damaging the leaves of the vine and reducing levels of photosynthesis. Tinta Roriz and Tinto Cão seem to be the most susceptible varieties. Leaf hoppers are also the vectors for bacterial diseases, among them Pierce's Disease and Flavescence Dorée, neither of which have thankfully been identified so far in the Douro.

Viral diseases introduced from the rootstock are a continuing problem, frequently reducing yields and delaying the ripening of fruit. *Enrolamento* or leafroll virus seems to be most acute in dry years. The deep autumnal colours that are frequently admired by visitors to the Douro at the end of the growing season are a manifestation of the problem. A co-ordinated programme to eliminate viral diseases from the Douro's vine stock is sorely needed.

At the opposite end of the scale from these microscopic pests and diseases are the marauding wild boar that frequently venture into the vineyards eating grapes or tearing at young vines. In a region where so much of the wildlife has been shot, poached or pilfered, hunting wild boar is a sport that continues with understandable impunity.

FERTILISERS AND HERBICIDES: TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE VITICULTURE

Fertilisers are applied to correct the soil balance before planting, with the emphasis on phosphorous, nitrogen, calcium, boron and organic material. Thereafter, most growers practise a three- or four-year rotation, applying both organic and inorganic fertilisers. Thirty years ago agrochemical salesmen worked hard in the Douro. Perhaps viewing fertilisers as a panacea for low yields some growers (including some of the major shippers) undoubtedly over-fertilised their vineyards in the 1980s, upsetting the vegetation balance to the detriment of their wines.

The use of herbicides has increased dramatically since the construction of *patamares* in the 1970s and 1980s. Although weeds have to be hand-picked for the first two

years, Mediterranean *arbutus* shrubs quickly take root on the *taludes* and need to be controlled. The need to apply systemic sprays and herbicides makes organic cultivation almost impossible on all but the highest, well-ventilated *vinha ao alto* slopes. A number of shippers are now members of a scheme called Protecção Integrada that operates from an ecological point of view to minimise treatments. The Fladgate Partnership are leading proponents of this form of sustainable viticulture, sowing alternate cover crops in between rows of vines both to reduce erosion in *vinha ao alto* and to fix nitrogen in the soil. On the second generation single-row *patamares* developed by David Guimaraens and vineyard manager António Magalhães, the vines are planted towards the front of the terrace, which is 2.3 metres in width, leaving space behind for a small tractor equipped with a mower to cut the vegetation both on the flat surface of the *patamar* and on the steep slope of the *talude*. This helps to bind the slope and reduces erosion during winter, spring and early summer when torrential downpours are most frequent. David Guimaraens describes this form of viticulture as ‘90 per cent organic’.

ORGANIC PORT: PIONEERS

There are still very few producers of certified organic wine in the Douro. A small producer, Casal dos Jordões with forty-three hectares in the Torto Valley, has led the way making a unique selling point from producing organic Port since the 1990s. Some of the larger shippers are now taking to organic cultivation. In 1992 Fonseca began by cultivating two hectares of organic vineyard at the top of Quinta do Panscal. They have subsequently replanted Quinta do Santo António, a six-hectare vineyard in the Pinhão valley that has formed a part of Fonseca vintage Port for over a century, so that it can be cultivated organically. Working with a number of independent farmers, the result is reserve Port, certified organic, called Terra Prima.

Since taking over Cockburn's Vilarça vineyards in 2010, the Symington family have been producing organic Port and Douro wines (Graham's Natura and Altano Biologico) and have a small organic vineyard at Quinta dos Lages in the Torto. The drier Douro Superior lends itself to organic viticulture much better than the more humid Cima Corgo or Douro Superior. They all restrict their treatments to *enxofre* (sulphur) and *calda bordelesa*, and use pheromones to confuse or trap insects. Production from an organic vineyard tends to be about 15 per cent lower and labour costs are much higher. Taking into account that the fortifying spirit also needs to be certified organic, Charles Symington estimates that the cost of producing an organic Port is around 40 per cent more than its non-organic equivalent.

GRAPE VARIETIES: A BRIEF HISTORY

Portuguese vineyards have traditionally been set out in a seemingly haphazard manner, with numerous different grape varieties interplanted on the same small plot. Ask the average small grower how much of this or that grape variety he has growing in the vineyard and he will almost certainly shrug his shoulders and utter the words *não sei* – I don't know! It is not that he is being coy; it is just that he really won't know. In the Douro, where as many as ninety different varieties have been sanctioned for planting at any one time, this means that there can be twenty or more different grapes growing cheek by jowl in the same small garden-sized plot.

This viticultural anarchy has naturally hampered research into the characteristics of individual grape varieties. The first reference to specific grape varieties in the Douro is in the work of Rui Fernandes who wrote the *Descrição do terreno em roda da cidade de Lamego, duas leguas* ('Description of the land, two leagues around the city of Lamego') in 1531–1532. Among the varieties that are still recognisable today, Fernandes mentions Bastardo, Trincadente, Malvasia, Catelão (sic), Lourelo, Verdelho, Donzelinho, Terrantes, Mourisco and Felgoso (sic). Of these Trincadente is probably Tinta Amarela (Trincadeira), Catelão is Castelão, which is no longer planted in any quantity in the Douro, and Lourelo is Loureiro, a variety now confined to Vinho Verde. Others like Agudelho, Alvaro de Sousa, Bural Camarrinho and Ceitão have either changed name or are now extinct.

For growers eking a living from tiny parcels of vineyard, the interplanting of numerous different grape varieties was (and in many places continues to be) a good insurance policy. A variety susceptible to, say, uneven flowering could be offset by another, more resistant grape that might be prone to rot later in the growing season. Likewise, a variety susceptible to drought would be offset by another that was drought resistant (see note on irrigation below). By hedging their bets in this way the Douro's farmers could assure themselves of a reasonable crop of grapes in all but the most extreme of years. Fernandes himself confirms this, observing that 'if some varieties fail to yield well in a particular year the others would compensate'.

It wasn't until the mid-nineteenth century that the first of many attempts was made to list and categorise Portuguese grapes, starting with those in the Douro. In 1853, Joseph James Forrester complained that 'an infinite number of different wines could be produced in the Douro if only there could be a separation of grape varieties'. However Forrester's obsession with light, unfortified wines (see pages 52) led him to single out varieties that are not considered particularly suitable for either Port or Douro wine today. Assessing the Bastardo variety, he writes that 'it produces a rich, delicate wine, with delicious flavour and bouquet, and *with little colour*. The Bastardo wine, *properly made* and judiciously treated will in Portugal keep for any length of time *without brandy*'. Likewise, on Alvarilhão (today spelt Alvarelhão) he writes 'it is a very durable wine; and if perfectly made, may be kept in Portugal altogether *without brandy*' (Forrester's italics).

This situation was shortly compounded by the arrival of phylloxera, during which time a number of the more troublesome *vinifera* varieties were probably driven to extinction. Writing in 1876 when phylloxera was at its height, the Visconde de Vila Maior lists a

total of twenty-eight grapes commonly planted in the Douro, including Pé-agudo ('pointed foot') and Entreverde ('green-between', so called because it must have suffered from uneven ripening) that have long since left the local lexicon. Other varieties described in some detail by Maier include Alvarelhão, Mourisco, Mureto (sic) and Tinta Castelloa (probably Castêlão), all of which have subsequently fallen from favour in the Douro. But Vila Maier adds a proviso which is still valid today: 'It must be borne in mind that the same kinds [of grapes] are known in different places by different names; and what still more thwarts the study of ampelography, is the same name is often used in different places to denote very dissimilar kinds. To avoid confusion and mistakes that might arise from this species of anarchy, the best plan would be to verify their synonymes [sic], by giving complete description of all the kinds cultivated – an investigation quite indispensable in making a methodical classification – yet we are still far from seeing this undertaking realised.'

This daunting undertaking was partly realised at the very end of the nineteenth century by Professor Bernardino Cincinnato da Costa (1866–1930). His thorough survey of Portugal's vineyards was written up in both Portuguese and French and published in a heavy, handsome tome entitled *O Portugal Vinicola* (*Le Portugal Vinicole*), for the Paris Exhibition in 1900. The book is illustrated with a series of detailed botanical watercolours by Alfredo Roque Gameiro depicting the principal grape varieties of the day. These include Sousão, Tinto Cão and Touriga Nacional, three red grapes that are still significant in the Douro over a century later. Cincinnato da Costa's authoritative work has never really been equalled. He was followed by Pedro Bravo and Duarte d'Oliveira who travelled the country and in a manual entitled *Viticultura Moderna* (1916) listed the names of 900 grape varieties growing in Portuguese vineyards. Bravo and Oliveira readily

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

Frank 'Smiler' Yeatman (1869 -1950)

The Yeatmans became partners in the firm Taylor, Fladgate & Co. in 1844. Grandson of the first Yeatman partner, Frank Yeatman was the first member of the family to spend a substantial amount of time in the Douro rebuilding and replanting Quinta de Vargellas which was in a poor condition in the wake of phylloxera. By all accounts Frank Yeatman was a tall, charming and diffident man who earned the nickname 'Smiler' from those who knew him well; certainly the contemporary photographs hanging on the wall at Vargellas show him dressed in a heavy suit with a benign smile on his face. In 1927 Frank Yeatman, together with his son Dick, oversaw the planting of the first varietal vineyard in the Douro at Quinta de Vargellas. This vineyard, known as Polverinho, is still in existence above the house at Vargellas and sometimes forms part of the Taylor's Vargellas Vinha Velha *lote*. Although it enabled Taylor's to conduct varietal experiments, it wasn't until the mid-1980s that varietal planting became commonplace at Vargellas. Frank combined his love of Port with a love of golf and Ceylon tea which he had shipped in a chest every year. By the time he retired in 1949 he had been responsible for over fifty harvests.

admit that many of these are the same varieties with different names and complain, like Forrester half a century before, about the lack of research to date. Throughout much of Portugal, the picture was further complicated post-*phylloxera* by the widespread use of direct producers and hybrids intended for use as rootstock that were planted in their own right among indigenous *Vitis vinifera* vines.

Portugal's turbulent early twentieth-century politics meant that little was undertaken in the vineyards until the Salazar regime gained a grip on the country in the 1930s. Port shippers pursued their own isolated attempts at varietal research. An edict was issued banning the use of poor quality American vine species for Port in 1935, but with the establishment of co-operatives after World War II, quantity became more important than quality. Port was fortunately outside the jurisdiction of the Junta Nacional do Vinho (JNV) which, in conjunction with the Estação de Agronomia Nacional at Oeiras near Lisbon, promoted a series of new varieties with less than promising names like Vaca Leiteira ('milk cow') and Carrega Burros ('load the donkeys'). These were widely planted in Estremadura, the Ribatejo and Dão, where they contributed to a collapse in quality, but fortunately they did not find their way into the Douro.

No attempt was made to co-ordinate research into Douro grape varieties until 1968. At the same time as mechanisation began to be an issue due to labour shortages, the CEVD (Centro de Estudos Vitivinícolas do Douro) planted a number of experimental

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

John Smithes (1910–1999)

A partner in Cockburn Smithes from 1938 until it was taken over by Harvey's in 1962, John Smithes was a diminutive man with a famously fiery temper and a devotion to Port. He liked to spend time in the Douro, often eschewing domestic comfort, and was much respected by growers. Encouraged by his grandfather who had been experimenting with different grafting and pruning methods at Quinta do Tua, John Smithes began experimenting with varietal planting in the 1930s. At a time when Touriga Nacional was on the way to extinction, Smithes began a selection process to find higher-yielding clones. Although his pioneering work was not recognised for another thirty years, it led directly to the planting of Cockburn's Vilariça vineyard on virgin territory in 1978 and Portugal's programme of clonal selection which began the following year. It was partly John Smithes' commercial acumen that made Cockburn the largest Port shipper in the UK market with Fine Ruby, followed in the 1970s by Special Reserve. Smithes was an accomplished and respected taster and an accurate spitter, able to hit a target from six feet as he removed his false teeth before tasting. He famously bypassed the 1977 vintage (declared by all the other major shippers), believing that the wines were not up to the required standard, which sadly undermined Cockburn's reputation for vintage Port. When he retired to England in the 1980s, he emulated a Douro *quinta* in South Devon, with terraces and vines.

plots strategically placed in the three different sub-regions of the Douro. Based on empirical information gathered from some of the leading Port tasters and blenders of the day, ten different red grape varieties were selected for study. After five years of intensive investigation, five red varieties were selected in 1981. Touriga Nacional, Touriga Francesa, Tinta Barroca, Tinta Roriz and Tinto Cão became known as the *top cinco* (top five). Under the PDRITM or World Bank Scheme of the 1980s, 2,500 hectares of the five varieties (mainly Touriga Francesa and Tinta Roriz) were subsequently batch planted in single varietal plots.

TODAY'S VINEYARDS: BACK TO THE FUTURE?

Since the varietal breakthrough in the early 1980s, viticultural research in the Douro has been advanced by a privately funded association known as ADVID (Associação para o Desenvolvimento da Viticultura Duriense). This was established by a number of leading Port shippers in 1982 with the modernisation of viticulture in the Douro as its principal objective. There are around a hundred members, including most of the leading single estates. ADVID's brief is wide-ranging and covers research into mechanisation, methods of cultivation, soil erosion, disease, rootstocks, grape varieties and yield. ADVID has a number of weather stations in the Douro (one of which is on top of the giant Sandeman Don on the opposite side of the river from Régua) where pollen is monitored during flowering in an attempt to predict yields. The results are announced in early August shortly before the annual *benefício* is issued in the *comunicado da vindima* (communiqué issued by the IVP before the start of the harvest).

Cockburn's instigated a programme of massal selection, the first in Portugal, in the late 1970s. This led directly to the first clonal selection that took place at Cockburn's Vilarça vineyard and Ferreira's Quinta do Seixo in the early 1980s under the supervision of Professor Antero Martins of the University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro (UTAD) at Vila Real. There are now over sixty Portuguese varieties undergoing clonal selection, although in the Douro the main emphasis has been on the capricious Touriga Nacional with the object of balancing commercial yields with acceptably high sugar levels. The selection of eight Touriga Nacional clones to date has brought about an increase in yields of over 30 per cent. Professor Nuno Magalhães of UTAD, viticultural consultant to Quinta do Noval, complains that clonal selection has been subject to the whims of fashion and that too many clones have been selected for productivity rather than quality.

The viticultural research that has been undertaken by the larger growers since the 1970s has bypassed the majority of growers in the Douro, especially those in the Baixo Corgo who continue to tend their tiny plots in much the same way as they did in their great-grandfathers' day. Despite thirty years of replanting, over 50 per cent of all the vineyards in the Douro are still planted with the time-honoured pick and mix – hence the shrug of the shoulders when you ask a question about varieties that would be fairly

straightforward elsewhere. The importance of many of these old and gnarled interplanted vineyards should not be underestimated. Although different grape varieties continue to be harvested at varying (uneven) degrees of ripeness, old vines still provide the core for the finest, most concentrated vintage Ports just as they did in outstanding years like 1927, 1945, 1963 and 1966. However, with mechanisation unfeasible and yields steadily declining, many older mixed vineyards are now uneconomic. A number of producers have been examining ways to increase the viability of their *vinha velha* (old vines), including bottling as a separate lot and selling the wine at a premium.

A number of leading growers are starting to believe that their forefathers were right after all and are returning to mixed planting and co-fermentation. In what he terms 'precision viticulture' at Quinta da Roêda and Quinta de Terra Feita, António Magalhães has been inter-planting both *patamares* and *vinha ao alto* with a number of different varieties according to exposure in order to make up mixed *lote*. These include the top five grape varieties alongside Tinta Amarela, Tinta Francisca, Alicante Bouschet and Rufete. This varietal make up is a reflection of the reawakening of interest now being taken in

IRRIGATION: A NEW POLEMIC

Irrigation is proving to be an increasingly controversial topic in the Douro. Although the European Union theoretically prohibits irrigation, some form of irrigation is nonetheless essential in order to establish a vineyard in the Douro. Young vines are often watered for the first two years from a bowser or by hand. Recurrent drought, however, has led to some growers establishing vineyards with permanent drip irrigation, ignoring the laws that prohibit it. There is already an excess of production in the Douro which could be exacerbated by further irrigation, though many growers maintain that controlled irrigation is beneficial for balancing the plant and aiding maturation of the grapes. But in an article in the *Publico* newspaper published in March 2012, David Guimaraens set himself very publicly against irrigation for a number of reasons. He argues that the region has survived without irrigation for three hundred years and that it is only since the replanting of vineyards, many on less than ideal soils, that irrigation has become necessary. Added to which, the block planting of a limited number of varieties has made Douro vineyards more susceptible to drought than the old interplanted vineyards which included varieties that were drought resistant. He goes on to state that it takes ten years to establish a vineyard and that today's growers 'no longer have any patience'. Once they start irrigating their vines, the deep root systems that are so important to producing a great wine never develop properly, making the vines even more prone to drought and totally dependent on irrigation. Guimaraens concedes that there is a need for irrigation in the Douro Superior but questions why so many producers have migrated there, especially with concerns about climate change. A question of sour grapes, perhaps?

some of the grapes that have largely been ignored since the 1980s, and includes Sousão, Touriga Femea and Donzelinho among the reds, as well as white varieties like Viosinho, Gouveio and Rabigato. An organisation called PORVID, supported by the major Port shippers, has been formed to study and preserve Portugal's indigenous grape varieties. Symington's have two hectares of fifty different varieties at Vilarica in the Douro Superior, and there are a further 250 varieties with multiple clones planted at Pegões near Setúbal in the south of Portugal.

There are over a hundred different red and white grape varieties sanctioned for planting in the Douro, twenty-nine of which are 'recommended' as opposed to the remainder which are merely 'authorised'. There are nearly as many white varieties as red, although most of the attention over the past thirty years has focused on the 'famous five' to the exclusion of other potentially interesting grapes. Until recently there were a number of inconsistencies in the official list of varieties including a large number of synonyms for the same grape. During the 1990s and 2000s, the Instituto da Vinha e do Vinho (IVV) in Lisbon has made useful progress in the naming of individual grape varieties. In accordance with the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature and the International Code of Cultivated Plants, they have drawn up a list of all the grape varieties growing in Portugal (over three hundred in total), the majority of which are indigenous. The IVV's list goes a long way towards sorting out the age-old problem of regional synonyms. It identifies a principal name for each variety along with an officially recognised synonym where appropriate. Other local synonyms are also listed and although they continue to be used in the day-to-day lexicon, these names are no longer authorised for use on labels. One or two principal names have been altered – for example, the Douro's single most planted variety, Touriga Francesa, is now known officially as Touriga Franca.

Apart from the famous five which have been batch planted since the early 1980s, many Douro varieties are still something of an unknown. White grapes, in particular, have been largely ignored and still tend to be found in older vineyards interplanted among red varieties. For this reason many of the profiles below are still necessarily based on observation rather than on co-ordinated scientific research.

The following grape varieties are listed in order of their relative importance in the vineyard. A full list of 'recommended' and 'authorised' varieties may be found in Appendix III.

RED GRAPE VARIETIES

Touriga Franca (Touriga Francesa)

Neither *franca* ('true') nor 'French', Touriga Franca is much the most widely planted variety in the Douro accounting for around 22 per cent of the total vineyard area and as much as 29 per cent in the Baixo Corgo. Touriga Franca is a relatively new grape, the result of an accidental crossing of Touriga Nacional with Mourisco (q.v.) probably at the time of phylloxera. The name Touriga Francesa (the antecedent to Touriga Franca) was only adopted in the 1940s. Prior to that it was probably the same variety as one known

as Tinta da França and then Tinta Francesa despite having nothing whatsoever to do with any French grape variety. Most producers in the Douro still refer to it as Touriga Francesa.

Touriga Franca is one of the Douro's few consensual varieties, liked as much by growers as winemakers. In the vineyard it is a hardy variety that likes the heat. It is very disease-resistant and flourishes on warmer south-facing slopes where it is favoured by growers for its relatively consistent yields. Like many Douro varieties, it suffers from excess vigour and produces grapes with low sugar levels if yields are too high or the local climatic conditions are less than ideal. At high altitudes sugar levels struggle to reach 11 degrees Baumé (a measure of grape sugar concentration which roughly corresponds with potential alcohol). When it reaches the winery, Touriga Franca requires plenty of work to extract both colour and tannin from the relatively thick skins. Young Touriga Franca wine is more expressive than Touriga Nacional but it doesn't match Nacional for sheer weight, depth and longevity. Although by no means the most highly prized of Port grapes (that accolade is still reserved for Touriga Nacional), it is nevertheless respected by winemakers for its aromatic qualities, lending a floral character to the blend. Touriga Franca is valued as a good all-round grape lending structure and up-front fruit to both Port and Douro wines, but suffers from fluctuations in quality. It performed brilliantly in 2009 and 2011 with some producers now considering that it could be a more interesting variety than Nacional. However, in 2010 it failed to ripen. One grower summed up Touriga Nacional and Touriga Franca as the 'Cabernet and Merlot of the Douro'. António Agrellos, winemaker for Quinta do Noval, describes Touriga Franca as the 'flor do Douro' (flower of the Douro).

Apart from in the tasting room, Touriga Franca is rarely seen as a varietal but it forms an important part of the blend in nearly every Port and an increasing number of unfortified Douro wines. The grape variety known simply as 'Touriga' in Australia is almost certainly Touriga Franca.

Tinta Roriz

One of the few Port varieties with a pedigree outside Portugal, Tinta Roriz has gathered a bewildering number of names on its travels round the Iberian Peninsula. Known in Spain as Tempranillo, it probably originated in Valdepeñas and reached the Douro via the Alentejo in central-southern Portugal where it continues to acknowledge its Spanish heritage under the title Aragonez. Although Roriz has been in the Douro since the early nineteenth century (presumably having been planted at Quinta do Roriz), it is not listed by Villa Maior as an important pre-phyloxera variety. Cincinnato da Costa, writing towards the end of the nineteenth century, identifies it as belonging to the high vineyards of Trás-os-Montes (Alfandega de Fé, Macedo de Cavaleiros, Moncorvo and Vila Flor) rather than the Douro valley itself. Greatly helped by the replanting programme of the 1980s, Tinta Roriz is still in second place behind Touriga Franca, accounting for around 12 per cent of the Douro's vineyards, having fallen in popularity in recent years. It has been undergoing a programme of clonal selection since 1982.

It appears Tinta Roriz does indeed perform better at higher altitudes than in the valley, where an excess was planted in the 1980s and 1990s, much of it on a very productive rootstock – R99. Relatively easy to grow, it is favoured by growers rather than winemakers. Roriz sprouts vertically and has a short vegetative cycle, budding late, which reduces the damage from spring frosts. Tinta Roriz is the first variety to show stress from the heat but ripens early, thereby enabling picking before the onset of autumn rains. Quality can vary alarmingly. Roriz has a tendency to over-produce and it performs best in those years when yields are inherently low. João Nicolau de Almeida of Ramos Pinto calculates that it normally produces 2.5 kilos per vine but is at its best with 1.4 kilos. Roriz is very sensitive to September rainfall, leading rapidly to dilution of colour and strength. In years of naturally high yields like 2010, Roriz produces dull, weedy wines of no great merit. One grower in the Douro claims that it only does really well in two years out of every ten and another went on to describe it as a *puta* (whore)! Certainly, declared Port vintages tend to be years in which Tinta Roriz has performed well. It is increasingly left out of premium Douro reds. Pedro Leal da Costa, who manages the Symington's vineyards, believes that Tinta Roriz is a grape for alkaline soils (e.g. Rioja) rather than the more acidic schist and granite of northern Portugal.

With a total hectareage of 17,020, Tinta Roriz / Aragonéz is the second most planted grape variety in Portugal.

Tinta Barroca

Known in the nineteenth century as Boca da Mina, Tinta Grossa, Tinta Vigaria and Tinta Gorda ('fat red'), this productive grape variety only became known as Tinta Barroca in 1941. Today it stands just behind Roriz in the popularity stakes, making up about 11 per cent or nearly 4,500 hectares of the Douro's vineyards. Tinta Barroca is favoured by growers for yielding large quantities of grapes with exceptionally high levels of sugar. As one of the five varieties authorised for replanting under the PDRITM scheme in the 1980s, Barroca is mainly found in the Cima Corgo region, often at higher altitudes on cooler, north-facing slopes where other varieties might face difficulties in ripening. With a thin skin, Barroca is easily damaged by extreme heat, and the berries have a tendency to raisinise or shrivel on the vine. On a south-facing slope – as at Dow's Quinta do Bomfim, where it accounts for a significant proportion of the vineyard – Barroca will yield 2.5 kilos per vine, at the same time as producing must with a Baumé of 15 or 16 degrees. Depending on where the grapes are grown, Barroca wines vary from being pale to quite deep in colour, supple and reasonably well structured, sometimes jammy, but always with a distinctly rustic, earthy overtone. The wines lose a considerable amount of colour after about fifteen years in bottle. Barroca is primarily a Port grape that almost never bottled as a varietal red and there are few instances where it is planted outside the Douro or Trás-os-Montes. Tinta Barroca has, however, made a successful foray into South Africa where it is also used primarily for fortified wines.

Tinta Amarela

Excluded from the famous five, Tinta Amarela is nevertheless very significant in the Douro where it represents around 5 per cent of the total vine stock. It is a grape that may be Tunisian in origin but crops up in various places in Portugal under a number of different names. Officially listed by the IVV as Trincadeira, it has also travelled in the name of Espadeiro (Lisbon region), Crato Preto, Murteira and Rabo de Ovelha Tinto (Vinho Verde).

Tinta Amarela is a notoriously tetchy grape, very susceptible to apical growth and disease. Due to its tightly packed bunches, Tinta Amarela is particularly prone to rot in damp weather and choice of location is therefore crucial to its success. A canopy management programme and clonal selection would surely help. It is surprising that so much Tinta Amarela has been planted in the Baixo Corgo where it accounts for as much as 20 per cent of the vine stock, mostly interplanted amongst other varieties. However, on well-exposed arid soils in the Cima Corgo and Douro Superior Tinta Amarela produces deep-coloured wines, fruity but herbaceous if picked before it is fully ripe, taking on a peppery-spicy character under the right conditions. Dirk Niepoort, who produces Batuta and Redoma, both of which contain a considerable amount of Tinta Amarela, is a fan. Although it is not a variety with a particularly deep colour, he believes it produces refined, balanced wines with good levels of acidity. Tinta Amarela is an excellent variety for the Douro Superior. It has certainly fared well in parts of the Alentejo where, under the name Trincadeira, it has quickly become established as one of Portugal's leading red wine grapes.

Occupying a total area of 14,220 hectares, Tinta Amarela / Trincadeira is the fourth most planted grape variety in Portugal.

Mourisco

Officially there are two red grapes by the name of Mourisco: Mourisco de Semente and Mourisco de Trevões. Miguel Corte Real (ex-Cockburn) maintains that Mourisco de Semente is the best of the two and is very similar to Tinta de Barca (see below). Most winemakers in the Douro do not make the distinction and tend to have a love-hate relationship with Mourisco, a variety that came to prominence in the nineteenth century due to its resistance to phylloxera. Villa Maior was a fan, describing Mourisco 'as one of the finest and most precious kinds cultivated in the Douro'. Nowadays the sentiment is mostly hate for the pale, fat Mourisco resembles a table grape rather than a wine variety. It is difficult to pollinate and is therefore subject to poor fruit set unless interplanted in the old-fashioned way with other varieties, particularly Tinta Roriz. There are few instances where Mourisco crops up on its own, but it is often found in old vineyards all over the Douro and therefore makes up around 4 per cent of the total vineyard area, making it the fifth most planted red variety in the region. Cockburn's were one of Mourisco's few fans and planted a significant amount in their Vilarça vineyard. Although it produces pale-coloured wine, Mourisco is rich in sugar and therefore provides a good, aromatic base for old tawny Port. It is almost never seen as a varietal, even in the rarefied tasting rooms of Vila Nova de Gaia. Mourisco is also planted throughout Trás-os-Montes where (along with Alvarelhão) it is the progenitor of semi-sweet

rosé for export markets. Outside the Douro it is now officially known as Marufo and it just scrapes in to the top ten of the most planted grapes in Portugal with 3,630 hectares.

Touriga Nacional

Of all the grape varieties in the Douro, Touriga Nacional has the most noble pedigree and is certainly the most frequently mentioned by Port shippers. It comes as something of a revelation that Touriga Nacional registers in sixth place in the list of the Douro's most planted red grape varieties and that it accounts for a mere 3 per cent of the region's vine stock. Nonetheless, it is climbing the regional league table and is up from eighth place in the last edition of this book (2003).

It is something of an affront to growers in the Douro to suggest that Touriga Nacional may have originated in Dão, where, prior to phylloxera, it was pre-eminent in the region's vineyards. It is sometimes known here as Preto Mortágua and there is a village in the heart of Dão between Santa Comba Dão and Tondela named Tourigo. Mortágua is also a town nearby, reinforcing the claim that it originated in the Dão region.

Touriga Nacional has been lauded since the late eighteenth century when it was known as Touriga Fina. In the 1870s Villa Maior described it the progenitor of some of the best wines in Portugal. It was noted at the time for its inherent astringency and various authorities recommended blending Touriga Nacional with Alvarelhão or Bastardo, both of which produce much paler, lighter styles of wine. Touriga Nacional lost ground in the wake of phylloxera, not because of its quality (that is indisputable) but due to its inherently low yields. Added to this, the lack of suitable rootstock increased its susceptibility to poor fruit set. With yields as low as 0.5 to 0.8 kilos per vine, Touriga Nacional was described to me by one farmer as 'a winemaker's grape rather than a grower's grape'. Such was its fall from grace that by the end of the 1970s it was almost extinct and accounted for just 0.1 per cent of Douro vineyards.

It was only in 1969 that the CEVD recognised Touriga Nacional as one of the best varieties among their experimental plots of vines, and just over a decade later José António Rosas and João Nicolau de Almeida considered it to be *the* best grape in their varietal selection (see above, page 66). A program of clonal selection which began in 1978 increased yields to a more commercially acceptable 1 to 1.5 kilos per vine. Touriga Nacional only returned *en masse* during the PDRITM project in the 1980s but then only to the Cima Corgo and Douro Superior, where in some prominent Port *quintas* it now accounts for 20 to 30 per cent of the vineyard. Cockburn's were early supporters of Touriga Nacional and claimed to have the most in their vineyards.

Touriga Nacional continues to suffer from excess vigour and is extremely susceptible to cool, damp weather during flowering. Yields are consequently very variable. For example, in three successive years, a five-hectare plot of Touriga Nacional at Quinta do Crasto in the Douro produced 40 pipes (220 hectolitres), 25 pipes (138 hectolitres) and then just six pipes (33 hectolitres). It is not particularly good in extremes and is probably less suited to the higher reaches of the Douro Superior than the Cima Corgo. Provided the grapes are picked at the right moment (Touriga Nacional easily over-ripens), its small, thick-

skinned berries produce the darkest and most concentrated of wines. Capable of high levels of alcohol, Touriga Nacional nevertheless retains its distinctive floral aroma (some say violets, others bergamot) and an air of civility and finesse. It is an essential constituent in all of the finest vintage Ports. Its reputation, aided by improved clones, has helped Touriga Nacional to migrate south from the Douro, back to Dão and into Bairrada, Estremadura, the Ribatejo, Setúbal Peninsula and Alentejo. Growers and winemakers throughout Portugal still have much to learn about Touriga Nacional and as a varietal it can be one dimensional. There are currently around 7,200 hectares of Touriga Nacional in Portugal, bringing it into eighth place nationally. But if ever Portugal became identified with a single grape in the way that Spain has Tempranillo or Italy Nebbiolo, that variety would be Touriga Nacional.

Malvasia Preta

The name 'malvasia' has been attached to so many Portuguese grapes that it is difficult to separate fact from fiction. No one in the Douro ever mentions Malvasia Preta ('Black Malvasia'), but it is clearly a significant variety in old mixed vineyards as it still represents around 3 per cent of the total vine stock.

Tinta Carvalha

Just behind Malvasia Preta in the popularity stakes, with 2 per cent of the vineyard area, Tinta Carvalha was favoured by small growers for its high yields and therefore makes up a significant proportion of older, mixed vineyards in the Baixo Corgo. Cincinnato da Costa records that it was much planted in the Cima Corgo between Pinhão and Tua in the latter part of the nineteenth century, but as many of these vineyards have been replanted it has lost ground in favour of Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz and Tinta Barroca. Although it apparently has some aromatic qualities, on its own Tinta Carvalha generally produces pale, rather hollow wine.

Tinto Cão

'Red dog' is a somewhat demeaning name for one of the Douro's most fascinating grapes. It was apparently the grape preferred by the British Port shippers when they began to colonise parts of the Cima Corgo in the mid-eighteenth century. Rebello de Fonseca mentions Francis Bearsley (an early partner in the Port shipping firm that subsequently became Taylor's) as one of the proponents of Tinto Cão, adding that he was prepared to pay an extraordinarily high price for it. The high price is commensurate with very low yields and, following phylloxera, Tinto Cão was almost driven to extinction by growers seeking production above all else. In the late 1970s it became one of the top five recommended varieties in the Douro and so began a modest revival, mostly at the behest of larger shippers who are intrigued by its capacity to make dense, long-lasting wines as well as its ability to resist mildew and rot. It now makes up around 5 per cent of the Douro vineyard. Tinto Cão yields a maximum of 1.6 kilos per vine. It resists the heat better than any other variety but ripens very late (as late

as November) and needs the correct exposure to achieve the delicate balance of acidity and alcohol for which it is renowned. Apart from being a constituent (albeit a minor one) in the finest Ports, it is also being used for Douro wines, very occasionally as a varietal. The wines are not particularly overt when young and need time to show finesse and complexity. Small quantities of Tinto Cão are also planted in Dão and on the Setúbal Peninsula. In the Vinho Verde sub-region of Basto it is known as Padeiro. A few growers are now experimenting with Tinto Cão in Australia and California.

Sousão

‘The reddest grape cultivated in Portugal’ is Cincinnato da Costa’s opening line on Sousão. It probably originated in the Minho, where it is known by the name of Vinhão, and spread to the Douro in the early eighteenth century as a legal substitute for *baga* (elderberry). In 1791, Rebello de Fonseca describes a detailed experiment in which he adds three almudes (about 76 litres) of wine made from Sousão to a nine-pipe vat of pale wine and ended up with a ‘very lively coloured’ blend. It was subsequently taken up by Portuguese growers whereas the British growers preferred the teinturier grape, Alicante Bouschet.

Nothing much has changed, for Sousão is still mostly planted in old interplanted vineyards in the Douro where it compensates for the lack of colour in varieties like Mourisco and Rufete (q.v.). Judging by its synonyms there would seem to be three variants: Sousão Forte (‘strong Sousão’), Sousão de Comer (‘eating Sousão’) and Sousão Vermelho (‘red Sousão’). Sousão would not deserve much in the way of an accolade but for its presence in Quinta do Noval’s ungrafted Nacional vineyard where in the past it made up to 25 per cent of the blend. The deep colouring matter that it lends to a wine is said by some to be unstable but anyone who has witnessed and tasted Noval’s 1963 or 1966 Nacional will know this to be completely untrue. Aside from colour, Sousão is also noted for its high natural acidity. António Agrellos from Quinta do Noval maintains that it is at its best on north-facing slopes, especially in the Douro Superior. Sousão is currently making a modest comeback and there are now varietal Douro reds made entirely from Sousão. In the Minho, Vinhão is responsible for much of the rasping, inky-red Vinho Verde. Sousão is also planted in South Africa and California where one fortified wine producer described it to me as providing ‘colour, acid and more acid’.

Rufete

This is a productive early-ripening variety that still makes up a significant proportion of old mixed vineyards in the Douro, representing under 1 per cent of the total vine stock. There has been a modest revival of interest in Rufete but most producers have concluded that it produces wine with little colour, lacking in structure and volume. Rufete is the same as Tinta Pinheira in the Dão and Beiras regions immediately south of the Douro. Both Rebello de Fonseca and Vila Maior consider that Tinta Pinheira was the same as a French grape then grown in Sillery (Champagne) and known there as Pinot Aigret or Pinot Dru.

Alvarelhão

In the mid-nineteenth century, Joseph James Forrester lavished praise on Alvarelhão, a variety formerly much planted on the *altos* (high plateau) north of the Douro. It may have been suitable for his brand of unfortified Port wine but it has certainly fallen from favour today. There were two varieties of Alvarelhão, distinguished by Villa Maior as Pé Roxo ('purple foot') or Pé de Perdiz ('partridge foot') and Pé Branco ('white foot') or Pé Verde ('green foot'). Evidently the Pé Roxo was considered superior. The distinction seems to have been lost, for the Alvarelhão planted around Vila Real and Trás-os-Montes today produces light, pale red wines that represent something of a transition between Vinho Verde and the Douro. Mateus Rosé, which used to be sourced entirely from this area, contained a high percentage of Alvarelhão. The grape has fallen from favour although it still exists in old mixed vineyards north of the Douro. Alvarelhão is thought to be the same as Brancelho that is sometimes grown for red Vinho Verde.

Bastardo

There are two officially recognised grapes in Portugal both sharing the name Bastardo: Bastardo Tinto and Bastardo Roxo. The latter, one suspects, is probably the Bastardinho ('little bastard') that used to be planted on the Setúbal Peninsula and is now all but extinct. Bastardo Tinto is a vigorous, early-ripening variety that was favoured by growers in the Douro and Dão prior to phylloxera where it was often planted alongside Alvarelhão (q.v.). Bastardo's virtues must have made it popular with growers but it was almost lost to phylloxera. According to Cincinnato da Costa it ripened as early as June and the intensely sweet grapes were eaten during the popular festival of São João (25 June). Small amounts of Bastardo remain today in old mixed vineyards in the Douro, where its main characteristics seem to be high levels of sugar and low acidity. It produces wine with a pale red colour that fades to onion skin within two years, making it the ideal grape for inexpensive tawny Port. Bastardo is extremely susceptible to rot in wet weather. Bastardo was also grown on Madeira where it remains an officially 'recommended' variety for fortified wine but seems to have retreated to the nearby island of Porto Santo.

Cornifesto

Once favoured by growers on the north side of the Douro, this vigorous, productive variety is now found only in old interplanted vineyards throughout Trás-os-Montes where it produces light, inconsequential red wines. The popularity of Cornifesto in the wake of phylloxera was probably due to its resistance to disease, especially oidium and anthracnose.

(Tinta de) Barca

Officially known as Barca, this unfashionable grape is almost totally confined to the hot country of the Douro Superior where it is still usually referred to as Tinta de Barca. It produces a distinctive, concentrated style of wine and makes up around 25 per cent of the *vinha velha* (old vines) at Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas. There is also a large amount among

the *vinha velha* at Cockburn's Quinta dos Canais. It is probably named after Quinta de Barca near Freixo de Espada à Cinta. According to the IVV's official list, there are 373 hectares of Barca in Portugal. This must nearly all be in the Douro, for I have not come across Barca in anywhere else in the country.

Tinta Francisca

Not to be confused with Touriga Franca (formerly Francesa, q.v.), Tinta Francisca is thought to be true to its name, having originated in Burgundy as Pinot Noir. There are two stories as to its genesis, neither of which can be proved. One asserts that it was brought to Portugal by Henry of Burgundy in the eleventh century (see page 2), the other that it was sent from Burgundy for Robert Archibald, the founder of Quinta do Roriz. It survives today in old mixed vineyards but on its own produces unbalanced musts with low acidity and high levels of sugar.

Donzelinho Tinto

There are three officially recognised Donzelinhos: branco (white), roxo (purple) and tinto (pink). Donzelinho Tinto is found in old interplanted vineyards in the Douro where it resists oidium. A number of shippers are experimenting with this grape, so far with mixed results.

Touriga Femea

I have only come across this grape variety on two occasions (two rows at Quinta do Mosteiró and a small experimental plot at Ferreira's Quinta do Seixo) where the grower called it by the synonym Touriga Brasileira, and described it to me as being very similar to Touriga Franca but more aromatic.

Alicante Bouschet

This teinturier (red-fleshed) grape has a historical presence in the Douro but has only recently been officially authorised. It was planted by British shippers to lend colour to wines in place of the illegal use of *baga* (elderberry). It tends to be a very productive variety. Alicante Bouschet is more widely planted in the Alentejo where it is an important variety for blending.

Syrah

There are pockets of Syrah all over the Douro which, until recently, few have admitted to – it is a variety that was neither recommended nor approved by the IVDP. Quinta do Noval have an eight-hectare plot in the Roncão valley and there is more at Quinta da Romaneira and upstream in the Tua valley. It already looks as though Syrah is well suited to the Douro. Others are also quietly experimenting with Syrah with a view to using it for unfortified wine, and it is now sanctioned for Vinho Regional Terras Durienses status rather than Douro DOC.

WHITE GRAPE VARIETIES

Codega (Síria)

Now officially known as Síria, this grape is planted throughout the interior of Portugal where it is known by a number of names including Roupeiro (Alentejo), Alva (Portalegre), Alvadurão do Dão, Crato Branco (Algarve) and Codega (Douro). It also used to be known by the name of Malvasia Grossa ('fat malvasia') and if this was not enough, Villa Maior cites it as the Vermentino from Corsica. In the Douro Codega is the most planted variety and accounts for about 6 per cent of the total vineyard area. Large quantities have traditionally been planted in the Douro Superior. It is resistant to heat but sensitive to oidium and rot, yields well (2 to 3 kilos per vine), and produces wine that is soft, flat and low in acidity providing the basis for dry white Port. Apparently it is also a good table grape, which usually infers that it is not a very promising wine grape.

Malvasia Fina

There seems to have been some confusion over the true identity of this grape which is an authorised grape on Madeira (where it is known as Boal) and the second most widely planted white variety in the Douro, amounting to about 4 per cent of the total vineyard area. Much has been written about it. Rebello de Fonseca heaped praise on Malvasia Fina saying 'you can eat it, make raisins from it as well as wonderful wine. Among white grapes only Moscatel is better'. Malvasia Fina is almost certainly identical to Arinto do Dão or Assário planted in the Beiras. It is a notoriously unstable variety which readily mutates and the quality of the wine varies greatly from one clone to another. Malvasia Fina produces reasonably well (up to 2 kilos per vine) but is very susceptible to oidium and poor fruit set, making yields extremely variable. With a soft, fat, vaguely honeyed character, the wine is better than that produced by Codega but could hardly be described as 'fine'. In the past this grape used to be known as 'Malvasia de Passa' because of its tendency to shrivel and raisinise on the vine.

Malvasia Rei

By no means 'King' of the grapes named 'Malvasia', Malvasia Rei accounts for around 3 per cent of the white varieties in the Douro. It is the same grape as Palomino in Spain and produces huge quantities of bland wine.

Rabigato

The 'cat's tail' grape is one of the better white grapes growing in the Douro, where it accounts for around 3 per cent of the vineyard area, putting it in fourth place among the white varieties. Named after the elongated shape of its bunches, Rabigato yields well (up to 3 kilos per vine), matures slowly and is capable of withstanding heat. However, it tends to be planted at higher altitudes where it is favoured by winemakers for the fresh acidity that it contributes to white Port as well as a smattering of white Douro wines.

Gouveio

Long thought to be the same as Madeira's Verdelho, it has now been established that Gouveio is a completely separate variety. There are a number of officially registered Gouveios, including Gouveio Estimado, Gouveio Real, Gouveio Roxo (purple) and Gouveio Preto (black), which suggests that it is fairly unstable. Gouveio produces aromatic wines with high levels of acidity. It is therefore favoured by winemakers for dry white Douro wines and white Port but is hampered in the vineyard by low yields (1 to 1.5 kilos per vine) and only represents about 7 per cent of the Douro's white vine stock. Gouveio is mostly found within old interplanted vineyards and is therefore rarely seen as a varietal. Gouveio Real, which ostensibly has marginally higher acidity, is planted immediately south of the Douro in Tavora-Varosa where it is used to make a base wine for *espumante* (sparkling wine).

Moscatel Galego Branco

There are nearly as many different names for Moscatel (Muscat) in Portugal as there are for Malvasia. Villa Maior names four that were growing in the Douro: Moscatel Branco, Moscatel de Jesus, Moscatel Roxo and Moscatel Preto (the latter two being purple and black respectively). Moscatel Galego Branco (also known by synonym of Moscatel de Bago Miúdo) is none other than Muscat à Petit Grains. This is much the best and most refined variety of Muscat (used for Muscat de Baumes de Venise), and with improvements in winemaking it is now being given the chance to shine. It is mostly planted on the north side of the Douro around the town of Favaio where it makes a fortified wine named Moscatel de Favaio (see page 229) or may be used as a component in white or (very occasionally) tawny Port.

Viosinho

Considered to be the best of the indigenous white grapes, this low-yielding variety is capable of producing some high-quality wines. It was ignored until fairly recently and is still mostly found in old mixed vineyards. According to João Nicolau de Almeida, who has planted Viosinho at Quinta dos Bons Ares, its only real drawback is a lack of acidity and it therefore performs best at high altitudes. With yields as low as 1–1.5 kilos per vine, Viosinho is one of the few white varieties that is currently undergoing a programme of clonal selection. It is a very promising grape variety for white Douro wines.

Arinto

Known in the neighbouring Vinho Verde region as Paderná, Arinto is not nearly as highly regarded in the Douro as it is in the south of Portugal where it produces fresh, steely, dry white wines. However, given its ability to hang on to natural acidity whatever the weather, Arinto is potentially a very interesting variety for planting in warmer parts of the region.

Fernão Pires

Portugal's most planted white grape, with nearly 17,000 hectares planted over the length and breadth of the country. One of the most adaptable varieties, Fernão Pires grows in the

Ribatejo and Bairrada (as Maria Gomes) but is not a big player in the Douro. Planted on the *altos* around Lamego, it is used in the Douro for both sparkling wines and white Port. It produces a vaguely spicy wine sometimes characterised by sub-tropical fruit.

Esgana Cão

Known in the Douro (and Bucelas) as the ‘dog strangler’ because of its ferociously high levels of natural acidity, Esgana Cão is none other than Sercial (not to be confused with Cerceal) grown on Madeira.

Folgosão

The same grape as Terrantez, which was planted in mainland Portugal as early as the sixteenth century and subsequently found its way to Madeira. On Madeira, where Terrantez is now almost extinct, the grapes are highly prized for their sweetness and astringency.

Donzelinho Branco

A low-yielding variety that, like Donzelinho Tinto, has fallen from favour in the Douro but is still occasionally found in old interplanted vineyards.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE *QUINTA*

The building block of the Douro is the *quinta*. Applied to everything from a modest farm to a large country estate, this is a word that almost defies translation and is probably best thought of merely as an area of agricultural land. It is impossible to quantify the number of *quintas* in the Douro, but suffice to say that in 2011 there were 34,000 growers in the Douro, farming over 142,000 holdings. The average hectareage per grower is 1.32 and the average number of plots per farmer amounts to 4.2. However, 94 per cent of these plots are less than one hectare in area, and just 0.15 per cent of holdings are in excess of ten hectares.

The popular image of a Douro *quinta* has come about because of trade and tourist visits to some of the more grandiose properties belonging to the major Port shippers. These estates, usually between 30 and 150 hectares in extent, account for just 0.01 per cent of the total number of holdings in the Douro and their overall importance is therefore exaggerated. Most of the larger properties belonging to the shippers in the Douro are an amalgam of a number of small *quintas* that have been acquired and bolted on over time. Looking up from the river at some of the great Douro estates, you will see the carcasses of a number of well-positioned houses which were once at the hub of their own small domain but have now been forsaken in favour of the main dwelling on the property.

Most Douro *quintas* are modest properties with an *adega* (winery), *armazém* (wine store) and rustic dwelling all combined within a single structure. The building is invariably built into the terraced slope with the stone *lagares* on the upper level draining into the wooden *toneis* in the *armazém* below. The living area is typically located above the

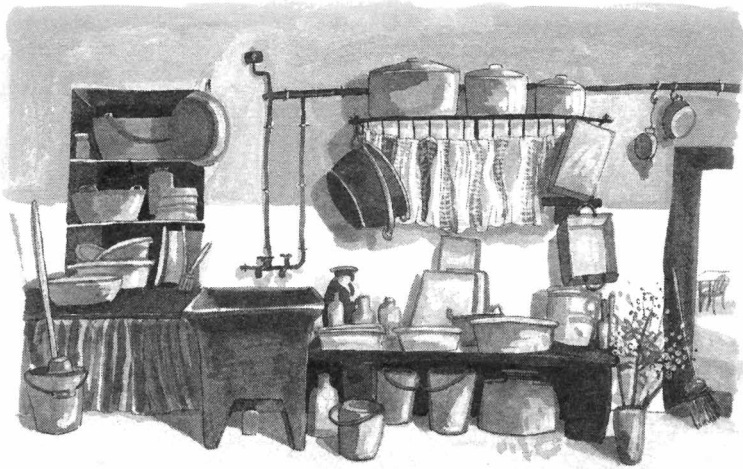
armazém, providing simple accommodation for the *caseiro* (foreman) and his wife, who are employed to run the *quinta*. However, the smallest properties have neither house nor winery and the owner and his or her family will tend the vines from a nearby village. The heady but often rank smell of fermenting grapes and young Port used to be all-pervading in Douro villages at harvest time, but most of these small growers now sell their grapes directly to a Port shipper or the local co-operative.

Many of the larger and more remote *quintas* are almost self-sustaining communities, farming their own pigs and poultry, growing vegetables and supporting as many as three or four families all the year round. Some have their own chapel adjacent to the house (as at Quinta do Porto, Quinta do Seixo, Quinta do Zimbório) or out in the vineyard (Quinta da Roêda, Quinta do Crasto, Quinta do Espinhal). Two outlying properties in the Douro Superior, Quinta de Vargellas and Quinta do Vesúvio, are each of sufficient importance to warrant their own railway station.

NAPOLEONIC LAWS AND A 'BERLIN WALL'

The fragmentation of landholdings in the Douro is the consequence of Portugal's Napoleonic laws of inheritance, whereby all offspring are entitled to inherit a share of the family estate. In the relatively densely populated Baixo Corgo there has been a greater tendency to split vineyard holdings among families than in the more remote Cima Corgo or the Douro Superior. As a result, some of the larger properties in the Cima Corgo may have as many as fifty or sixty absentee shareholders, most of whom take absolutely no part in the day-to-day running of the *quinta* but cause considerable problems when it comes to taking strategic management decisions. This explains the run-down look of so many houses in the Douro and the number of abandoned properties. I once visited a typically run-down *quinta* where a breeze-block wall had been built through the middle of a once grandiose house to separate two factions of the same family.

Depending on the time of year, Port *quintas* provide employment for an army of labourers rising to thirty or forty people during the harvest. Like most armies, the Douro marches on its stomach and the kitchen is the focus of the *quinta*. Usually the largest room in the house, the cavernous Douro kitchen still has medieval appeal. Food in the form of a hearty 'all-in-one' soup or stew is cooked in a huge black pot, which is sometimes hoisted by means of a pulley or crane on to an open wood fire. There is a hole in the roof for the smoke to escape. Children scream and squawk on the floor, especially during the winter months when the kitchen is the only warm place to be. One of the few modern concessions is the television, which has the capacity to bring this industrious scene to a virtual standstill when the latest episode of a melodramatic Brazilian *telenovela* (soap opera) starts.



Harvester's kitchen, Quinta do Bomfim

In spite of the social changes that have taken place in Portugal since the revolution of 1974–1975, the larger Douro *quintas* are still resolutely hierarchical. The *patrão* (owner) and his family and guests will eat in his own comfortable quarters, usually well away from the hubbub of the kitchen. The *artistas* or skilled workers have another dining room, simply furnished with a long wooden table and bench seats. The remaining *peçoal* (staff) either eat outside at a huge stone table or in a spartan *refectório* (refectory). Most major *quintas* also have *cardenhos* (dormitories) to accommodate the *roga* or gang of pickers for the duration of the harvest. The *cardenhos*, densely packed with bunk beds, are frequently the scene of many a melodrama in their own right. With the sexes separated from each other by a flimsy wall or a wooden screen, it is not unusual for affairs of the heart to come to a head in the middle of vintage. Although generally good-humoured, passions are occasionally inflamed with a few glasses of *aguardente*. It is not uncommon for the police to be called out in the middle of vintage to intervene in a domestic dispute that has turned violent.

THE ROLE OF THE QUINTA

For a century or more the influence of the *quinta* waned. In the 1870s, properties like Quinta da Boa Vista, Roncão, Romaneira and Zimbrow were much better known than they are today. Henry Vizetelly remarked at the time that the house of Feuerherd maintained 'certain of its vintage wines from particular *quintas* intact'. But following the devastation wreaked on the region by phylloxera, vineyard yields fell to such low levels that shippers were compelled to blend wines from a number of properties. The wines from many prominent *quintas* were therefore absorbed into declared vintage blends and the properties lost their independence as a result. Legislation followed in 1927 that also discriminated against the individual *quinta* (see page 38). Although there were notable exceptions like

Quinta do Noval, which retained its autonomy throughout, the Douro *quinta* only began to recapture lost ground in the early 1960s. Taylor's released Quinta de Vargellas 1958 as a single-*quinta* vintage Port and other shippers followed suit, using the *quinta* designation to distinguish between fully declared vintages (i.e. blends from a number of properties) and good intervening years. This process gathered momentum in the 1980s and 1990s, accompanied by improvements in vinification which meant that small quantities of wine of high quality could be made in all but the poorest of years. For most shippers, the *quinta* has become the marketing vehicle for these wines made in what are now being termed 'non-classic' years (see page 161).

Quintas were given greater autonomy following Portugal's accession to the European Union in 1986 when the monopolistic legislation introduced in 1927 was finally revoked. For the first time in nearly sixty years, independently owned *quintas* were given direct access to overseas markets, thereby allowing them to circumvent the major shippers occupying the *entrepoto* in Vila Nova de Gaia. Without the well-oiled marketing machinery of the shippers to propel them to stardom, the single-*quinta* movement has been slow to take off. But helped by the increasing popularity of unfortified Douro wine, the single *quinta* is once again on the ascendant with properties like Quinta do Vallado, Quinta do Crasto, Quinta do Infantado, Quinta de la Rosa and Quinta do Vale Meão becoming well-known shippers of both Port and Douro wine in their own right. One of the consequences of this is the awakening of interest in the different *terroirs* of the Douro.

PROMINENT QUINTAS

It is beyond the realm of this book to profile every *quinta* in the Douro Valley, but a number of estates are of historical importance and/or keystones in the edifice. I have listed the *quintas* geographically and grouped them by sub-region starting with the Baixo Corgo to the west and



Granite chapel, São Salvador do Mundo

extending to the Douro Superior in the east. Wines from *quintas* that have become important exporters in their own right are covered in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

In order to encourage tourism in the Douro, a number of official entities came together in the 1990s to promote the Port Wine Route. Modelled on the French idea of the *route du vin* (although operated without any of the Gallic flair and efficiency) some *quintas* are now open to visitors. Apart from Fonseca's Quinta do Panascal and Sandeman's Quinta do Seixo, most properties require an appointment. The *quintas* that form part of the Port Wine Route are indicated with * and contacts are given below. The grading system of Douro vineyards (Grades A – I) is explained in detail earlier in this chapter.

From Barqueiros to the mouth of the Corgo

The most westerly and historically the most accessible part of the Douro region, this is also the coolest and wettest part of the Douro with annual rainfall averaging in excess of 900mm. It is mostly made up of smallholdings but there are some historic *quintas* dating from the eighteenth century or even earlier. Job Beasley's first vineyard was located at Lugar das Lages, Salgueiral, where Taylor's maintained a production centre until the mid-1990s. His hieroglyphics, including Taylor's 4XX (an old wool mark), can still be seen on the Casa dos Alambiques. In the mid-nineteenth century Ferreira built up a large holding in the area. Mostly graded C or below, many of these Baixo Corgo *quintas* have come to prominence in recent years as producers of Douro wine.

Quinta do Côtto

Cidadelhe, 5040-154 Mesão Frio

Tel. (351) 254 899 269

www.quintadocotto.pt

Grade C

One of the most impressive estates in the Baixo Corgo, Quinta do Côtto was among the first properties to export their own Port, taking advantage of the change in legislation from 1986 onwards. The fine eighteenth-century house is now the headquarters for shippers Montez Champalimaud and has been restored to receive paying guests as *turismo de habitação* (see pages 94 and 236).

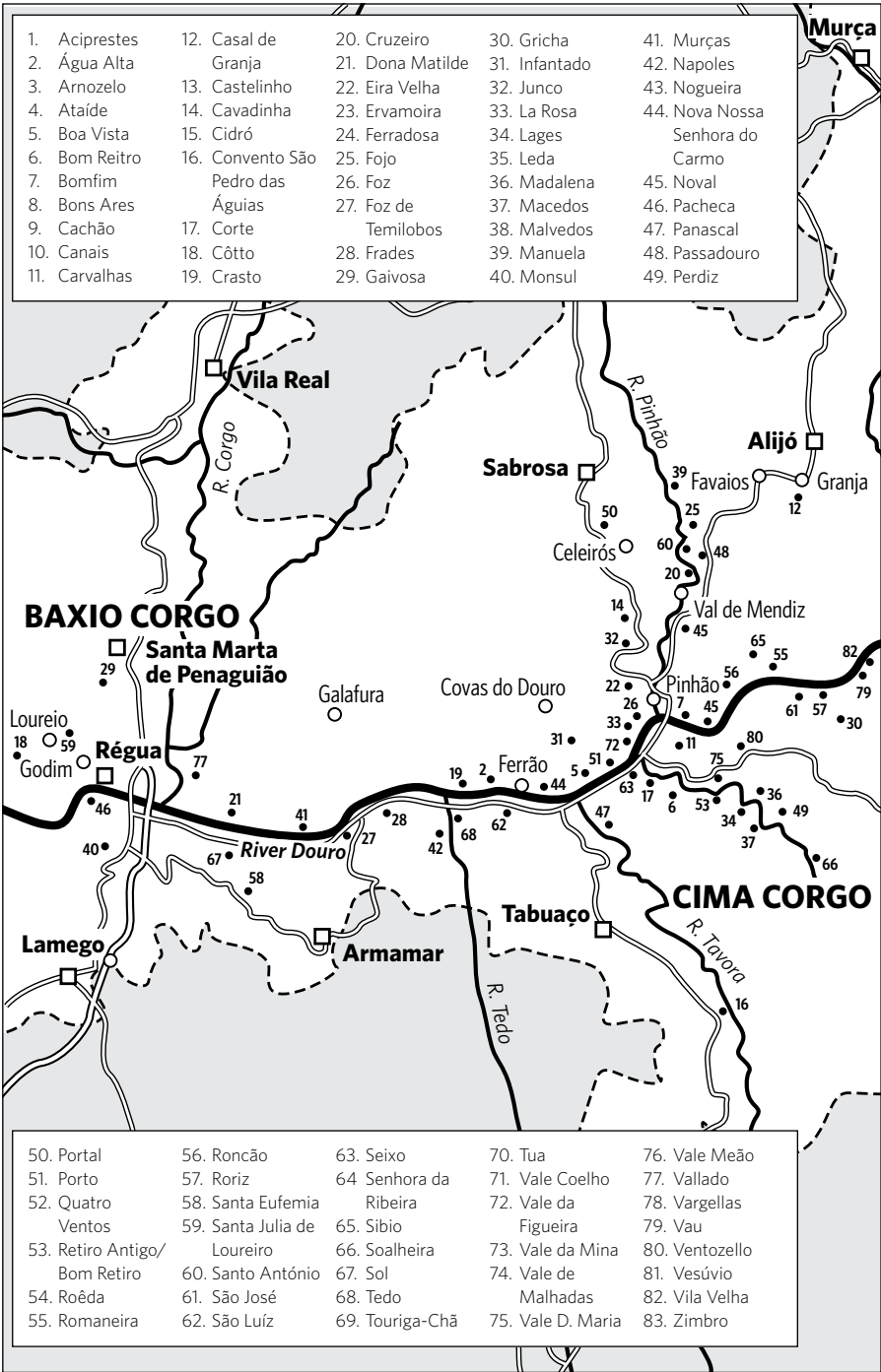
Quinta das Caldas/Quinta da Estação

Fontelas, 5050-023 Caldas do Moledo

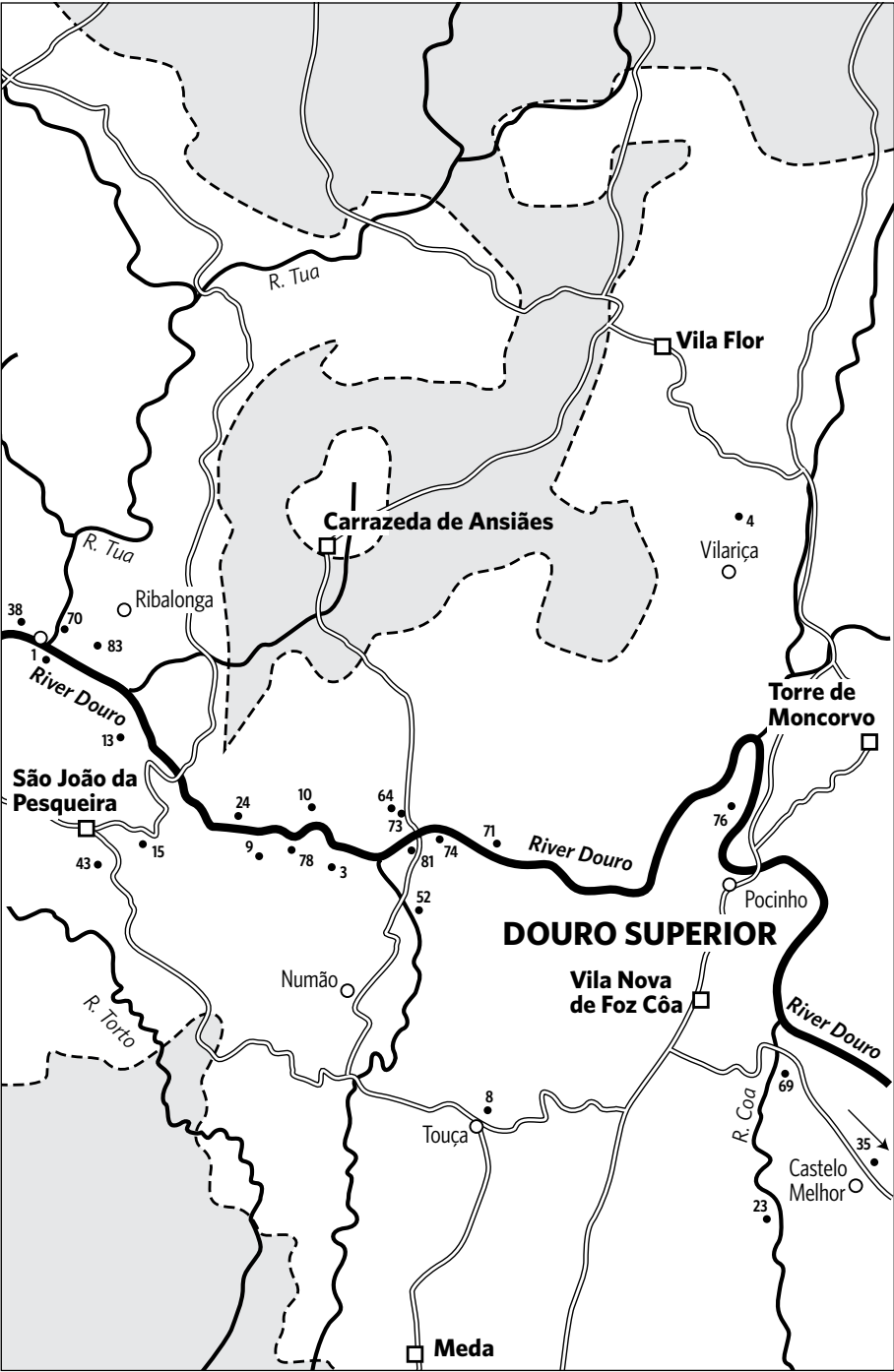
Tel. (351) 259 372 440

Grade C

Situated just above the charming but run-down spa of Caldas de Moledo, Quinta das Caldas (Caldas means 'thermal spring') was originally part of the Ferreira empire. This 22-hectare south-facing property now belongs to Domingos Alves de Sousa and, along with neighbouring Quinta de Estação, produces good Douro wine.



Map 2. The Douro, showing prominent quintas



Quinta de Santa Julia de Loureiro

Loureiro, 5050 Peso da Régua

Tel. (351) 254 336 157

www.quintasantajulia.com

Grade C/D

With a view over Régua, the Douro and the valley of the Rodo, this immaculate property belongs to Eduardo da Costa Seixas, formerly chief taster and blender at Sandeman. In spite of its rather lowly rating, I can vouch for the fact that this 60-hectare estate is capable of producing some impressive wines having tasted a Port from Santa Julia dating from the nineteenth century. The Port was sold to Sandeman and, in good years, formed part of the vintage *lote*. The property is now open for overnight guests (*turismo de habitação*).

Quinta da Gaivosa*

Pousada de Cumiera, 5030-055 Santa Marta de Penaguião

Tel. (351) 254 822 111

www.alvesdesousa.com

Grade C/D

On the right bank of the River Corgo, Quinta de Gaivosa is the principal property belonging to Domingos Alves de Sousa. This 25-hectare property faces due west onto the Serra do Marão, the summit of which is less than 10 kilometres away. With careful attention to his vineyards, Alves de Sousa makes a range of good to excellent Douro wines from Gaivosa, adjoining Quinta do Vale da Raposa and three other properties in the Baixo Corgo.

Quinta da Pacheca*

Cambres, 5100-424 Lamego

Tel. (351) 254 313 228

Grade C/D

A huge Sandeman Don marks Quinta da Pacheca on the opposite side of the river from the centre of Régua. This largely flat property belongs to the Serpa Pimentel family and bottles its own Port and Douro wines under the Quinta label. Sandeman also maintains a huge storage facility on another part of the estate.

Quinta do Monsul

Cambres, 5100 Lamego

Grade C

This impressive property on the south side of the river has one of the longest documented histories of any in the Douro, dating back to the time of Portugal's first king, Afonso Henriques, who owned it until 1163. It also boasts the first Rua 25 de Abril in Portugal, named not after the military coup of 1974, but after the marriage of one of its owners in 1881. The vineyard is mainly planted with white grapes. Production is either sold to Taylor or Sogrape, or made into Douro wine at Quinta do Vallado (below).

Quinta de Mosteiró*

Cambres, 5100 Lamego.

Tel. (351) 254 320 320

www.quintademosteiro.com

Grade B

Situated above the River Varosa facing Régua on the opposite side of the Douro, Quinta do Mosteiró was one of the early monastic estates belonging to the monks of São João de Tarouca. It seems to have been incredibly productive for, according to Rui Fernandes writing in 1532, it produced between 15,000 and 16,000 *almudes* of wine a year (750 pipes) as well as fruit, olive oil, chestnuts and sumac (ground leaves were used in tanning and dyeing). The property has subsequently been sub-divided and the ten-hectare property retaining the name Quinta do Mosteiró is now privately owned and producing a range of Douro wines.

From River Corgo to Ribeira de Temilobos

Although technically Cima Corgo (upstream from the River Corgo), this sub-region is still officially part of the Baixo Corgo. It is a point of issue with many *quinta* proprietors who occasionally lobby for reclassification. On the ground this short stretch represents the transition between the two zones. The westernmost vineyards (Quinta da Vila Freire, Quinta do Valado, Quinta da Santa Barbara and Quinta da Santa Eufemia) share many of the characteristics of the Baixo Corgo, producing medium-weight Ports and, with controlled yields, good Douro wines. They are graded accordingly. Those closer to the Temilobos are A-grade vineyards making finer wine, suited for LBV or better.

Quinta do Vallado*

Vilarinho dos Freires, 5050-364 Peso da Régua

Tel. (351) 254 323 147

www.quintadovallado.com

Grade B/C

This estate, which straddles the River Corgo just upstream from Régua, was the first property in Dona Antónia Ferreira's Douro empire. It was bought by her father, António Bernardo Ferreira, in 1818 and has remained with the family ever since. The production from Vallado's sixty-four hectares of vineyard is split almost equally between Port (for Ferreira) and an impressive Douro wine which is bottled under the Quinta's own label. With its distinctive yellow-ochre buildings, the property is easy to identify from the Régua-Valarinho dos Freires road. Vallado also has a small but impressive hotel.

Quinta Santa Eufemia*

Parada do Bispo, 5100-650 Lamego.

Tel. (351) 254 331 970

www.qtastaeufemia.com

Grade C/B

Casa da Quinta de Santa Eufemia*

Tel. (351) 254 331 970

Divided into two parts in 1992, Quinta Santa Eufemia now belongs to separate branches of the Carvalho family. The baroque house and chapel of Quinta Santa Eufemia form the main square of Sta Eufemia, an old hamlet now sadly rather overwhelmed by electricity pylons. A new *adega* has been constructed across the road and the house has been restored to take paying guests (*turismo rural*). White ports are something of a speciality. Confusingly, Casa de Santa Eufemia, which is located alongside, is a now a separate property specialising in Douro wines.

Quinta do Sol

Bagauste, 5110 Armamar

No Grade

This landfill site from the dam at Bagauste can hardly be called a conventional *quinta* as it does not have a single vine. But since the Symington family bought Sol in the mid-1980s, it has become one of the most strategically significant locations in the Douro. Well placed to serve growers in both the Baixo and Cima Corgo, the huge stainless-steel winery built in 1996 is now the main vinification centre for Cockburn, Dow, Graham, Warre, Smith Woodhouse, Quarles Harris and Gould Campbell.

Quinta Dona Matilde

Bagauste, 5050 Peso da Régua

Grade B

With a fine view of Quinta do Sol and the Bagauste dam, Dona Matilde is also occasionally known by its old, much less pronounceable, title of Enxodreiro. The property was renamed after it was purchased by Barros family in 1927. The predominantly south-facing vineyards were substantially replanted in the 1990s and the family now produce their own single-*quinta* wines.

Quinta da Foz de Temilobos*

5110 Armamar

Grade A

On a steep slope overlooking the mouth of the Ribeira de Temilobos, this property has been owned by members of the Delaforce family since 1931, and until 1968 was part of the family company. It was part of the original *feitoria* and has granite *lagares* dating from 1753. Vineyards extending to seven hectares were restructured in the early 2000s. Temilobos continues to supply Delaforce with grapes. The name Temilobos is thought to originate from 'a thousand wolves' (*mil lobos*) and a wolf appears on the crest of this property.

Quinta das Murças*

Covelinhas, 5050 Peso da Régua

www.espoao.com

Grade B

Once under the same ownership as Dona Matilde, this sizable property on the north bank of the river claims the very first vertical plantings in the Douro undertaken in the 1940s. Much of the *quinta* is now planted this way and can be viewed easily from the Régua–Pinhão road on the opposite side of the river. The *adeiga*, situated beside the railway line, claimed the first autovinifiers in the Douro, built in 1956. Murças now belongs to Esporão, large producers of wine in the Alentejo.

From Ribeira de Temilobos to the River Torto

A diagonal line from the Ribeira de Temilobos across the River Douro to the Ribeira de Covelinhas marks the official start of the Cima Corgo. Although just 9 kilometres upriver from Régua, the climate is considerably warmer and drier here. The slopes are steeper and vineyards facing east / south-east have good shelter and exposure and are capable of producing to high quality Ports. This is an area with many different meso- and microclimates, with the Ribeiras Ceira and Tedo and River Tavora providing shelter for a number of *quintas*. Historic properties are generally close to the Douro, which was the main axis of communication until the construction of the railway. This was superseded by the Régua–Pinhão Road on the opposite side of the valley, one of the few fast, straight roads in the Douro, having been largely rebuilt following the damming of the river in the 1970s. Apart from those properties described below, a number of other significant *quintas* – Quinta do Caleiro, Quinta do Espinhal, Quinta Nossa Sra. do Carmo, Quinta das Sopas, Quinta do Espinheira – can also be seen from the main road.

Quinta dos Frades

Folgosa, 5110 Armamar

Grade B

This large property (shown on the cover) with its distinctive crenellated house above the Régua–Pinhão road used to belong to the monastery of Santa Maria de Salzedas but was sold by public auction in 1841 with the dissolution of the religious orders. The property is now privately owned and supplies the Symington family.

Quinta de Napoles*

Vila Seca, 5110 Armamar

www.niepoort-vinhos.com

Grade A

Until they purchased Napoles in 1988, the family-owned shipping firm of Niepoort had no presence in the Douro, preferring instead to buy in and blend wines from growers. Niepoort found Napoles (along with its smaller sibling Quinta do Carril) in a complete state of abandonment but quickly replanted the vineyard which they now endeavour to cultivate using organic methods. A spectacular new *adeiga* was built into the hillside in

2007. Naples produces powerful, concentrated wines that are components for Niepoort's fine vintage and LBV Ports.

Quinta do Tedo*

Vila Seca, 5110-549 Armamar

Tel. (351) 934 609 671

www.quintadotedo.com

Grade A

Situated on a small promontory at the confluence of the Tedo with the Douro, Quinta do Tedo was bought by Vincent Bouchard (a scion of the Burgundy Bouchards) in 1992. Bouchard, a purveyor of French oak barrels to the Californian wine industry, is now producing a reserve, LBV and vintage Ports from nearly thirty hectares of vines on the estate.

Quinta de São Luíz*

Adorigo, 5120-012 Tabuaço

Tel. (351) 254 789 266

www.kopkeport.com

Grade A

One of the most prominent quintas on the south side of the Douro, if only for its impressive white-painted terraces and the large black letters on the wall of one of the buildings that proclaims 'founded in 1638'. This refers to the firm of Kopke, which was acquired by Barros Almeida along with Quinta de São Luíz in 1952. Although an eighteenth-century house and chapel are at the core of the *quinta*, it is now used by Barros as their main vinification centre and, internally, the property has lost much of its innate charm as a result. The wines from São Luíz form the basis of some impressive and often unfairly overlooked vintage Ports bottled under the Barros and Kopke labels.

Quinta do Crasto*

Gouvinhas, 5060-063 Sabrosa

Tel. (351) 254 920 020

www.quintadocrasto.pt

Grade A

Illustrated on one of the famous panels of decorative *azulejos* (tiles) at Pinhão station, Quinta do Crasto covers a hog's back on the north side of the Douro and can be viewed from the Régua–Pinhão road. The name is believed to derive from the Portuguese word *castro* (Latin: *castrum*), which signifies a Roman fort. Crasto formed a part of Pombal's first demarcation, and a sturdy granite pillar marking the geographical boundary of the *feitoria* can be seen on the estate. For much of the twentieth century Quinta do Crasto has been the property of Constantino de Almeida, formerly of Port shippers Constantino (now part of Ferreira). Crasto is currently one of the leading independent *quintas* in the Douro, owned and run by Constantino de Almeida's granddaughter Leonor and her husband Jorge Roquette.

Quinta da Água Alta

Ferrão, 5060 Sabrosa

Grade A

Água Alta (meaning ‘high water’) is one of a number of estates belonging to the Borges de Sousa family. A photograph from the Beleza collection dating from 1927 shows the property still virtually abandoned following phylloxera, with *mortórios* covering most of the slope. Although much of the vineyard has subsequently been replanted on *patamares*, the buildings of the *quinta* are traditional and largely unrestored. A huge wooden beam press remains in the *adeiga*. Sheltered by a fold in the hillside, the local climatic conditions here are hot and Quinta da Água Alta produces a rich, full bodied style of Port which is bought by Churchill.

Quinta Nova Nossa Senhora do Carmo*

Ferrão, 5060 Sabrosa

www.quintanova.com

Grade A * (Hotel)

Named after a small chapel built on the site in 1795, Quinta Nova (as it is known for short) was purchased by Port shippers Burmester in 1991 and currently belongs to the Amorim family. The *quinta* has been extensively restored and now produces its own wines as well as being a hotel and restaurant.

Quinta do Panascal*

Valenca do Douro, 5120-496 Tabuaço

Tel. (351) 254 732 321

www.fonseca.pt

Grade A

Facing south-west in the narrow lower reaches of the Távora valley, Panascal is one of a famous trio of *quintas* belonging to Fonseca. The company only acquired the *quinta* in 1978 but Panascal had been an important component in Fonseca's vintage blend for the previous twenty years. In 1985 they bought the adjoining property, Quinta do Val do Muros, taking the estate to 78 hectares, 51 of which are planted with vines. The Távora valley is hot and sheltered and the wines are prized for their solid backbone and concentration. The steep vineyard was extensively replanted on *patamares* during the 1980s but a small area of vertical planting was carried out towards the top of the property. Quinta do Panascal is one of few properties in the Douro that is equipped to welcome passing visitors who are given an audio-visual tour. It is well signposted from the main Pinhão-Régua road.

Quinta do Convento de São Pedro das Águias*

Tavora, 5120 Tabuaço.

Tel. (351) 254 787 004

www.quintadashereditas.com

Grade C/B

Situated in the narrow Távora valley on the southern margins of the demarcation, São Pedro das Águias does not really feel like the Douro. There is more granite than schist and the

springs that flow from the mountainside give a feeling of abundance. The existence of water gave rise to the construction of the Cistercian monastery on the site, dating back to the eleventh century. It fell into secular hands after the civil war of the early 1830s when the monastery was destroyed by fire. In 1986, São Pedro das Águias was bought in a run-down state by the Champagne house, Vranken. Ten years later, as part of a divorce settlement from Paul Vranken, it came under the ownership of Mme Mauricette Mordant who established the brand of Porto Heredias in 1999.

Quinta do Infantado

Covas do Douro, 5085 Pinhão

Grade A

Quinta do Infantado forms part of the old hamlet of Gontelho, deep in the valley below the untidy little village of Covas do Douro (*cova* means 'hollow'). The property used to belong to the Infante Dom Pedro (hence the name) and was bought by the Roseiras, a family from Covas, at the end of the nineteenth century. The 46-hectare vineyard at Infantado is made up of a number of different plots of vines at varying altitudes; eight hectares of Touriga Nacional are cultivated organically. In 1979 Infantado became the first to sell estate-bottled wine on the domestic market. This put the Roseira family in a good position to take advantage of the change in legislation in 1986 which permitted exports from the Douro, thereby circumventing the shippers in Vila Nova de Gaia.

Quinta da Boa Vista

Chanceleiros, 5085 Pinhão

Grade A

This dramatic *quinta* immediately below the hamlet of Chanceleiros has some of the finest traditional terraces in the Douro. The property was used as a base by Joseph James Forrester in the mid-nineteenth century but it has subsequently had a somewhat confused history, falling into a number of different hands until it was bought back by the firm of Forrester & Co. in 1979. Situated on either side of a deep ravine, Boa Vista has a particularly warm mesoclimate with temperatures often four or five degrees higher than in neighbouring *quintas*. As a result, it is usually one of the first properties to harvest in the Cima Corgo, at least a week in advance of others. Another point of interest is the old track leading from the *adega* to the river, along which bullock carts once hauled pipes of Port for shipment down to Gaia. Some of the vertical stones used as a primitive braking system for the carts still remain.

Quinta do Porto

Chanceleiros, 5085 Pinhão

Grade A

The elaborate iron gates to Quinta do Porto denote this as one of Dona Antónia Ferreira's many properties in the Douro, and it still belongs the Port house Ferreira. The simple whitewashed house and adjoining chapel at Quinta do Porto have been restored and maintained as a showpiece for trade guests. Grapes from the south-facing terraces and

patamares are vinified at Sandeman's Quinta do Seixo on the opposite side of the river, although the wine is sold under the Quinta label as a ten-year-old tawny.

Quinta do Seixo*

Valença do Douro, 5120-495 Tabuaço

Tel. (351) 223 746 100

www.sandeman.eu

Grade A

Touring the Douro in the 1870s, Henry Vizetelly describes Quinta do Seixo as 'commodious and well arranged' with 'an air of pretention about it'. Seixo occupies a prominent position overlooking the confluence of the River Torto with the Douro. Under the aegis of the late Jorge Maria Cabral Ferreira, the vineyards were substantially restructured with vertical planting (*vinha ao alto*) favoured on all but the very steepest slopes. Bought as a Ferreira property, Seixo has now been rebranded as Sandeman by owners Sogrape. The house and *adega* have been restored and are now open to passing visitors who are able to see a working winery and sample the wines on a terrace with a fabulous view over the Douro.

The Torto Valley

Torto means 'twisted', an accurate description of this Douro tributary, rising on the granite *planalto* near Sernancelhe before carving a deep and convoluted valley through the schist. Inaccessible by road for much of its length, the Torto is one of those hidden valleys that make a hugely important contribution to Port and the Douro as a whole. The twists and turns of the river provide a significant variation in exposure and microclimate. Vineyards are sheltered on either side by mountains rising to between 450 and 700 metres. Although there are few showpiece properties in the Torto, nearly all shippers source some of their finest Ports here.

Quinta da Corte

Valença do Douro, 5120 Tabuaço

Grade A

Viewed from the road on the opposite side of the Torto valley, Corte is one of the most singularly impressive properties in the Douro with its inclined stone terraces. For many years this independently owned property has supplied Delaforce with both vintage and tawny Ports and small quantities of old *colheitas* are aged at the property.

Quinta do Bom Retiro

Valença do Douro, 5120 Tabuaço

Grade A

Bom Retiro is divided in two. The larger part of the estate belongs to Ramos Pinto, who developed the *quinta* in the early twentieth century on profits generated by the sale of Port to Brazil. As a result it boasts the earliest swimming pool in the Douro (disguised as an ornamental pond) and a long level promenade shaded by palm trees designed for a gentle saunter after lunch or dinner. Some of the first *patamares* and *vinho ao alto* were laid out in the upper part of

the property in the 1970s. Wine from the *quinta* is an important component in Ramos Pinto's Vintage Port but is also sold as a single-*quinta* twenty-year-old tawny.

Quinta do Retiro Antigo

Valença do Douro, 5120 Tabuaço

Grade A

Long part of the Warre vintage *lote*, this property was bought by the Symington family in 2006. The much photographed step-like terraces that form part of the property can be seen from the Pinhão–São João de Pesqueira road.

Quinta do Retiro Novo

Sarzedinho, 5120 Tabuaço

Grade A

Deep in the Torto adjacent to the river, Retiro Novo belongs to the Portuguese firm of Wiese & Krohn, who purchased the property in 1989. It now serves as a vinification centre for the company's range of Ports.

Quinta do Vale Dona Maria

Casais do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

From 1973 to 1996, this nineteen-hectare property in the Torto valley was leased to the Symingtons to make wine for Smith Woodhouse and provided the backbone for some of its good but often undervalued vintages. Now back in the hands of the Lemos family, it is run by Cristiano van Zeller (ex-Quinta do Noval), who has replanted much of the vineyard and restored the *lagares* (unusually on the same level as the *armazém*). He is producing both vintage and crusted Ports from the property as well as red Douro wine under the Quinta's own label.

Quinta das Lages

Sarzedinho, 5120 Tabuaço

Grade A

This large estate extends upwards from the banks of the Rio Torto close to the village of Sarzedinho. Graham's have bought wines from the property for the best part of a century and Lages has become crucially important to the style and overall balance of their wines. The fruit and finesse that characterises Port from the Torto seems to complement the big, intense wines from Graham's Quinta dos Malvedos further up the Douro.

Quinta de Macedos

Sarzedinho, 5120 Tabuaço

Grade A

This small property perched on a knoll above the Torto has been bought by Englishman Paul Reynolds. With help from his brother Raymond (formerly a winemaker for Taylor's), he is producing a single-*quinta* Douro red from the property's seven hectares of old vines.

Quinta da Madalena

Ervadosa do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

This small, unsung property in the Torto valley now belongs to the Symingtons but has long been the basis for some of the vintage Ports produced by the firm of Smith Woodhouse. Of seven hectares, just four are planted with vines. In 1995 and 2001 Madalena was made as a single-*quinta* wine. The adjoining Quinta da Santa Madalena also supplies Smith Woodhouse.

Quinta de Perdiz

Ervadosa do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

Deep in the Torto valley just upstream from Madalena, Quinta de Perdiz was leased for a time to Churchill and has now been bought by Prats and Symington for the production of premium Douro reds, Chryseia and Post Scriptum.

Quinta do Rio

Ervadosa do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

Immediately upriver from Perdiz, Quinta do Rio was bought by Churchill in 2000. This ten-hectare property now provides the basis for some of Churchill's finest Ports and Douro wines, bottled under the name of Churchill Estates.

Quinta da Soalheira

5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

Approaching the town of São João de Pesqueira on the *altos* above the Douro, a sign on the right reads 'Quinta da Soalheira 5.5 km'. The dust-choked track then plunges back down into the Torto valley. The 330-hectare property belongs Borges & Irmão and used to be the source of a single-*quinta* ten-year-old tawny. With 40 hectares of vines Soalheira now produces Borges Douro wines, but the vineyard is being restructured and is the key to the company's revival as a Port shipper.

Pinhão

The shabby little town of Pinhão is the heart of the Cima Corgo and, for some, the soul of the Douro. Facing a ninety-degree bend in the river, Pinhão was merely a hamlet on a fluvial beach until the railway arrived in 1879. From being a single line of houses along a single street, the place has expanded up the hillside in the 1980s to take in Quinta Amarela. This prominent yellow-painted house used to stand immediately above Pinhão and is now occupied by the school (subsequently closed) that stands precariously on stilts above the town. With a bridge linking the south side of the Douro, all roads converge on Pinhão and the single, narrow cobbled main street is a thoroughfare for growers and shippers. No one can fail to pass through Pinhão without being seen and noted by the shopkeepers who spend their idle hours (and they are many) talking on the pavement – when a Spanish-

registered road tanker arrived in Pinhão during one vintage, apparently laden with grape must, word spread round the Douro in minutes. Some of the largest and most important *quintas* are located in the vicinity of Pinhão, including a number of flagship properties belonging to the major Port shippers.

Quinta do Vale da Figueira

5085 Pinhão

Grade A

A fig tree in the Douro usually indicates a watercourse, and Vale da Figueira means 'fig tree valley'. Although it was mentioned in Pombal's day, the property came to prominence in 1878 when the first trials with American vines were conducted there in the wake of the destruction wrought by phylloxera; a plaque in the *adega* records the event. Since the 1930s, Vale da Figueira has been owned by the Hoelzer family who used to sell to Cálem but now sell to the Symingtons. A small amount of wine is retained and bottled under the Quinta's own label.

Quinta de la Rosa*

5085 Pinhão

Tel. (351) 254 732 254

www.quintadalarosa.com

Grade A

There can be no finer christening present than Quinta de la Rosa, which was given to Claire Feuerheerd by her English grandmother in 1906. It was originally named Quinta das Bateiras after the hamlet on the opposite side of the river but was renamed 'La Rosa' by the Feuerheerds after a brand of Sherry. The property still belongs to the same family, although the Port-shipping firm of Feuerheerd became separated from the *quinta* when it was taken over by Barros Almeida in the 1930s. In the interim La Rosa sold its wine to a number of shippers, latterly to Sandeman, who built up the *lagares* and installed the ill-fated *movimosto* system to make Port both with grapes from the *quinta* and nearby properties. Disappointed by the quality of the wine being made at La Rosa, Tim Bergqvist, Claire Feuerheerd's son and current owner of La Rosa, decided it was time to strike out on his own and in the late 1980s the family began producing its own Ports and Douro wines. The vineyards rise from the river, at about 90 metres above sea level almost up to Gouvaes at 400 metres, making for a wide range of microclimates. The best vineyard, however, is Vale do Inferno ('Hell Valley'), a sheltered hollow with old vines close to the river. Built into the terraces just above the railway line, the rather topsy-turvy house at La Rosa is one of the most appealing in the Douro. The Bergqvists have built a number of rooms to receive paying guests (*turismo rural*). A stay at La Rosa is the best way to experience the life of a working *quinta*.

Quinta da Foz*

5085 Pinhão

Grade A

Overlooking the mouth or *foz* of the River Pinhão, Quinta da Foz marked the easternmost limit of Pombal's initial demarcation. The Cálem family bought the estate in 1885, it having

been devastated by phylloxera a decade earlier. A contemporary photograph in Vilarinho de São Romão's book *Viticultura e Vinicultura* illustrates the abandoned terraces. The railway line that was built at the same time comes so close to the house that it feels as though the early morning train were coming through the bedrooms! For many years Foz formed the backbone of Cálem's Vintage Ports, along with wines from the neighbouring Quinta do Sagrado and Quinta do Vale da Figueira. At the time of writing this edition the Cálem family had just sold the estate.

Quinta do Bomfim

5085 Pinhão

Grade A

Approached from the chaotic main street in Pinhão, Bomfim is something of an oasis and certainly one of the most civilised of all *quintas* in the Douro. It occupies an enviable site, facing south-west, and (with the exception of the upper part of the property) is not nearly as steep as many vineyards in the Cima Corgo. The locality was known originally as Vale Bem Feito ('well-made valley') but the Quinta do Bomfim ('good end') does not seem to have had much of a history until it was bought for Silva & Cosens (Dow's) by George Acheson Warre in 1896. He clearly had foresight because Bomfim has subsequently become the centre of Dow's operations in the Douro. Warre built a modest but comfortable residence at Bomfim, inspired by the tea-planter's houses in Ceylon, and the shady verandah with its view over the river continues to be one of my favourite places to enjoy a glass of chilled twenty-year-old tawny. Port was made in *lagares* at Bomfim until the early 1960s when they were phased out and replaced by autovinifiers. Wine from the property continues to form the backbone of Dow's solid vintage Ports, and is also produced as a single-*quinta* wine in intervening years.

Quinta da Roêda

5085 Pinhão

Grade A

The vineyard at Roêda interlocks with Bomfim and enjoys a similar aspect and exposure. The property belonged to the Fladgates (of Taylor, Fladgate & Yeatman fame) until it was acquired by Croft in 1875. A colonial-style house similar in style to that at Bomfim was built in the 1920s. Roêda went full circle in 2001 when Croft was bought by Taylor's and is now a key property in the Fladgate Partnership. The utilitarian 1970s winery overlooking the river was built to withstand earthquakes, a very rare occurrence in the Douro. It continues to serve as the principal vinification centre for both Croft and Delaforce and has been subject to many improvements in recent years. Many of Roêda's wines were disappointing in the 1970s and 1980s, when it formed the backbone of Croft's vintage Port as well as single-*quinta* vintages. Much of the property has now been replanted and, under new management, is producing some first-class wines.

Quinta das Carvalhas*

Casais do Douro, 5085 Pinhão

www.realcompanhiavelha.pt

Grade A

The entire hill opposite Pinhão belongs to the Silva Reis family, the principal shareholders in Real Companhia Velha (Royal Oporto) and among the largest landowners in the Douro. Carvalhas itself extends to some 600 hectares. The summit of the hill is crowned by the modern *Casa Redonda* (Round House), known locally as the 'Holiday Inn'! It commands one of the best views in the Douro, although Quinta do Seixo on the opposite side of the Tordo must feel slightly threatened by the two cannons that point in that direction.

The Pinhão Valley

The deeply incised Pinhão valley has a huge area of vineyard, much of it hidden from view. Up from the narrow river mouth, the valley opens out and vineyards extend over 10 kilometres upstream, covering the precipitous slopes from an altitude of 150 metres above sea level to over 500 metres. Like the Rio Tordo, the Port shippers treat the Pinhão valley as a sub-region in its own right. Sheltered on all sides, the best vineyards (Grade A) are those at lower altitudes (150–350 metres) that extend down to the river. These produce some of the very finest Ports, prized for their balance and finesse. Nearly all the major shippers have a stake here. Unless you are prepared to go on a 4x4 safari it is difficult to take in the extent and importance of the Pinhão valley as most of the finest vineyards lie below the Pinhão–Sabrosa and Pinhão–Alijó roads. If you do manage to venture off-piste, you cannot fail to be struck by the scale and serenity of the place.

Quinta da Eira Velha

Gouvães, 5085 Pinhão

Grade A

At an altitude of nearly 200 metres, Eira Velha looks straight down on the mouth of the River Pinhão and boasts one of the finest views in the Douro. The *quinta* has a long recorded history, having been owned by the See of the Archbishop of Braga in the sixteenth century. In 1893 it was bought by the firm of Hunt Roope and thence passed into the hands of the Newmans, an old-established trading family from Devon, England, who were among those to exchange Portuguese wine for *bacalhau* in the seventeenth century. Eira Velha is famous for its panels of blue and white tiles or *azulejos* surrounding the *lagares*, one of which illustrates the Newmans' shipping interests. From the late 1970s until 2007 Eira Velha supplied Martinez, and in the recent game of musical chairs it was bought by the Fladgate Partnership.

Quinta do Junco

São Cristóvão do Douro, 5085 Pinhão

Grade A

So precipitous are the slopes of the Pinhão valley at Quinta do Junco that it is difficult to see the property from the Pinhão–Sabrosa road which runs immediately underneath. Owned by Borges & Irmão for most of the twentieth century, in 1998 it was sold to Taylor's in a

somewhat run-down condition along with nearby Quinta da Casa Nova. Both properties have since been extensively replanted and Junco is producing high quality Port.

Quinta da Cavadinha

Provezende, 5085 Pinhão

Grade A

Wine from the Rio Torto has customarily been at the heart of Warre's Ports but in 1980 the Symington family took the decision to buy Cavadinha high above the Pinhão valley. With a north-easterly aspect and an altitude ranging between 120 and 450 metres, this is the last of the Symington family's many properties to be harvested, usually in early October. Although much of the upper part of the *quinta* is planted with Tinta Barroca, the enormous height variation ensures a balanced wine. The entire production is made on the property, the best wines in robotic *lagares*. In the years when Warre's declare a vintage, Cavadinha forms a substantial part of the blend together with wine from Quinta do Retiro Antigo in the Rio Torto. A single-*quinta* wine is produced in good intervening years. Quinta da Cavadinha was the setting for Miguel Torga's story *A Vindima*, a fact that is now recorded on a panel of tiles on a wall at the *quinta*. Two neighbouring properties, Quinta do Alvito and Quinta das Netas, have also been bought by members of the Symington family.

Quinta do Noval

5085 Pinhão

Grade A

Noval is perhaps the best example of the aphorism that you have to visit a neighbour's *quinta* to appreciate your own. Seen from Warre's Quinta da Cavadinha on the opposite side of the Pinhão valley, the view of Noval is certainly among the finest in the Douro. In spite of its rather chequered history, Noval's vineyards have always been immaculately maintained and the whitewashed steps connecting one walled terrace to another are visible for miles around. Since it was bought by the French insurance company AXA in 1993, nearly half the vineyard has been replanted, largely with Touriga Nacional, but the traditional terraces have fortunately been retained. The famous ungrafted 'Nacional' vineyard extends to just two hectares and occupies three terraces above and one terrace below the main drive up to the house which bisects the estate. The Noval estate now extends to 102 hectares (including the neighbouring Quinta das Canadas) and Noval also have a 25-year lease on a 38-hectare estate in the Roncão valley where they have a small quantity of Syrah. Although 'Noval' is a brand that appears on wines that come from outside the *quinta*, the name 'Quinta do Noval' is reserved for LBVs, colheitas and vintage Ports, all of which originate from the property itself. For more information on the history and wines of this remarkable *quinta*, see page 225.

Quinta da Terra Feita

Provesende, 5085 Pinhão

Grade A

Taylor and Fonseca own an enviable amalgam of *quintas* deep in the Pinhão valley, which together count as one of the finest vineyard holdings in the Douro. With forty-eight hectares of vineyard, Quinta da Terra Feita is Taylor's largest property. It covers a low spur on the right bank of the river and is easy to recognise because of the small flat vineyard on the summit that was made by blasting away nineteen metres of rock from the top of the knoll. All grapes from the *quinta* are foot trodden in two *adegas* on the estate. The richly perfumed wines from Terra Feita are a major component in Taylor's vintage Ports, bolstered by those from Quinta de Vargellas upstream in the Douro Superior. Small quantities of single-*quinta* vintage Port from Terra Feita are released in good interim years.

'Museu dos Lagares'

Vale de Mendiz, 5070 Alijó

From the outside there is nothing remarkable about this rectangular whitewashed building, but on the inside are the Douro's only round *lagares*. They were built by António Pinto Gouveio at the end of the nineteenth century, an eccentric who apparently believed that the treaders could hurt their feet in the corners of the conventional rectangular *lagares*. The building was converted into a museum by Sandeman and in 2004 the Museu dos Lagares was bought by Niepoort who also acquired an old vineyard nearby. They have returned the round *lagares* to working order and make some of their finest Ports here.

Quinta de Cruzeiro

Vale de Mendiz, 5070 Alijó

Grade A

An imposing crenellated gateway marks the entrance to this seemingly modest property on the edge of the village of Vale de Mendiz. Facing Terra Feita on the opposite side of the River Pinhão, Cruzeiro has been at the heart of Fonseca's Vintage Port since 1912. It was bought in a run-down condition by the company in 1973 and much of the vineyard has subsequently been replanted on *patamares*. Touriga Franca and Tinta Barroca together now account for over 60 per cent of the vines on the property, producing beautifully balanced, fragrant Ports which complement the bigger, rather more robust wines from Panascal. The wines from Cruzeiro are foot trodden on the *quinta* in *lagares*.

Quinta do Silval

Vale de Mendiz, 5070 Alijó

Grade A

Not to be confused with Noval's Silval (the name of their second vintage Port), Quinta do Silval is independently owned by the Magalhães family who make Port and Douro wines on the property. The family's fifty hectares of vineyard extend up from the River Pinhão over the hill unto the neighbouring Roncão valley. In the past, Ports from Quinta do Silval have

been sold to Sandeman, Taylor and Rozès. In 2000 Silval bottled their first Port for fifty years under the name of Magalhães, and Douro wines are bottled as Dorna Velha.

Quinta do Passadouro*

Vale de Mendiz, 5070 Alijó

Tel. (351) 254 732 312

www.quinta-do-passadouro.com

Grade A

Hidden and almost forgotten for many years, Quinta do Passadouro has enjoyed a renaissance since it was bought by Belgian sand and gravel magnate Dieter Bohrmann in 1992. Port and Douro wines are made in *lagares* on the property under the aegis of Jorge Serôdio Borges. The house on the property is run as a *turismo rural* and receives overnight guests.

Quinta de Santo António

Vale de Mendiz, 5070 Alijó

Grade A

Slightly further up the Pinhão valley, Santo António was acquired by Fonseca in 1979. It is the smallest of their properties with just six hectares of vines. As with nearby Quinta do Cruzeiro, Fonseca has bought the grapes since 1912 and it forms part of the vintage blend. The property was completely replanted in the 2000s and is entirely organic.

Quinta do Fojo and Quinta da Manuela

Vale de Mendiz. 5070 Alijó

Grade A

Few properties in the Douro are more peaceful than Quinta do Fojo, where all that can be heard in the spring is the rush of water from the River Pinhão. It is owned (along with the adjoining Quinta da Manuela) by the Serôdio Borges family who, over the years, have supplied Churchill, Croft and Niepoort. Fojo and Manuela also produce single-estate Douro wines.

The Roncão Valley

‘Vinho bom e do Roncão, Ferrão and Todão’ (good wine comes from Roncão, Ferrão and Todão). So goes the local saying, which must please growers in these three locations. There are plenty of other places in the Douro making good wine but the small but deeply incised Roncão valley has a strong reputation of its own. Just over the hill from the much more extensive Pinhão valley, Roncão has a particularly hot and dry mesoclimate that differentiates it from the surrounding area and produces robust wines, prized for their richness, power and concentration. The British shippers refer to ‘roasted Roncão’ and after a hot summer it is not uncommon for these wines to take on more than a hint of torrefaction. It is difficult to appreciate the Roncão valley from anything other than a four-wheel drive but there are some wonderful walks over the hill from the villages of Casal de Loivos and Vilarinho de Cotas.

Quinta do Roncão

Casal de Loivos, 5085 Pinhão

Grade A

Quinta do Roncão used to belong Robertson Bros. who bought this and other adjoining *quintas* in 1893. There are now two Roncão *quintas*, Roncão Velho and Roncão Novo. Roncão Novo is now leased by Noval who have restored the impressive stone-walled terraces overlooking the narrow mouth of the Roncão valley.

Quinta do Sibio

Cotas, 5070 Alijó

Grade A

Like Roncão, there are also two Sibios (sometimes spelt Cibio). The main Sibio was laid out by the Jordão family from Granja in the mid-nineteenth century and remained with the family until it was bought by Real Companhia Velha (Royal Oporto) in 1934. The property has some magnificent terraces which, until the late 1990s, were all but abandoned. A restoration programme has taken the vineyard to twelve hectares.

From Roncão to Tua

There are no roads alongside the Douro upstream from Pinhão. The journey from Pinhão to Tua, which is 10 kilometres by river, is well over 20 kilometres by car. Long tracks lead down to the *quintas*, which are some of the most remote in the region. All these properties, with varying exposures and mesoclimates, are capable of producing outstanding wine but, by the 1990s, many were suffering from prolonged under-investment. It is encouraging that a number of properties have been fully restored over the past decade. The railway line that runs along the north side of the Douro affords good views of Quinta do Ventozello, Quinta do Roriz, Quinta do Vau and Quinta da Vila Velha, all of which come down to the river.

Quinta de Ventozello*

Ervadosa do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Tel. (351) 254 732 167

Grade A

One of the largest and most spectacular properties in the Douro, Quinta do Ventozello occupies a natural amphitheatre above a 2-kilometre bend in the river, and extends to 600 hectares. Ventozello was originally a Cistercian property and, unusually for a property of this size, has never been linked with any of the major shippers. It was acquired in poor condition in 1999 by a Galician company. They have since invested large sums of money, restoring over 90 hectares of old terraced vineyard and planting a further 120 hectares of new vines. Touriga Nacional is already the most planted grape variety on the estate. Spanning an altitude range of 90 to 450 metres above sea level, Ventozello faces predominantly west but encompasses a variety of different exposures. Although the property has its own *lagares* (now restored and halved in size), Ventozello has purchased an old winery on the Pinhão-São João de Pesqueira which has been renamed the Adega

da Cruz and is to be completely rebuilt. Such is the size and scale of Ventozello that it is now emerging as a shipper in its own right.

Quinta da Romaneira

Cotas, 5070 Alijó

Grade A

With an isolated yet glorious location, Romaneira covers over 400 hectares, has 50 kilometres of roads and used to boast three railway stations, extending 2.5 kilometres along the north bank of the Douro from the Costa do Roncão as far as Carrapata, once a *quinta* in its own right. It used to belong to the Borges family and, unlike the other *quintas* owned by Borges & Irmão bank (Junco, Casa Nova and Soalheira), it escaped nationalisation during the Revolution in 1975. In 1986 Romaneira was among the first of the new generation of *quintas* to make and market their own single-estate Ports. In 2004 it was acquired by an investment consortium led by Christian Seeley, President and Managing Director of Quinta do Noval. The fine house and the *adega* on the estate were converted into a Relais et Châteaux hotel (Hotel dos Sonhos) and an impressive new winery was built at the top of the property.

Quinta das Tecedeiras

Ervadosa do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

Formerly known as Quinta Teixeira Velha, this property was renamed Tecedeiras ('Weaver's Quinta') at the turn of the twentieth century. The name derives from the fact that the nuns of São Pedro das Águias used to cultivate hemp for cloth on the estate. Situated opposite Roncão, the property covers sixty-six hectares, of which just fifteen are planted with vines. The property now belongs to Dão Sul who made their first Douro wines here in 2001.

Quinta do Caedo

Ervadosa do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

Caedo is a short valley sheltered to the south by the 600-metre peak of Furada. This small property on the south bank of the Douro used to belong to Port shippers Hunt Roope and was subsequently acquired by Ferreira. With forty hectares of vines facing both east and west on either side of the valley, Caedo produces premium quality grapes, vinified at Quinta do Seixo.

Quinta de Santa Barbara

Ervadosa do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

Euphemistically known as 'Caedo II', this property was renamed Quinta de Santa Barbara when it was bought by Poças in 2000. The forty-hectare vineyard includes ten hectares of *vinha velha*, which forms the core of Poças' vintage Port. A single-*quinta* vintage Port is also made.

Quinta do Roriz

Ervadosa do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

Roriz is one of the most famous *quintas* in the Cima Corgo. It began as a shooting box leased in the 1700s by the Scotsman Robert Archibald from the Três Minas da Ordem de Cristo who mined tin and gold here in the seventeenth century. From Archibald's son Diogo, the *quinta* passed into the hands of Nicolau Kopke and thereby through marriage to the van Zeller family. Roriz fairly lays claim to one of the first single-*quinta* Ports, much sought after in England in the early years of the nineteenth century. The London auction house Christie's records the sale of 'thirty dozens of fine Old Port ... including Roriz' in their sale of 10 July 1828. The wine continued to be bottled by Gonzalez Byass through the early years of the twentieth century but the property's identity was subsequently lost when the wines were sold to other shippers, including Ferreira and Noval. Since 2009 the property has been owned by Prats and Symington and restored for the production of Douro reds: Chryseia, Post Scriptum and Prazo de Roriz. The house, one of the most attractive in the Douro, is situated on a short and fairly flat spur at the centre of the property. The forty-three hectares of vineyard (25 per cent Touriga Nacional and Touriga Franca) face west/north west and span an altitude from 125 to 250 metres.

Quinta de São José

Ervadosa do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

This small riverside property immediately below Quinta do Roriz has been bought by the Brito e Cunha family who have restored the modest schist-built house into accommodation for paying guests. João Brito e Cunha is the winemaker for Lavradores de Feitoria (see page 252).

Quinta da Gricha

Ervadosa do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A.

At an altitude of 250 metres (immediately above Roriz), Gricha derives its name from a small spring that rises on the hillside and, through a series of granite-lined watercourses, continues to supply water to the house. The property was planted in the 1840s and an *adeiga* was built a decade later with impressive granite *lagares* decorated by carved finials. In 1999 Gricha was the first property to be acquired by Port shippers Churchill. The wine from the property now forms the backbone of their vintage Port and in good interim years, grapes from the old vineyards are made into a fine single-*quinta* Port.

Quinta do Vau

Soutelo do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

'Vau' is the Portuguese word meaning 'ford' and this *quinta* on the south bank of the river marked a shallow crossing point in the Douro prior to the construction of the dams in

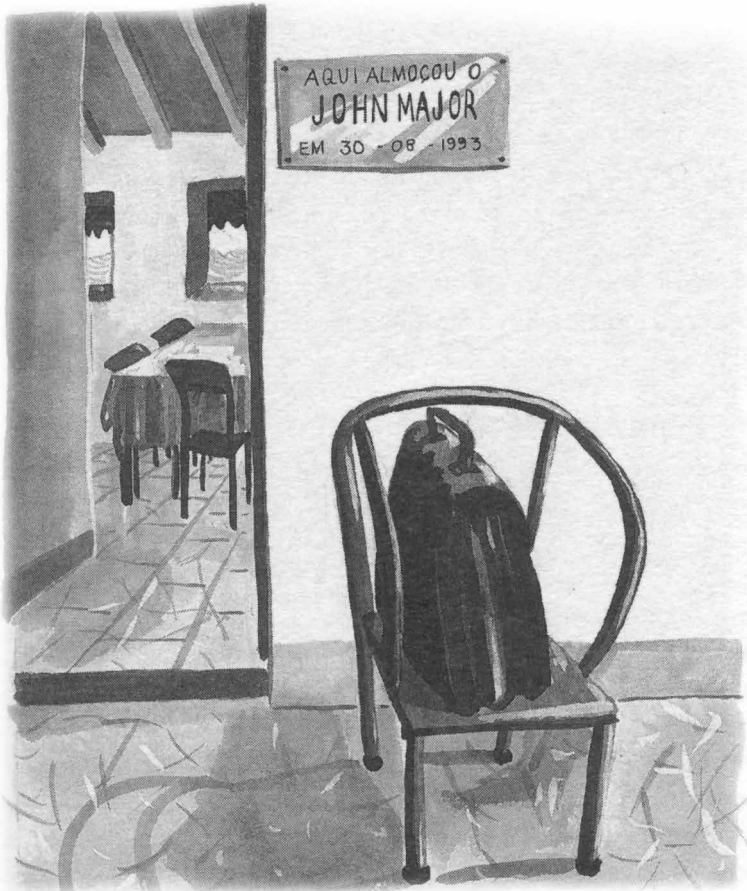
the 1970s. The property was purchased by Sandeman in 1988 and has subsequently been replanted. It forms a part of Sandeman's vintage *lote* and has been released as a single-*quinta* wine although, confusingly, a wine named 'Vau Vintage' does not originate entirely from the estate.

Quinta da Vila Velha

Soutelo do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

Overlooking Ribeira do Caedo on the south bank of the Douro, Vila Velha is owned privately by James Symington and supplies Grahams. Of 137 hectares, just under half is planted with vines.



Senhora da Ribeira. 'John Major had lunch here'

Quinta dos Malvedos

São Mamede da Riba Tua, 5070 Alijó

Grade A

Malvedos is synonymous with W. & J. Graham, having been a component in their renowned vintage Ports for over a century. The *quinta* briefly parted company from Graham in the lean years of the early 1970s but was repurchased in poor condition by the Symington family in 1982, who have subsequently invested substantial sums in restoring the property. The latest development is a new winery, constructed sympathetically from local schist, with stainless steel robotic *lagares* to tread the grapes; one of the old granite *lagares* has been retained. Covering nearly a hundred hectares, the property is predominantly south-facing and rises up to 400 metres in altitude. Malvedos produces big but balanced and lasting wines that stand up on their own as single-*quinta* vintage Ports. The simple nineteenth-century *solar* provided peaceful holiday accommodation for British Prime Minister John Major in 1993 and 1994. A brass plaque on the café at Senhora da Ribeira upstream records the event.

From the Tua to Valeira

Like Pinhão downriver, the village of Tua, with its single cobbled street, owes its existence to the railway. The station used to be the junction between the main line and the wonderful narrow-gauge branch line to Bragança but after a number of fatal accidents this has now been closed. The spectacular Tua valley, most of which is too sheer to plant vineyards, is under threat from a hydroelectric scheme which would alter the landscape irrevocably. Upstream from Tua, the sheltered Ribalonga valley is planted with fruit trees and vines. With the exception of Quinta do Zimbro which used to belong to Silva & Cosens (Dow), there are no large properties of any note, but the wines from Ribalonga are prized by shippers for their finesse. Croft used to be important buyers here. On the south side of the Douro there are a number of *quintas* in the shelter of their own small valleys: Quinta do Mileu which used to form part of the Ferreira empire, Quinta do São Martinho and Quinta do Castelinho. The Douro is much narrower here and, after the winter rains, the river is quite fast flowing.

Quinta do Tua

Tua, 5140 Carrazeda de Ansiães

Grade A.

Overlooking the confluence of the River Tua with the Douro, Quinta do Tua belonged to Dona Antónia Ferreira until it was bought by Cockburn Smithes in 1899. It subsequently became known as Quinta dos Ingleses ('the English Quinta') and appears on the Instituto Geográfico do Exercito maps as 'Quinta do Smith'(sic). The terraced vineyards of Quinta do Tua are on a spur of land above the mouth of the River Tua and include neighbouring Quinta da Chousa. Tua was the site of some of the first varietal plantings in the Douro, carried out by John Smithes in the 1930s. The modest but well proportioned *solar* or mansion has been joined by a rather utilitarian winery and a line-up of concrete *balões* for the bulk storage of Port. The wines from Tua frequently formed part of Cockburn's vintage Port until the property was bought by the Symington family in 2010 and rebranded as a Graham estate.

Quinta dos Aciprestes

Soutelo do Douro, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

Quinta dos Aciprestes can easily be identified from the six cypress trees that stand near the main house and give the property its name. The *quinta* was established in the late eighteenth century by Dom José de Seabra, a minister of Maria I. Since the 1860s, Aciprestes has been an agglomeration of several properties and includes the adjoining Quinta da Boa Vista which used to be part of the Ferreira empire. It now extends for nearly 2 kilometres along the river Douro opposite Tua. Aciprestes now belongs to Real Companhia Velha who completely transformed this property in the 1990s. The vineyard is now completely mechanised and 90 per cent of it is vertically planted.

Quinta do Zimbro

Ribalonga, 5140 Carrazeda de Ansiães

Grade A

There are two Zimbros, one belonging to Calços de Tanha and producing Douro wine, the other supplying Dow. Zimbro (meaning ‘Juniper’) used to belong to Silva & Cosens and continues to form an important part of Dow’s vintage *lote*. The vineyards are divided from the old house and chapel by the railway line that runs past the front door and many of the old terraces below the house have been lost to the river.

Quinta do Castelinho*

Valeira, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Tel. (351) 254 320 100

Grade A

Quinta do Castelinho is the last property in the Cima Corgo before reaching the Douro Superior. Since 1848 the property has incorporated a number of old *quintas* including Padrão, Azenha, Vau and Pelão, all of which appear on Forrester’s map. In 1969 Castelinho was bought by Manuel António Saraiva and, although the fifty-hectare property still produces a single-*quinta* Port, it lends its name to a shipper of Port and Douro wines. Quinta do Castelinho itself is situated in a sheltered *bacia* (hollow), which favours the production of big, concentrated wines.

From Valeira to Pocinho

A huge outcrop of granite extending from Carrazeda de Ansiães in the north to Sebadelhe and Touça on the *altos* south of the Douro divides the Cima Corgo from the Douro Superior. Above the Barragem da Valeira (Valeira dam), the river is shackled by the granite which rises to form a precipice over 500 metres above sea level on either side. No one has ever attempted to cultivate this stretch of the Douro and the crags above the river are the preserve of wild birds. At Ferradosa the schist returns and there is even a small hamlet on the south side of the Douro named São Xisto (Saint Schist). Until the river was made navigable in the late eighteenth century (see page 16), the Douro Superior was remote and inaccessible.

All the properties upriver from Valeira therefore date from the nineteenth century or later. Cockburn and Taylor have long favoured this stretch of the river and, since the 1980s, the Symington family have also gained ground. This is the so-called *Terra Quente*, hot land of Trás-os-Montes. Travelling east from Ferradosa, the climate becomes much more arid with annual rainfall starting at 600mm and falling to 400mm or less upriver from Pocinho. Short, sheltered tributaries like the narrow valleys of the Ribeira da Uceira and Ribeira de Murça have mesoclimates of their own.

Quinta da Ferradosa

Ferradosa, 5140 Carrazeda de Ansiães

Grade A

Situated on the inlet that forms the mouth of the Ribeira da Ferradosa, the western part of Quinta de Ferradosa lies on granite. When the property was sold by Real Vinicola to Cálém in the early 1990s (without any *benefício*) every vine on the property, including an ancient pergola shading the chicken coop, had been spitefully sawn off just above the roots! A new vineyard has now been planted on the schist east of the inlet. Although the railway almost passes the front door, Ferradosa is one of most isolated properties in the Douro and the best way to reach the *quinta* is by boat.

Quinta do Cachão

Ferradosa, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

Cachão means a ‘rush of water’ and although this is one of the closest *quintas* to the former rapids of Valeira, it was not one of the first properties to be planted when the river became navigable. Quinta do Cachão was laid out in 1845 by the Barão do Seixo and subsequently acquired by the Cabral family. It was then purchased, in a poor state, by Port shippers Messias in 1956. Two years later it was joined by the adjacent Quinta do Rei (bought from Gonzalez Byass) and this now forms the heart of the property. Messias have their own *adega* and *armazém* on site, and wines from Quinta do Cachão form the basis for vintage Ports, colheitas and Douro wines.

Quinta de Vargellas

Vale da Figueira, 5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grade A

With its own impeccably maintained railway station, Vargellas has developed into a self-contained community high in the Douro Superior. It was established in the early 1800s, and by the 1830s had gained a reputation for the quality of its wines. For much of the nineteenth century a significant part of the property belonged to the Ferreira family until three *quintas* bearing the name of Vargellas were merged into one by Taylor, Fladgate & Yeatman between 1893 and 1896. Between 1993 and 1999 Taylor’s added the 41-hectare Quinta do São Xisto, which lies alongside the hamlet with the same name. Curving with the river, Vargellas forms an extremely impressive property and, although not the largest of their vineyards, is treated by the Fladgate Partnership as their flagship estate. Vargellas produces

strong, dark wines with a scented character which Alistair Robertson, Chairman of the Fladgate Partnership, describes as 'violety'. Taylor's were the first of the current generation to release a single-*quinta* vintage Port with the launch of Quinta de Vargellas 1958. In order to justify the extra costs involved, wine from the old unmechanised vineyards on the property is now being bottled separately under the name Vargellas Vinha Velha. In declared years Port from Vargellas forms a major part of Taylor's vintage blend along with powerful wines from the company's other estates, Quinta de Terra Feita and Quinta do Junco, in the Pinhão valley. The so-called 'chalet' at Vargellas has been transformed by Gillyanne Robertson into a dwelling modelled on a comfortable English country house. That no doubt inspired the late Willie Rushton to draw a cartoon that depicts the railway station at Vargellas with bowler-hatted commuters as the 'last outpost of the British Empire'!

Quinta dos Canais

Beira Grande, 5140 Carrazeda de Ansiães
Grade A.

The view across the river from Vargellas has been completely transformed since Cockburn's purchased this impressive property in 1989. The hillside has been reworked on *patamares* and large numbers cypress trees have been planted to soften the impact. Canais is named after the channels which, like Madeira's *levadas*, transport water from the immense waterfall that cascades off the granite behind the property during the winter and spring. The predominantly south-facing vineyard extends to 100 hectares, 70 per cent of which is Touriga Nacional. Canais has formed the backbone of Cockburn's vintage blend for over a hundred years and, as the new vineyards mature, this property has the capacity to make some superlative Ports. The estate was bought by the Symington family along with Cockburn's assets in 2010. It will remain branded as a Cockburn *quinta*.

Quinta do Arnozelo

Arnozelo, 5150 Vila Nova de Foz Côa
Grade A

Once part of Dona Antónia Ferreira's empire, Quinta do Arnozelo is a 200-hectare estate situated on the south side of the Douro, on the opposite side of the Ribeira da Silva inlet from the hamlet of Arnozelo. The Port shipper Cálem, stripped of its vineyards (Foz, Sagrado and Ferradosa) when the Cálem family sold the company in 1998, purchased Arnozelo in 2004. The property rises from the river to an altitude of 300 metres and has 100 hectares of vineyard, nearly all planted since 1992. Almost 50 per cent of the vineyard is Touriga Nacional.

Quinta do Vesúvio

Numão. 5150 Vila Nova de Foz Côa
Grade A

This legendary *quinta* is undeniably among the most impressive in the Douro. It boasts the largest house, some of the biggest *lagares* and, like Lisbon, Rome and San Francisco, it covers seven hills. The estate was created in the early nineteenth century by António

Bernardo Ferreira (the father-in-law of Dona Antónia) and remained with the Ferreira family until it was acquired by the Symingtons in 1989. It was in a poor state of repair at the time and many of the best vineyards had been lost to the flooding of the river in the 1970s. Predominantly north facing, the entire property covers an area of 325 hectares, of which over a third is now under vine. Much has been done to revive the property since the Symington family decided to produce a single-*quinta* vintage Port from Vesúvio independently of their other brands. The eight 25-pipe *lagares* (which are equipped with their own pissoirs should anyone be caught short whilst treading) have been thoroughly revamped and equipped with temperature control, essential in this part of the Douro. The old *azenha* ('mill') has been converted into an air-conditioned lodge for cask ageing. Bottled in all but the most dismal years (1993 and 2002 are the exceptions to date), Quinta do Vesúvio has quickly risen to join the premier league of vintage Ports.

Quinta dos Quatro Ventos

Numão, 5150 Vila Nova de Foz Côa

Situated in the narrow Teja valley just above Quinta do Vesúvio, the 200-hectare Quinta dos Quatro Ventos was purchased in 1998 by Bairrada-based Caves Aliança for the production of Douro wines. Wines from fifty hectares of vines are made in an *adega* on the property.

Quinta do Vale de Malhadas

Numão, 5150 Vila Nova de Foz Côa

Grade A

This magnificent but remote *quinta* adjoins Quinta do Vesúvio on the south side of the Douro and has been bought by brothers Paul and Dominic Symington. The property was purchased in a poor state of repair and is currently being restored.

THE VISITOR'S BOOK

The showpiece *quintas* belonging to the major Port shippers receive hundreds of guests each year from all over the world. They all have a visitor's book which guests are asked to sign at the end of their visit. Some of these are now important historical records, with detailed comments from family members and guests on the weather conditions during the year and the quality of the vintage. At Dow's Quinta do Bomfim, the visitor's books date back continuously to 1890 with entries from George Warre and James Ramsey Dow. Today's books tend to carry short notes of thanks from trade and press guests who have spent a few days being shown around the Douro. One of these is open to interpretation: 'Wonderful weekend, spoilt by the Symingtons'. At Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas it is a tradition to write a poem in the visitor's book.

Quinta da Senhora da Ribeira

Seixo de Ansiães, 5140 Carrazeda de Ansiães

Grade A

Facing Vesúvio across the Douro, Senhora da Ribeira was one of three *quintas* to be bought for Silva & Cosens (Dows) at the end of the nineteenth century by George Acheson Warre (the others are Bomfim and Zimbro). The property remained with Silva & Cosens until it had to be sold by the Symington family in the mid-1950s in order to make ends meet. An entry in Dow's Quinta do Bomfim visitor's book dated 21 May 1954 records: 'Went to Senhora da Ribeira to conclude sale ... It's been a most sad occasion but we leave the happiest memories and many good faithful friends here.' The wine continued to be an important component in Dow's Vintage Ports, being foot trodden at the *quinta* in traditional stone *lagares*. In 1998, just as Dow's celebrated their two-hundredth anniversary, Quinta da Senhora da Ribeira was bought back by the Symingtons and is once more in the family fold. The winery has been completely rebuilt and, like Graham's Malvedos and Warre's Cavadinha, equipped with robotic *lagares*. Senhora da Ribeira makes wonderfully fragrant, floral wines which, in good interim years, are bottled as single-*quinta* vintage Ports. Grapes from nearby Quinta do Santinho, belonging to members of the Symington family, are sold to Dow.

Quinta Vale da Mina

Seixo de Ansiães, 5140 Carrazeda de Ansiães

Grade A

This ten-hectare property above Senhora da Ribeira belongs to Cristiano van Zeller (ex-Quinta do Noval), who replanted the property in 1986 and began making a single-*quinta* vintage Port in 1995.

Quinta de Vale Coelho

Vilarinho de Castanheira, 5140 Carrazeda de Ansiães

Grade A

On the north bank of the Douro, Quinta de Vale Coelho ('Rabbit Valley') and the adjoining Quinta da Telhada are some of the most peaceful and unassuming of all properties in the Douro. Originally known as Quinta do Lobazim de Baixo, Vale Coelho was the first of Cockburn's many *quintas* in the Douro Superior, bought by the firm in the 1890s. Apart from electricity which arrived in 1965 and still seems something of an imposition, the house is little changed since. When the Symingtons bought Cockburn's in 2010, Vale Coelho and Telhada were both rebranded as Warre estates.

From Pocinho to Barca d'Alva (and beyond)

Pocinho is the terminus for the train from Oporto, the railway line having been pruned back in the 1980s from Barca d'Alva on the frontier with Spain. Pocinho is hardly an end in itself as it is no more than a rather gloomy railway station supported by a few shacks and cottages with a hydro-electric station on the Douro nearby. This is the 'far east'. Without the moderating

effect of the Atlantic the heat in summer can be suffocating, with the thermometer rising to 50°C on occasion. With annual rainfall of less than 500mm (and in places below 400mm), irrigation is essential in order to establish a vineyard. Until the 1970s, the land beyond Pocinho was almost virgin territory with few Port vineyards, even though the area falls well within the demarcation. Cockburn, Ramos Pinto and Ferreira bought property in the area, taking advantage of the relatively flat terrain and the availability of land. Now others have followed, with a number of estates in the Cima Corgo taking up finance available under the Jovem Agricultor programme, intended to incentivise young farmers to remain on the land. Many shippers remain sceptical about the quality of the wine that can be produced here. I tend to find that although this part of the Douro Superior can make rich, voluptuous wines for Reserve, LBV and good aged-tawny Ports, vintage Ports often lack essential balance and elegance. On the other hand, the area around Pocinho and the valley of the Ribeira d'Aguiar have proved capable of making outstanding unfortified Douro wines.

Quinta do Vale Meão

Pocinho, 5150 Vila Nova de Foz Côa

Grade A/B

In the shadow of Monte Meão, Quinta do Vale Meão is the easternmost of all the historic Douro *quintas* and one of the most fascinating. It must have been a huge challenge for Dona Antónia Ferreira, who completed the imposing house and chapel shortly before her death at the age of 85 in 1896. Now in the possession of her great-great-grandson Francisco ('Vito') Olazabal, the interior of the house remains much the same as she left it and the attic is full of *fin de siècle* memorabilia. The property extends to nearly 300 hectares with vineyards covering a large meander in the river. On the eastern flank of the meander is the Ponto da Barca Velha ('Point of the Old Boat') which is marked on Forrester's 1848 map and pre-dates the establishment of the *quinta*. In 1952 Barca Velha lent its name to a new, unfortified red which has subsequently become one of Portugal's most sought-after wines. The wine was made in Vale Meão's thirty-pipe *lagares* until the production was transferred to Quinta da Leda in 2001. Vale Meão now produces its own extremely impressive red Douro wines (see Chapter 7). The Barca Velha story is recounted in full in Chapter 6.

Quinta de Touriga

Chã, 5150 Vila Nova de Foz Côa

Grade B

Having dedicated nearly fifty years of his life to the Port trade, José António Ramos Pinto Rosas decided to establish his ideal retirement *quinta*. In the early 1990s he acquired twenty hectares of flat, virgin territory at Chã, just above Pocinho and, at 72 years of age, began setting out a vineyard. Vines cover 8.5 hectares of rocky schistous soil and, due to the preponderance of Touriga Nacional, he named the property Quinta de Touriga. The property has a beautiful modern house and winery (both built sympathetically from local schist) with wonderful views over the surrounding countryside, most of which is still uncultivated.

Quinta do Ataíde

Vilariça, 5360 Vila Flor

Grade A

Planted with a smattering of vines in the 1850s when the threat of oidium was at its height, the broad Vilariça valley was of no great significance to the wine business until Cockburn bought 300 hectares here in 1978. Such is the importance of Ataíde and the nearby Assares and Tourão vineyards today that they are known collectively as ‘Vilariça’. The acquisition of Vilariça marked the beginning of a new generation of vineyards in the Douro, with greater emphasis on research and development aimed at improving yields and reducing costs. Cockburn’s initially established a nursery vineyard at Tourão, planted with virus-free rootstock which at the time could only be sourced in France. At the same time Cockburn began developing clones of the existing Douro varieties in order to produce high-quality vines with improved yields both for their own properties and for independent farmers. However, the principal advantage of planting a new vineyard in this isolated corner of the Douro is the terrain. Apart from a few *patamares* on the edge of the property, Vilariça is almost level and, despite the schistous nature of the soil, is relatively easy to mechanise. Mechanical harvesting, still unthinkable elsewhere in the Douro, is feasible here. The main drawback is the extreme climate with irregular rainfall and high summer temperatures, sometimes in excess of 50°C. Vilariça was acquired with the specific intention of building up a base for Cockburn’s Special Reserve Port and it served its purpose admirably. Some wine even used to enter Cockburn’s vintage *lote*. Since the Symington family purchased Cockburn’s in 2010, they have used the property to source their Douro red, Altano. With 127 hectares in production, 24 per cent of the vineyard is Touriga Nacional.

Quinta de Ervamoira / Museu de Ervamoira*

Muxagata 5150 Vila Nova de Foz Côa

Tel. (351) 279 759 229

Grade A

Ervamoira is the fulfilment of a dream that nearly became a nightmare. In 1974 José António Ramos Pinto Rosas, then Chairman of Port shipper Ramos Pinto, went prospecting in the Douro Superior for an estate on relatively flat land that would allow a certain amount of mechanisation. Having studied military maps, he found his promised land in the Côa valley, a narrow tributary of the Douro upstream from Pocinho. The 200-hectare Quinta Santa Maria was rechristened Quinta de Ervamoira. Planting began after the revolutionary turmoil had abated in 1976 but no sooner had the 100-hectare vineyard become established than the entire valley was threatened by the construction of the Côa dam which would have submerged much of the property. Ervamoira was eventually saved by the discovery of palaeolithic engravings on the schistous crags beside the River Côa and the whole area has subsequently been designated as a ‘parque archeologico’ and a World Heritage Site (see page 269). Ramos Pinto claim that Ervamoira is the first vineyard in the Douro to be block planted with individual grape varieties (although this is also claimed by Cockburn). To João Nicolau de Almeida, who looks after the production at Ramos Pinto, Ervamoira represents ‘the future of the Douro’. A museum has been set up on the property to record the past.

Quinta da Leda

Almendra, 5150 Vila Nova de Foz Côa

Grade A/B

Ferreira's easterly outpost was established in 1978 at the same time as Cockburn and Ramos Pinto were setting up similar labour-saving operations in the Douro Superior. Lying in a basin on the south side of the Douro and separated from the river by the Calabria hill, Jorge Ferreira literally transformed the landscape at Leda. When I first visited the property in the summer of 1982 the '*quinta*' was no more than a couple of air-conditioned huts surrounded by twenty-five hectares of vines on remarkably tough schistous soils. The property has subsequently expanded to cover eighty-seven hectares and now has one of the most advanced wineries in the Douro, much of it submerged into the hillside as a form of temperature control. Robotic treaders work eight granite *lagares*. Wines from Leda (which means 'joyful' or 'hilarious') tend to have a typically hot, ripe, character and are destined to form part of Ferreira's vintage or traditional LBV blends. Fruit from the property is used for the basis of the now legendary Barca Velha (see Chapter 6) as well as estate wines bottled under the names Callabriga and Quinta da Leda.

Quinta da Urze

Almendra, 5150 Vila Nova de Foz Côa

Grade A/B

Urze (meaning 'heather' or 'heath') is situated above the Ribeira d'Aguiar. Out of a total of 190 hectares, just 14 are planted with vines and the remainder is given to olive groves. Urze is one of seven properties in the Douro Superior belonging to the Casa Agricola Roboredo Madeira (CARM) and houses their original *adega* equipped with granite *lagares*. The Madeira family's other *quintas* in the district are Bispado, Calabria, Côa, Marvalhas, Pedra Escrita and Verdilhas.

Quinta de Canameira and Quinta de Vigia Redonda

5180 Freixo de Espada á Cinta

Grade A/B

These remote properties opposite and upstream from Barca d'Alva have extensive river frontage. They were bought by Rozès in 2000 and together have sixty-five hectares of vineyard, much of it irrigated.

Quinta do Silho

Barca d'Alva, 6440 Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo

Grade A

On the south side of the river almost on the frontier with Spain, Quinta do Silho is the most easterly of all the historic Douro *quintas*. It was planted by Miguel António Ferreira in 1820 and was of sufficient importance to be marked on Forrester's 1848 map.

Quinta do Grifo

Poiares, 5180 Freixo de Espada á Cinta

Grade A

This is one of the most remote properties in the Douro, located on the so-called 'Douro Internacional', facing Spain. Grifo, named after the local vultures, belongs to Rozès (Vranken Pommery) and produces single-*quinta* Douro reds and vintage Ports under the Terras do Grifo label from twenty-five hectares of vines with a high percentage of Sousão. There is a small *adega* on the estate.

The 'Altos'

There is no official definition of the *altos*, the high land on either side of the Douro that falls within the demarcated region. Most of the properties are small with little historical or strategic significance. However, with the advance of unfortified Douro wines, a number of vineyards have been planted, taking advantage of the cooler climate at higher altitudes. White grapes (of which there is now a shortage following the widespread replanting in the 1980s and 1990s) benefit especially from the lower temperatures.

Quinta da Fonte Branca

5100 Lamego

Grade D/E

Right on the edge of the demarcated region above the city of Lamego, this property is Peter Symington's retirement project. Taking advantage of the altitude, white grapes Malvasia Fina and Viosinho are planted for the Symington's Douro white, Altano.

Quinta do Portal*

Celeirós, 5060 Sabrosa

Tel. (351) 259 937 100

www.quintadoportal.com

Grade C

Originally named Confradeiro, this property belonged to Sandeman until 1991 when it was bought (along with nearby Quinta do Casal de Celierós) by the Mansilha Branco family to form Quinta do Portal (see pages 229). The Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza Vieira has built a winery here and there is a hotel on the estate.

Quinta Casal da Granja

Granja, 5070 Alijó

Grades C-F

This large, relatively flat property on the plateau or *planalto* near Alijó is the main vinification centre for Real Companhia Vinicola (Royal Oporto). At an altitude of between 520 and 640 metres, 160 hectares of vineyard are largely used for the production of white Ports and Douro wines. The vineyard is mostly planted with white grapes (Moscatel, Arinto, Fernão Pires, Viosinho and Gouveio) and includes a small amount of Semillon which forms the basis for a botrytis-affected, late-harvest wine called Granjô.

Quinta do Cidrô

5130 São João de Pesqueira

Grades D–F

This undulating property on the outskirts of São João de Pesqueira was bought by Real Companhia Velha (Royal Oporto) in 1972 having previously belonged to the family of the Marquês de Soveral. The ostentatious white-painted *palácio* looks stark amidst 136 hectares of vertically planted vineyards. Situated at an altitude of between 450 and 600 metres, this property is considered too high for Port and most of the production is used for Real Vinicola's red and white Douro wines, much of it bottled under the name Cidrô. Traditional Douro varieties are planted alongside substantial quantities of international grape varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Semillon which seem to perform well at this altitude.

Quinta da Nogueira

5130 São João de Pesqueira

No Grade

Formerly known as Quinta da Cismeira, Nogueira has been transformed into an impressive winery and wine lodge serving the Port houses of Taylor, Fonseca and Romariz. It is well-placed alongside the São João de Pesqueira–Vila Nova de Foz Côa road, and at an altitude of 640 metres the humidity controlled *armazens* are ideal for the maturation of LBVs and old tawnies.

Quinta de Vale de Cavalos

Numão, 5150 Vila Nova de Foz Côa

Grade C

At 400 metres above sea level, this 55-hectare property has been bought by Poças, mainly for the production of Douro wines (see Chapter 7), with some of the wine fortified for LBV.

Quinta dos Bons Ares

Touça, 5150 Vila Nova de Foz Côa

No Grade

On granite soils at an altitude of 600 metres, Bons Ares ('Good Airs') rules itself out for the production of Port. The property was acquired by Ramos Pinto in 1985 to complement Quinta da Ervamoira which is situated nearby in the torpid Côa valley. The relatively cool climate is deemed suitable for growing white grapes, and the local Viosinho does well here alongside Sauvignon Blanc and Riesling which retain much of their natural acidity. Both red and white grapes from the property go into making 'Duas Quintas', a range of Douro reds blended from Quintas Ervamoira and Bons Ares. A small quantity of red and white wine – made partly from international grape varieties – is bottled as Quinta dos Bons Ares, a Vinho Regional.

3

MAKING PORT: TRADITION AND TECHNOLOGY

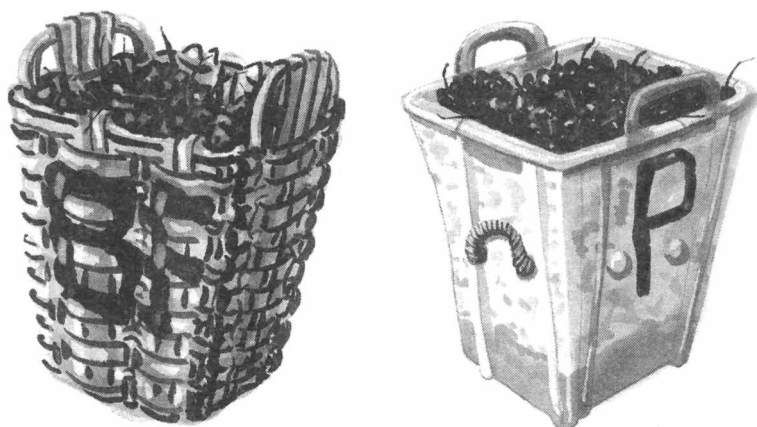
PREPARING FOR VINTAGE

Even the most minor sound has a strange resonance in the Douro. At no time is this more apparent than at the start of vintage, when the babble of an impassioned conversation can suddenly be heard from the opposite side of the valley. As expectations rise, great gangs (*rogas*) of high-spirited pickers descend on Douro *quintas* from outlying villages. The *cardenhas* (dormitories), silent for most of the year, fill to the sound of cheerful voices and the aromas of sardines and *bacalhau* begin to rise as fires are stoked in huge kitchens. The same families often come to work at the same property year after year and, despite the profound political and social changes of the late twentieth century, a strong bond of loyalty is maintained between the *roga* and the *partão* (owner) of the *quinta*. For all concerned, there is an intense feeling of personal involvement as the year's work in the vineyard reaches its culmination. In the few crucial days before picking begins, the Douro grapevine works overtime as growers gather together on the streets and in cafés to compare notes, talk prices and exchange the latest gossip about the forthcoming vintage.

The exact timing of vintage depends upon location and weather conditions during the growing season. In the Douro Superior the harvest can begin as early as mid-August, whereas downstream in the cooler Baixo Corgo or at high altitudes some growers may hang on until early October to maximise the ripeness of their grapes. But the equinox often signals a change in the weather – and the longer the wait before picking, the greater the risk of rain when the first of the autumn depressions moves in from the Atlantic. As a rule of thumb, in the Cima Corgo the harvest usually begins on the Monday closest to 20 September. If rain falls, quality-conscious producers will cease picking, leading to a stop-start vintage, but if rot sets in (a greater risk in the old mixed vineyards) the grapes will be gathered as quickly as possible. Depending on the weather and the overall size of the crop, the vintage will last until mid-October.

In the weeks prior to the harvest, winemakers representing the major Port shippers will tour the region, visiting farmers, doing deals and taking samples of grapes from different plots to monitor development. Baumé (a measure of sugar concentration in the grapes which roughly corresponds with potential alcohol), pH and total acidity are crucial readings, but tasting grapes or juice is increasingly gaining ground as a method of determining optimum ripeness. All grapes destined for the production of Port should legally be above 11 degrees Baumé, although in a poor vintage I have come across grapes from the *altos* (high vineyards) and Baixo Corgo with readings as low as 9 degrees Baumé, similar to the neighbouring Vinho Verde region. In the Cima Corgo and Douro Superior potential alcohol levels are usually between 12 and 14% by volume but can occasionally be much higher. In excessively hot years, the shrivelling or raisining of grapes as they hang on the vine can be a problem, especially with heat-sensitive varieties like Tinta Barroca, which can reach 20 degrees Baumé or more. In these warm conditions, levels of natural acidity are usually low, although an excessively hot, dry summer can cause the vines to close down and produce unbalanced wines with a 'green', under-ripe character. Depending on the source of the grapes total acidity may be as low as 5 grams per litre, and pH levels sometimes exceed 4.0. This will warrant correction once the grapes have reached the winery.

Given the terrain, it almost goes without saying that picking in the Douro is carried out entirely by hand. Grapes were traditionally cut into large, coarse woven baskets (*cestos da vindima*) with a capacity of up to 75 kilos. These would then be carried to the *adeга* by a regimented line of pickers, egged-on by a small band of musicians. Although *cestos* are still used by some smaller growers, nowadays they are usually loaded on to trailers and towed to the *adeга* by tractor. Following the centralisation of Port production in the 1960s, the majority of grapes have been transported to the winery or *adeга* in 1,000-kilo steel bins known as *dornas*. These are usually emblazoned with the name of the owner (co-operative or shipper) and lent out to growers during vintage. They are far from



Cestos, old and new

ideal as the grapes at the bottom of the *dorna* are frequently crushed under their own weight. If weather conditions are warm or there is a delay, fermentation will already have commenced before the grapes reach the winery. Conversely, if heavy rain falls during the vintage and the *dornas* are not covered with plastic sheeting, the juice will be diluted. But worse than these are the plastic bags into which some small growers compress their grapes and leave them out on the roadsides awaiting collection. Most quality-conscious growers and shippers now use small, stackable plastic crates with holes in the sides to allow water (or juice) to drain away. With a capacity of no more than about 25 kilos each, the grapes tend to arrive at the *adega* intact and undamaged.

Mechanical harvesting is only possible in some of the larger, flatter vineyards of the Douro Superior. Apart from the considerable potential saving in labour costs, the chief advantage of mechanical harvesting is speed. It would also be possible to harvest in the cool of the night, thereby reducing the refrigeration required when the grapes reach the winery.

FOOTWORK

Peel the skin from most red grapes and you will find that the pulp or flesh is grey-green in colour. With the notable exception of red-fleshed *teinturier* varieties, all the pigmentation and most of the flavour compounds are to be found in the skins and adjacent cell structure. Producers of 'light' or unfortified red wine have the luxury of a relatively long period of fermentation and maceration to extract the necessary colour, tannin and flavour from the grapes. In the case of a fine red, like a classed-growth Bordeaux, extraction may take place over a period of two weeks and may be followed by a period of post-fermentation maceration or *cuvaison*. Port producers have no such time on their hands. The deep crimson-black hue, firm tannin structure and ripe flavours that characterise a young, premium quality Port have to be extracted before the fermentation is prematurely arrested by the addition of colourless grape spirit. Depending on the rate of fermentation, the grape juice or must may be in contact with the skins for forty-eight hours or less. The key to the production of a quality red Port is, therefore, found in the vigorous extraction of colour and flavour compounds from the grape skins.

The crucible for this extraction process is the *lagar*, a square stone tank made from granite (or occasionally epoxy-coated cement), usually 80cm to 1 metre in depth with a capacity varying between 15 and 25 pipes (8,000–14,000 litres). The *lagar* is filled to within about 15 to 20cm of the brim – the width of an outstretched hand is the crude measurement. Before the advent of electricity, baskets of grapes arriving from the vineyard were emptied directly into the *lagar* or into a hand-turned roller-crusher. Foot crushing whole bunches is not only hard work but the stalks, if green and unripe, can introduce a herbaceous character into the wine. Nowadays, electric roller-crushers, de-stalkers and pumps are used and the stalks are removed. Some may be added back to the *lagar* at a later stage. It is generally believed that the tannins from the stalks contribute to the structure of the wine, though this depends on the overall ripeness of the crop. But stalks do help when it comes to pressing the solids once the must has been run off and fortified.

A single *lagar* will generally be filled over the course of a day's picking. At the end of the day, as the sun sets behind the hills, the pickers return to the *adega*. After a hearty supper they each don a pair of shorts and, having supposedly washed their feet, step thigh-deep into the mass of grapes. On the basis that it takes two people per pipe to tread effectively, the equivalent of two football teams will be required to work a *lagar* with a capacity of 22 pipes (12,100 litres). Although vintage is an excuse for a great deal of mirth and merriment, treading grapes in a *lagar* is both arduous and monotonous, especially after an exhausting day in the vineyard. For the first two to three hours, the treaders link arms and march slowly back and forth; the soles of their feet squelching the grapes against the stone floor of the *lagar*. This regimented treading is known as the *corte* or cut, and is usually accompanied by the rhythmic chant of '*um, dois*' (one, two) or '*esquerda, direita*' (left, right) from the *rogador*, a senior member of the *roga* who acts as a drill sergeant. Legs must be lifted high to work the grapes and homogenise the must. The pressure and friction of treading prior to fermentation provokes the rupture of the cell walls of the grape skins and imparts colour and flavour to the must. At the end of this period (usually around 10 p.m.) the *corte* comes to an end and *liberdade* ('freedom') is declared. Cups of wine, *bagaceira* (a particularly ferocious brandy) and cigarettes are sometimes doled out and the treading continues informally until midnight to the accompaniment of a local accordionist or, more prosaically, to the sound of a booming CD player. By the end of the evening with forty or more well-oiled souls dancing around in a *lagar*, there is often quite a party. Needless to say when foreign wine-trade visitors arrive in the *adega* (usually after having been entertained to a good dinner), the party sometimes runs out of control and people emerge from the *lagar* dripping with purple grape must.

In spite of twenty-first century technological advances, the scene at many a *quinta* during vintage has remained virtually unaltered for over a hundred years. Visiting the Douro in the 1870s, Henry Vizetelly found 'a score of men in a clammy purple bath ... treading the grapes to the sound of fife and drum', adding that 'they half march, half dance round the large *lagar*'. The only difference seems to be a minor matter of basic hygiene. When Vizetelly was offered the opportunity to taste the must, one of the treaders lifted his brawny leg and a large white saucer was 'held beneath his dripping foot to receive the *mosto* [grape must] as it trickled down'!

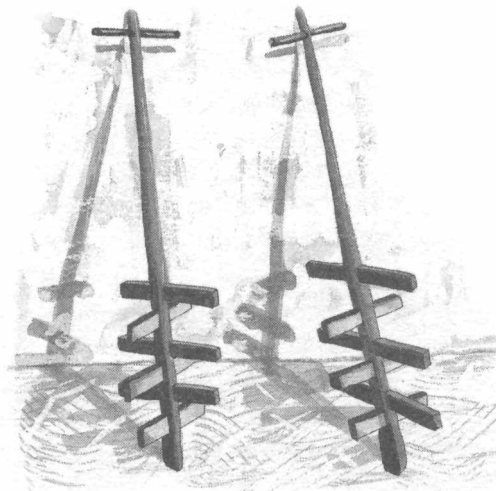
Fermentation tends to start naturally after a few hours. Port producers rely on the natural flora of the grapes and the ambient yeasts in the winery and add sulphur to the must at the outset in order to select the most desirable strains. The onset and speed of fermentation will depend on the temperature of the grapes when they reach the *adega*. Ideally the grapes will arrive at the *adega* registering temperatures of around 20°C, rising to 28 to 30°C at the height of fermentation. However, if the ambient temperature is cold at the start of vintage it may take days for the fermentation to begin. With all the *lagares* having been filled, this can cause a problematic log jam when there is no spare capacity for more grapes. Conversely, if the ambient temperature is too warm, the grapes may already be fermenting when they reach the winery and the fermentation will be fast and furious and take little work. Human legs and feet help to warm the must; an advantage in a cool

LAGARES: MYTHS AND RITUALS

Lagares are a repository of seemingly arcane myths and rituals, a number of which have a practical justification from the not too distant past. For example, a few *quintas* still continue to forbid women from treading a *lagar* claiming that 'they spoil the wine'. This seemingly sexist rule is rooted in hygiene. Putting it delicately, the populace of the Douro were at one time fairly small and the women were somewhat shorter than the men anyway, so that the level of the must in the *lagar* would reach parts higher up the body... Nowadays, people tend to be taller, and with labour in relatively short supply few properties can afford to pick and choose. But with no women present, it was not uncommon for the treaders to improvise their own rather coarse songs during the period of *liberdade*. In recent years a number of *quintas* have returned to employing local musicians who play Portuguese folk songs or tub-thumping *musica pimba*. Traditional music demands that the treaders lift their legs higher, and therefore crush the grapes more effectively, than they would shuffling to disco music coming from a CD.

vintage but a distinct handicap in a warm year, when twenty pairs of feet at the human body temperature of 37°C can play havoc with any attempted temperature control. Hot ambient temperatures during vintage may have still more serious implications, and it is not that uncommon for a perfectly healthy crop to be spoiled if the temperature in a *lagar* runs out of control. In the past, *lagar* fermentations were totally in the lap of the gods but nearly all producers have installed heat exchangers to cool the must as necessary.

Once the fermentation is well underway, the *manta* ('blanket' or cap) of skins and stalks rises to the surface, buoyed up by carbon dioxide. In order to keep it submerged



Macacos: 'monkey sticks'

and in contact with the fermenting must, planks are placed across the *lagar* and a couple of men with long spiked paddles known as *macacos* ('monkeys') will stand over the must and plunge the *manta* back into the fermenting must. Carried out at periodic intervals during the fermentation, this further aids extraction and prevents the cap from drying out and developing acetic off-flavours. The incorporation of air or micro-oxygenation of the must helps to stabilise colour. The alcohol itself has a solvent effect and further increases the rate of extraction.

Once sugar levels have fallen to around 7 or 8 degrees Baumé (i.e. have fermented to between 5 and 7% alcohol by volume), the must is run off the skins and mixed thoroughly with the fortifying *aguardente*. Blended in a proportion of roughly 20 per cent *aguardente* to 80 per cent grape must, the alcohol is raised to a level where the fermentation yeasts are unable to survive. The result is a deep, dark, naturally rich wine with between 80 and 120 grams per litre residual sugar, according to house style, and an alcoholic strength of 19 to 20% ABV: embryonic Port.

In the Douro, where there are few flat sites, *adegas* have traditionally been built into the hillside on two levels. The *lagares* on the upper level correspond in size to horizontal wooden vats (*toneis*) situated in the *armazém* on the floor below. Before electric pumps became the norm, the partially fermented must was simply run off from the *lagar* by gravity, leaving behind the mass of grape solids. (Interestingly, a number of recently built wineries are organised in much the same way.) The remaining stalks and skins then have to be manhandled into a basket press to extract the last of the fermenting must. This in itself is a time-consuming process, taking up to two hours. There can be no delaying the point at which the must is run off and fortified and it is 'sod's law' that most *lagares* seem to reach this point at 2 or 3 in the morning!

Over recent years some of the *lagares* that were abandoned in the 1960s and 1970s have been restored and the practice of treading has been revived. Although it is impossible to be accurate, around 3 per cent of all Port is currently made in *lagar* in the traditional manner. Some larger *lagares* have been divided in two in order to give greater flexibility to producers looking to make small *lotes* of wine from the finest grapes. A number of technical innovations have helped to reduce labour costs and improve the viability of the *lagar* over the long term. These are described below.

PRESSURE, PUMPS AND PADDLES

The mass emigration that afflicted rural Portugal in the early 1960s (see pages 44–45) presented the Port shippers with a problem. The difficulty of finding the equivalent of one football team – let alone the couple of rugby teams needed at some of the larger *quintas* – nearly turned *lagares* into things of the past. It fell to the larger shippers to find a substitute for foot treading and the quest to find a method of extraction to emulate that of the traditional *lagar* has been a polemic ever since. The principal shippers resorted to building large, centralised wineries to which outlying growers could deliver their grapes. Electricity was still

in short supply in the 1960s. Most outlying *quintas* were without electricity altogether and the power supply in other parts of the Douro was at best unreliable and often insufficient to feed the battery of pumps and appliances that are now commonplace in a well-equipped modern winery. The solution was autovinification. Adapted from an Algerian design known as the Ducellier System, autovinification provides for a vigorous and thorough extraction and has the singular advantage that the process is self-sustaining, being powered by the build-up of carbon dioxide – the natural by-product of fermentation.

The mechanics of the autovinification system are as follows. The vat (illustrated in figure 2) is filled to within a metre or so of full capacity. The autovinifier is then closed by lowering the central unit (A) into place. As the fermentation begins, carbon dioxide is given off and the pressure builds up inside the tank. This forces the fermenting must up an escape valve (B), which spills out into an open holding tank on top of the vat. Once a certain pressure has built up inside the autovinifier, the carbon dioxide escapes through a calibrated hydraulic valve (C). No longer supported by the pressure inside the vat, the fermenting must falls back down the central autovinification unit by force of gravity, spraying the floating cap or *manta* below. At the same time the hydraulic valve resets itself, ready for the pressure to build up and the autovinification cycle to begin again. At the start of fermentation, this cycle is relatively slow but after a few hours, when sufficient carbon dioxide is being given off, the build-up of pressure inside the vat

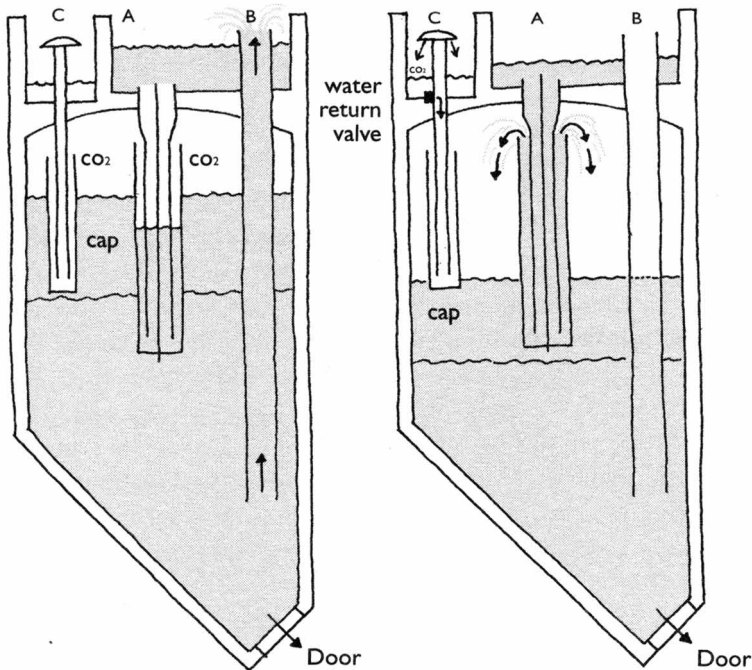


Figure 2. Autovinification

is such that each cycle takes just ten or fifteen minutes to complete. By the time that the fermenting must is ready to be run off and fortified, the floating cap of grape solids has been thoroughly washed by the must at least twenty or thirty times. No external power source is required.

Some of the earliest autovinifiers were built at Royal Oporto's Quinta das Carvalhas and Dow's Quinta do Bomfim in 1963 to 1964 and are still in use. The Symington family (owners of Dow, Graham and Warre) have long been fans of autovinification. Peter Symington (retired winemaker) believes that because the system incorporates a certain amount of air, it produces structured wines that are not dissimilar in style to those made in a *lagar*. But there are also detractors. Cockburn and Sandeman were advocates of a system called the *movimosto*. This entailed the building up the sides of a traditional *lagar* and installing a pump to spray the floating cap of grape skins. The *movimosto* was a cheap and reasonably successful for the production of relatively lightweight rubies and tawnies, but provided completely inadequate extraction for high-quality Port. Sandeman installed the *movimosto* at Quinta de la Rosa, an A-grade property that supplied Robertson's Rebello Valente vintage Port. By their own admission, the quality of the wine deteriorated sharply and when La Rosa's owner Tim Bergqvist decided to make his own wine in 1987 he scrapped the *movimosto* and returned to foot treading. By the late 1980s, the ill-fated *movimosto* had generally been abandoned.

Cockburn subsequently addressed the problem of extraction their own way by building a central winery at Vila Nova de Foz Côa which used thermo-vinification. This has now been closed by the new owners but it is worth recording the process nonetheless. Euphemistically known as the 'jam factory', the must was heated to 70 to 75°C for an average of fifteen minutes prior to pressing and inoculation with selected dried yeast cultures. In this way the extraction process is completed before fermentation, which takes place off the skins in any suitable vat equipped with temperature control. Jim Reader, former Production Director at Cockburn, declared himself happy with the overall quality of the wine but other shippers did not adopt this process. Both Cockburn and Noval also tried adding alcohol to the must in traditional *lagares* in the hope of slowing fermentation and extracting more colour and fruit from the skins prior to fortification but found this to be of limited benefit. Some shippers have tried using natural pectolytic enzymes to aid extraction and enhance colour and aroma. Enzymes help to soften grape skins, but only tend to be used in an under-ripe year.

At Croft's Quinta da Roêda the concrete autovinifiers (similar to those at neighbouring Quinta do Bomfim) were modified to accommodate a mechanical device known as a *remontador* by which the must is drawn mechanically from the centre of the vat and sprayed over the cap, the entire operation being programmable. This has subsequently been replaced by the new owners. Sandeman continue to work with a device known as a *turbo-pigeur* which does much the same as the *remontador*. One shipper briefly experimented with paddles to stir the fermenting must but found that they turned the *manta* into a thick unmanageable porridge. In the 1990s, Taylor's installed a closed rotary fermentation vat known as a rotovot or Vinimatic at Quinta de Vargellas. Although this

produced deep-coloured aromatic Port, it was concluded that as a result of the lack of aeration during fermentation the wines lacked the structure and complexity of those made in *lagares* or autovinifiers. The Vinimatic has since been used successfully for the production of unfortified Douro wine. A number of other producers, notably Barros, Ferreira and Taylor, built new wineries with temperature-controlled stainless-steel vats equipped for pumping over, a process known in Portuguese as *remontagem*. All three have subsequently developed new devices (see below). It is fair to say that, with the possible exception of autovinification, none of these methods has provided sufficient extraction to produce premium-quality Port.

Nowadays, large wineries are fully automated from start to finish. As soon as a consignment of grapes arrives at the winery, a core sample is taken from each of the *dornas* or bins and the must weight or Baumé is recorded by refractometer to determine the amount of fermentable sugar. This may be used to determine a bonus over the basic grape price to the grower, who will be paid when the harvest is over. Some shippers will also pay a further premium for selected grape varieties. After the *dorna* has been weighed it is tipped into a reception hopper from where a large Archimedes screw (known locally as a *sem-fim* meaning ‘without end’) conveys the grapes to a crusher/de-stemmer, which removes the stalks from both red and white grapes. Before the crushed grapes reach the fermentation tank or autovinifier, the must is dosed with sulphur dioxide at levels of between 40 and 150 milligrams per kilo depending on the condition of the grapes. Larger amounts are sometimes used to delay the onset of fermentation and thereby aid extraction. Most winemakers will adjust the acidity of the must at this stage to around pH 3.6 to 3.7 by adding the appropriate amount of tartaric acid. A few producers inoculate with selected dried yeasts but most rely on sulphur dioxide to delay fermentation, thereby culling undesirable strains of wild yeast. Specific cultured yeasts only tend to be used when a fermentation is reluctant to start, as there is a very real risk of ethyl acetate forming if the fermentation fails to commence fairly promptly after crushing.

Having been among the first to experiment with autovinification in the early 1960s, the Symington family have made significant improvements to the system. When they were first developed, most autovinification vats were cubic in shape and built from epoxy-lined reinforced concrete with a capacity similar to that of a traditional *lagar*. As concrete is a poor conductor of heat, in warm years Port ferments continued to suffer from overheating. Conversely, in cool vintages, without any means of circulating the must prior to the onset of fermentation, maceration was reduced. As a result a number of important modifications were made to the autovinification system during the 1980s and 1990s. The most significant of these was the introduction of temperature control. Apart from its obvious benefit during a warm vintage, temperature control enables the winemaker to run off each ferment as late as possible, thereby prolonging skin contact. Now that electric power is readily available, autovinifiers are equipped with pumps that can be switched on to extract colour before fermentation begins. At Warre's Quinta da Cavadinha and the Symington's Quinta do Sol winery, a battery of stainless-steel autovinification tanks has been installed, some of which are squat in shape to bring the surface to volume ratio

as close as possible to that of a traditional *lagar*. All the tanks are conical for ease of emptying (as in figure 2) and can be run off within forty-five minutes, the solid matter being conveyed to the press by means of an Archimedes screw. The entire Quinta do Sol winery, which has a production capacity of around 10,000 pipes (5.5 million litres), will function during vintage with just six people. This represents a substantial labour saving when compared to the twenty or so individuals required to tread a twenty-pipe *lagar*!

PISTONS, PLUNGERS AND ROBOTS

Forty years after they were nearly decommissioned, the major shippers have come to accept that traditional *lagares* generally produce the finest, most structured Ports. There can be little doubt that the quality of vintage Port suffered from the mid-1970s to late 1980s, the reasons for which are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. In the early 1990s, when vintage Port met with unprecedented success in the United States, a number of shippers returned to using *lagares*, adapting them to the modern environment. At Quinta do Vesúvio, which boasts some of the largest in the Douro, the Symington family devised an innovative temperature-control mechanism. This consists of a mobile gantry with a matrix of stainless steel pipes that can be lowered directly into the fermenting must. At Quinta de Vargellas, under a programme named MacerPorto, Port shippers Taylor and Fonseca set themselves a demanding challenge in the 1990s: 'To develop or optimise new production process able to, at least, match the performance of the foot-trodden *lagar* for the production of vintage-type Port wine, thus enabling the replacement of the traditional process.' From 1997 onwards, under the auspices of Australian-trained wine maker David Guimaraens, Quinta de Vargellas effectively became a laboratory for different methods of extraction. These included pump-over fermenters (*remontagem*), so called auger fermenters (tanks with rotating paddles), piston fermenters and the aforementioned rotary fermenter or Vinimatic, as well as traditional foot-trodden *lagares*. Over a period of four years a series of experiments were carried out under controlled conditions and the resulting wines were assessed for taste as well as for anthocyanins and phenolic extraction. On the resulting comparative performance index, the traditional, well-trodden *lagar* was proved to be the most effective. This was followed by vertical vats equipped with pistons which registered a relative performance of about 85 per cent. Much the least effective method, as might be expected, were the pump-over fermenters which notched up a performance rating of just 60 per cent. On the basis of these results, Taylor and Fonseca went on to develop the piston fermenter, optimising the design or 'geometry' of the vats to simulate that of a traditional *lagar*. The resulting 'P4' prototype is a squat, circular, temperature controlled stainless steel vat, three metres in diameter and a maximum of 1.3 metres deep. Open to the air like a *lagar*, it has an inclined base to improve the mixing of the must and three stepped pistons to depress the cap or *manta* must against the floor of the vat. Following further experiments in 2000, it was found that the performance of the new fermenter was similar to or even slightly more effective at extracting anthocyanins and phenolics than a foot-trodden *lagar*. Taylor's

subsequently dispensed with fourteen large pump-over vats at their Nogueira winery and installed thirty piston fermenters (now called 'Port-toes'), each with a capacity of between eight and fourteen tons. Taylor's Port-toes have also proved to be the solution at Croft's Quinta de Roêda, where the old concrete autovinification vats have been adapted to take piston plungers.

Over a similar time frame, both Quinta do Noval and the Symington family have faced up to the challenge of foot treading by going back to basics. In 1994 Noval's head winemaker, António Agrellos, modified a traditional granite *lagar* to take a robotic plunger. Competitors and Noval's own workforce viewed the original contraption with some amusement. But having been used successfully over seven vintages (including the declared years of 1997 and 2000 when Noval made outstanding vintage Ports), the machine has been upgraded to a new version with ten mechanical feet compared with the original four. Each of these 'feet' comprises a hinged plate that plunges the cap down against the stone floor of the *lagar*. The new machine is able to tread a *lagar* under its own propulsion, whereas the original version had to be moved manually. Noval's robotic machine can now move freely across an entire bank of traditional stone *lagares*. In a development of the same system, Ferreira have built eight new granite *lagares* at Quinta de Leda in the Douro Superior, each of which is equipped with a robotic plunger. Built into the hillside like a traditional Douro *adega*, Ferreira's winery works by gravity feed with the *armazém* directly underneath the *lagares*.

The quest to mechanise the production of Port has been taken to new lengths by the Symington family with their own 'robotic *lagar*'. Developed in-house, the first prototype was installed at their Quinta do Sol winery at the end of vintage in 1998. It takes the form of a low sided, square stainless steel tank or *lagar* with a capacity of seventeen pipes of must, similar to that of a traditional *lagar* (see photograph opposite page 181). Four large rectangular blocks or 'feet' are suspended from a gantry which moves slowly across the *lagar* once every seven minutes, under computer control. The feet, which are able to cool or warm the ferment accordingly, sink through the must until they tread the grapes against the stainless steel floor. Silicon pads (made from the same grade of silicon that is used for barrel bungs) are designed to exert the same pressure as the sole of the human foot (about 120 grams per square centimetre). The Symingtons go to some length to point out that whereas other piston plungers (i.e. Noval's robots and Taylor's Port-toes) stop inches short of reaching the floor of the *lagar* or vat, the robotic *lagar* actually squashes the grapes against the floor like a human foot. Once the grapes have been thoroughly trodden, the *lagar* can be reprogrammed to immerse the cap (so the feet don't touch the floor), thereby imitating the action of the traditional *macaco*. When the natural sugar level in the ferment has fallen to the appropriate level the must is run off and fortified as before. Hydraulic arms then tip the contents of the *lagar* straight onto an Archimedes screw and within five minutes, at most, the remaining mass of grape skins has reached the press. This compares with the two hours spent forking grape skins into a press from a traditional stone *lagar*, during which time the skins continue fermenting. The robotic *lagar* has the advantage over the traditional *lagar* as it can be emptied later

(thereby allowing more skin contact) without having to allow for the difference in Baumé between the press wine and the free-run juice. Charles Symington, Graham's winemaker, points out that both traditional and robotic *lagares* need to be trodden for about four hours 'which suggests that the simulation we have achieved is very close to the traditional method'. At the time of writing the Symingtons have sixteen robotic *lagares* at Quinta do Sol, Graham's Quinta dos Malvedos, Dow's Quinta Senhora da Ribeira and Warre's Quinta de Cavadinha. There are also two *lagares* made to the same design at Quinta Nova Nossa Senhora do Carmo. A logical but radical extension of the Symington's idea might be a mobile robotic *lagar* that can be used to tread the grapes in outlying *quintas*, thereby taking the winemaking process back to the days before centralised wineries were built in the early 1960s.

Both the Symington Family Estates and the Fladgate Partnership (the group comprising Taylor, Fonseca, Croft) are at pains to point out that they are not about to give up traditional foot treading entirely. The Symington family still makes around 2,000 pipes (over a million litres) in the traditional way, and Taylor and Fonseca still tread virtually all the grapes from their own *quintas* with a resident team of around a hundred people. However, about 70 per cent of the *lote* making up Graham's most recent vintage Port has been trodden by robotic *lagar*. Some *quintas*, such as Graham's Malvedos and Warre's Cavadinha, may have lost the old team spirit described so vividly by Portuguese author Miguel Torga in his novel *Vindima* ('Vintage'), but they have benefited greatly from investment in robotic footwork. Added to which, the robotic *roga* is not distracted during vintage by the occasional romantic tryst and robots never answer back, demand a glass of *bagaceira* or a cigarette!

PINK PORT

Pink or rosé Port is a relatively new category that emerged in the late 2000s. The method of production varies from shipper to shipper, with colour varying accordingly from salmon pink to pale ruby. It is made with juice drained from red grapes, given minimal skin contact and followed by cold settling to clean the must prior to fermentation. Fermentation takes place in stainless steel at around 16°C over a period of five to six days before must is run off and fortified leaving 60–90 grammes of residual sugar. The quality of the *aguardente* is vital if the delicate fruit flavours are not to be overpowered, so the fortifying spirit should be as neutral as possible (see below). The wine is bottled young and shipped within twelve months of the harvest.

WHITE PORT

Compared to red, white Port has customarily been treated as something of an afterthought. White grapes (traditionally found interplanted among red varieties) tend to arrive at the winery in dribs and drabs and a number of days can elapse before there is a sufficient

THE USE (AND ABUSE) OF 'BAGA'

Elderberry, *baga do sabugueiro* or merely '*baga*' for short, has been used to enhance the colour of Port ever since it became a fortified wine at the end of the seventeenth century. It was the widespread abuse of *baga* in the mid-eighteenth century that forced the Marquês de Pombal to order that all the elderberry trees in the Douro should be grubbed up. But only a few years elapsed before *baga* reappeared, and by the middle of the nineteenth century its use was once more fairly commonplace. Henry Vizetelly describes the use of *baga* in the 1870s: 'It is quite possible that some small farmers deepen the colour of their wine in bad years – in good years it has ample colour of its own – by steeping in it a bag filled with dried elderberries...'

Although I have never found anyone adding *baga* to a *lagar*, I am told it is still in use and I can think of a number of abnormally deep-coloured vintage Ports from the 1977 and 1980 vintages where *baga* may have been used. Most of the elderberry trees are to be found in the higher peripheral areas south of the river (the *altos*), especially above the town of Tabuaço – to the extent that *baga* is sometimes referred to covertly as the 'Tabuaço grape'. The fruit ripens in late August and can therefore be dried and stored until the vintage begins in mid-September. Certainly, whenever I have gone up to the *altos* on the south side of the Douro in early September the elderberry bushes have been completely stripped. The trick, as it has been explained to me, is to conceal a sack of dried elderberry at the bottom of a *lagar* full of grapes. A lone treader will then mark time to rehydrate and extract colour from the *baga* which, provided it is used in judicious quantities, does not affect the taste or smell of the wine and is obviously quite harmless.

quantity to begin a fermentation. Where white grapes are batch planted they are the first to be harvested.

In the winery, prolonged maceration on the skins leads to the over-extraction of phenolic compounds, resulting in wines that taste hard and tend to brown rapidly with age. Although there are some excellent examples of this traditional style of white Port, foot trodden in *lagar* and aged in wood, there is a general trend towards making lighter, less extractive wines. Where possible, skin maceration is increasingly limited to the few hours prior to the onset of fermentation when the juice is run off and vinified separately. Fractions of pressings are usually mixed with the free-run juice in a process known as *meia curtimenta*. The fact that most Douro *adeegas* are geared up for red wines rather than white means that pressing tends to be quite severe, accentuating the extractive character of the wine. Some producers have therefore resorted to making very light wines with little or no skin contact, the solids separated by cold settling for twenty-four hours, often aided by pectolytic enzymes. With the advent of temperature control, fermentation temperatures tend to be lower than for red Ports but are not as low as they might be for an unfortified

dry white wine. Lighter wines, however, are inoculated with selected yeast cultures and fermented at 18 to 20°C to develop and retain primary fruit character. However, most of the Douro's indigenous white grape varieties lack intrinsic character and a number of winemakers introduce Moscatel (Muscat) to enhance aromas and flavours. Around the town of Favaio, where much of the Moscatel is planted, some small producers make an aromatic varietal Moscatel by fortifying the wine prior to pressing and leaving it in contact with the skins. This skin maceration technique is also used in southern Portugal for the production of Moscatel de Setúbal.

FORTIFICATION AND AGUARDENTE

All Port (with the notable exception of a special category of light, dry white Port known as 'Leve Seco') is fortified to a strength of between 19 and 22% ABV. In a process known as *encuba*, the wine is run off when approximately 5 to 6% by volume of natural alcohol has been produced from the fermentation, and is then mixed with the colourless grape spirit known as *aguardente* (often erroneously referred to as 'brandy'). The ratio is roughly 115 litres of *aguardente* to 435 litres of wine, thereby making up a 550-litre pipe (the standard unit of measurement in the Douro). The blending process is generally carried out by pumping a measured quantity of spirit into a holding tank simultaneously with the free-run juice and the pressings. The new wine is then homogenised and given a certain amount of aeration by pumping over. The action of mixing fermenting must with *aguardente* causes a sudden rise in temperature, which can be undesirable in a young wine. A number of shippers have now taken to chilling the spirit down to 12°C, which helps to arrest the fermentation and ameliorates 'thermic shock'.

The style of a particular Port is determined to a great extent by the point at which the must is run off and fortified. A shipper looking to maintain a marginally sweeter house style (e.g. Graham) will therefore choose to fortify slightly earlier than a producer whose wines are drier (e.g. Dow). However, shippers may also produce small amounts of sweet wine specifically for blending at a later stage. Known as *geropigas*, these are wines (either red or white) with 150 grams per litre or more of natural sugar that have been fortified almost as soon as fermentation begins. Red *geropigas* tend to be relatively pale in colour due to the limited amount of skin contact. Conversely, some ferments may be permitted to continue for rather longer than normal to produce darker, drier wine with 20 to 50 grams per litre residual sugar, which is also used for blending and fine tuning. In a few instances, a small amount of *aguardente* may be added to musts before fermentation, raising the level to 3 to 4% by volume, to curtail the metabolism of the yeasts and thereby further aid extraction.

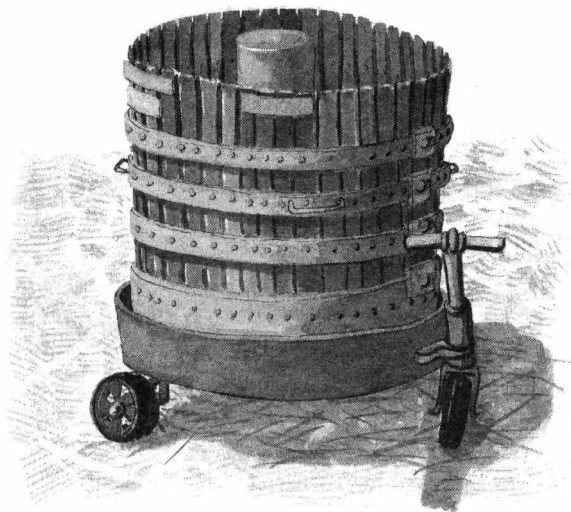
Considering that it makes up a fifth of all Port wine, until the late 1990s remarkably little thought was given to the character and quality of the *aguardente*. Throughout the nineteenth century and into the early years of the twentieth, most spirit was distilled locally in the Douro from wine that was surplus to requirements. Following João Franco's

legislation of 1907 (see page 35), shippers were forced to purchase *aguardente* from outside the region. Initially this came from distilleries in the Estremadura and the Ribatejo regions of central-southern Portugal, but in the 1970s a greater proportion began to be sourced abroad. It was accepted that the spirit should be of grape origin, 77% ABV and, ideally, neutral in character. This is fundamentally different from the spirit used to fortify Sherry, Madeira and the Australian fortifieds imitating Port which is 98% in strength.

There have been occasions where even the most basic standards were broken. Due to a shortage of local *aguardente*, much of the widely declared 1904 vintage was fortified with German spirit made from potato and grain, which led to it being dubbed the 'schnapps vintage'. More recently, the 1972, 1973 and 1974 vintages were fortified with industrial alcohol of Yugoslavian origin, a well-documented scandal that was no fault of the shippers and is related on page 48.

From 1967 until 1976, *aguardente* had to be purchased directly from the Casa do Douro who were in turn supplied by the Junta Nacional do Vinho. When the Port Wine Institute (IVP) subsequently assumed these powers, French spirit began to play a greater role, but the shippers themselves still had little or no control over the quality of the spirit used. It was only in 1991 – after the European Union forced liberalisation on Portuguese government – that shippers began to take control. The shippers now buy spirit individually with samples submitted to the IVDP for approval.

Since the late 1990s, a number of shippers have been experimenting with different types of spirit for certain types of Port. Working with Lucien Bernard in Bordeaux, both the Fladgate Partnership and Niepoort have been using a proportion of pot-distilled spirits (some originating from Cognac) that have more character than the *aguardentes* from continuous stills which have traditionally been used to fortify Port. It is fair to conclude that the standard spirit used to fortify Port is not as neutral as everyone thought



Basket press

it was. A tasting of different spirits set up for me in 2010 showed just how oily in character the standard spirit is and how a cleaner, more aromatic spirit interferes much less with the fruit, right from the start. This has led to a significant change in vintage Port with shippers tending to use better quality spirit from the 2000 vintage onwards; the influence of spirit on vintage Port is discussed again in Chapter 5. David Guimaraens concludes that the aldehydes have an important role and that if a spirit is too neutral (e.g. the very pure 98% ABV spirit used in Australia) it has a negative effect. A neutral spirit, the most expensive of all, is however desirable for white and rosé Port, and forms a significant part of the cost of these wines if they are well made.

TIME TO PRESS

The mass of grape solids (skins, pips and stalks) remaining after a Port fermentation has been run off and fortified contains valuable must, rich in colouring matter and tannin. The traditional means of extracting this juice is to transfer the solids either to a vertical (basket) press in the centre of the *lagar*, or to a hydraulic piston press located elsewhere in the *adeiga*. Nowadays most wineries are equipped either with horizontal plate presses or a continuous screw press. The former is generally preferable as continuous presses can produce bitter, over-extractive juice; in spite of this, they continue to be used successfully by a number of major shippers. The greater proportion of the press juice is mixed with the free run; however, more astringent fractions may be fermented to dryness and sent for distillation. The more gentle pneumatic presses favoured by many wine producers are not generally used by Port producers as they provide insufficient levels of extraction.

THE END OF VINTAGE

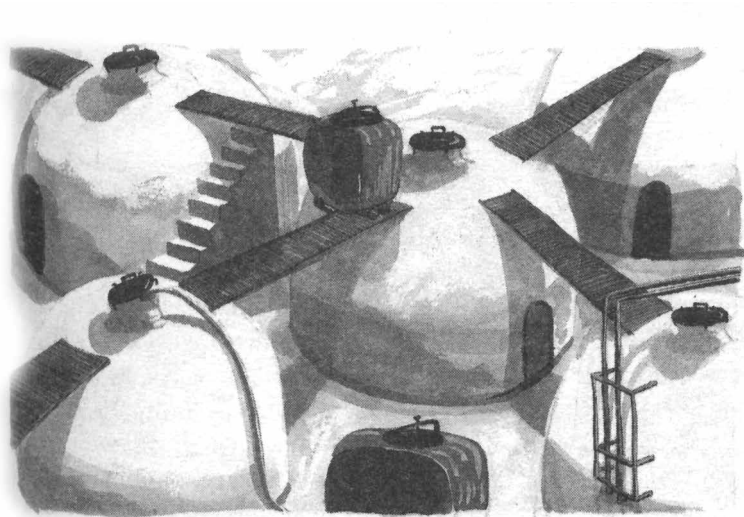
The vintage usually ends as noisily and cheerfully as it begins. Once all the grapes have been gathered and the final *lagar* has been trodden, the *roga* or gang of pickers prepare to depart. The conclusion of a successful harvest is the excuse for a celebration by all those involved. The *patroa* (wife of the owner of the *quinta*) is customarily presented with the *ramo*, a palm or bamboo branch that has been festooned with flowers, grapes, paper streamers and other objects, like empty sardine tins, that happen to be on hand. The significance of this ceremony has been lost to all those who take part today but it is thought to originate from a pagan attempt to ward off evil spirits. The presentation of the *ramo* is accompanied by a chorus of 'vivas' from the *roga* followed by singing and dancing along with the libatory consumption of wine, *bagaceira* and food provided by the *quinta*. The *roga* then return tired and somewhat the worse for wear to their village where they remain until the following vintage. After a month of frenzied activity, an uncanny silence settles once more on the Douro.

4

PORT TYPES

OVER-WINTERING IN THE DOURO

The onset of winter transforms the Douro into a cold, soulless place. A thick blanket of icy fog sometimes hangs over the valley for weeks, blotting out the sun. Houses remain shuttered up and in the *armazém* the young wines seem to shut down in sympathy. As the heady aromas of the vintage fade, even the finest of Ports can seem to be something of a disappointment during the winter months. All Port wines spend their first winter in the Douro, during which time they 'fall bright' as minute yeast cells, grape solids and tartrates settle to the bottom of the vat, helped by the cold weather. Left in the wine, this sediment will absorb colour and could stimulate the growth of harmful bacteria.



Balões . . . 'ginas', 'mamas', 'Lollobrigidas'

A month or two after the vintage, the *lota* takes place. The young wines are racked or drawn off the sediment (lees), analysed and adjusted where necessary. It is not uncommon for a Port to be fortified initially up to 16% alcohol and an extra measure of *aguardente* is added to bring the level up to a minimum of 19% ABV. This provides the opportunity for the first selection and classification. To a certain extent this is preordained. At the end of vintage, the origin, quality and quantity of the individual lots of wine will generally reflect a shipper's overall requirements. A large shipper marketing a complete range of different types of Port will end up with as many as 400 to 500 separate lots. Most large Port producers are therefore equipped with a variety of different storage vessels in the Douro. These vary greatly in size. There are concrete *balões* (also known colloquially as '*mamas*' or '*ginas*' – after Gina Lollobrigida – because of their shape), each capable of holding up to 100,000 litres. Nowadays these are being superseded by stainless steel vats, some of which double up as vats for fermentation. Smaller producers use wooden *toneis* or even 550-litre pipes in which small parcels of high quality wine can be kept separate for future appraisal. Some of the wine will remain in the custody of individual farmers throughout the winter months.

In the spring following the harvest, the colour begins to recover as the young Ports start to bind or 'close up'. This is the cue for much of the previous year's wine to be shipped down from the Douro to Vila Nova de Gaia before the onset of the summer heat. As the wines are prepared for shipment, they undergo a second racking from the lees, and levels of sulphur dioxide are adjusted to protect the wine from undue oxidation. The fraction of wine mixed in with the gross lees used to represent a considerable loss, amounting to as much as 10 per cent of total volume. In order to keep their losses to a minimum, producers would frequently empty the lees into canvas sacks, placing boards and stones on top to squeeze as much wine as possible from the solid matter. Nowadays, this troublesome and unhygienic practice has given way to the rotary vacuum filter, which separates clean wine from solid matter. The wine is kept to one side and blended later into lower-quality Ports.

For the best part of three centuries, the new wine was shipped downstream to Vila Nova de Gaia by *barco rabelo*. These distinctive Viking-inspired boats were gradually decommissioned following the construction of the railway in the 1870s and finally had to be abandoned altogether when the river was dammed in the 1960s. With an increasing amount of Port now being matured and bottled in the Douro, the region's winding roads are not quite so choked by spluttering articulated tankers from March through to May.

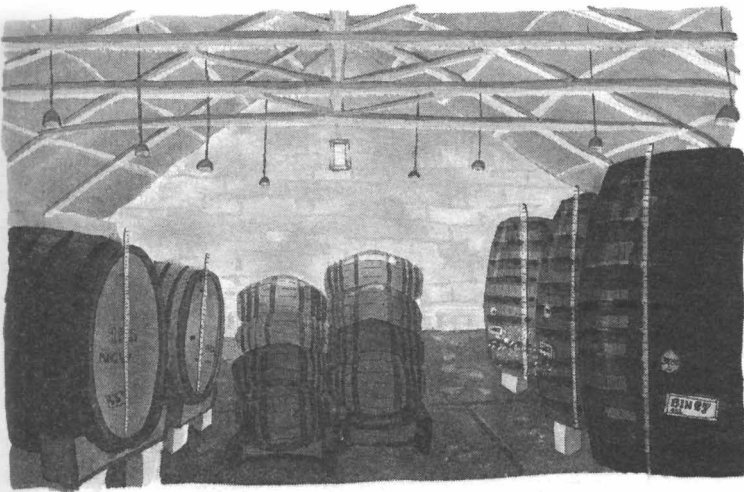
MATURATION

Listen to the daily weather forecast for Oporto and Vila Nova de Gaia and it often starts in much the same way. The *neblina matinal* (morning mist), which drifts in during the night from the Atlantic, often hangs around for much of the day during the winter months, obscuring the top of the Torre dos Clerigos, the tallest church tower in Portugal.

An air of dampness pervades the city, penetrating buildings so that patches of mould grow on the walls if rooms are not regularly aired. This atmosphere is eminently suitable for the maturation of wine and it is here, rather than in the Douro, that the Port shippers inevitably chose to set up their cellars. They are not 'cellars' in the true sense of the word, for Port is generally aged above ground. The British shippers refer to their 'lodge', a term that derives from the Portuguese word '*loja*' meaning shop, store or cellar. The Portuguese themselves tend to use a more accurate term, *armazém* (plural *armazéns*), which translates as 'warehouse' or 'storehouse'.

The long, low red-roofed lodges or *armazéns* that stack up from the river bank in Vila Nova de Gaia serve both as headquarters for the majority of Port shippers and storehouses for a huge quantity of Port. Most of the wine ages in wooden vats and casks ranging in capacity from *balseiros*, vertical vats holding as much as 100,000 litres to casks of around 600 litres (so-called 'lodge pipes'). They function as vessels for ageing where the permeability of the wood permits a gradual, controlled oxidation of the contents. Wines destined for bottling after two or three years – premium ruby, LBV and vintage – will be aged partly in *balseiros* and sometimes in stainless steel to preserve the primary character of the fruit. Wines set aside to become old tawnies are transferred to smaller lodge pipes to enhance the oxidative character of the wine.

Apart from a number of vats made from *macacauba* (Brazilian mahogany) and a few Italian chestnut casks, nearly all the wood utilised for the maturation of Port is oak. This is favoured over other types of wood for its tighter grain, thereby reducing evaporation and enabling a more gradual oxidation. Much of the oak used for ageing Port originated from Memel and Stettin in the Baltic state of Lithuania before it was occupied by the former Soviet Union in 1939. More recently oak has been obtained from New Orleans in North America and from northern Portugal, although with no forest management policy



Toneis, pipas and balseiros

to speak of, the latter is now almost non-existent. When new casks are required today, the oak is bought from the Limousin and Alliers forests in France and coopered in Portugal. New oak does not have a role to play in the maturation of Port. Unlike say, a Californian Cabernet or classed growth Claret, the merest hint of new oak can detract from the primary fruit character of a young Port. With a shortage of old wood, new Port producers occasionally resort to using new oak that imparts a strangely sweet, vanilla-like character to a naturally sweet wine. New casks should be well seasoned for a few years before they are put into use, usually with unfortified Douro wine.

Although some of the larger shippers still maintain their own coopers, the demand for wood is nowhere near as great as it was in the first half of the twentieth century when the majority of wine was still shipped in cask. Chestnut was generally used for shipping because it is cheaper and structurally more robust than oak, though it suffers from greater evaporation. The few chestnut casks that remain are left over from this period. Coopers are now retained on regular maintenance duty, repairing a pipe when a stave has been damaged or dismantling and rebuilding a vat when it has to be moved. The main shippers have a long-term programme of wood renewal. The recent closure and redevelopment of a number of lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia has created work for coopers as vats are dismantled, restored and reassembled.

Lesser Ports (white, ruby and inexpensive tawny) are generally stored in tanks made from stainless steel or cement. These wines have traditionally remained up in the Douro long after the premium-quality wines have been shipped down to Gaia, sometimes until they are called upon to make up the final shipping blend prior to bottling. Since the 1990s, there has been a gradual but important shift to the Douro with an increasing number of shippers maturing an ever greater proportion of their wine in purpose built *armazéns*, mostly located on the *altos* at altitudes of 500 to 600 metres on the margins of the region. Quinta do Noval led this trend, moving lock, stock and barrel to the Douro after their lodges were destroyed by fire in 1981. With Vila Nova de Gaia

DOURO-BAKE

This is an expression that used to appear regularly in tasting notes, signifying a wine that has been aged in the heat of the Douro rather than the relative cool of Vila Nova de Gaia. Douro-bake manifests itself as a stewed, sometimes volatile (so called *vinagrinho*) and slightly unctuous character, especially in old tawnies that may have been kept by an individual *quinta*, often with a view to selling them to a shipper at a later stage. This phenomenon has as much to do with poor handling and hygiene as high storage temperatures. When a Port shipper visits an outlying *quinta* just before the start of vintage he will often slap the palm of his hand hard against the head of a wooden *tonel* (horizontal vat) and immediately stick his head inside to sense the cleanliness (or lack of it). On more than one occasion, it has been known for a flock of roosting chickens to run out!

becoming ever more congested and tourist-orientated a number of other shippers have followed, constructing well-insulated *armazéns* in the Douro. Gran Cruz, which vies with Symington Family Estates as the largest Port shipper and is by far the largest Port brand, plan to follow Noval by moving their lodges and bottling to the Douro in the near future. Sandeman, Symington Family Estates (Cockburn, Dow, Graham and Warre) and the Fladgate Partnership (Croft, Fonseca and Taylor) all maintain substantial stocks of Port in the Douro, especially stocks of aged tawny which develop well in humidity-controlled conditions without a hint of fabled 'Douro-bake'.

RACKING

The process of racking (or *transfega* as it is known in Portuguese) is an important but extremely labour-intensive part of the annual cycle of cellar work. It involves separating the clear wine from the sediment or lees that have settled at the bottom of the cask or vat. Left in the wine, the lees will generate off-flavours and, apart from aiding the process of clarification, racking also provides aeration and helps to develop the flavour of the wine.

Racking regimens vary according to the shipper and the type of wine, but all Ports are typically racked three times in the first year, twice in the second and annually thereafter. Older wines like aged tawnies continue to precipitate solid matter as the anthocyanins (tannin and colouring matter) are deposited in the bottom of the cask. In this case pipes or casks (normally stacked four high) are decanted progressively, starting from the top row. The lees are left in the bottom of each pipe, which is then removed from the stack, cleaned and replaced. The stack is effectively entirely rebuilt, row by row. With labour-saving in mind, some shippers have built new lodges with small cranes (many of these in the Douro) to shift and empty the pipes. The combination of ageing vessel, the amount of air in the head space and the frequency of racking provides the winemaker with an opportunity to influence the rate of maturation and has an important bearing on the style and character of the wine.

CLARIFICATION AND FILTRATION

Racking alone is sufficient to eliminate heavier insoluble particles from a young Port but it does not remove inherently unstable material found in solution that could precipitate after the wine has been bottled. Most wines are therefore clarified further using fining agents such as gelatin, bentonite, egg white and casein. Young Ports are no exception and it is the winemaker's task to choose a fining agent appropriate to the type of wine. Gelatin and bentonite are normally used in tandem, with larger amounts added to round out the flavour and strip colour from a young wine (for example, a standard tawny which is supposed to be paler than a ruby). One or two shippers use centrifugation to hasten deposition. Some smaller producers continue to use gum arabic which prevents deposition and tends to produce wines with an opaque appearance and a dull colour. Casein-based products

are used to stabilise and remove oxidative browning from white Ports. Unless there is a particular problem, old tawnies and bottle-matured wines like unfiltered LBVs and vintage Ports are rarely (if ever) fined.

Most rubies and young tawnies are cold stabilised to remove tartrates and colouring material, which could otherwise crystallise and precipitate in the bottle (particularly in colder climes like Canada and Scandinavia, both of which are important markets). Two systems are commonly used. The first involves the use of a heat exchanger to refrigerate the wine down to between -8 and -10°C followed by static settling for about a week in an insulated tank. Alternatively, most of the larger Port shippers have invested in continuous systems which chill the wine and pass it continually through a crystallising tank. In each case, the wines are filtered after the stabilisation process using diatomaceous earth followed by sheet and/or membrane filters. Smaller producers like single *quintas*, which lack the wherewithal to purchase such sophisticated equipment, tend to rely on metatartaric acid, which merely offers short-term protection against tartrate deposition. Since the increase in bacteriological problems during the 1980s (see below), shippers have resorted to flash pasteurisation following cold treatment in order to achieve 'belt and braces' stability in volume ruby and tawny. Wine extracted from the lees is also pasteurised.

The methods of clarification and filtration outlined above inevitably strip a certain amount of character and flavour from a wine. Consequently, bottle-matured Ports are not cold stabilised and are rarely filtered, leading to the formation of a heavy deposit or 'crust'. These wines need to be decanted off the sediment before serving (see page 200 for decanting recommendations).

QUALITY CONTROL

In the early and mid-1980s there was a rapid increase in the incidence of bacterial problems. Wines that appeared to be correct in the tasting room suddenly turned unpleasantly volatile (vinegary) in bottle. Lactic bacteria (*lactobacillus*), which flourish in the presence of small amounts of air, will transform naturally occurring malic acid into lactic acid and attack the glucose in the wine to form acetic acid. In dry red wines and some whites, this malo-lactic transformation is perfectly natural, leading to a reduction in the overall acidity of the wine. However, in Port, where glucose levels are high and acidity is generally low in the first place, the presence of lactic bacteria is always extremely detrimental to the wine. Until the 1980s many producers believed that these lactic bacteria were unable to tolerate high levels of alcohol and (particularly up in the Douro) hygiene was perhaps not accorded the highest priority.

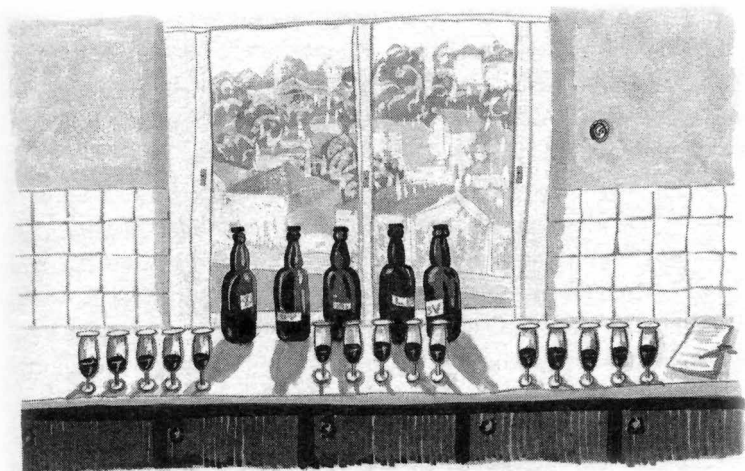
Since a number of shippers were caught out with the 1985 vintage (see Chapter 6), hygiene and quality control have come to the fore. Technical requirements have to be adhered to and, in response to the decline and subsequent suspension of bulk shipments, the major shippers have all set up their own quality-control laboratories. The Instituto dos Vinhos do Douro e do Porto (IVDP) has a well-equipped laboratory and offers its services to smaller shippers. The IVDP also has its own rigorous quality control procedures but

I can think of a number of smaller shippers without their own laboratories who are still sitting on a potential bacterial time bomb.

The problem is most acute in the Douro where an increasing number of single *quintas* are shipping their own wine. (One property solved the problem of a tainted *tonel* by lining the inside with fibreglass to prevent the wine coming into contact with the wood!) Despite the obligatory and rigorous assessment by the IVDP's Câmara de Provadores (tasting panel), a few inconsistent and occasionally downright faulty wines still occasionally reach export markets.

TASTING AND BLENDING

Every major Port shipper has a tasting room, often with a fabulous view. Huge plate glass windows look northwards over the River Douro and on to the kaleidoscopic city of Oporto beyond. Impressive as this sight is to visitors, there is a practical reason for capturing the panorama of Portugal's second city. Colour is axiomatic to Port and it is no coincidence that two of the most important types of Port, ruby and tawny, are named after different shades. A single glass held up and tilted against the cool north light may represent a blend of a thousand or more pipes of Port. As soon as representative samples of the previous year's wines reach the shippers' lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia, they are reassessed. Each wine is given a name and/or number based on its origin and will be accompanied by an analysis detailing, among other things, its strength and sweetness. Relying on prior knowledge and experience, tasters have the future in their hands when they judge if a Port will stand up to ten, twenty or more years ageing or whether it is destined to form part of a blend for early consumption. Following extensive replanting in the Douro in the 1980s, varietal lots have added another variable into the already complex blending equation. With the notable exception of wines from a single year (vintage, LBV and colheita Ports), shippers generally seek to produce Port of a consistent style and age in keeping with their house style.



Fonseca's room with a view

This presents a formidable challenge, especially for younger, fruit-driven styles (ruby and reserve) where the variation in the character and quality of the wine from year to year has to be masked in the final blend. Although some of the same principles apply, there is no mechanism to blend Port by means of the *solera* system used for Sherry. Most brands of Port result from continuous blending, appraisal and reappraisal. Tasting is a question of memory as well as an inherent feeling for the style and character of the wines that have been put to one side. Samples are submitted by other producers (from small *quintas* to large co-operatives) but it is usual for shippers to have contracts with the same growers year after year in order to reinforce the continuity of style. Although colour, aroma and taste will always remain paramount, quantifiable colour analysis (spectrophotometry) and computer records provide a useful aide-memoire.

Shippers base their blends on a series of *lotes*. These are themselves blends of wines from different years held in reserve to feed a certain predetermined house style or brand. The *lote* is usually made up some time before it is required, and a proportion of the previous *lote* is usually included in the final blend to keep the wine consonant with the last bottling. Younger or older wines may be introduced accordingly and the final sweetness may be adjusted with *geropigas* or drier wines. Sometimes both are used in order to lend complexity to a particular blend. The standard blending unit for this fine-tuning is the *almude* (25.44 litres). With twenty-one *almudes* to a shipping pipe, this longstanding but apparently arbitrary measure represents the maximum amount that a person can be expected to carry on their head at any one time!

Wines destined to make up straightforward white, rosé, ruby and tawny blends tend to be classified early on and their *lotes* are made up first, usually within six months of the vintage. Many shippers purchase large volumes of wine from co-operatives, predominantly in the Baixo Corgo, in order to augment these wines. Later in the year blends of differing but complementary wines will be formed, perhaps with a particular reserve brand in mind. The small quantities of wine set aside to become old tawnies may remain for several years before further blending whereas potential vintage *lotes* are kept separate and classified as late as possible. They will be regularly reassessed before the decision is finally taken as to whether or not to declare a vintage eighteen months or so after the harvest.

The rules and regulations that govern the various different types or styles of Port are covered below.

PORT: CATEGORISATION

There has been a proliferation of different styles of Port since the 1960s, many of them filling a niche in different markets. Despite this there are still two basic categories of Port:

Wood-matured Ports: These are wines that are aged for varying periods in bulk (either in wood and/or stainless steel or cement vats) and only bottled when they are judged to be ready to drink. Once in bottle, most of these wines will keep well for a year or more but

they are not intended for keeping over the medium or long term. With most wines having been fined and filtered prior to bottling, they should not need decanting. All ruby, tawny and rosé and white Ports fall into this category, including tawnies with an indication of age, colheita, reserve Port and the majority of LBV. So-called ‘wood Ports’ are generally bottled with a stopper cork (as opposed to a driven cork which requires a corkscrew to extract).

Bottle-matured Ports: these wines may spend a short period ageing in bulk (usually in large wood) but are bottled while relatively young and continue to develop in bottle over the medium to long term. All vintage Ports, single-*quinta* vintage, cruised, and unfiltered LBVs fall into this category. Compared to wood Ports, where the maturation takes place in a controlled, oxidative environment, bottle-matured Ports age in reductive conditions largely isolated from the air. Bottle maturation therefore slows down the ageing process. A crude illustration of this can be seen just by comparing the colour of a vintage Port after twenty years with that of a twenty-year-old colheita. Bottle-matured Ports are not generally subject to any fining or filtration and therefore throw a sediment or ‘crust’ in bottle and should be decanted. They are bottled in dark, often opaque, glass with driven corks and should be stored lying down in cool conditions to keep the cork elastic and prevent the intake of air.

The Port and Douro Wine Institute (IVDP) have their own official categorisation which is written into the statutes that govern Port. Anything other than standard ruby, tawny, rosé and white Port, which together account for just over 80 per cent of the trade in volume terms, falls into the so called ‘Special Categories’ or *Categorias Especiais*. This embraces all vintage Port, LBV, reserve, Port with the year of vintage stated (i.e. single-*quinta* vintage and colheita), and Port with the age indicated on the label (i.e. most aged tawnies). The rules that accompany the Special Categories are much more exacting than those covering standard Port. With the exception of Ports categorised as ‘reserva’ (see below), the shippers are required to maintain a current account for each *lote* and the wines are regularly and randomly monitored by the IVDP to ensure that they remain true to style. In 2011, the Special Categories accounted for 20% of all Port.

‘PORT TYPES’?

The title of this chapter – Port types – is inspired by an essay title set many years ago by the Institute of Masters of Wine in London. This is a notoriously challenging examination with far more failures than there are passes. The candidate at the time was a senior member of the UK wine trade with long-standing family links to Port and Oporto. He took the question at face value and wrote an erudite essay about the people in the business. Thankfully he passed!

PORT: CLASSIFICATION

The world has a near obsession with class and classification. Not content with the continuum in which we inhabit and interact, for the sake of convenience we divide ourselves into socio-economic groups A, B, C, and sometimes attaching labels like ‘Sloane ranger’, ‘yuppie’ or ‘preppie’... The classification of wine took hold in the nineteenth century with the 1855 Classified Growth system in the Medoc, although Pombal had attempted a similar (but more complex) classification of Port vineyards when the Douro was demarcated nearly a century earlier. The latter has long been superseded by Moreira da Fonseca’s vineyard points system (see page 58). But no classification system is ever perfect and various attempts at categorising Bordeaux and Douro vineyards have been subject to vociferous criticism over the years. Due to the fact that most Ports are complex blends from a number of different properties, sub-regions and *terroirs*, the Douro’s vineyard classification system is not of great use to the consumer.

From the 1980s onwards, high-profile North American wine critics have taken wine classification a stage further with their point-scoring systems. Based on the US examination system, a wine can score a minimum of 50 points (in which case it will be totally and utterly undrinkable) and a maximum of 100. Most scores are massaged to fall between 80 and 100 and there is often very little difference between a wine that is awarded, say, 89 and one that gains 91 points. However, as frustrated wine producers will often tell you, a wine with 89 points will sell much less well than one with 91. Apart from common wine faults and the agreed expectation of a particular style of wine, classification is often a matter of personal taste. We all have our own opinions and getting even the most skilled tasters to agree a mark for a wine, as I find when chairing the Port and Madeira panel for the *Decanter* World Wine Awards, requires a certain amount of negotiation and diplomacy.

I am not a fan of giving marks to wines, finding them too inflexible and prescriptive. Although I much prefer the 20-point scale to the 100-point scale (most of which is never used), I have stopped short of giving marks to individual wines in this book. This book is not a compendium of tasting notes, which go out of date soon after they are published. I have, however, listed my ‘pick’ of favourite Ports, not based on a single taste but on many years of tasting and repeated success in competitions like the *Decanter* World Wine Awards. I have limited my selection to the IVDP’s officially designated Special Categories. Individual vintages (in the next chapter) are given a star rating.

STANDARD STYLES

Ruby

Named after its youthful colour, ruby is the simplest and can be one of the most satisfying styles of young Port. The wines chosen to make up a ruby usually present a deep colour, straightforward fruity aromas, some body and structure but not too much in the way of tannic

grip. Ruby blends are generally made up from more than one year, aged in bulk for less than three years and bottled young to capture the strong, fiery personality of young Port. The wines are either aged prior to bottling in large wooden *balseiros* or more usually in lined cement or stainless-steel vats. Racking is kept to a minimum in order to prevent any oxidative character entering the wine. Some rubies have a coarse but rather hollow character as a result of heavy-handed stabilisation but there is something honest and entirely admirable about a good down-to-earth ruby, packed with raw, primary fruit. A glass of fiery ruby Port can be extremely satisfying outdoors on a cold day or on a winter's night with a slice of strong cheese.

Port and lemon

In the aftermath of the First World War, ruby Port was drunk in huge quantities by the British and became strongly associated with the archetypal street-corner pub. It was often the basis for a long drink, 'Port and lemon' – a shot of ruby poured over ice, let out with fizzy lemonade and served with a slice of lemon. I have to admit to being a fan of the British soap opera *Coronation Street* (one of the longest-running TV series in the world) where Port and lemon was a special-occasion drink enjoyed at the Rovers Return by ladies like Hilda Ogden (when she wasn't in her curlers). The fashion for Port and lemon began to fade in the 1960s and, sadly, the Hildas of this world are now few and far between. More recently, Liz MacDonald has been known to enjoy a Port and lemon now and then but ruby Port has now given way to proprietary brands like Archers and Baileys. Port and lemon was *that* sort of drink!

Tawny

The word 'tawny' is attached to two very different styles of Port. It implies a wine that has been aged in wood for longer than a ruby, until it takes on an amber-tawny hue. But much of the tawny Port that reaches the shelves today is no older than the average ruby and it is not uncommon to see the two wines standing side by side at the same price. These inexpensive tawnies are merely lighter wines from the Baixo Corgo, occasionally let out with white Port so that they appear pink. Heavy fining is also used to adjust the colour and some shippers add a little *mosto torrado* (basically caramelised grape must), which lends an artificially mature colour, aroma and flavour to the blend. This form of tinkering is not a particularly new practice. At the beginning of the twentieth century Ernest Cockburn relates that it was not uncommon to use 'brown finings', which 'certainly removed the pinkness of a wine, but produced in its stead an unpleasant yellow, greenish colour...'. Fining is still used as a means to tinker with the colour but today's young tawnies are rather more natural in appearance than they were in Ernest Cockburn's day. Many wines spend a summer up in the Douro being *estufado* (stewed) in cement *balões* by the ambient heat and, as one shipper admitted candidly, these Ports see wood by accident rather than by design. The resulting wines usually display a slightly brown tinge on the rim, are softer than ruby but tend to lack

the freshness and vibrancy usually associated with young Port. Often drunk as an aperitif, these so-called 'tawnies' have a popular following in France. In order to distinguish them from basic tawny, most wood-matured tawnies are labelled with an indication of age. There is, however, a category of tawny reserve which must be aged for a minimum of seven years in wood (see the relevant sections below).

Rosé Port

This is a new category initiated by Croft in 2008 and was initially classified by the authorities as 'light ruby.' Most of the shippers have now taken to producing a rosé or pink Port but there is a huge variation in style with colours from pale salmon to light ruby, and with flavours to match. Not without controversy when it was first launched, rosé has captured a new and younger section of the market (perhaps taking over from where Port and lemon left off). The wines are marketed to be served over ice in summer or used as a mixer drink.

White Port

There is an old adage that Port has two duties: the first is to be red and the second is to be drunk. Having tasted many bland white Ports in my time, I am more than inclined to agree. Although handling has greatly improved in recent years, characterless grape varieties and heavy-handed vinification methods still produce some rather insipid, often extractive wines. Some wines are aged in wood but most dry white Ports are kept in stainless steel before bottling. In the wake of the widespread vineyard replanting scheme of the 1980s and 1990s which focused on five red grape varieties, there has been a shortage of white grapes. White Ports are produced in a number of different styles ranging from the unctuous wines labelled 'Lagrima' (meaning 'tears', because of their viscosity) with a Baumé reading of 4.8 to 6.6 degrees, through 'sweet', 'medium sweet', 'dry' to 'extra dry' (around zero degrees Baumé). With the exception of a special category known as *leve seco* (light dry), which is bottled at 16.5% ABV, white Ports are normally fortified to between 19 and 22% ABV.

White Port is usually served chilled as an aperitif, either on its own or with a twist of lemon peel to sharpen up the flavour, accompanied by a bowl of salted almonds. Some shippers pour white Port over ice and advocate a long drink let out with tonic water and served with a mint leaf, although a long cool Super Bock (the local beer) is a better thirst-quencher at the end of a hot day in the Douro. At Factory House lunches where a decanter of dry white Port stands alongside a decanter of Fino Sherry, the latter is usually more popular. White Ports, nevertheless, continue to find a market in Portugal (where Sherry is virtually anathema) and in Holland, France and the Benelux.

MOSCATEL DO DOURO

There are pockets of Moscatel (Muscat) in vineyards all over the Douro, but the greatest concentration is to be found on the *planalto* around the town of Favaio. Made in much the same way as Port, production is centred on the local co-operative, which ages the wine

for around three years in wooden *toneis* and *balseiros* ranging in size from 10,000 to 33,000 litres. Most Favaio wines share a similar rustic, oxidative style with rather cloying sweetness akin to Demerara sugar, although Quinta do Portal bottles a paler, fresher wine. Favaíto, a young Moscatel do Douro in miniature bottles, has become a favourite mixer drink in cafés all over Portugal. Outside the Favaio sub-zone, Niepoort make limited quantities of a rich, balanced Moscatel, which is amber-brown in colour from prolonged ageing in cask.

SPECIAL CATEGORIES

Reserva/Reserve

Although the word ‘reserve’ has been in use for many years (aka Cockburn’s Special Reserve), this category was only approved by the authorities in 2002. The official definition is all-embracing: ‘a wine of good quality obtained by blending wines of different ages, which produce a wine with a complex aroma and flavour and specific organoleptic characteristics. If the wine is *retinto* (very deep red) or ‘tinto’ (youthful red) in colour it may be called reserve ruby’. This effectively means that the term ‘reserve’ can be applied to a multitude of different styles of wine, from deepest ruby to a fairly pale tawny. Indeed a wine like Ferreira’s Dona Antónia reserve is wood-aged with the intention of taking on tawny characteristics (even though the word tawny does not appear on the label). In practice most of the wines in this category can be described as ‘premium ruby’. They are wines of a higher quality than a standard ruby, made from better grapes and possibly, although not necessarily, aged for slightly longer before bottling. The IVDP points out that the reserve category is a function of quality rather than age and any producer seeking to use the term must seek approval from the *Câmara de Provedores* (the Institute’s tasting panel).

This is an important category for all Port shippers and one that has produced strong sales growth, especially in English-speaking markets. The term ‘reserve’ (*reserva* in Portuguese) has substituted ‘vintage character’, a category that was first recognised by the then IVP in 1973. This was a great misnomer. The wines were neither vintage nor did they have the character of a vintage Port, but they carried a cachet that made them very successful in the United Kingdom where sales of standard ruby had been steadily declining. Reflecting the tendency to ‘trade up’, Cockburn’s Special Reserve took over from Cockburn’s Ruby as the United Kingdom’s best-selling Port brand in the mid-1990s. Under the terms of the 2002 legislation the words *Finest*, *Especial* or *Special* may be used with either ruby or reserve. The expression ‘Special Reserve’, so long associated with Cockburn, may now be used by anyone although ‘Cockburn’s Special Reserve’ remains a trademark.

Pick of the reserves

Cockburn’s Special Reserve
Dow’s Masterblend / Dow’s Trademark
Fonseca Bin 27
Fonseca Terra Prima (organic)
Graham’s Six Grapes
Krohn Rio Torto Reserva
Warre’s Warrior

Despite the ambiguity of the term ‘reserve’, reserve ruby is undoubtedly a much more honest term than vintage character to describe wines which are deep in colour and full of vibrant, primary fruit. There are impressive wines in this category, the best of which have rich, ripe, spicy berry fruit and, depending on house style, bold tannins.

Late-bottled vintage (LBV)

LBV means what it says: a wine from a single year bottled between four and six years after the vintage (compared to a maximum of two years for vintage Port). The style evolved largely by default. In the lean years from the 1930s to the 1950s, it was not uncommon for a vintage Port to remain in wood for rather longer than normal while the wine was awaiting a buyer. Under the terms of subsequent legislation, many of these wines were technically ‘late bottled’. A number of shippers therefore claim to have invented LBV, but it seems that the expression was first used by Noval when they applied it to a wine from the 1954 vintage. Rutherford, Osborne and Perkin, then the London agents for Noval, listed it without any qualifying explanation in the autumn of 1961. However David and Jack Rutherford were reported to have described the wine as ‘a new vintage style of Port. No decanting necessary, buy it from your off-licence, throw it in the back of your car and drink it that night’. Noval may have been the first to produce a modern (filtered) LBV but the style was undoubtedly popularised by Taylor. In 1955 they introduced a new style of wine which they termed ‘vintage reserve’. Taylor’s owned the rights to this name but with a clear gap in the market, a new designation – Late Bottled Vintage – was officially sanctioned by the IVP in the mid-1960s. Taylor’s 1965 LBV was launched in 1970. Subsequently adopted by all the main shippers, LBV proved to be hugely successful in English-speaking markets where the word ‘vintage’ undoubtedly commands a premium.

Three different styles of LBV have now evolved. In order to qualify, all wines must be a single harvest (but not necessarily a declared ‘vintage’), bottled between 1 July in the fourth year after the respective harvest and 31 December in the sixth year. In order to prevent the wines from turning oxidative and therefore tawny in style, those destined to become LBVs are kept in large vats (wooden *balseiros* and stainless steel) prior to bottling. Most producers initially followed Taylor’s, fining and/or filtering and cold-stabilising their wines before bottling in order to prevent the formation of sediment and thereby removing the need to decant. This has proved popular both with restaurateurs and consumers but both the size of some of the *lotes* and heavy-handed filtration have conspired to strip much of the character from the wine. As a result some LBVs are little more than reserve ruby with a date attached.

During the 1990s there was a growing trend towards so-called ‘traditional’ LBV, bottled without any filtration or treatment. The word ‘traditional’ was never officially sanctioned by the IVP and may no longer be used. Instead, the majority of these wines now bear the word ‘unfiltered’, either on the front or back label. These wines tend to be more full-bodied than LBVs which have been fined and filtered and have the capacity to age for five or more years in bottle. Often bottled with a driven cork (as opposed to a stopper cork), young unfiltered LBV does not necessarily need decanting but the wine will eventually throw sediment in bottle.

Since revision of the legislation in 2002, LBV may also be sold as *Envelhecido em Garrafa* or 'Bottle Matured'. These wines, defined as 'liable to create a deposit in bottle ... must have aged in bottle for a minimum period of three years and may only be released after this period has elapsed'. Warre and Smith Woodhouse have made a speciality of this style of LBV and the wines share

something of the depth, intensity and maturity of a true vintage Port at less than half the price. Like a vintage Port, they should be decanted before serving.

Pick of the LBVs

Cockburn
Fonseca
Graham
Niepoort (unfiltered)
Quinta do Noval (unfiltered)
Ramos Pinto
Smith Woodhouse (unfiltered – Bottle Matured)
Taylor
Warre (unfiltered – Bottle Matured)

Crusted Port

So-called because of the deposit or 'crust' that the wine throws in bottle, crusted Port is a fairly recent creation that has earned itself the epithet of 'poor man's vintage Port'. Although the coveted word 'vintage' does not appear anywhere on the label, crusted Ports are much closer in style to vintage Port than most LBVs, presenting a dense, concentrated wine for a fraction of the price. Wines from two or three harvests are aged in wood for up to two years and bottled without any fining or filtration. The only date that is of any significance is the year of bottling, which has to appear on the label. The preserve of a few British shippers, most crusted Port was UK bottled and, following the suspension of bulk shipments in 1996, it briefly ceased to be sanctioned by the IVP. Crusted Port may be released at any time after bottling but under the legislation drawn up in 2002, a wine with three years in bottle may be sold as 'bottle matured'. Most crusted Ports are ready to drink around six years of age but some will keep for nearly as long as a fully-fledged vintage Port, as I found in 2011 on opening a bottle of Noval Crusted – from 1961!

Pick of crusted Port

Graham
Niepoort

Tawny with an indication of age

Most 'true' Tawny Ports are bottled with an 'indication of age': 'ten', 'twenty', 'thirty' and 'over forty years old' are the designations officially permitted by the IVP. However there is a category of tawny reserve/*reserva* for wines that have spent at least seven years in wood. With the exception of colheita, which forms a separate category (see below), all tawny Ports are complex blends of wines from a number of different years. The indication of age found on the label is therefore nothing more than an approximation. Ten-, twenty- and thirty-year-old tawnies may be officially described on the label as *velho* or 'old' whereas wine bottled as 'over forty years old' may be described as *muito velho* ('very old').

Wines set aside to become part of this chain of old tawnies are selected from among the finest Ports, usually after making up the potential vintage or single-*quinta* vintage *lotes*. The component wines are mostly sourced from A or B-grade vineyards in the Cima Corgo or Douro Superior but a number of *quintas* in the Baixo Corgo are making some good wines of their own. Individual shippers look to maintain different house styles, but on the whole the young wines destined to develop into mature tawnies combine stature and structure with elegance and finesse.

The ageing process is of crucial importance to the style and character of tawny Port. In small casks (lodge pipes) of 600 to 640 litres the wine undergoes a gradual process of oxidation and esterification as the colour fades and ethyl esters and acetals develop in the wine. The formation of these volatile components (sometimes known colloquially as *vinagrinho*, 'little vinegar') is directly influenced by the ambient storage temperature and rate of evaporation. Consequently, tawny matured in the Douro undergoes a different (and more rapid) maturation process than that aged in the cooler lodges of Vila Nova da Gaia where annual evaporation (mainly of alcohol and water) is between 1 and 2 per cent. Provided the wines are well nurtured, a degree of so-called 'Douro-bake' can be a positive advantage in a mature tawny. A higher rate of evaporation (around 3 per cent a year) concentrates the natural residual sugars and the higher temperature produces wines with a distinctive toasted richness. One single *quinta* making their own ten-year-old tawny estimates that keeping the wine up in the Douro accelerates the ageing of the wine by around 30 per cent. Many shippers deliberately use a component of Douro-matured wine in their aged tawnies, although they have also constructed purpose-built lodges with controlled humidity to emulate the conditions found in Vila Nova de Gaia.

The racking regimen (see page 145) is also very influential in the development of the wine and provides the tasting room with a regular opportunity to monitor the character and evolution of each *lote*. The tasting and blending of tawny Port is a continuous process, the aim being to produce a wine that both conforms to the house style and is also consistent over time. Wines set aside initially are often marked with the year of the harvest but as the shipper makes up new blends followed by blends of blends, the characteristics of the individual wines gradually meld into the house style. Lighter, earlier maturing wines will go towards a ten-year-old blend with richer, more structured wines reserved for older tawnies (see individual styles, below). Stocks of old tawny Port are largely driven by anticipated sales and the onus is on the shipper to look over forty years ahead in order to put aside the correct quantity of wine. If there is a run on stock, the house style may waver and it is not unknown for shippers to trawl the Douro in search of old wine. Occasionally a slightly caramelised, *rancio* character can enter a wine that was otherwise a textbook tawny. The final *lote* may be made up of anything between ten and fifty different component wines with younger, fresher, fruit-driven Ports balancing older, mature styles that have gained more in the way of secondary complexity from extended ageing in wood.

I am by no means alone in my admiration of the intricacy and poise in a well-aged tawny. The Port shippers themselves often drink a good tawny in preference to any

other style of Port although, after a heavy dinner capped by one or more vintage Ports, a twenty-year-old tawny may be served as 'mouthwash'! The refinement and delicacy of a well-aged tawny befits the climate and temperament of the Douro better than the heftier bottle-matured wines, which are more at home in cooler climes. Think of tawny as a summer wine. A glass of tawny served cool from the fridge is positively refreshing either as an aperitif or after lunch in the heat of the day.

Ten-year-old tawny: Still brick-red in the centre of the glass but developing an amber-tawny rim, these wines tend to retain a rich raisin and sultana character with a touch of toasty complexity from the wood. Smooth in texture, they may retain a vestige of peppery tannin on the finish.

Twenty-year-old tawny: This, to my mind, is the apogee of tawny: the epitome of balance and poise, combining freshness, delicacy and primacy of the fruit with secondary toasted almond and brazil nut complexity from ageing in wood. Twenty-year-olds are generally slightly sweeter than ten-year-old tawnies, owing to the greater concentration of sugars, and there has been a tendency in recent years for the IVDP to favour wines with more than a hint of complexity from Douro-bake. Colours vary considerably according to house style, ranging from tawny-pink to pale amber-orange, occasionally with an olive-green tinge to the rim.

Thirty-year-old tawny: Orange/amber-tawny to pale mahogany in colour with an olive-green hue to the rim. Thirty-year-olds have wonderful complexity, sometimes with a marked torrefaction character (roasted coffee) and raisin-like richness and sweetness

that can verge on being unctuous, even cloying. By this stage some wines are heading downhill with distinctly rustic, high-toned, *vinagrinho* aromas. Bottled in very small quantities (most shippers release just a few hundred cases a year).

Forty-year-old tawny: Amber-tawny to deep mahogany in colour, with an olive-green rim. Typically mature and roasted; toasted almonds, well-done toast and freshly roasted

Pick of ten-year-old tawny

Dow
Graham
Niepoort
Offley
Ramos Pinto, Quinta da Ervamoira
Sandeman
Taylor
Warre

Pick of twenty-year-old tawny

Dalva
Dow
Fonseca
Graham
Messias
Niepoort
Poças
Ramos Pinto, Quinta do Bom Retiro
Sandeman

Pick of thirty-year-old tawny

Dalva
Graham
Sandeman

Pick of forty-year-old tawny

Graham
Sandeman
Taylor

coffee on the nose. Tawny marmalade, candied peel on the palate with a *rancio* character often evident. Some wines are overblown and cloying. Tiny quantities are bottled and – needless to say – the wines are expensive!

Colheita

Often misunderstood, the Portuguese word *colheita* (pronounced col-yate-a) means ‘harvest’ and, by extension, can be confused with ‘vintage’. Like vintage Port, a colheita is the product of a single harvest but the wine is aged in wood for a minimum of seven years by which time it will have begun to take on an oxidative, tawny character. In practice most colheitas are aged for considerably longer, the casks or vat being raked and topped up periodically (in theory with the same wine) to replace that lost by evaporation. The wines take on secondary aromas and flavours, losing colour and gaining in richness, sweetness and intensity the longer they mature in wood. Without recourse to blending and refreshing, some colheitas look distinctly tired by the time they come to be bottled and in comparative tastings they can fare much less well than blended tawnies with a comparable average age. Two dates

appear on the label of a colheita Port: the year of the harvest (i.e. the *colheita*) and the year of bottling. The latter is significant as the wine will not generally improve in bottle (although after prolonged oxidative ageing in wood it won’t deteriorate that quickly either). It is not uncommon to find colheitas from the early years of the twentieth century still on sale in grocers’ shops in Lisbon and Oporto but wines from post-war years tend to be more reliable. Some shippers maintain stocks of wine still in wood, dating back prior to colheitas in the 1930s, many of which have distinct overtones of *vinagrinho*.

Pick of colheita

Barão de Vilar
Dalva
Graham
Kopke
Krohn
Niepoort
Quinta do Noval
Poças

White Port with an indication of age

Wood-ageing lends character to a well made white Port, turning it tawny in colour and flavour with age. Indeed, old white Ports may form part of an aged tawny blend. White Ports that have been aged in wood can now be marketed with the ten-, twenty-, thirty- or forty-year-old designation provided they have met the requisite standard of the IVDP’s *Câmara de Provadores*. Rare whites like Quinta Santa Eufemia’s Very Old Reserve and colheitas like the 1952 from C. da Silva or Niepoort’s exceptional wine from 1895 present a rich, honeyed complexity comparable to well-aged tawny.

Colour

The first facet of a young Port assessed in any tasting is its colour. Depth and hue are fundamental indicators of the quality and style of the wine and go some way to helping predict its future evolution. From tastings during the last decade or so I have noticed that there is much less variation in colour, particularly among young vintage, single quinta vintage and late bottled vintage Ports. Nearly all the wines seem to share the same deep, opaque crimson-purple colour. There are two reasons for this. Firstly extraction methods have greatly improved in the winery (see earlier in chapter). The other reason (and perhaps the most important) stems from the replanting of vineyards in the 1980s, with more emphasis having been given to grape varieties that contribute colour than in the old pick and mix vineyards. Many of these newer vineyards are now at the peak of their production and the grapes are forming part of the vintage *lote*.

Garrafeira

The term *garrafeira* meaning ‘private wine cellar’ or ‘private reserve’ is usually associated with Portuguese light wines rather than Port. Until 2002 it did not form part of the IVDP’s official lexicon and, as far as I am aware, has only been used by one shipper, Niepoort, to designate a unique style of Port. Under the legislation, wines from a single year are aged for at least seven years in wood before spending a minimum of eight years in glass demi-johns (these are known colloquially as *bon-bons*). In practice the wines age for considerably longer than the minimum. After twenty, thirty, even forty years or more in glass, the wine is decanted off its sediment and rebottled in conventional 75cl bottles. For example, Niepoort’s 1967 Garrafeira was ‘bottled’ (i.e. put into 5- or 10-litre glass demi-johns) in 1972 and ‘decanted’ (i.e. bottled) in 1981. Garrafeira wines combine the oxidative character and complexity of tawny with the more reductive bottle-ageing of vintage Port. These unusual wines are the only ones to bridge the gap between wood-matured Port and bottle-matured in terms of weight and style. An undeclared 1945 Cockburn tasted in 2012 technically qualifies as a garrafeira having been decanted from a demi-john into bottles in 1972.

5

VINTAGE PORT

Although vintage Port only accounts for a tiny fraction of total shipments, for most shippers it represents the very pinnacle of production. The British-owned shippers in particular have built (and sometimes destroyed) their individual reputations on the back of vintage Port. In spite of the reluctance of some Portuguese-owned firms to embrace vintage Port in the same way, this category has become a flagship for the entire trade. For this reason I decided to devote an entire chapter to vintage Port. It could easily be the subject for an entire book.

All the approbation that surrounds vintage Port belies the fact that it is one of the most straightforward of all Ports to produce. Wines from a single year are bottled, without treatment or filtration, after spending a maximum of two years ageing in bulk. The skill in producing a vintage Port is in the selection of the *lotes* made from the finest grapes, picked at optimum ripeness after a successful growing season. To a certain extent this is predetermined as most shippers know their own *quintas* intimately, as well as those belonging to their long-term suppliers. Many of the most successful vintage Ports are therefore based on grapes from the same plots of vines in the same properties, year after year. The grapes need to be very well worked during vinification, usually either foot trodden in *lagar* and/or subject to mechanical extraction by piston plunging or robotic treading (see Chapter 3). After the harvest these Ports are put to one side and monitored as potential vintage *lotes*. The wines have traditionally been kept in large wooden vats (*balseiros*) in order to prevent undue oxidative ageing, but since the microbiological scare of the mid-1980s a number of shippers have resorted to using stainless steel. As one well-known shipper of vintage Port remarked, ‘handling and hygiene are more important than the material from which the vessel is made’.

Under the rules set out by the IVDP, the shippers have up to two years to decide whether to ‘declare’ the wine as vintage. As most of the major shippers have premises cheek by jowl with each other in Vila Nova de Gaia, there is inevitably a certain amount of debate about the overall quality of the harvest and the weekly Wednesday lunch at the Factory House is often a forum for discussion. But contrary to received opinion, declaration is an independent decision taken by the shipper and one that isn’t made lightly. More often

than not there is a natural consensus but there are a number of examples of so-called 'split declarations' where some of the principal shippers have opted for one year and others have plumped for another. Recent examples include 2009 (when Taylor, Fonseca and Croft surprised the trade with their declaration) and 1991–1992. There is no law of averages about the regularity of vintage declarations but, as a rule of thumb, three or four years are declared in a decade. Expectation mounts when there are long gaps between declarations as happened, for example, between 1985 and 1991.

The size of a declaration will depend upon the year and the market. Some shippers used to be very cagey about revealing the information but expect a major shipper to declare between 8,000 and 15,000 cases of vintage Port. However Noval, whose wines have been on top form since the 1994 vintage, sometimes declare 1,000 cases or less. Warre declared just 500 cases of the 2009 vintage. To put vintage Port into context, it is worth pointing out that whereas the top twenty chateaux in Bordeaux make about 600,000 cases a year between them, the top ten Port shippers declare perhaps 90,000 cases every three years.

Vintage Port is often thought of as a time-honoured tradition and the shippers can be quite affronted when they are accused of changing the wine to suit the market. But with the benefit of hindsight and repeated tasting, it is fair to say that vintage Port went through a fundamental stylistic change after 1970 and up to 1994. This should not be too much of a surprise for the interim vintages (1975, 1977, 1980, 1983, 1985, 1991 and 1992) coincided with a period of profound socio-economic change in Portugal. Over-production in the vineyard, a shortage of labour and changes in methods of vinification all had an impact on vintage Port. Handling was not given top priority and the problems began to manifest themselves in the 1985 vintage (see below). Some shippers deliberately ceased to prioritise vintage Port during this period, preferring to build up bigger brands for the mass market. From 1975 to 1992 inclusive, there was an overall dip in quality; although some outstanding wines were still produced, there are many wines from leading shippers that do not have the same longevity as in earlier vintages.

Against this, with the steady investment in vinification that has taken place since the early 1980s, the production of high quality Port is much less hit and miss than it was. Unless the harvest happens to be a washout (as in 1993 and 2002), wines of potential vintage quality can now be made every year. The shippers have consequently been faced with a dilemma of how to market wines from good interim years without undermining or diluting the reputation of a fully declared vintage. In the past, a certain amount of wine that was good but not quite up to vintage standard was bottled as *crusted Port*, usually accompanied by both the date of harvest and bottling. Since the late 1960s, the collective solution to this problem has either been to declare wines under a second label (Fonseca Guimaraens, for example) or, more commonly, to bottle a single-*quinta* vintage Port (SQVP).

The Port and Douro Wine Institute (IVDP) treats second label and SQVPs in exactly the same way as fully declared vintage Ports. In order to obtain approval for the description 'vintage', a sample of the wine must be submitted to the Institute between 1 January and 30 September in the second year after the harvest. The quantity must be

registered and, pending its approval by the *Câmara de Provadores* (tasting panel), a current account will duly be opened for the wine. Approval from the tasting panel used to be a rubber-stamping exercise but a number of shippers have been taken aback when their wines were rejected and samples had to be resubmitted. Following a change in the law that accompanied the 2000 vintage declaration, the wines may be bottled as soon as they have been officially approved. Consequently most shippers are now bottling earlier than in the past, avoiding the summer heat. Vintage Port may now be bottled at any time until 31 July in the third year after the harvest. The wines may be shipped at any time after 1 May of the second year.

UK BOTTLING OF VINTAGE PORT

There is considerable bottle variation between different bottlings of the same wine from vintages prior to and including 1970, when vintage Port was frequently shipped in pipe and bottled by individual UK wine merchants. Although UK bottling was often better than that in Portugal, it was not unknown for a wine to languish in wood for an extra year or more thereby increasing the amount of oxidative maturation and changing the character of the wine. There are some who say this was for the better as the delay helped to stabilise colour. There was also a tradition in the UK to roll the pipe of wine before bottling, thereby mixing up the sediment so that it was evenly shared between bottles. However, unscrupulous merchants were also free to stretch the blend with a generous slug of young ruby, although I have absolutely no proof of anyone doing so. I have long wanted to take a single declared Port from, say, the 1963 or 1966 vintage, and compare bottles from different UK merchants with the same wine bottled by the shipper in Vila Nova de Gaia.

Once a vintage Port has been bottled, it continues to develop and evolve over a period of fifteen to twenty years or more before it is considered as being ready to drink. Rather like the seven ages of man, the wine enjoys a short, fragrant bloom of youth before it shuts down and endures ten, even fifteen years of surly, spotty adolescence. Then it slowly begins to emerge as a fully fledged adult, gaining stature and *gravitas* until the Port reaches its peak, often at around twenty or thirty years of age. For the finest vintage Ports the peak becomes a long plateau. Old age need not be reached for eighty or more years, as I found when I tasted a bottle of Taylor's 1912 at Roy and Doreen Hersh's Port weekend in Seattle in 2003. It still had a fabulous rosy freshness about it and was happily alive at the age of 91. Throughout the ageing process, vintage Port slowly softens and sheds its colour, forming a 'crust' of sediment on the inside of the bottle. This means that all vintage Ports need decanting, a procedure that is a deterrent to some but is in fact just as easy as the wines are to drink (see section on decanting on page 200).

The accepted practice in the British market of 'laying down' vintage Port to mature has been confounded by the Americans who, perhaps because of a familiarity with strapping Californian Cabernet, are prepared to broach their vintage Ports almost as soon as they have been shipped. A young vintage Port can be extremely satisfying (if mouth-numbingly tannic) and one shipper has proved to me that it can be a good match for a green-pepper steak, but I remain firmly of the opinion that it is worth waiting fifteen, twenty years or more for a classic vintage to develop and mature in bottle. A few shippers have introduced early maturing wines to meet the demands of the powerful North American market, but the majority have resisted the temptation to change the style of their wines. From tasting and re-tasting recent declared vintages like 2000 and 1997, both produced with the North American market on the ascendant, I am convinced the principal shippers are standing their ground and making vintage Port, just as they always have, for the long term. In fact, there are a number of shippers with, by their own admission, little or no reputation for great vintage Port who are now succeeding in making some classic wines.

By the very nature of the category, there is no excuse for poor quality vintage Port – but there is a considerable variation between the great, the good and, just occasionally, the bad and the ugly as well. Individual shippers and different vintages have their own character and style, which puts some in the premier league while others fall below par.

A GUIDE TO VINTAGES

The following guide to Port vintages takes each year in turn, noting relevant weather conditions, market considerations and the overall style of the wines, and highlights particularly successful shippers. I have assessed each and every year back to 1960, which roughly coincides with the emergence of single-*quinta* vintage Port (SQVP) in between fully fledged declarations. Prior to this, only the more prominent (declared) vintages are listed. As you go back in time records inevitably become rather scanty, partly because my own experience begins in the early 1980s and contemporary vintage reports have either been lost or are nothing like as comprehensive as they are today. I am particularly grateful to the late Bruce Guimaraens, David Guimaraens and the Symington family for access to vintage reports.

KEY

As an indication of overall quality, each year is rated with stars (up to a maximum of five):

- ***** an outstanding vintage
- **** very good, some outstanding wines
- *** good all-round vintage
- ** an average year; wines generally sound but unexciting
- * generally indifferent

No stars poor

2011 *****? a challenging year; potentially outstanding wines

There were smiles on the faces of winemakers at the end of the 2011 harvest, although growers had bitten their fingernails to the quick. The growing season was generally dry but warm, unstable weather in May brought on an attack of oidium and mildew that some smaller growers found hard to treat. Yields fell as a result. In June there was localised hail damage followed by an unexpected burst of heat over the weekend of São João (25 June). With the thermometer above 40°C, exposed berries were burnt by the power of the sun: no one in the Douro can recall an episode quite like it. July and August were relatively cool and windy but dry. Heavy but welcome rain fell on 21 August and again at the beginning of September, allowing Baumés to fall and grapes to ripen evenly. A seemingly early vintage was delayed as a result. There was not a drop of rain in the Douro for the next five weeks and harvest conditions were perfect throughout the region. Temperatures were hotter than normal at the start of vintage so must cooling proved to be essential. Aromas in the winery were wonderful from the start (always the sign of a promising harvest) and good, possibly great, wines were made from the beginning to the end of harvest. Expect a vintage declaration early in 2014.

But 2011 was a year when a dark cloud hung over the growers. In response to both over-production and a decline in sales, the IVDP cut the Port *benefício* to 85,000 pipes, a 25 per cent reduction on the previous year. This, together with the huge amount of planting that has taken place in the Douro Superior, left many independent growers without a market for their grapes. There were protests in Régua and, at the time of writing, there is an urgent need for the government to implement the necessary reforms to secure a viable future for the region's farmers.

2010 ** / *** an uneven year

The winter of 2010 brought a deluge of rain after three very dry years. At Pinhão the rainfall total from October to March was 50 per cent above average. Despite considerable soil erosion and costly damage to stone walls in the vineyards, the winter rainfall proved vital as there was no rain at all for eight weeks in July and August. With a heavy yield on the vines, grapes struggled to ripen. Temperatures in August were hot with a daily maximum in excess of 35°C and photosynthesis was brought to a halt. Older vines with root systems penetrating to 25 metres and more fared much better than younger vineyards. Some welcome rain fell at the start of September and picking was generally delayed by a week or so throughout the region. For the quality conscious, it was a stop-start harvest with an extra wait for some varieties (especially the Tourigas) to ripen. Fortunately for those who took the risk, the weather remained fine through to early October when some heavy rain fell on the 3rd. But the weather quickly improved and the grapes from the higher C/D grade vineyards were picked in near perfect, disease-free condition. At Quinta do Noval, where yields were double those of 2009, the harvest lasted from the end of August until late October. Overall, 2010 produced some good but at times unbalanced wines due to uneven ripening. The best wines were produced by the old vines able to withstand the summer heat and drought and these should provide the basis for some powerful single-*quinta* wines.

2009 **** an unusual split declaration, some very ripe opulent wines

Following a very dry winter (the third in a row), the growing season began early and stayed ahead of normal all the way through to an early harvest. Unsettled weather in April and May reduced yields throughout the region and June brought welcome rain. Early July was relatively cool but the heat built up to a peak of 40°C plus at the end of the month and continued through August. No rain fell before harvest, which began as early as the end of August in the Douro Superior. Here, yields were down by as much as 40 per cent and low-lying vineyards suffered from the summer heat with high sugar readings and dehydrated yet under-ripe grapes. The thermometer was still touching 40°C on 9 and 10 September when many *quintas* were already picking. Sugar readings were high, especially Tinta Barroca which was heavily raisinised in places; Churchill registered a *lagar* of Barroca at 20 degrees Baumé that was so raisinised that the treaders could walk on top of it, and the average sugar reading in the *lagares* at Churchill's Quinta da Gricha gave a potential alcohol of 17.5% by volume! Tinta Roriz and Touriga Nacional both fared much better, with many of the best-quality grapes coming from higher altitudes than normal. I arrived in the Douro on 18 September (our vintage in the Alentejo already concluded) to find healthy, disease-free grapes already being picked at around 450 metres altitude under clear skies. The fine, warm weather continued nearly to the end of harvest when a heavy storm blew over the Serra do Marão. On 6 and 7 October more rain fell than in any month since January.

The prospect of a good single-*quinta* vintage was on the cards right from the outset but the trade was taken completely by surprise when the Fladgate Partnership announced an outright declaration of Taylor, Fonseca and Croft on St George's Day 2011. The other Port shippers had absolutely no inkling of their impending declaration. Fladgate were joined in their declaration by Barros, Cruz, Dalva, Delaforce, Krohn, Messias, Niepoort, Real Companhia Velha, Poças, Rozès, Skeffington and Warre. The latter chose to declare just 500 cases in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the liberation of Oporto in which Captain William Warre was awarded Portugal's highest military honour.

The character of the 2009s is in complete contrast to 2007, reflecting the heat of the growing season. Taylor is dense and opulent, Fonseca ripe but more restrained with Croft showing the sweet, plummy succulence that has become a hallmark. Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas Vinha Velha is outstanding: aromatic rather than opulent with ripe berry fruit and rapier-like tannins. The vintage also produced some very fine single-*quinta* wines, namely Dow's Senhora da Ribeira and Quinta do Vesúvio. Opening prices for the fully declared wines were very close to the 2007s.

Pick of the vintage: Taylor; Warre; Cockburn's Quinta dos Canais; Dow's Quinta Sra. da Ribeira, Ramos Pinto, Quinta da Ervamoira.

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

Peter Symington (1944-)

In 2009, Peter Symington, winemaker for Symington Family Estates, retired after forty-five vintages. This softly spoken man was never one to shout his achievements from the rooftops, but he did much to transform wine making of the Douro with the invention of robotic *lagares*. Quinta do Noval introduced robots into their *lagares* in 1994 but at the same time Peter Symington was taking the idea a stage further by designing new purpose-built *lagares* from stainless steel. The first prototype was ready for the end of vintage in 1998 and by 2000 there were six robotic *lagares* working at Quinta do Sol and Graham's Quinta dos Malvedos. Three more were set up at Dow's Quinta Senhora da Ribeira in 2002 and another six at Warre's Quinta da Cavadinha in 2006, taking the total to fifteen. By the 2007 vintage, as much as 70 per cent of the Symington family's vintage Ports were being produced by robotic *lagares* which simulate the action and pressure of the human foot (see page 134). In the time that Peter Symington worked for the family firm, total production increased from 1,000 pipes to 36,000. Peter retired to his own vineyard, Quinta da Fonte Bela high above the Douro near Lamego, and handed over the winemaking and blending to his son Charles.

2008 **** Small harvest, outstanding single-*quinta* wines

After another very dry winter, April was wet and stormy (with snow over Easter) and May brought more rain. Consequently the flowering was uneven with *desavinho* throughout the region. Apart from a short burst of heat in the second part of July, the summer was cool with westerly winds blowing off the Atlantic. Despite the relatively low yields, the harvest looked set to be late. Charles Symington wrote on 2 September that 'the maturation studies in mid-August showed the lowest readings on record'. After some timely rain early in the month, hot weather brought on rapid maturation. Then the weather turned again and heavy rain fell over the equinox in the western part of the region. The outlook was unstable and growers resigned themselves to dodging showers for the next two weeks, but the rain stopped and the best grapes were picked under clear skies towards the end of September. Those who panicked and picked too early found themselves with under-ripe grapes. In the three weeks from 23 September to 15 October the weather could not have been better. The grapes were picked in excellent condition, producing wines with good colour and excellent sugar (13.5–14.5 degrees Baumé) and fine acidity.

Apart from Noval who declared outright, 2008 proved to be an excellent single-*quinta* year with a large number of wines released. In general the wines are aromatic yet show restraint, and are characterised by their freshness and purity of fruit combined with firm, structured tannins. In fact the wines are in much the same style as 2007 and the temperatures for the two growing seasons were remarkably similar.

Pick of the Vintage: Quinta do Noval; Fonseca Quinta do Panascal; Taylor's Quinta de Terra Feita; Graham's Quinta dos Malvedos; Churchill Quinta da Gricha; Quinta do Vesúvio; Vista Alegre.

2007 **** / ***** relatively cool growing season, great purity of fruit; widely declared

The widespread declaration of a new vintage immediately evokes comparison with an earlier year but in a quarter of a century of visiting the Douro, I cannot recall a year like it. A good Port vintage is usually thought of as a product of heat (as 2003) but in 2007 the wines were shaped by a long and relatively cool summer.

The winter was wet and even more rain fell in June and July, reducing yields and raising the threat of disease. August was unusually cool. At Quinta do Vale Meão in the hottest part of the Douro the thermometer never rose above 37°C. 'At the end of August' remarked Johnny Symington, 'no one could see a great vintage in prospect.' Rain in September would have been disastrous (and this was certainly a challenge for growers in the south of Portugal) but the Douro remained dry. The harvest, which started ten days later than usual, finished in mid-October and was the driest since 1985. Charles Symington wrote this on 15 October: 'It is another beautiful clear day with mild temperatures, we have become so used to this type of weather over the last six weeks that we have almost started to take it for granted. One feels very fortunate to have had near perfect conditions throughout this vintage, allowing us to produce some very promising wines.' Vasco Magalhães, speaking for Sogrape (Sandeman, Ferreira and Offley), concluded that 2007 was 'the perfect ripening season'. Dirk Niepoort described the year as 'a dream come true!'

I wrote in *Decanter* at the time of declaration that 'the 2007s have an early vivacity, vibrancy and purity of fruit that I have never seen at this stage before' (although this may also have something to do with *aguardente* – see overleaf). The words 'elegance' and

TASTING VINTAGE PORT: A CAUTIONARY TALE

At the end of 2008, in an effort to lose some weight, I put myself on a sugar-free diet. It worked, and with the help of a personal trainer I lost 12 kilos in a few weeks, bringing me back to the same weight I was when I graduated from university. But I hadn't accounted for the fact that my palate changed and my taste buds had become much more sugar-sensitive. Tannin also became more bitter. Along came the 2007 vintage declaration in the early months of 2009 and, without realising it at the time, I fear I assessed the vintage incorrectly. Some wines which should have rated highly, didn't. I can only apologise for this and hold it up as a cautionary tale for any wine drinker who decides to change their diet...

'poise' are words that crop up frequently in my tasting notes, particularly among the best wines which show perfect balance and are supported by fine, tight-knit tannins. This is not an impenetrable, blockbuster, 'black-strap' vintage and there are no stewed, raisiny or pruneey flavours. Ana Rosas, winemaker for Ramos Pinto, characterised the aromas of the 2007s as 'romantic'. Most of the wines were very aromatic at the outset and some have a green edge, (characterised in my notes by a floral-hedgerow character on the nose). This manifests itself as leafy greenness in a number of wines that are one-dimensional and under-ripe, a sign that some picked their grapes too early.

There can be no cry of cynicism with 2007, declared in early 2009 when all the main markets were in deep recession. In a remarkable show of confidence, which wasn't present in 1931 (one of the best years of the past century to have been largely overlooked), over fifty producers declared, including many of the new generation of stand-alone single *quintas*. Some houses, namely Churchill, Cockburn and Ramos Pinto, declared both a single estate and a house wine. Prices were up by around 10 per cent on the 2003 declaration.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow; Graham; Niepoort; Sandeman; Taylor's Vargellas Vinha Velha; Quinta Dona Matilde; Quinta do Vesúvio.

2006 *** very variable year where *terroir* made all the difference

After the extreme drought of 2005, heavy winter rain went some way towards replenishing groundwater reserves. The spring was warm and dry, and flowering took place in good conditions. May and early June were dry and hot, except for a severe hailstorm on 14 June that wiped out some vineyards in the Pinhão and Torto valleys. July was very hot with temperatures at Quinta do Vesúvio in the Douro Superior reaching 40°C on all but seven days of the month. Apart from the localised hail damage, grapes were looking very healthy until the start of September when a late burst of heat started to shrivel the grapes

THE ROLE OF AGUARDENTE IN VINTAGE PORT

The *aguardente* or spirit used to fortify Port has changed since the late 1990s (see page 138). Shippers are now fortifying vintage Ports with much cleaner spirit than used to be the case when they were left with no choice other than to buy the *aguardente* they were presented with by the government. The 2000 vintage marked the change, but it is probably best manifested in the 2007s with their purity of fruit. The spirit being used to fortify vintage and single-*quinta* vintage Port has a much more vinous character than in the past. This means that it interferes much less with the fruit in a young wine than the coarse, rather oily spirit of yesteryear. David Guimaraens, head winemaker for the Fladgate Partnership, maintains that the transition from youth to maturity will be much smoother in future, with much less of that awkward adolescent stage that has long been a phase in the evolution of vintage Port.

on the vine. Young vineyards were badly affected whereas older vines, with their deeper root systems, withstood the extreme conditions.

Picking began in the Douro Superior on 11 September and downstream in the Cima Corgo a week or so later. However, the weather broke on the 13th and more persistent rain fell after the 20th, which took its toll on grapes picked during the latter part of the vintage. As a result, 2006 is very variable in the Douro with the best wines produced from older vineyards at lower altitudes and in the Douro Superior where picking took place earlier. Consequently this was a single-*quinta* vintage, which one shipper summed up as a 'characterless year'. At the time of writing many of the wines are still big and raw with many showing the heat of the vintage. I have not come across any outstanding wines, but 2006 has proved to be an excellent year for ripe, fruit-driven LBVs.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow's Quinta Sra. da Ribeira; Graham's Quinta dos Malvedos; Kopke Quinta São Luíz; Quinta do Vesúvio.

2005 *** severe drought produced powerful, concentrated wines

The harvest was one of the earliest on record after the driest and warmest growing season in living memory. Just 197mm of rain fell at Pinhão from November 2004 to July 2005 inclusive. The Douro Superior was even drier and there was no significant rainfall at all between November 2004 and August 2005, when three days of rain delayed a particularly early harvest. By this time many outlying villages and *quintas* were without water and had to have it shipped in for vintage. Younger vineyards were showing signs of extreme stress. Although flowering and fruit set were successful, lack of water produced small berries and limited leaf cover. With heatwaves in June, July and early August, there was a high incidence of raisinisation. Tinta Roriz and Touriga Nacional suffered badly from the heat.

Picking began in the Douro Superior on 22 August, followed by the Cima Corgo on 5 September and the cooler, westernmost Baixo Corgo on 12 September – a good ten days ahead of normal. Rain fell on 6 and 9 September, causing sugar levels to dip for a few days before rising again. The rain was followed by cool clear skies, making this perfect harvest weather. Yields were down significantly on average due to the drought. Despite these challenging conditions, some exuberant concentrated wines were made from the older, more deep-rooted vines. There were also baked and unbalanced wines including some that were both stewed and green. Barros, Calem, Burmester, Kopke and Niepoort declared outright but the majority of shippers opted for a single-*quinta* vintage. These are generally big, foursquare wines with powerful tannins for drinking over the medium to long term: 2015 to 2030.

Pick of the vintage: Croft Quinta da Roêda; Dow's Quinta Sra. da Ribeira; Fonseca Guimaraens; Kopke; Niepoort; Pintas, Taylor's Quinta de Terra Feita; Quinta do Vesúvio.

2004 *** / **** fine, balanced single-*quinta* wines

After the extremes of the previous two years, 2004 proved to be more amenable but still not without risk. Wet weather at the end of 2003 was followed by a very dry start to the

year when just 147mm of rain fell at Pinhão during the first four months of the year (less than half the ten-year average). The flowering went well in all three sub-regions but yields were low from the outset, especially Tinta Roriz and Tinta Amarela. July was hot with temperatures reaching 40°C towards the end of the month. Vineyards remained in excellent condition but as August approached (normally the hottest month with no rainfall at all), growers became concerned about how the vines would cope with the low water reserves in the soil. Then the unheard of happened: rain fell on three consecutive days in early August followed by yet more rainfall in the middle of the month. In total, 77mm fell in Pinhão making it the wettest August for 104 years. The weather remained abnormally cool and overcast into September, slowing down the ripening process. When more wet, unsettled weather returned in the first week of September growers faced a major dilemma: start picking under-ripe grapes early before rot set in or hold on in the hope of better weather. Most growers held their nerve and, just in the nick of time, the sunshine returned. Sugar levels rose suddenly, taking many by surprise, and continued to rise as the thermometer topped 30°C.

Picking began around the middle of the month and continued with uninterrupted sunshine. Not a drop of rain fell until 8 October when a deep depression moved in from the Atlantic, by which time the harvest was all but complete. In forty harvests, Peter Symington commented that he had never seen a vintage that could have swung so easily from near disaster to success. With yields down slightly on the previous year, the overriding feature of 2004 is the balance of the musts. With two good harvests in the bag, the shippers had plenty of work in the tasting room to decide which year(s) to declare. At the outset, Sophia Bergqvist of Quinta de la Rosa commented that ‘the overall quality may be higher than 2003 although we might not have achieved the highest levels of 2003’. Quinta do Noval chose to declare both 2003 and 2004 (the latter an ‘eccentric declaration’ according to Christian Seely, Managing Director of AXA Millésimes who own Noval), with all the other major shippers going down the single-*quinta* route in 2004. These are impressive wines: balanced, well-structured and complete. Eccentric or not, Quinta do Noval 2004 is outstanding and should be ready in 2022. Drink the SQVPs from 2016 onwards.

Pick of the Vintage: Croft Quinta da Roêda; Dow’s Quinta Sra. da Ribeira; Fonseca Quinta do Panascal; Quinta do Noval; Quinta de la Rosa; Taylor’s Vargellas Vinha Velha; Quinta do Vesúvio; Quinta do Vale Meão.

2003 **** / ***** very hot summer: ripe opulent wines,
generally declared

The Douro is accustomed to heat, but 2003 brought complaints from even the most seasoned of the region’s inhabitants. Fortunately the growing season was preceded by a very wet winter with 1000mm of rainfall registered between November and March at Pinhão. Bud burst occurred in the second half of March and flowering took place in the last ten days of May amid, calm stable weather. The first blast of extreme heat came in mid-June. In the

Douro Superior the thermometer rose to 48°C and some fledgling bunches of grapes began to show *queima* (burn). There was a month or so of respite before a period of sustained heat between the end of July and mid-August when temperatures rose above 40°C on a daily basis throughout the region. Temperatures stayed abnormally high through the night, with a *minimum* temperature of 33°C at Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas. Welcome rain at the end of August did not reach the Douro Superior where, despite the heat, most vineyards did not suffer visibly from stress due to the previous wet winter. But the hot weather brought maturation to a standstill and at the beginning of September sugar readings were still surprisingly low. As always, the younger vineyards suffered the most and when the berries began to shrivel on the vine, some growers had to start picking before the grapes were physiologically ripe. In the easterly Douro Superior, the harvest began as early as 1 September and Taylor's began picking at São Xisto on 8 September, about a week earlier than normal. Picking began in the Cima Corgo around 15 September and was underway throughout the region by the 26th. In the intervening period, Baumés rose rapidly with Tinta Barroca (the sweetest of the Port grapes) registering 16 degrees plus (I heard of one *lagar* of raisinised fruit with a potential alcohol content of 19).

The high Baumés took many growers by surprise and there were worries about the high pH, particularly in Tinta Roriz which produced large quantities in 2003. Touriga Franca and Touriga Nacional produced much better, more balanced wines. The fine, abnormally warm weather continued until 29 September when rain swept in from the Atlantic. The high ambient temperatures gave problems for those without sufficient temperature control and many *lagares* consequently took little work before they were run off and fortified. Carefully controlled fermentations produced wines with deep colour, plenty of fruit and high levels of tannin. For Croft, now under the ownership of the Fladgate Partnership, this was the first vintage to be foot trodden in *lagar* since 1963. At the end of vintage David Guimaraens, winemaker for the Fladgate Partnership, described 2003 as 'a textbook year for good Port production'. It was no surprise when a general declaration was made in the spring of 2005. Despite the substantial size of the harvest, the quantities declared were generally smaller than 2000. At the time of writing many of the 2003s are going through a generally rather sullen stage and some wines seem rather stewed, jammy and clumsy. It remains to be seen how this vintage will re-emerge in ten years but, judging by my early tasting notes, 2003 should have produced some very impressive, powerful long-lived wines.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow; Ferreira; Fonseca; Graham; Niepoort; Quinta do Noval; Quinta do Noval Nacional; Ramos Pinto; Quinta de Roriz; Smith Woodhouse; Warre.

2002 ** near-perfect growing season, ruined by rain during harvest

There were high hopes of a fine harvest in 2002. The previous winter had been dry but cold, thereby killing off the spores and insects that lurk in the vineyards. The Pinhão river froze over at Christmas. The cold weather resulted in a late bud burst and the dry conditions led to a year of low vigour right from the start. The weather was fine during flowering

and Touriga Nacional, a variety notoriously susceptible to *coulure*, produced well. Sogrape (owners of Ferreira and Offley) resorted to a green harvest of Touriga Nacional for the first time ever. The weather continued to be fine, warm and dry through the summer but without any of the extreme heat that burns and shrivels the grapes on the vine. Rain over the weekend of 7/8 September helped to swell the berries. Tinta Roriz, the most capricious of the top five Port grapes, had ripened evenly which is usually a sign of a fine vintage. In mid-September Vasco Magalhaes, spokesperson for Sogrape, described the growing conditions as 'close to idyllic'.

Picking began in the Douro Superior during the week of 9 September but those further downstream waited until the week of the 16th. On Friday 13 September an unusually deep depression settled over western Iberia. With torrential rain and warm temperatures, the grapes began to rot on the vine and the harvest became a race against time. The old interplanted vineyards with a high percentage of Tinta Amarela (notoriously susceptible to rot) were particularly badly hit. The wet weather continued on and off into October and vintage was a stop-start affair. Those who picked before the rain set in (mostly in the Douro Superior) made small quantities of good, even great, wine – but for most producers 2002 was a damp squib. Ports made towards the end of the harvest were particularly dilute. Very few single-*quinta* wines have been released.

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

Bruce Guimaraens 1935–2002

Those who knew Bruce Guimaraens will know that the Douro also shaped the man. He was huge in every respect, jovial and full of bonhomie. I recall sitting down to a large English breakfast with Bruce in Pinhão, accompanied by a glass of Port. Bruce Guimaraens was passionate about good Port and was responsible for every Fonseca vintage from 1960 until 1995. He joined his family company after leaving the army in 1956 and trained under Dick and Stanley Yeatman, followed by his aunt Dorothy Guimaraens (one of very few women to work in the Port trade). As head of winemaking and vineyard management for both Taylor and Fonseca, he knew every inch of the Douro and was treated with great respect and affection by growers and shippers alike. He had a fund of funny stories, which he was able to tell equally well in English and Portuguese. Bruce Guimaraens foresaw the growth in demand for premium quality Port and built up the Taylor and Fonseca vineyard holdings to become some of the best in the Douro, acquiring a number of prime *quintas* in the 1970s. He also instigated the production of organic Port at Fonseca's Quinta do Panascal in 1992. Bruce liked nothing better than a good vintage Port; eschewing the purple prose favoured by wine writers, he would drain the decanter with the irrefutable phrase 'it's bloody good vintage Port!'

2001 **/** good middle-weight wines for drinking over the medium term

The year began with one of the wettest winters on record. Nearly 1200mm of rain fell in Pinhão between November and the end of March. This helped to replenish the water table after four abnormally dry years but caused a great deal of damage in the vineyards. At Entre-os-Rios the bridge over the River Douro collapsed with the loss of over seventy lives. Mild, rainy conditions led to an early bud burst in the first ten days of March but from April onwards the weather cleared and just 110mm of rain fell before the end of August. Although the first two weeks of May were cool and wet, flowering generally took place under optimum conditions later in the month. With groundwater supplies thoroughly replenished, there was the expectation of a large crop. The summer was cooler than normal and temperatures were uneven during August. Rain at the end of the month helped to swell the grapes and the first half of September was warm and dry. The harvest began in the main on 17 September with Tinta Barroca already over-ripe by this stage. The weather remained fine through to the end of the month, and although ambient temperatures were relatively high this caused few problems as most *lagares* were equipped with temperature control. However, rain fell in early October and sugar readings fell quickly towards the end of the harvest.

Yields were up on 2000 by between 20 and 30 per cent on average in the A/B grade vineyards. Overall, 2001 proved to be a fairly useful year. David Guimaraens commented at the time that 'the quality was evident from the first. Although not exuberant in aroma, many of the wines show as much colour as in 2000'. Most shippers declared single-*quinta* wines in the spring of 2003. Dow's Quinta do Bomfim, Graham's Malvedos, Warre's Quinta de Cavadinha and Smith Woodhouse Madalena will not be released until 2012.

Having tasted most of the wines blind in the summer of 2004 and some again in 2011, I am impressed by the depth of colour but some of the wines lack structure and breadth. The best wines are soft, supple and elegant, mostly ready to drink now and with sufficient balance to keep for another fifteen years.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow's Quinta Sra. da Ribeira; Fonseca Guimaraens; Quinta do Noval Nacional; Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas and Quinta de Terra Feita; Quinta do Vale Meão.

2000 ****/***** a small harvest produced fine, concentrated wines with a long life ahead; unanimous declaration

Few years can have raised quite so much hope and expectation as 2000. The previous harvest concluded in torrential rain that continued until the end of the year, but the first three months of 2000 were cold and abnormally dry. The low rainfall meant that the growing season began with very little water in the soil and bud burst was irregular with potential yields reduced from the outset by *gavinhas* (excessive vegetative growth). During April and May the heavens opened and half the normal annual rainfall fell in just two months. This encouraged tremendous vigour, with vines directing their energy to the development of new shoots. Flowering in late May coincided with heavy showers and cool weather causing

desavinho (*coulure*) particularly in the A grade vineyards. Potential yields fell by as much as 30 per cent as a result. Warm, dry weather returned during June and July and the so-called '*pintor*' (*veraison*) was homogenous, occurring in mid-July. The dry weather continued through August with high temperatures during the early part of the month, and a few days of rain in mid-September helped to finish off the ripening prior to the harvest, which began as usual around the 20th of the month.

The widely anticipated small harvest led to an unseemly scramble for grapes. Shippers without vineyards of their own were forced to pay stratospherically high prices for premium-quality grapes which were also being diverted to satisfy the growing demand for unfortified Douro wines. Through no fault of their own, Sandeman and the Symington family were apprehended receiving illegal grapes (even though they were accompanied by the correct paperwork) and scare stories spread about grapes arriving from outside the region and even from Spain. But by the end of the harvest there was no shortage of grapes, however; production in the *altos* and the Baixo Corgo was at or above normal as the flowering had taken place later and in better weather.

In terms of vintage Port, it is the A-grade vineyards of the Cima Corgo and Douro Superior that matter. Here yields of little over half a kilo per vine produced musts of extraordinary richness and concentration. At Warre's Quinta de Cavadinha, the old mixed plantings with an average age of around fifty years produced just 190 grams per vine, the lowest yield in living memory. As the sun shone during picking, it became clear that a very fine vintage was on the cards. The musts had barely finished fermenting when one senior Port shipper had the temerity to say 'I am 95 per cent certain we will have a declaration. I am even more certain than I was at this stage in 1994.'

After spending the statutory two winters in wood, 2000 was unanimously declared in the spring and early summer of 2002. For most shippers it was only the twenty-fifth or twenty-sixth vintage to be declared since 1900, a landmark year that also happened to be a very successful vintage and was widely declared at the time. It is interesting to draw parallels between 2000 vintage Port and the crazy demand for 2000 Bordeaux when these wines were sold *en primeur* in 2001. Opening prices were up by just 5 to 10 per cent on 1997, the previous declared vintage. Although demand for the top names was strong, there was none of the speculative fever that surrounded 2000 Bordeaux, the market having been dampened by 9/11 the previous year.

As to the wines, the 2000 vintage is remarkable for the sheer depth of colour and richness that is evident across the board. Although there are some Ports that lack intensity and show up as being rather sweet and one dimensional, the best combine seductively ripe, fleshy fruit with structure, power and concentration. It remains to be seen if the 2000s are as powerful and complete as the exceptional 1994s (some interesting comparative tastings lie ahead), but they have more depth and poise than the 1997s which are somewhat leaner in style. There can be little doubt that 2000 is a very good, classic year which, like 1966 and 1970, has produced a handful of truly great wines. For Graham (one of the greats), this was the first vintage to be made (36 per cent) in robotic *lagares*. Although there are a number of good middle-distance wines that will be enjoyable in a decade or so (Cockburn's Quinta dos

Canais, Cálem, Martinez, Churchill), the finest 2000s will take at least twenty years to reach a plateau of perfection that should last through most of the twenty-first century. Quinta do Noval and Noval Nacional were both declared in tiny quantities and are outstanding.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow; Fonseca; Graham; Niepoort; Quinta do Noval; Quinta do Noval Nacional; Poças; Warre.

1999 */*** prospects of a small but excellent harvest dashed by rain; good wines in the Douro Superior

The winter of 1998/99 was cold and dry, which delayed bud burst until the end of March, two weeks later than normal. Wet weather followed in April and May, and light rain during flowering reduced the number of berries. July and August were dry and intensely hot with temperatures reaching 40°C. The heat, together with the already low water table, produced exceptionally small berries, thereby concentrating the juice. The total rainfall at Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas between October 1998 and July 1999 was just 300mm, barely sufficient for the vines to survive. As wells dried up there was a serious water shortage throughout the region and some *quintas* had to bring water up from the river in bowers for domestic use. By early September there was the expectation of a small but high-quality harvest.

The harvest began in the Douro Superior on 10 September and on 15th in the Cima Corgo. There was just enough time to gather the grapes from the old interplanted vineyards before the weather broke and torrential rain fell throughout the region as the remnants of Hurricane Floyd blew in from the Atlantic. Baumés fell by a degree or more and, as the vines rapidly took up water, the skins of the grapes ruptured leading to a serious outbreak of rot. As always, Tinta Amarela was particularly badly affected. Sunshine and showers followed from 28 September, but for many vineyards it was already too late and some growers left their grapes to rot on the vine. Although the harvest finished under clear skies, in many places sugar levels had fallen to less than 10 degrees Baumé and at one *adega* I encountered a batch of grapes with a Baumé as low as 8! The Symington's prototype robotic *lagar* arrived at Quinta do Sol halfway through the vintage and they had to undertake trials with indifferent grapes. But all was not lost, and some properties (mostly in the Douro Superior) managed to pick most of the crop before the rain. Some suave, middle-distance wines were produced which should be good for drinking until 2020 at least.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow's Quinta do Bomfim; Taylor's Quinta de Terra Feita; Quinta do Vesúvio.

1998 *** challenging year: tiny crop with some good, concentrated wines

The growing season in 1998 was unusual, to say the least. The winter was short but wet. Warm temperatures in February and March brought on early bud burst but cold wet weather returned in April and, as late as Easter, snow fell on the hills above Pinhão. At Warre's Quinta da Cavadinha, 259mm of rain fell in April alone (the ten year average being 55mm). The unsettled wet weather continued through May and June, provoking an attack of oidium and mildew. With the water table high, the vines sprouted in all directions, using

up energy in foliage rather than fruit set. Taylor recorded 40cm shoot growth over one weekend in early May. Hot, dry weather arrived in July and continued through August into early September. Yields were some of the lowest on record and by the middle of the month there was every prospect of a small but exceptional harvest.

Picking began in the Douro Superior on 14 September and by 24 September the harvest was underway in most of the region. Unfortunately this coincided with more unsettled weather and periodic heavy showers fell, diluting sugar levels. There were exceptions. Quinta do Noval stopped picking in September and resumed again in clear weather at the beginning of October, a strategy which clearly proved itself when you taste their fine, structured Silval. Likewise, Warre's Quinta da Cavadinha only began picking on 1 October, by which time sugar readings were back up to 13 degrees Baumé. Although the grapes generally arrived cool and there was very little need for temperature control, a potentially 'great' vintage became merely 'good' in terms of quality. Nonetheless a number of single *quintas* made some fine, balanced wines for the medium to long term. Dow's Senhora da Ribeira, picked before the rain, is particularly impressive with multiple layers of fruit and a solid, ripe tannic backbone. Drink now to 2020 plus. Taylor's Quinta de Terra Feita 1998 was sadly wiped out by the landslide that demolished part of the lodge in January 2001 (see page 1).

Pick of the Vintage: Dow's Quinta Senhora da Ribeira; Fonseca Guimaraens; Quinta do Vesúvio; Graham's Quinta dos Malvedos; Quinta do Noval, Silval; Smith Woodhouse, Madelena.

1997 **** very good, well-structured wines, widely declared

The winter of 1996/97 was short and sharp with snow settling at low altitudes along the River Douro in January. The weather suddenly changed in February when temperatures rose 4°C above average for the time of year leading to an early bud burst. Some vineyards were then hit by frost which reduced overall yields. Wet weather returned in April and May and temperatures remained abnormally cool through to August, allowing for a slow but steady development of the grapes. Hot weather in late August/early September saved the day, bringing about an even final ripening. By the time picking began around 20 September, Tinta Barroca registered a healthy 14 degrees Baumé with Tinta Roriz and Touriga Nacional only marginally behind. Touriga Franca (or Francesa as it was then known) also ripened evenly. This was undoubtedly helped by low yields (down by up to 40 per cent on 1996) with younger varietal plantings producing around 1 kilo per vine and older mixed plantings around 0.4 kilos (the equivalent of one bottle for every four vines). Apart from the occasional isolated thunderstorm, the harvest continued under clear skies. Temperatures were high at the start of harvest but cooled down significantly, and the later *lagares* took plenty of work producing aromatic wines with impressive purple-blue colours.

At the outset, the wines were by no means as easy to assess as the super-ripe, opulent 1994s but the best 1997s are beautifully balanced, combining fine, firm sinewy tannins with structure and freshness. Nearly all the leading shippers declared in the spring of

1999, marking up their prices by around 30 per cent on the 1994s, which had risen sharply on the open market. From early tastings I found some wines tending to be rather lean and one-dimensional but Dow, Fonseca, Graham and Noval belong in the premier league. Niepoort, which looked impressive at the start, has suffered alarming volatility in bottle. Noval Nacional is the best for three decades – perhaps since their remarkable duo of wines from 1966 and 1963. Rather like 1963s and 1966s, the 1994 vintage will inevitably cast a shadow over the 1997s for years to come. Drink from 2015.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow; Fonseca; Graham; Quinta do Noval; Quinta do Noval, Nacional; Quinta do Vesúvio.

1996 *** huge crop, some beautiful balanced wines but others somewhat stretched

After a very wet winter and mild spring, there was an abundance of fruit which took time to ripen. No rain fell from June to August. As a result the harvest began quite late (end of September/early October in the Cima Corgo). This was just as well as it rained during the week of 16 September but thankfully good weather returned and sugar levels increased rapidly towards the end of the month. Yields were huge but the *benefício* (130,000 pipes of must) remained low, leaving plenty for producers of the increasingly popular unfortified Douro wines. There was also a 30 per cent increase in the price of *aguardente* which put pressure on prices. In general sugar levels were on the low side with the result that many wines taste stretched and dilute. Some growers picked too early and better wines were made towards the middle or end of the vintage. Warre did not begin picking at Cavadinha until 8 October. This was a good year for replenishing premium rubies and LBVs but, perhaps playing up to a receptive American audience, a handful of single *quintas* released some attractive, forward fruity wines for drinking over the medium term. The wines tend to be quite open, sometimes beautifully aromatic, soft and are fully ready to drink. Quinta do Noval Nacional is the notable exception, although it is quite forward and already sings from the glass.

Pick of the Vintage: Quinta do Noval Nacional; Smith Woodhouse; Madelena, Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas; Warre's Quinta da Cavadinha; Quinta do Vesúvio.

1995 *** concentrated but occasionally somewhat jammy and burnt

After a fairly wet winter the weather turned dry at the end of February. Early March was an exceptionally warm, dry spring and the vines were well advanced by mid-April. However at the end of April, late spring frosts inflicted severe damage on some of the higher vineyards. The early part of the summer was cool and overcast which affected the flowering, but August provided four weeks of intense and unrelenting heat. In the Douro Superior some growers began picking in mid-August and on 4 September many properties in the Cima Corgo began to pick. However, it rained on 5 September, with sunshine and clear skies returning after the 10th. The Symingtons had finished picking in all their top *quintas* by 26 September. The extreme heat raisinised grapes and produced some rather coarse, burnt

wines but the concentration of flavour (often rather jammy) justified a full declaration for some. Had it not come hard on the heels of the exceptional 1994s, 1995 might have been a more generally declared. In the event, Barros Burmester, Krohn, Osborne, Noval, Rozès and Poças declared outright with the remainder opting for second label or single-*quinta* wines. Well received by the growing American market, in the United Kingdom 1995 has provided some immensely pleasurable rich, ripe Ports for drinking over the medium term (now to 2025). Dow's Quinta do Bomfim, Fonseca Guimaraens, Graham's Malvedos, Quinta do Noval, Osborne, Quinta de la Rosa, Quinta de Vargellas Vinha Velha and Quinta do Vesúvio represent the best of the vintage.

Pick of the Vintage: Fonseca Guimaraens; Dow Quinta do Bomfim; Quinta Quinta de Vargellas Vinha Velha.

1994 ***** outstanding wines, with flesh masking structure at the outset
It was clear almost from the first snip of the secateurs that 1994 would be a fully-declared Port vintage. A wet winter put an end to three consecutive years of drought and when the sun began to shine in March and April, the vines were sprouting in all directions. Heavy rain in May served to check the overall size of the crop but from then on, despite a relatively cool summer, it was plain sailing all the way through to the harvest. Tinta Roriz flowered at the same time as the worst spring weather. This reduced yields and helped to improve quality and overall concentration. Cloudy skies and a little light rain in mid-September rekindled memories of 1993 when the heavens opened during vintage. A few growers panicked and picked too early but, as it turned out, the rain helped the berries to swell and sugar readings rose. The majority held their nerve and by 20 September the harvest was well underway. Winemakers were helped in their task by clear skies and cool night time temperatures. (At one stage the temperature fell from 32°C to 9°C over a 24-hour period.) *Lagares* took plenty of work and long, slow fermentations gave rise to prolonged skin contact and good extraction. As the wines were run off and fortified, the big guns could hardly conceal their glee at the prospect of a major vintage declaration.

The shippers were helped in their decision by the healthy state of the market. Having tested the water successfully in 1991–1992, they knew that there was enough support for a large declaration with the Americans particularly receptive to vintage Port. Opening prices rose considerably and in some cases continued to soar, overtaking mature vintages like 1970 at auction. Tasting the 1994s at an early stage, they were characterised by super-ripe fleshy fruit, which tended to cover up the underlying tannic grip. Tasting them again some years later, the wines are still incredibly rich but the somewhat deceptive puppy fat is beginning to fall away revealing some outstandingly well-structured wines. At the time of writing, the best wines are now dumb with brooding tannins and opulence. Dow, Fonseca, Graham, Taylor and Warre are in the premier league, as always, with Quinta do Noval and Quinta do Vesúvio joining them. Croft, Gould Campbell, Martinez, Martinez Quinta da Eira Velha, Skeffington and Smith Woodhouse are also impressive. After more than two decades of very variable declarations (and some downright faulty wines in the mid-1980s) 1994 marks a return to form for vintage Port. Drink from 2016.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow; Fonseca; Graham; Taylor; Quinta do Noval; Quinta do Noval Nacional; Warre.

1993 – one of the poorest years in living memory

A damp spring was followed by a cool summer. In late August, James Symington recorded that Touriga Nacional and Tinta Roriz at Graham's Quinta dos Malvedos looked 'very poor'. September weather remained cool and growers hung on for as long as they could for the grapes to ripen, then when they could wait no more the heavens opened. The pickers had a thorough drenching and were bogged down in mud. In the meantime, grapes were rotting rapidly on the vine and reaching the *adega* with Baumés as low as 4 in the Baixo Corgo. There was no colour. António Agrellos at Quinta do Noval recalls that 'we made tawnies in five minutes'. Thankfully yields were fairly low. No one in their right mind declared, though Quinta de Romaneira made an SQVP and there are one or two rather washed-out LBVs. Nobody bothered to write a vintage report at Malvedos, making 1993 a year to forget.

1992 **** rich, concentrated wines from those who picked late

The winter and spring were unseasonably dry, and the drought continued through until June when a few days' rain proved to be very beneficial. Fortunately flowering was earlier than usual, starting in the second week of May, and was not harmed. The summer was dry but not unduly hot and a few short, sharp rainstorms at the end of August helped to swell the grapes. Most growers began picking on 21 September but the new moon on the 26th brought more rain. Those who waited for another week or so before picking (Taylor, Fonseca, Niepoort) made more concentrated wines.

A handful of shippers declared 1992 in preference to the previous year, leading to a so-called 'split vintage'. The Symingtons (Dow, Graham, Warre) chose to declare 1991 (and Smith Woodhouse in 1992) whereas Delaforce, Taylor and Fonseca preferred 1992. Niepoort declared both. Both years produced some excellent wines but, having re-tasted both years side by side in 2003 and 2010, the gap is growing between them and 1992 is undoubtedly the better year. This puts paid to the rather ridiculous story circulating at the time that Taylor only declared because it coincided with the 400th anniversary of their foundation. Fonseca and Taylor are rich, ripe and impressive with some promising single-*quinta* Ports such as Churchill's Água Alta, Dow's Quinta do Bomfim, Quinta do Passadouro and Quinta do Vesúvio. Most of the wines are ready to drink (though Fonseca would benefit from another couple of years in bottle) and should last until 2025 to 2030.

Pick of the Vintage: Delaforce; Fonseca; Quinta do Infantado; Taylor; Quinta do Vesúvio.

1991 *** ripe, full flavoured wines, some of which are soft and one dimensional

After six years without a vintage, the shippers were eager for a declaration. Growing conditions were good: a wet winter was followed by a settled, dry spring and a hot summer with very high temperatures at the end of August and early September. The hot spell left

the grapes looking rather shrivelled but heavy night-time dew helped to swell the berries. Rain in mid-September fell too late for the Douro Superior but helped swell the grapes in the Cima Corgo. When picking began, very high ambient temperatures (40°C) presented problems for those without adequate control. This has subsequently showed up in some of the wines. Cooler weather arrived during the harvest and, when the last grapes reached the *adeegas*, some producers had to heat the must in order to kick-start ferments. The grapes tended to be small with little juice, and at the outset the wines seemed deep and well structured with tannic backbone and grip.

Most of the major shippers declared 1991 outright (with the notable exception of Delaforce, Fonseca and Taylor who produced some good SQVPs). The market for Port was strong at the time, especially in the US which bought more vintage Port than the UK for the first time in history. Given the American penchant for drinking vintage Port young, most 1991s have probably been drunk by now. This is all to the good because many of the wines have turned out to be rather soft and early maturing, some marked by a hot, raisiny character. All the 1991s are ready to drink and some are already falling apart.

Pick of the Vintage: Croft; Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas; Rozès.

1990 *** unusual year: quantity matched by reasonable quality

A prolific harvest followed a wet but mild winter and good weather during flowering. July and August were very hot leading to *queima* (burn) but some heavy rain in mid-September saved the day. Temperatures were high during vintage and outlying properties without temperature control had to draw off their *lagares* early, with the wines suffering as a result. There were more problems during vintage when some shippers ran out of fortifying *aguardente* only to find that the Casa do Douro had issued licences to produce Port in excess of the annual *benefício*. No full declarations but some rich, ripe single-*quinta* wines were released. Dow's Quinta do Bomfim, Graham's Malvedos and Warre's Quinta da Cavadinha are all good for the medium term (drink from now to 2020).

Pick of the Vintage: Dow's Quinta do Bomfim.

1989 ** attractive wines for the short to medium term

A dry winter was followed by sporadic rain throughout the spring. Localised hailstorms caused problems in June. There was extreme heat in late July and August, by which time some vineyards were showing considerable signs of stress. Yields were thankfully up on 1988 but still below average. Picking began early (6 September at Quinta dos Malvedos), but in retrospect better wines would have been produced if the harvest had been delayed for a week or so as heavy rain fell on the Pinhão and Rio Torto areas on 8 and 9 September. However, the grapes were in perfect condition and there was little or no disease. Most rain fell in the Baixo Corgo and the wines here were considerably better than normal. Picking continued under warm, clear conditions and some appealing, full-bodied SQVPs were produced, all of which are fully ready to drink.

Pick of the Vintage: Quinta do Vesúvio.

1988 ** tiny crop, a few concentrated wines, others unbalanced

A very challenging year in all respects and an expensive one for growers. A wet winter was followed by a cool, wet spring and early summer. The flowering took place under wet conditions and there was widespread mildew. Comparatively cool weather in July and August finally gave way to heat in early September when the thermometer rose to over 40°C for five consecutive days. Yields were tiny; Michael Symington reported that one property in the Douro Superior which usually produced 130 pipes yielded just four in 1988, having been hit in turn by mildew, *desavinho* (*coulure*) and hail! From mid-September, however, vintage weather was absolutely perfect with dry sunny days followed by cool nights. Some single-*quinta* wines were bottled, some of which now look hot and unbalanced although Graham's Malvedos would have still benefitted from a few more years in bottle when I tasted it in 2010.

Pick of the Vintage: Graham's Malvedos; Taylor's Quinta de Terra Feita.

1987 *** a handful of dense wines for the medium to long term

After an exceedingly hot, dry summer, picking began in mid-September with the grapes in near-perfect condition. The weather at the start of vintage continued to be hot and grapes arrived at the *adegas* with temperatures above 30°C. Some producers, however, had installed must coolers and these undoubtedly helped these ferments (see 1985). Sugar readings were high but as the grapes were small and sometimes shrivelled, yields were low. At Quinta dos Malvedos it took 820 kilos of grapes to produce a pipe of must. James Symington recorded at the time that 'fine, dark wines have been made. Perhaps due to the extreme heat during ripening the wines are a little lacking in aroma but they are extremely intense'. However, mid-way through the harvest, heavy rain fell throughout the Douro continuing into October. Sugar readings fell and only a strong wind prevented the onset of disease. Perhaps because of this, 1987 is one of those 'nearly but not quite' years when a handful of shippers declared (Ferreira, Martinez, Niepoort, Noval, Noval Nacional) but the majority held off and bottled single-*quinta* wines. The market for vintage Port was also looking distinctly shaky by the time of the would-be declaration in 1989. The heat may have contributed to the somewhat ponderous, roasted character now evident in some of the wines although the low yields of grapes provided some dense, concentrated Ports which, without a general declaration to support them, are often under-valued. Niepoort started off well but seems to have become slightly volatile in bottle. Graham's Malvedos, tasted in 2010, still had more to give with characteristic opulence backed by solid, ripe tannins. Drink now to 2020.

Pick of the Vintage: Graham's Malvedos; Martinez, Quinta da Eira Velha.

1986 ** attractive, open fruity wines which continue to develop well

The growing season began with a cold snap in April followed by a very dry summer, although hail did great damage to vines on the north side of the Douro around Castedo and Alijó. The rain, when it finally arrived, was copious and delayed the start of harvest by a

week or so. When picking began, sugar readings were relatively low but fortunately, despite more rain on 23 September, there was little sign of rot in the Douro Superior and Cima Corgo. The Baixo Corgo fared differently with outbreaks of rot everywhere. Fortunately the clouds cleared just in time and warm dry weather from 24 September helped to avert a potential disaster. The remainder of the harvest took place in near-perfect conditions until the weather broke on 10 October. After the universal 1985 declaration, there was never much prospect of a declared vintage in 1986 but attractive single-*quinta* Ports were bottled, with an exceptional trio from Dow's Quinta do Bomfim, Graham's Malvedos and Warre's Quinta da Cavadinha matched by a very good wine from Fonseca Guimaraens and Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas. Drink now to 2020 plus.

Pick of the Vintage: Graham's Quinta dos Malvedos.

1985 **** a few outstandingly good wines for the long term but some seriously faulty; *caveat emptor*

The winter of 1984/85 was cold and wet with temperatures falling below freezing during January in Pinhão. Cool wet weather continued into the spring. Bud burst took place in early April and with dry weather from June onwards, the berry set was above average. The summer was dry and warm and the Douro was so low at Tua that it was possible to wade across. Heavy rain on 7 September helped swell the grapes. Picking began around 18 September in very hot conditions. Sugar graduations were good but, without temperature control, fermentations were fast and furious and *lagares* took little work before being run off and fortified. Michael Symington wrote in his vintage report that 'never can the grapes have been gathered under better weather conditions', and I recall Bruce Guimaraens remarking at the time that 'it was clear from the colour and aromas of the fermenting must that 1985 would be a high quality year'.

The declaration, when it came in the spring of 1997, was unanimous. It was a big vintage – the only year producing more wine was 1927; Fonseca, for example, declared 20,000 cases. The wines were impressively plump and rich (especially in comparison with the 1983s) and a great deal of interest was shown by the trade. But 1985 has subsequently thrown up some rather nasty surprises. Wines that seemed to be exemplary at the outset (e.g. Cockburn) soon turned volatile (vinegary) in bottle. Cockburn are by no means alone and from subsequent tastings of the 1985 vintage Cálem, Churchill, Niepoort, Quarles Harris, Ramos Pinto and Sandeman all appear to be experiencing varying degrees of difficulty as well. It seems likely that hot weather during the vintage, over-use of chemical fertilisers producing musts of low acidity, and poor handling and hygiene are probably collectively to blame. However another theory put forward is that the wines were not fully fortified at the outset, making them even more vulnerable to bacterial spoilage. When it became evident that there was something seriously wrong with many 1985s, it provided the impetus for shippers to clean up their act. The power and concentration of fruit that was the hallmark of the vintage continues to live on in a handful of wines. Graham was still surprisingly tight-knit and not as rich or sweet as you would expect when I tasted it in 2010. With a good, ripe tannin structure to support them, Dow, Taylor and Warre are

ready to drink and continue to develop well until 2030 at least. Fonseca would benefit from more time in bottle. Gould Campbell and Martinez have been drinking well for sometime and are still good for the medium term.

Pick of the Vintage: Fonseca; Graham; Taylor.

1984 ** well-rounded, straightforward single-*quinta* wines

Despite an unstable spring and early summer, the flowering was successful. The weather in July and August was generally hot with occasional heavy rain. The first grapes were picked in fine, dry weather but at the end of September the weather broke, temperatures dropped sharply and there was heavy rain. A cyclone knocked over two vats at a new winery near Ervadosa. The grapes nonetheless withstood a certain amount of dilution and there was no rot to taint the wines. Average Baumés were a degree or more lower than in 1983. Sandwiched between 1983 and 1985, no one declared but the single-*quinta* movement was gathering momentum. Well-rounded wines like Dow's Quinta do Bomfim and Delaforce's Quinta da Corte have developed well in bottle. Drink soon.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow's Quinta do Bomfim.

1983 **** firm, muscular, lasting wines

The year began inauspiciously with a long, cold winter and spring, and snow fell on the Serra do Marão as late as 20 May. The cool weather caused a certain amount of *desavinho* (*coulure*) which reduced yields. During the early part of the summer the weather was hot but unsettled and the vines were three or more weeks behind. A fine September saved the day. Michael Symington reported that the sugar graduations in the Douro Superior were on average at least 1.5 degrees Baumé above 1982 and that despite hot fermentation temperatures 'above average wines have been made throughout the Douro Superior and we are sure that some will prove to be outstanding'. Dow, Gould Campbell, Graham, Smith Woodhouse, Quarles Harris and Warre proved him right and stand alongside Taylor and Niepoort as the finest examples of the vintage. Cockburn (which started out well) can be very good indeed but also very variable, and Fonseca is on the light side and rather disappointing. Initially 1983 was overshadowed in the marketplace by 1985. The austere and more muscular '83s were certainly much less easy to taste than the plump '85s, but the earlier year has gained stature with age. Although some wines are on the lean side, the hallmark of the vintage is the tannic backbone that stands the wines in good stead for the long term. The 1983s can be drunk with pleasure now and prices at auction are keen, making this a good, easily accessible choice for lovers of fine mature vintage Port.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow; Graham; Warre.

1982 ** soft and early maturing

I have fond memories of the summer of '82, having spent much of July traversing the terraces of *quintas* in the Torto valley researching my undergraduate dissertation on

vineyard microclimates. August and early September were hot and the start date of vintage was brought forward by ten days throughout the region. Michael Symington wrote 'one can confidently assume that those grapes gathered after 16 September, when the weather started to cool, will have produced really first class wine in colour, body and fruit'. A handful of shippers chose to declare 1982 in preference to 1983 leading to a so-called 'split vintage'. In retrospect it was a mistake, for the wines are generally soft and lacking in substance. The heat of the late summer is reflected in the soft, sweet raisiny character of the wines. The best (Churchill, Sandeman, Niepoort and Quinta do Noval) proved to be no more than useful wines to drink while waiting for the 1983s to come round and they lack the backbone to last. Croft and Delaforce were both disappointing. Those who decided not to declare bottled some successful single-*quinta* wines. Drink soon.

1981 *

An extraordinary year in all respects. A severe drought began in the autumn of 1980, lasting all the way through the winter. The spring and early summer were unusually cold, giving way to searing heat in mid-June. The hot, dry weather continued through the summer, delaying the development of the vines and turning grapes to raisins. But by mid-September, when the growers could wait no longer and picking began, the weather broke and the mother and father of storms swept through the Douro. Gales brought down electricity pylons, leaving Pinhão without power for fourteen hours. Better wines were made in the Baixo Corgo (where picking began later) than in the Cima Corgo, where a small crop produced dark wines that tended to taste cooked and were lacking in freshness.

1980 ***/**** open, fresh, attractive, fruit-driven wines drinking perfectly now

Perhaps deterred by a substantial hike in prices, the 1980 wines were largely overlooked by the trade and the year subsequently became a 'Cinderella vintage', overshadowed by 1977, 1983 and 1985, the last of which turned out to be something of an ugly sister. The growing season was variable. Spring arrived early, then exceptionally cold weather in May and June delayed flowering. The summer was warm and dry but sugar readings were relatively low when picking began at the end of September. Temperatures were high during the harvest and the *lagares* fermented furiously fast and therefore took little work. In spite of these difficulties, the wines are generally very well balanced. Fonseca is on the light side but Dow, Graham, Niepoort, Offley, Smith Woodhouse, Taylor and Warre all produced open, attractive wines that are drinking very well indeed and will continue to develop. Drink now to 2025.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow; Graham.

1979 *

A wet winter was followed by a hot, dry summer with no rainfall at all until just before the harvest in late September. Despite the drought, yields were high. No declaration but a handful of straightforward single-*quinta* wines, which are now fully mature. A trio from

Dow's Bomfim, Graham's Malvedos and Warre's Cavadinha were still showing quite well in 2011 with Malvedos the best of the bunch. Drink soon.

1978 **

Cold weather in spring and early summer was followed by drought from June until late October with a heatwave in September. A handful of shippers preferred 1978 to 1977 (Ferreira, Krohn and Quinta do Noval). Niepoort and Kopke declared both years. The wines are generally soft, quite rich and approachable although Noval is weak. Noval Nacional was better and is entirely ready to drink. The year was notable for the number of single-*quinta* vintage Ports, some of which appeared on the market for the first time. Drink soon.

1977 **** ripe, concentrated wines at the outset, many developing faster than expected

The winter of 1976/1977 was exceptionally wet and the spring and early summer were cool and unsettled. Frost inflicted great damage in the higher vineyards on 12 May. The flowering was uneven, reducing the potential yield, and the *pintor* (*veraison*) arrived late, only occurring in the third week of July. From mid-August onwards the weather improved but at the beginning of September Michael Symington records that sugar readings were still as low as 10.5 degrees Baumé. Fortunately September was hot with temperatures over 30°C and the grapes ripened evenly. Picking in the Cima Corgo began around 28 September and fine weather continued through the early part of the vintage into October. Even then, sugar readings were not all that high and the warm weather meant that the early *lagares* took little work before being run off. However the ambient temperature fell markedly in early October and the musts began to take more work. Rain fell from 5 to 8 October and although yields were high and grape skins were fairly thin, bunches resisted disease. From the colour and flavour of the musts at the time it was clear that some fine wines would emerge. All except Cockburn, Noval and Martinez decided to declare. From early on, the 1977s were compared in stature to the 1963s. This was praise indeed, and although 1977 produced wines that must have looked very impressive up against the 1975s and other wines from the early 1970s, none are quite up to the standard of the finest wines from 1963 or 1966. The 1970 wines have much more staying power. Many of the 1977s are now beginning to show their age. Calem, Croft, Quarles Harris, Rebello Valente, Rozès and Sandeman are fading and should be drunk quite soon. Dow, Graham, Warre and Smith Woodhouse are extremely good; sweet, quite soft, suave and ready now but with the capacity to keep for another decade or so. Unusually, Dow bottled two pipes of Quinta do Bomfim 1977 for shipment to Denmark and apparently this is holding up better than the fully declared wine. Graham is particularly good, not big like Smith Woodhouse but with a haunting violet-like aroma that is the hallmark of a really fine, mature vintage Port. Taylor and Fonseca are fabulous and it is perhaps on these wines that the reputation of the vintage has been established. Both are still quite closed and dense with bitter cherry fruit and have more to give. These may be drunk now to 2030 plus, but they are not wines to last a lifetime.

Pick of the Vintage: Fonseca; Taylor; Smith Woodhouse.

1976 ** soft, sweet and early maturing

The winter of 1975/76 was extremely dry. A hot, dry summer followed and wells dried up all over the Douro. Much-needed rain fell in late August and September was cool with light rain. The harvest began in the Cima Corgo on 23 September and grapes were free from disease. Sugar readings were high and cool temperatures meant that fermentations were slow, but it rained throughout vintage causing an outbreak of rot, mainly in the Baixo Corgo. Michael Symington wrote at the end of vintage that 'dark wines were produced but lacking "freshness" due to the exceptionally dry year.' With one or two exceptions, most of the wines are soft, intensely sweet and early maturing. The exception is Fonseca Guimaraens: a wonderfully deep, dark opulent vintage Port that overshadows all the 1975s, and many of the 1977s as well.

Pick of the Vintage: Fonseca Guimaraens.

1975 ** soft, early maturing vintage; drink up

Christened the *Verão Quente* (hot summer) both because of the heat and the political temperature at the time, 1975 has always been a controversial declaration. There is absolutely no truth in the tale that the wines were only declared due to the revolution and the threatened nationalisation of the Port industry, because by the time the shippers chose to declare (in the spring of 1977) Portugal had settled down as a mild-mannered but economically ruined democracy. The growing season followed a wet winter but the hot, dry summer delayed ripening. The vintage began in early October by which time heavy September rain was beginning to dilute sugar levels. Slow fermentations produced wines with considerable colour but seemingly without sufficient structure to make lasting wines. Reading vintage reports from the time, the majority of shippers talked themselves into a declaration. Even Quinta do Noval Nacional is disappointing. In general, the 1975s are now soft and rather hollow but have been quite attractive to drink while waiting for the 1970s, 1966s and 1963s to mature. Cálem, Delaforce, Dow and Graham are still drinking well but should not be kept for anything other than academic interest. Drink soon.

1974 *

The year of the revolution. After a winter of average rainfall, the spring and summer were perfect for the development of the vines. Following a hot July and fine August, September was cool but no further rain fell. Picking began around 26 September and the large crop produced rather soft, dilute wines. Good 'traditional' LBVs from Smith Woodhouse and Warre and an SQVP from Taylor's Vargellas. Drink up.

1973

Unusually heavy demand for wines caused prices to rise by as much as 150 per cent on the previous year. Early September was wet and cold, and when picking began under clear skies around 20 September, sugar levels were surprisingly low and the initial feeling was that the

harvest had begun too early. In the event, wet weather returned in early October. High yields produced undistinguished wines. I have never seen or tasted a Port from 1973.

1972 *

A number of shippers made attractive wines in 1972 in spite of heavy intermittent rain during the harvest. The vintage was blighted early on by the alcohol scandal that broke shortly after Dow, Offley and Rebello Valente declared (see page 48). Although rarely seen, many of the wines are still curiously attractive, retaining their simple, fresh fruit character. The Casa do Douro still holds a substantial stock of wine from this era which surfaces from time to time in old tawnies. Drink up.

1971

Hot weather in July was short in duration and the following six weeks were cool and cloudy. Regular spraying was necessary to combat mildew. By early August, growers in the Rio Torto could not recall a year when the grapes were so far behind. Nothing of any consequence was made and no wines were declared.

1970 ***** classic, tight-knit wines; the best with a long future ahead

Early tastings tended to play down the 1970 wines and they are only now being judged in their true light. January and February were wet, followed by cold, dry weather in March. April was warm which favoured early flowering. Although May and June were wet there was very little rain, with the exception of few timely downpours in late August, until October. In the Cima Corgo picking began on 21 September with temperatures of 35°C. Michael Symington wrote at the time that 'fermentations were therefore rapid, but colours are nonetheless excellent'. There was a high incidence of raisinised grapes which may have led to some early doubts about the wines. A few wines have developed burnt, high-toned aromas and, this being the last vintage to be bottled both in Gaia and in the UK, there is inevitably a certain amount of variation from bottle to bottle (see my qualifying note earlier). There were some big declarations with Taylor, for example, declaring 31,400 cases of 1970.

In retrospect this was the last old-fashioned vintage where the majority of leading shippers were still treading their wines properly in *lagar*. Some, such as Sandeman and Noval, were already going off the boil. The overall quality is by no means as uniformly high as in 1963 but there are wines that deserve to be ranked among the century's greats. Dow and Graham certainly deserve this accolade, followed up by some undeniably impressive wines from Cálem and Kopke. Cockburn, Delaforce, Fonseca, Niepoort, Noval Nacional and Taylor are also very good, displaying the tight-knit concentration that is the hallmark of this vintage. Taylor's also bottled some 1970 Quinta de Vargellas, produced from vines that were shortly to be lost to the river. I suspect that many of the 1970s have been drunk too early, for the best only recently reached a long plateau that will see them through much of the twenty-first century. Drink now to 2030 plus.

Pick of the Vintage: Cálem; Dow; Fonseca; Graham; Kopke; Niepoort.

1969 *

Desavinho (coulure) in May and an attack of mildew in early June cut down potential production, ensuring that 1969 would not be a high-yielding year. A hot summer followed but by early September the vines continued to be very backward. Rain fell in mid-September, bringing on rot in some districts. A late harvest produced wines that were much better than was previously thought possible. Taylor produced an attractive wine from Quinta de Vargellas, but otherwise no one declared.

1968 *

Late flowering followed by a hot, dry summer. Heavy rain just before harvest led to some rot. Attractive but early-maturing wines represented by Fonseca Guimaraens, Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas and Graham's Malvedos. Drink up.

1967 ** / *** middle-weight, middle distance wines; most fading

A wet spring followed a dry winter. This had a negative impact on flowering and resulted in poor berry set. July, August and September were hot with almost no rainfall. Picking began on 26 September and the weather remained good throughout. Musts were described as being slightly green and unripe at the time (perhaps a function of the heat) but with plenty of colour. Many people picked too early. Four shippers chose to declare 1967 in preference to 1966, with Cockburn and Martinez following their own rather idiosyncratic hunch that 1967 was a better year. Sandeman (who declared both years) produced a wine that is just as good as their excellent 1966. On the whole, 1967 produced good, gentle, middle-distance wines, which are now looking rather tired around the edges. However I have enjoyed Cockburn on a number of occasions, and Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas is sweet, peppery and fully mature. Quinta do Noval Nacional is beautiful with a honeysuckle nose and crystallised fruit character but quite loose-knit nonetheless. Most wines should be drunk fairly soon.

Pick of the Vintage: Cockburn; Quinta do Noval Nacional; Sandeman.

1966 ***** power and elegance; complete

History has been rather unkind to the 1966s and until quite recently they were completely overshadowed by 1963. A warm, wet winter prepared the vines for a very hot, dry summer with May registering unusually high temperatures. The flowering was successful with a good berry set but the vines remained very backward until early September. In August the temperature in the Cima Corgo twice exceeded 45°C. The vintage began, as normal, around 20 September and the weather remained fine until the 30th. The rain was in fact beneficial, as the cool weather kept temperatures down and the grapes (some of which were raisinised by the heat) resisted disease. Sugar levels were high (14 degrees Baumé was normal) and the musts took plenty of work, producing impressively deep, powerful wines. On 9 October, Ronald Symington wrote that 'yields are the lowest for many years... We are delighted with the prospects for the 1966s. It will be surprising indeed if 1966 does not prove to be an excellent vintage for Ports'.

Although the standard is not as quite as high across the board as in 1963, there are a number of really stupendous vintage Ports combining structure and quintessential ‘bitter chocolate’ intensity. Quinta do Noval Nacional typifies the vintage, matching its cast-iron tannic backbone with supreme elegance. Dow and Fonseca are two of my all-time favourites followed by dense, brooding wines from Delaforce, Graham and Taylor. The latter, when I tasted it in a vertical in 2007, was even more impressive than the 1963 from the same house. Cálem is also very fine. The 1966s may be drunk now but the best of these wines will keep for a lifetime or more.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow; Croft; Graham; Fonseca; Quinta do Noval Nacional; Sandeman.

1965 **

The winter of 1964/65 was dry and, after a wet spring, hot, dry weather returned for the summer. The vines suffered and the rain, which fell sporadically during vintage, actually benefited the grapes. The wines can be a bit green and simple as a result but with good body. No fully-fledged declaration apart from Wiese & Krohn, but there are some fine second-string wines like Taylor’s Quinta de Vargellas, Dow’s Bomfim and Graham’s Malvedos which have developed well. Drink fairly soon. Fonseca Guimaraens is a little burnt and prune-y in style but will keep. A Sandeman wine (tasted in 2011) was still surprisingly youthful with firm tannic grip running right through to the finish; an example of just how good wines from this house were before the multinational owners stepped in.

1964 *

Coincided with the introduction of autovinification. Exceedingly hot weather during the vintage produced some round, full-blown jammy wines that are either fully mature or fading. Ronald Symington commented at the time that ‘the forecasting of the quality is a difficult and open question, as rarely have weather conditions varied to such extremes during vintage’. Graham’s Malvedos was displaying a roasted quality when I tasted it in 2010. Quinta do Noval Nacional (tasted in 2011) is now fairly pale, with the aroma of violets and icing sugar, elegant, succulent but falling away on the finish. Drink soon.

1963 ***** a classic vintage, ready now and with years ahead

A textbook growing season in northern Portugal: a cold winter followed by a wet spring set the vines up for a long, warm summer. Rain helped to swell the grapes just before the harvest, which took place under ideal conditions with warm days and cool nights. Ronald Symington reported at the time that ‘*mostos* [musts] look very nice indeed and seem to have plenty of flavour and colour even if perhaps lacking a little in “guts”’. Dick Yeatman of Taylor’s recorded that the grapes were ripe but the stalks were still green at the start of vintage, ‘rather like the 1924s’ (which also turned out very well indeed). A large volume of wine was made and Dick Yeatman noted ‘acidification widely needed’.

Widely declared, 1963 has subsequently become a benchmark vintage. The vintage was good across the board. All the wines have evolved well, although a number are now

really showing their age (Martinez, Quinta do Noval). The best wines still retain layer upon layer of rich, ripe fruit backed up by a powerful tannic streak that stands them in good stead for years to come. Nearly every shipper produced an impressive vintage Port in 1963 and this consistency is reflected in today's auction prices, which are around a third more than the 1966s, some of which are equally fine. The superstars of the vintage are Croft, Fonseca and Quinta do Noval Nacional. The 1963 Nacional (last tasted in 2010) is still dense, powerful and focused, bitter sweet with perfect balance. It is a wine that will go on and on and on and counts among the most wonderful wines that I have ever tasted. Cockburn, Delaforce, Dow, Graham, Taylor and Warre all produced superb wines.

Pick of the Vintage: Croft; Fonseca; Quinta do Noval, Nacional.

1962 **

Catastrophic winter floods, followed by long summer drought. Some wines tasting burnt. Not generally declared but some good second-string wines and a rich, lasting Quinta do Noval Nacional.

1961 **

I take a particular interest in this vintage because it is my own birth year. Some successful wines (Graham's Malvedos, Fonseca Guimaraens, Wiese & Krohn and Noval's 1961 so-called 'Crusted' (bottled in 1964), generally drinking well although not for long-term keeping. Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas is suffering from excess volatile acidity. Drink soon.

1960 *** gentle wines that are now over their peak

After a severe, wet winter, June and July were warm. By the end of July the vines were advanced and Ronald Symington wrote 'should the weather be favourable for the next six to seven weeks till the beginning of vintage, the quality will probably be excellent'. Late August and early September were hot and much-needed rain came just before the harvest, which began for most on the 19th, although some picked as early as the 8th. The weather at the start of harvest was fine but then became dull, rainy and cool. Described at the time with 'good colour, flavoury, slightly green', 1960 was widely declared and well received by the trade. The wines seemed to peak in the late 1970s or early 1980s, some suffered from excess volatile acidity but the best wines are now soft, sweet and open. Mostly mid-weight and lacking in backbone, the best wines of the vintage are still soft, sweet and open. Cockburn, Dow and Graham showing particularly well. Drink soon.

Pick of the Vintage: Cockburn.

1958 * / **

A good summer followed by rain during picking. A handful of shippers declared although the wines were never very powerful and are now declining. Sandeman was showing its age when I last tasted it in 2011. Noval Nacional is still drinking well. Otherwise, drink up.

1957

Irregular weather with a very wet June. Apart from a few isolated examples, not generally declared. Wines generally rather one dimensional. A soft, sweet *colheita* from Cálem, a fine though fully mature Fonseca Guimaraens and an unusually impressive vintage Port from Royal Oporto are almost all that remain.

1955 ***** outstanding, concentrated wines for the long term

An early heatwave in April/May was followed by wet weather which necessitated regular spraying. Following hot weather in July and August, John Symington wrote 'grapes looking wonderful and fairly sweet considering there is still about four weeks to go before the vintage. A little rain ... should make for ideal conditions'. After a week of heat at the beginning of September the rain arrived on cue prior to vintage, which began at the end of the month. Apart from a little rain in early October, the harvest took place in perfect conditions.

Reading through Ronald Symington's notes from the time, it was clear that he thought a fine vintage was on the cards. So it has proved; the best 1955s are still complete wines retaining wonderful balance and masses of concentrated fruit. It was a small declaration and the 1955s are now quite hard to find but anyone with bottles remaining need be in no hurry to drink up. With so much of the vintage bottled in the UK, even the Port shippers lack stock. Croft is stupendous, showing just how good this house used to be when it was on form. Taylor is gentle, without the backbone that tends to characterise this vintage but very elegant and showing lovely purity. Dow, Graham, Niepoort, Sandeman and Warre are also very impressive.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow; Croft; Graham; Quinta do Noval, Nacional; Niepoort; Sandeman.

1954 **?

Tiny vintage, now a rarity. I have only ever tasted one 1954 (a very fragrant, elegant wine from Sandeman) but the vintage had a good reputation at the time. Most shippers opted for 1955 but there were a number of successful second-string wines.

1950 ** on the whole, soft and early maturing

After a challenging growing season, conditions were apparently ideal during the harvest and a number of shippers declared despite the difficult market conditions. Sandeman was still scented and fresh with more to give when I tasted it with George Sandeman in 2011. Cockburn (tasted 2012) is still deep and looking very good. Quinta do Crasto is still very fresh and vigorous and Graham's Malvedos continued to display good fruit and acidity into the 1990s. Dow, Ferreira and Cálem (last tasted in 1999) are looking hollow and pale. Drink soon.

1948 ***** rich, ripe, opulent wines

Following a wet winter, bud burst was prolific and fruit set was good, except in the higher areas where the flowering coincided with wet weather. The *pintor* arrived early following hot weather in June but July was unusually cool. High temperatures and dry easterly winds (*Nem bom vento...*) dried the grapes during August and September. Picking began early (around 15 September) but most waited for another week or ten days. The weather during vintage was hot, but the nights were cool. Sugar levels were high, many grapes were over-ripe and the fermentations were rapid. Many farmers faced huge difficulties in the light of post-war quotas and an impossible market for vintage Port at the time and, as a result, 1948 was not widely declared or shipped. Those that did declare made fabulous, opulent wines. I have only tasted the 1948s on a few occasions, most recently in 2003 at the Hersh's Seattle Port weekend. Taylor (last tasted in 2007) is so rich it is almost caramelised. Still fresh, with floral aromas, it is amazingly rich and intense but almost unbalanced by so much sweetness. Similarly Fonseca, still fine and expressive with rapier-like tannins cutting through the fruit which has the sweetness of Demerara sugar. Not quite as powerful as either of these, Graham is nonetheless bolt upright with 'hot' sweet fruit and wonderful length. Sandeman is variable, but when I last tasted the 1948 in 2011 it was powerful and fresh with great length and depth. A 1948 Dow's Quinta do Bomfim which was neither declared nor shipped but bottled for home consumption is almost syrupy in its richness and intensity. The wines are not as solid as the '45s but they are certainly more sumptuous. Drink now or keep.

Pick of the Vintage: Taylor; Sandeman.

1947 ***** very fine, balanced wines that have developed well; now rare

A year with ideal weather conditions: wet spring, hot summer and low yields. The weather was fine during the harvest and the *lagares* took plenty of work. Reluctantly declared by a number of shippers, 1947s are now very hard to find. Both Cálem and Ferreira are now fragile but Sandeman (last tasted in 2011) is youthful in appearance with great poise with bitter-sweet berry fruit and firm tannins still propping up the finish. Cockburn (who did not declare 1945) is undoubtedly the best: mellow, fully mature but retaining its bitter chocolate concentration at the core. Drink soon.

Pick of the Vintage: Cockburn.

1945 ***** 'victory vintage': wonderfully solid, lasting wines

'This being the first vintage spent in peace after the defeat of Germany and Japan it is disappointing that conditions may not allow a 1945 Victory Vintage,' wrote Ronald Symington at the time. The flowering was exceptionally early and fine weather during berry set held the prospect of the large vintage. The *pintor* arrived early but searing heat in June raisinised the grapes, cutting yields by about 50 per cent. Further drought caused yields to diminish even more. The harvest began early and, according to Dick Yeatman, the

wines 'took fair work but were inclined to reach very high temperatures towards the end of fermentation'. Everyone except Cockburn declared. Due to shipping restrictions, the wines were mostly bottled in Oporto (sometimes in brown sherry bottles due to lack of glass) and have developed very well indeed. Some are starting to look rather frayed (Ferreira, Quinta do Noval, Sandeman) but Croft, Dow Niepoort and Taylor are bolt upright, reflecting the depth and concentration of this small but exceptional vintage. One of my favourites is Croft (tasted twice in 2007), which is scintillating: wonderfully fresh and pure with powerful tannins to back up the sweet berry-fruit. Drink now or keep forever! Taylor (last tasted in 2007) is, if anything, more powerful with voluptuous fruit supported by a massive tannic superstructure. It combined power and elegance. The best 1945s will continue to evolve well through the first half of the century and will still be alive to celebrate their centenary.

Pick of the Vintage: Croft; Dow; Taylor.

1942 **** wartime vintage; wines now rare

Declared by some and bottled in Gaia, but very little was shipped due to the restrictions in force at the time. A dry winter was followed by a cold and wet spring. Flowering was late and the crop was small. Rain in August helped to swell the grapes. Fermentations took some work. I have only tasted two wines: Croft is still fresh, beautifully poised and refined; Niepoort has sweetness and richness that can only be described as exotic, supported by tough, foursquare tannins, and is still hugely impressive.

1935 ***** classic wines with great finesse, some with real staying power

A split vintage: some shippers went for 1934 while others went with 1935. There is little to choose between them as both years produced some fantastic wines that are still drinking very well. 1935 was the smaller of the two harvests and the weather was cool and fine during vintage. The grapes were not particularly rich in sugar but they produced wines with great finesse and considerable staying power, making up in balance and harmony for what they lack in structure. Taylor (last tasted in 2007) does not lack structure: it is still introverted on the nose but hugely powerful with ripe broad tannins lingering onto a sweet finish. Cálem and Ramos Pinto are light, delicate, crisp and still alive. Croft and Delaforce have elegance, poise and retain some depth. Cockburn (last tasted in 2008) is glorious: ripe, retaining dark chocolate concentration and beautifully poised. Sandeman, when I tasted it in 2011, was still youthful and tight-knit, amazingly with more still to give.

Pick of the Vintage: Cockburn; Sandeman; Taylor.

1934 **** firm, well-structured wines, now showing their age

A dry winter was followed by a wet spring. Flowering and fruit set were late. July was hot and dry but September rain helped to swell the grapes. John Symington wrote: 'The vintage started on September 24th. Except for one day of rain it has been perfect vintage weather and fairly warm most days. The grapes have all come in fresh and very healthy. It should

prove good wine as there was an absolute absence of disease of any kind.' The wines are now scarce but from tasting on a number of occasions (most recently at the Seattle Port weekend) the 1934s have the edge over 1935s in terms of structure but lack the elegance and finesse. Sandeman (tasted in 2011) is tight-knit and focused although not as expressive as the 1935. Fonseca is well structured, aromatic, alive and very, very fine. Ramos Pinto is fresh and delicate and Dow's is soft, smooth and sweet with a rather lean tannic grip. Niepoort have an impressive 1934 colheita.

Pick of the Vintage: Fonseca.

1932

I have only ever tasted one wine from this generally undeclared year, a Fonseca Guimaraens which was high toned but still sweet and fresh, albeit more like a colheita than a vintage, in 2003.

1931 ***** an outstanding year; overlooked by most shippers

Bypassed by the majority of shippers because it coincided with the worldwide depression, 1931 is almost certainly the best year never to have been fully declared. The trade was still well stocked with the 1927s and every one of the British shippers ignored 1931. As a result there are few records of the 1931 vintage but the wines that have survived are outstanding and count among the best I have tasted.

Ernest Cockburn writes that 'demand this year was unusually small and the produce of some quintas could be bought at very low prices which hardly paid the farmer's expenses'. According to Amyas Warre, the summer 'was conspicuous for low temperatures, and although just before and during the vintage warmer weather prevailed, the grapes have never ripened properly... In the finer vineyards some good wine with plenty of colour is promised but elsewhere the *mostos* [musts] are thin and green. There was however very little if any mildew this year and consequently no *escolha* [selection] was necessary. The quantity of wine produced especially of VT [Vinho Tinto / Red Wine] is rather more than expected (about 30 per cent) and as the wines were free of disease and the fermentation of the musts regular it is probable that the wines will be sound.'

They were in fact a great deal better than 'sound'. One of very few shippers to declare was Quinta do Noval, which built its reputation on this vintage. The Nacional is so rare that Christian Seeley (President and Managing Director of Noval) has only had the opportunity to taste it on one occasion and the wine was oxidised, the cork having dried out! It still commands the highest price ever paid for a bottle of vintage Port (5,900 US\$ at a restaurant in 1988). I have never had the opportunity to taste the Nacional but the straight Quinta do Noval which I have tasted on a number of occasions, is, I am told, nearly as good. Last tasted from in 2003 from an English bottling, the wine still shows few signs of age, is still youthful on the nose with a wonderfully fresh, assertive, powerful flavour and peacock's tail of a finish. Niepoort also declared a deep, dense 1931, which was effectively 'late bottled' and still looks youthful and very impressive. Other shippers kept back small quantities of

1931, mostly for their own consumption. Ramos Pinto is fine, seductive and elegant with some underlying power. Cálem is fine, firm with crisp acidity keeping the wine alive and Sandeman, now a pale pink-tawny, has a soft creamy texture with underlying richness. In the spring of 1998 I tasted what I am told was the last remaining bottle of Cockburn 1931 which, although not as rich or dense as either Noval or Niepoort, retains the balance and elegance of an outstanding but almost overlooked vintage.

Pick of the Vintage: Quinta do Noval; Niepoort.

1927 ***** classic, dark, concentrated wines

Embraced by most shippers, 1927 has stood the test of time and remains a truly monumental vintage. Although yields were not huge, in terms of vintage Port it appears to be one of those rare years that combined both quality and quantity. Both Cockburn and Croft apparently declared around 30,000 cases apiece.

The grapes were far advanced by the end of July but August was unusually cold with only a few really hot days and the grapes ripened slowly and evenly. September remained cool with some rain. Towards the end of the month, good weather helped to conclude the ripening process. The vintage began on 3 October. According to Ernest Cockburn, 'the grapes were ripe except those very high up, and the weather [during harvest] was hot and perfect. The *lagares* stood a great deal of work and the strengths were good'. The wines were widely declared at the top of the market, shortly before the Wall Street Crash, and subsequently proved difficult to sell.

I was fortunate to taste eleven 1927s side-by-side in 1989 when James Suckling was researching his book on vintage Port, and recall debating at the time whether Fonseca was ready to drink! I have tasted a number of wines individually since and continue to be amazed by the wines, some of which are so dark and dense that they will continue to improve in bottle over eighty years later. Taylor (tasted in 2007) is the most recent example of this: still deep, ripe and supple supported by powerful, cast-iron tannins with a peacock's tail of a finish. Sandeman, tasted in 2011, is lighter but still rich and shows the balance of the vintage. Niepoort (last tasted in 2003) was still closed; tight, solid and not particularly expressive initially, it opens up to reveal an incredibly powerful wine. Likewise Cockburn (last tasted in 2012): more expressive but still incredibly youthful with beautiful floral aromas and bitter-chocolate intensity.

Pick of the Vintage: Cockburn; Niepoort; Taylor.

1924 **** high quality wines, the best still keeping well

It was apparent from the time of the harvest that 1924 would be out of the ordinary. The summer had been cool but dry. After rain fell in early September the grapes, which were small and dried up due to the drought, began to swell and ripen evenly. Ernest Cockburn notes that some grapes were not properly ripe when the harvest began on 29 September but yields were low and the wines produced had 'good colour, medium body and fair sweetness'. Gordon Cosens (of Silva & Cosens) concluded at the time 'that the 1924s will turn out to

be a better than ordinary vintage...’ He has been proved right. Dow’s (last tasted in 1998) is extraordinary: still deep in colour for its age, round mid-palate with a good tight, firm tannic backbone rising on the finish. Taylor (tasted in 2007) is richly scented with fine dark chocolate backbone, combining length and depth. Ramos Pinto and Ferreira on the other hand (last tasted in 1999 and 2003 respectively) are now fragile, their residual charm vying with creeping decay.

Pick of the Vintage: Dow; Taylor.

1917 ***

A late spring and very dry summer resulted in the grapes being rather burnt. The weather remained favourable until the start of September when two weeks of very hot weather were followed by thundery rain at the end of the month. The harvest began late (8 October) but the weather remained fine throughout. Some shippers declared but others overlooked 1917 due to the war. I have only tasted two wines from this vintage. Sandeman is still fine with berry fruit, tannic spice and sweetness balanced by fresh acidity. Ramos Pinto has a strong hint of resin on the nose and is now a relic.

1912 ***** classic vintage, some wines still standing up well

Generally declared, 1912 was considered to be a great vintage (perhaps the greatest of the early twentieth century). The summer was fairly cool but dry and during the first week of September, Ernest Cockburn notes that ‘the grapes looked good though by no means ripe as the sugar had up to this time not developed, but fine weather on and after 18 September with additional warmth enabled them to make rapid progress... The wines showed a good average percentage of sugar and had considerable flavour but the yield was on the short side; as they developed, however, they showed good colour and the year produced some extremely fine wines for bottling’. The 1912 Cockburn (tasted in 2002 and again in 2012) is still very much alive. The fruit may be drying out but the wine retains much of its spicy tannic grip and has an extraordinarily powerful finish. When I tasted it in 2003, Taylor was even more impressive but a subsequent bottle in 2007 proved to be similarly slightly roasted but light and rather fragile. Sandeman retains a vestige of fruit but Dow is maderised and Ferreira somewhat rustic and drying out.

Pick of the Vintage: Cockburn.

1911

Just one shipper, Sandeman, declared a wine for King George V’s Coronation. Now autumnal in character but very sweet and unctuous.

1908 **** / ***** fine, long-lived vintage

A cold winter was followed by a hot summer. Both Ernest Cockburn and John Warre concur: ‘It seemed probable from the start that the year would be declared a vintage Year,’

wrote the former; 'Everything points to 1908 turning out to be the best year since phylloxera swept away all the Portuguese vines,' declared the latter. The weather during vintage was hot and there was no rain. The grapes matured evenly and were free from disease. The 1908 Cockburn is reputedly their greatest-ever wine, and I tasted it for the first time in 2012. It is now quite pale but ethereal with beautiful richness. I can certainly vouch for Dow (last tasted at their bicentennial tasting in 1998), which has a deep amber-tawny colour, slightly caramelised, milk chocolate richness with succulent texture and great complexity. It is outstanding by any measures. Sandeman (tasted in 2003) and Taylor (tasted in 2007) are fading fast but Cálem, though fragile, is still quite impressive.

1904 **** light wines; waning

The summer was very dry but rain in mid-September helped to swell the grapes. It seems from a contemporary report that some growers picked too early and that although 'there were some very good grapes, the skins were hard and the grapes had little liquid in them. The vines were so overloaded with grapes that, although the weather was favourable, they could not bring them to ripeness, and it was found in some *quintas* that the last wines were far more green than those made earlier'. Yields were in fact so much greater than expected that the fortifying *aguardente* was in such short supply that it had to be rationed. The large crop nonetheless produced some fine wines, lighter than in 1900 and now fading into old tawny. Cockburn however was still deep in 2012; quite rich and structured but a bit clumsy on the finish. It must have started out as a very tannic wine. Sandeman was still just about alive when I tasted it at the Port Wine Institute's Vintages of the Century Tasting in 1999 – but was sadly corked when I had another opportunity to taste it twelve years later.

1900 **** fine, delicate wines; some now fragile

The twentieth century began with a fine, abundant vintage that turned out well in spite of an initial lack of body and colour. Harvest was late, starting on 1 October. Ernest Cockburn wrote that 'the vintage lots shipped showed wines of great delicacy with appreciable breed, and although lighter in colour than many previous vintages they appealed to connoisseurs of Port Wine'. The most recent 1900 that I have tasted (in 2007) was Taylor's which had been bottled in Ireland. Surprisingly deep and youthful in colour for a wine of 107 years, fresh if caramelised on the nose, it is still elegant and in fine condition. I tasted Ferreira and Sandeman at the IVP's Vintages of the Century tasting in 1999. Although Ferreira was more like a very old *colheita* than a vintage, Sandeman still retained a vestige of fresh fruit and some milk-chocolate intensity. Dow's (tasted at their bicentennial a year earlier) is scented, high-toned with soft, tawny flavours and a medicinal finish.

Pick of the vintage: Taylor.

1897 ****

After the widely declared 1896 vintage, only a handful of shippers declared, mostly as a mark of respect to Queen Victoria who celebrated her Diamond Jubilee this year. There was a shortage of fortifying spirit and Sandeman apparently used Scotch whisky. I have only ever tasted one wine from Harvey, still fresh in 2010 with a delicate, lifted tealeaf and citrus character and still very drinkable.

1896 ***** watershed year: the first great post-phylloxera vintage

The turning point for Port: the best vintage since phylloxera struck the Douro in the 1870s. Ernest Cockburn records that 'in May the vines were looking very well and the prospects were good, but from then on the vines began to be attacked by various diseases that had done so much damage in the past...' (presumably oidium). The harvest took place amid favourable weather conditions although Ernest Cockburn – who seems to be quite pessimistic about most vintages – wrote that 'the grapes were not as ripe as they should have been'. This is not borne out by Cockburn's 1896 when I tasted it in 2012, which still retains a pink hue with a lovely chocolate core and caramelised finish. Similarly, Dow's 1896 (tasted at their bicentennial tasting) still had a remarkable colour for its age with fresh berry fruit evident and extraordinary firm, peppery tannic grip. A remarkably bold wine, even after 102 years!

1880

This must have been the height of phylloxera and so very few wines were made. I have only tasted one, a wine from Ramos Pinto (the year of their foundation) bottled in 1914 so technically a colheita. It was tasted in 2000 to celebrate the 120th anniversary of Ramos Pinto: old mahogany colour with olive green rim, high toned on the nose but with a vestige of fruit; tasting fresher than it smells, still sweet and spicy with a tawny marmalade character but fading fast in the glass.

1873

Phylloxera broke out in the Douro in 1863 and was spreading steadily through the region at this time, reducing yields. Nonetheless, sixteen shippers declared including Sandeman, whose remarkable wine I tasted with the Port Forum in London in 2011: still quite intense and aromatic with a lovely caramelised orange character, velvety richness with a vestige of tannin remaining, sweet and very beautiful.

1854

A so called 'comet' vintage, coinciding with Halley's Comet. Tasted at Dow's bicentennial tasting and made from pre-phylloxera vines: very pale amber in colour, green-tinged rim; high toned but scented, almost floral and slightly caramelised; lovely creamy caramelised tawny flavours, burnt sugar. Light, fine, fragile and quite short but still just about alive, even retaining the last vestige of tannic spice.

1851

Produced from pre-*phylloxera* grapes, I tasted this wine at the birthday celebration organised for me by members of the Port Forum. According to Michael Broadbent this was a year tainted with mildew although *oidium* only made its presence felt a year later. From an unknown shipper, this wine was still deep and amazingly youthful in the centre of the glass, browning on the rim; subdued, a touch high-toned but still fine and focused; dusty cherry fruit still evident, a touch of coffee, bitter-sweet cherries with some sweetness coming through again on the finish. Still retaining its youthful grip, amazingly fresh if quite dry in style. An astonishing wine that illustrates the staying power of a good vintage Port.

1844

The oldest Port I have tasted. From Quinta de São Martinho (a Rebello Valente property): pale mahogany colour with an olive green rim, high toned but ethereal; very, very delicate, light and just off-dry but still fresh with searing acidity keeping the wine alive in the mouth. This wine was fortified but almost certainly made to a much drier style than is customary today (see Chapter 1).

STORING, AGEING AND SERVING PORT

So much has been written about the rituals of storing, serving and drinking Port that people are sometimes deterred from opening a bottle. In reality there are no hard and fast rules, just practical suggestions that help you to enjoy a wine to the full. So-called 'wood-matured' Ports (ruby, reserve, all tawnies, *colheitas*, white and the majority of LBVs) are bottled ready for drinking and should be stored upright. With the possible exception of some *colheitas*, they do not benefit from keeping and will begin to deteriorate with bottle age. Aged tawnies, however, are fairly resilient even though they may lose some of their freshness if kept for too long.

Given the correct storage conditions, bottle-matured Ports (vintage, crusted and unfiltered LBVs) will evolve in bottle over the medium to long term, gaining character and complexity with age. The ideal cellar for all wines is a cool, dark space with a reasonably even temperature of 10 to 12°C, winter to summer, day to night. Port is more resilient than many wines but will still be damaged by excessively high or fluctuating temperatures; seepage around the cork and capsule is often a symptom. Bottles should be laid on their side to maintain the elasticity of the cork with the label uppermost so that the sediment or crust falls to the underside. Vintage Ports are often marked with a splash of whitewash that survives even after the label has disintegrated. If the bottle is moved for any reason it should be returned to its original position with the label or white splash facing upwards.

As a rule of thumb, wood Port intended for early drinking is bottled with a stopper cork whereas bottle-matured Port for laying down has a driven cork.

One at eleven or eleven at one

There is a ditty, often recited in the Douro, which is used as a good excuse for a glass of Port mid-morning. The full rhyme is carved on a cask used by Cockburn's for picnics on the river when a glass of Port (usually a chilled tawny) at eleven is mandatory:

I must have one at eleven,
 It's a duty that must be done,
 If I don't have one at eleven
 Then I must have eleven at one.
 So I must have one at eleven,
 If I leave it at one it's too late
 For when I have caught up with eleven
 I find I'm three over the eight.
 I've taken my drink at eleven
 And confirmed it with others at one
 Now I am in absolute heaven
 As my spiritual duty's been done.

Serving port

With the exception of vintage, crusted and unfiltered LBV, all Port can be poured directly from the bottle into the glass. White Ports should be served chilled, straight from the refrigerator. Tawny Ports also benefit from being served 'cellar cool', especially during the summer months. Be careful not to over-chill the wine (an hour or two in the fridge will suffice) as this tends to mask the delicacy of the aromas and flavours. All other Ports should be served on the cooler side of room temperature, remembering that rooms in modern centrally heated houses are considerably warmer than those of yesteryear. A Port that is too warm will appear unbalanced as heat brings out the spirit on the nose.

Once a bottle has been opened, all Ports begin to deteriorate after a short period of time. Rubies and filtered LBVs begin to lose some of their freshness and vibrancy a week or so after opening and should be drunk within three weeks. Having matured for longer in cask, aged tawnies will stay in good condition for longer after opening; a month or more if kept in the refrigerator. Like all great wines, vintage Ports (along with crusted and bottle-matured LBVs) should be consumed within a few days of opening. Older wines tend to be more fragile and are likely to lose their freshness and complexity after a relatively short period of time. Ideally these should be drunk within a few hours of decanting.

The pleasure gained from a great wine is all too often marred by the use of an inappropriate glass. I recall the occasion when a senior Port shipper received the Fortified Winemaker of the Year award and a major London hotel served vintage Port in thimble-

sized glasses, filled to the brim. Although Port is generally served after a meal and therefore drunk in smaller quantities than the average red or white wine, it should still be served in reasonably capacious glasses, filled to a maximum level two-thirds from the brim. This leaves plenty of space for the Port to be swirled and aired in the glass so that the aromas can be appreciated to the full. The Port and Douro Wine Institute (IVDP) have their own recommended glass, designed by Portuguese architect Álvaro Siza Vieira. It is tulip-shaped with a square stem. An indent marks the position where it should be held.

Decanting port

Vintage Port is one of few wines to be bottled without any fining or filtration. Consequently, after around five years in bottle, a substantial amount of sediment begins to form. This is not like the fine-grained sediment that appears in a bottle of mature Claret or Burgundy, but a heavy 'crust' that sticks to the side of the glass and slides slowly to the base of the bottle when stood upright.

Decanting vintage Port (along with crusted and bottle-matured LBV) is a relatively straightforward procedure requiring only a steady hand and reasonably good light. The traditional use of a candle to illuminate the neck of the bottle adds a certain romance but as most vintage Ports are bottled in opaque, black glass to protect the wine from the light during storage, it is of limited effect. Good background light is, however, useful to illuminate the neck of the decanter as the wine is being poured.

Ideally, the bottle should be stood upright some two or three hours before decanting (although there are many spontaneous parties at *quintas* in the Douro where a bottle of vintage Port is opened and decanted at short notice without detriment to the wine). If a wax seal covers the cork, a few sharp raps with the handle of the corkscrew will cause it to break away and fragment. More challenging are the thick plastic capsules used in the UK in the mid-1960s, which require a Stanley knife and a great deal of patience to remove.

The cork should then be eased slowly from the bottle, causing the minimum of disturbance to the wine. In the case of older vintages this can be quite difficult as the cork will often break where it fans out about three-quarters of the way down the neck of the bottle. It may therefore take two or more attempts to remove the cork in its entirety and fragments will fall into the wine. A decanting funnel equipped with a fine mesh screen or a clean nylon stocking will catch the pieces of cork. Always use a good corkscrew with a sharp point and an open helix as cheaper examples with a solid 'worm' will pull the core from a soft or spongy cork.

If the bottle has been shaken and the crust disturbed, leave it standing upright for thirty minutes after pulling the cork for any loose sediment to settle. Then, keeping the label or splash of whitewash uppermost, pour the wine steadily and slowly into a clean, freshly rinsed decanter. Many wines are tainted by musty decanters and either the Port or the cork takes the blame. Tilt the decanter as you pour. As the level of wine in the bottle falls, tiny particles of sediment will start to appear on the side of the decanter. This is the cue to stop pouring. If the bottle has been handled carefully there will be, at the most, four centimetres of wine left behind. Pour this into a glass and the wine and sediment

may be used to enrich the gravy if the wine has been decanted before a meal. Younger vintage Ports will benefit especially from two or three hours exposure to the air before serving, so a limited amount of pre-planning is recommended.

A great deal of unnecessary ritual surrounds the use of Port tongs which, at first sight, look rather like a medieval instrument of torture. The tongs are meant to be heated in an open fire until red-hot before being clamped around the neck of the bottle. Subsequently, a damp cloth is applied whereupon the neck is supposed to break cleanly. Contrary to perceived opinion, Port tongs are almost never used in Vila Nova de Gaia and have mostly been mothballed as museum pieces. Another myth surrounds the use of a specially made ornamental decanting machine. This apparatus (usually made from brass) has a cradle for the bottle, which is controlled by a screw device and handle. However, once the first sediment starts to appear you have to rewind the handle quite fast, a feat that is beyond the mechanism that controls the bottle's incline. A steady hand is always the safest option!

Passing the Port: the Bishop of Norwich

Port, either in bottle or decanter, is traditionally passed from right to left or clockwise around the table. There are a number of explanations for this, one of which is an ancient Celtic superstition that all left-hand turns were an ill omen. A much more down to earth reason is that the majority of people are right-handed, making it easier to pour the wine with the right hand and pass it on with the left.

With the lively conversation that usually follows a meal, it is not unusual for someone to neglect to pass the Port and for the decanter to come to a standstill. Rather than ask directly for the Port, the reminder used by members of the trade at Factory House lunches is to turn to the person on your right and say 'Do you know the Bishop of Norwich?' The origin of this expression is obscure but must relate to a former bishop, some say a Dr Wright of Norwich, who neglected to pass the Port. Upon this gentle reminder the Port should immediately continue its clockwise course around the table. There is a story, (possibly apocryphal) about a lunch at the Factory House when the Church of England Chaplain was asked by a Port shipper if he knew the Bishop of Norwich. He replied that he most certainly did as the then Bishop of Norwich was his brother-in-law. The decanter of Port stayed put!

6

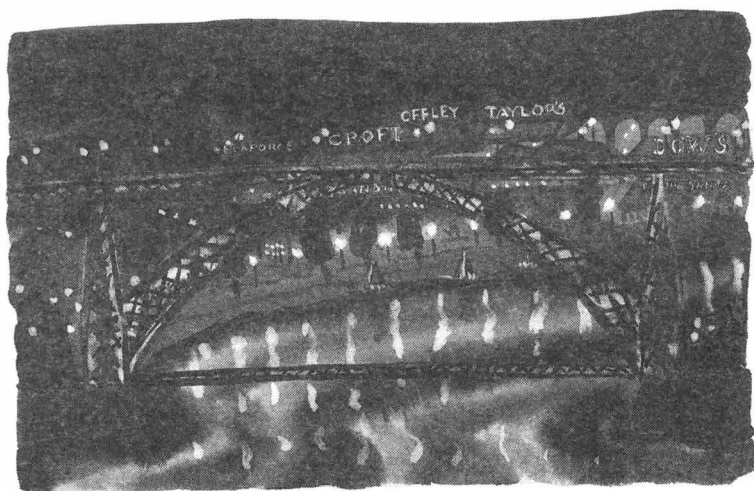
PORT PRODUCERS AND SHIPPERS

THE STRUCTURE OF THE TRADE

The Port trade is dominated by brands. It has been, to a greater or lesser extent, since the eighteenth century when many of the famous Port-shipping firms came into being. But household names like Sandeman, Cockburn, Graham and Taylor represent the apex of a much larger pyramid. There are over 34,000 individual *lavradores* or farmers in the Douro, the vast majority of whom farm far too little land to justify investment in a winery. A few continue to produce a few pipes of wine in time-honoured fashion (*adegueiros*), but most sell their grapes either to one of the major shippers or to a co-operative.

The shippers often have long-term contracts with individual growers and/or *adegueiros*. ‘Contract’ is perhaps too strong a word, for these are mostly gentleman’s agreements based on mutual trust which stretches back for generations. A senior member of the shipping firm (usually the winemaker) will visit his growers at least once a year, usually just prior to the harvest. Deals are invariably done over a glass of ancient tawny from the farmer’s own stock followed by a handshake. In the past it wasn’t unknown for the farmer’s daughter to be offered as part of the bargain!

Until 1986, all Port wine had to be traded through the *entrepoto* or bonded area of Vila Nova de Gaia. The legislation that came into force in June of that year opened the way for wines to be exported directly from growers in the demarcated Douro region. Although a number of leading *quintas* and some co-operatives have begun to market their own wine, the pre-eminence of the established brands has meant that their share of Port wine sales has not passed 1 per cent. The co-operatives in the region produce 20 per cent of all Port, most of which is bought by the shippers as the basis for their standard ruby and tawny. There are also a number of powerful *intermediários* (intermediaries), private companies who make and/or broker wine as a commodity and sell to many of the larger shippers.



Ponte D. Luíz and Gaia

The term 'shipper' dates from the era when Port companies were little more than agents taking a commission on the wines they shipped abroad. Nearly all shippers are now intimately involved in the production of Port with their own *quintas*, centralised winemaking and bottling plants as well as ageing facilities in Vila Nova de Gaia. This is covered in detail in Chapters 3 and 4.

The Port shippers have been in a state of flux for the past fifty years. In the downturn that followed the Second World War, many smaller family-owned shippers were taken over by their larger brethren. Some of the leading brands fell into the hands of multinational firms who were seen as the white knights of the Port trade in the 1960s. After mergers, takeovers and restructuring, Croft and Delaforce were acquired by United Distillers (ultimately Diageo), Sandeman by Seagram and Cockburn and Martinez by Harvey's (subsequently Allied Domecq then Fortune Brands). Even the Symington family (owners of Dow, Graham and Warre, Gould Campbell, Quarles Harris and Smith Woodhouse) relinquished 20 per cent of their family firm to Pernod-Ricard in order to secure distribution.

The multinationals have all now backed out, and from 2001 to 2010 the Port business underwent another restructuring which put many of the former multinational companies back under family control. Sandeman joined Ferreira and Offley in the hands of Sogrape, Portugal's largest winemaker, which has itself become a multinational with interests in Argentina, New Zealand and Spain. Croft is now part of the Fladgate Partnership which was formed jointly with Taylor and Fonseca. Delaforce, briefly part of the Fladgate Partnership, is now controlled by Real Companhia Velha (Royal Oporto). Cockburn and Martinez, the last of the multinational firms to be sold on, now belong to Symington Family Estates.

There are no officially released figures as to which companies are largest in terms of

shipments, but five groups now dominate the trade. Symington Family Estates (with Cockburn, Dow, Graham, Warre among other brands under their belt) are the largest shippers and the largest landowners in the Douro. Porto Cruz, a French-owned company that came from nowhere in the 1970s, are a close second and have by far the largest single brand, Gran Cruz. They are followed in third place by Sogrape (Sandeman, Offley, Ferreira), controlled by the Guedes family. The Fladgate Partnership, with some of the best-known premium brands – Croft, Fonseca and Taylor – are in fourth place. They also control the Port house of Romariz and own a small share of Messias. A relatively new Spanish-owned group, Sogevinus, who own Burmester, Barros, Cálem, Gilberts and Kopke, comes in fifth place. Between them, these five groups account for nearly 80 per cent of sales by volume. As ever, the Port trade is a cultural melting pot with well-known Portuguese and British companies working alongside firms of Danish, Dutch, French, Norwegian and Spanish ownership and extraction.

At the time of writing, a total of ninety shippers are registered with the Instituto dos Vinhos do Porto do Douro (IVDP), of which seventy-eight are exporters. The following directory of Port producers and shippers is by no means exhaustive but includes all those with a significant presence on export markets. A few of the names that follow are historic but merit inclusion because their wines continue to be sold at auction. Shippers and producers are listed in alphabetical order by brand name with the full company name, address, telephone/fax numbers and website below.

Andresen

J. H. Andresen Sucrs. Lda

Rua Felizardo de Lima, 74, Apartado 1510, 4401-901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 770 450

www.jhandresen.com

Jann Hinrich Andresen was born on the North Sea Island of Föhr, part of Denmark. At the age of fourteen he left for Portugal and, five years later in 1845, established his own Port shipping firm. His heirs continued to run the company until 1942 when, like many shippers at the time, they were forced to sell. The company was acquired by Albino Pereira dos Santos whose successors still run the firm. Álvaro van Zeller is the winemaker. The company specialises in tawnies and sells mainly to France, Belgium, Germany, Holland and Denmark. At the top of the range is 'Royal Choice' a soft, silky twenty-year-old. Andresen only declared their first vintage Port in 1950 and now seem to be making up for lost time with frequent declarations in the late 1990s and 2000s. LBVs, bottled unfiltered, have been produced since 1992 and are more impressive than the vintage Ports which are relatively light and early maturing. The company also maintains a small stock of excellent old white Ports and colheitas dating back to an undrinkably concentrated 1900. Andresen own Quinta das Aranhas ('Spider's Quinta') with forty hectares of A-Grade vineyard near Tua. They have

two lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia, one of which used to belong to Mackenzie Driscoll, and the name has served in the past as a second brand.

Barão De Vilar

Barão de Vilar Vinhos SA

Rua Candido dos Reis, 575, 4400-075 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 773 330

www.baraodevilar.com

Although this company bills itself as being ‘established in 1715’, it is in fact the most recent of all the Port shipping firms, having been founded in 1996 by Fernando and Álvaro van Zeller. The van Zellers can trace their origins back to thirteenth century Flanders and migrated to Portugal in the seventeenth century. The family used to own Quinta do Noval, and Barão de Vilar occupies part of the lodge that used to belong to Noval. Despite being a small shipper, the company produces a comprehensive range of wines from ruby through tawny to some good mid-weight vintage Ports. Rather rustic colheitas, dating back to the 1950s, have been bought in from stock matured by the Casa do Douro. The company owns a winery near Vilarica in the Douro Superior. Barão de Vilar also ship Port under the Feuerherd and Maynard brands.

Barros

Barros Almeida & Ca

Vinhos SA, Rua D. Leonor de Freitas,

180/2, Apartado 39, 4401-955 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 752 320

www.porto-barros.pt

Barros is one of the principal brands belonging to Sogevinus, a Spanish group that includes Burmester, Cálem, Gilberts and Kopke. Barros itself is a relative newcomer to the scene, having been founded in 1913 when Manoel de Almeida left the firm of Motta & Vaz to create his own independent company – Almeida em Comandita. His sister married Manoel de Barros, who reputedly started out as an office boy and then entered the firm as a partner, altering the name to Barros Almeida. Barros weathered the depression of the 1930s and used it as an opportunity to buy up a number of ailing firms. The last acquisition was Kopke (founded in 1638 and purchased by Barros in 1953). The Barros family themselves sold out in 2006 (retaining Quinta Dona Matilde) and Sogevinus is currently controlled by Nova Galicia, one of the largest *cajas* in Spain.

The bulk of Barros wines are young rubies and tawnies destined for the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Germany and the home market. However, its strength at the quality end of the market lies less in vintage Port than in aged tawnies and colheitas. Barros maintains substantial stocks of these wines in Gaia dating back to the 1930s. Wines like the finely tuned 1966 colheita, a rich, concentrated 1937 colheita and a beautifully lifted thirty-year-old tawny put Barros into the premier league. Vintage Ports can be open,

supple and attractive (1995, 1987, for example) but Barros declares on a frequent basis and the wines tend to be relatively light and early maturing.

Borges

Sociedade dos Vinhos Borges SA

Rua do Infante D. Henrique, 421, Apartado 18, 4439 - 909 Rio Tinto

Tel. (351) 223 745 770

www.vinhosborges.pt

Borges & Irmão used to be one of the best known names in Portugal. The company was founded in 1884 by two brothers, who began trading in tobacco, matches, textiles and wine. They made enough money to establish a high-street bank which, like all Portuguese-owned banks, was nationalised in 1975, a year after the 25 April revolution. Subsidiary companies like Borges & Irmão Vinhos went with them. In the ensuing confused political situation, Borges faced an uncertain future as successive governments talked about ways of returning Portugal's moribund state sector to private ownership. The quality of the wines suffered although by the mid-1990s, under the auspices of winemaker Anselmo Mendes, there were encouraging signs of improvement.

After decades of uncertainty, Borges & Irmão was completely restructured in 1998 and stripped of its principal assets to realise capital. Much of the stock and two of the company's *quintas*, Junco and Casa Nova in the Pinhão Valley, were purchased by Taylor. This leaves the company with Quinta do Soalheira in the Rio Torto. The company is now integrated into JMV, a Portuguese group which owns Torrié Café. Rosés, Vinhos Verdes and Douro wines are now more important than Port but some fine old tawnies and rather attenuated vintage Ports from Borges can still be found for sale on the market.

Burmester

J.W. Burmester & Ca., SA

Rua Barão de Forrester, 73, 4400-034 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 747 290

www.burmesterporto.com

The Burmesters are a large family who came to Portugal from Germany in 1730 and began to specialise in Port twenty years later. The name is a corruption of *Burgmeister*, who was effectively mayor of a town or city in the middle ages. There are nine branches of the family altogether, one of which settled in the United Kingdom, forming the company Burmester Nash & Co. with offices in both London and Oporto. Frederick Burmester subsequently became a founding director of the Westminster Bank (precursor of NatWest) and the family name is still represented by Burmester Road in the London suburb of Wimbledon. In 1834 Johann Wilhelm Burmester arrived in Oporto to work for the family company; when he became sole owner in 1861 the name was changed to J. W. Burmester and Ca. The firm remained in family hands until 1999 when it was sold to Amorim, a Portuguese family conglomerate which began by selling corks to the Port trade. Amorim subsequently sold the firm on to Sogevinus in 2005, retaining the company's only vineyard, Quinta Nova de Nossa Senhora do Carmo.

Burmester still scores highly with its supremely good old tawnies and colheitas. Burmester's ten-year-old is delicate but rich, while its twenty-year-old is soft, high-toned and beautifully balanced. The company also maintains outstanding old colheitas dating back to 1890 and 1900, both bottled in 1977. In 1998 it was able to present an intriguing vertical tasting covering a century of its colheita Ports. Gilberts, a subsidiary company named after Karl Gilbert, belonged to Burmester before being brought by Sogevinus.

Butler Nephew

The company was founded by Nash of Burmester Nash & Co. (see above), who took James Butler into partnership in 1789. He in turn was joined by his nephew, Robert Butler, and the name of the firm became Butler Nephew. The firm had a good reputation before the Second World War. It has since been consigned to relative obscurity, first by Gonzalez Byass and subsequently by Vasconcelos. Butler Nephew was disbanded in 1989.

Cálem

Sogevinus Fine Wines SA

Av. Diogo Leite 344, 26-42, 4400-111, Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 746 660

www.calem.pt

Cálem was a family-owned company, founded in 1859, which grew into one of Portugal's leading brands. In 1998 it made history by becoming the first shipper in Gaia to be bought out by a company based in the Douro. This reversal was short lived, as in 2003 Cálem was bought out by the Galician bank the Caixa Nova, and now forms part of Sogevinus along with Barros, Burmester and Kopke.

The company has been separated from Quinta da Foz, the property that formed the backbone of Cálem's vintage Ports for over a century as well as their more recent SQVPs. At the confluence of the Pinhão River with the Douro, Quinta da Foz remained with the Cálem family until it was sold in 2012. The vinification centre at São Martinho d'Anta near Sabrosa and Quinta do Pego were retained as part of the company. In 2004 Cálem bought the A-grade Quinta do Arnozelo in the Douro Superior.

Cálem produced superb vintage Ports in 1966 and 1970 but subsequent wines have been very inconsistent. Three vintages (1985, 1990 and 1991) were sensibly withdrawn from the market. Aged tawnies and colheitas dating back to 1957 (the latter bottled to order) look much better. The company's main brand is Velhotes, a standard tawny which is brand leader on the home market. The company's stocks are split between four separate lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia. Their main lodge is located by the lower tier of the Ponte Dom Luíz and receives over 100,000 visitors a year.

Churchill

Churchill Graham, Lda

Rua da Fonte Nova, 5, 4400-156 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 703 641

www.churchills-port.com

Churchill's gravitas as a Port shipper belies its youthful age. Deprived of their family Port house by the sale of W. & J. Graham to the Symingtons in 1970, brothers Anthony, Johnny and William Graham established Churchill Graham in 1981. It was the first new British Port shipper in half a century. The Grahams named the company after Johnny's wife (née Churchill) and his own family surname, but trade under the Churchill brand. With a lodge rented from Taylor and a shoestring budget, Johnny Graham quickly gained a reputation for small quantities of high-quality wines pitched mainly at the UK market. The company had no *quintas* to call its own and bought in wines from properties belonging to the Borges de Sousa family. From 1982 to 1999 Quinta do Fojo, Quinta da Manuela and Quinta da Água Alta have provided the backbone for some ripe, plump vintage Ports. Quinta da Agua Alta, with its own distinctive *terroir*, was bottled as a single-*quinta* wine.

In 1999, Churchill changed direction and bought two properties, Quinta da Gricha on the bank of the Douro above Quinta de Roriz and Quinta do Rio in the Torto Valley. These now form the basis for Churchill's thick-set vintage and LBV and Gricha is produced as a single-*quinta* vintage in good interim years. The company also makes a range of Douro wines known as Churchill Estates. With few stocks of old wine to draw on, the Churchill range has gradually developed to include a ten- and twenty-year-old tawny and a well-aged dry white Port.

Cockburn

Symington Family Estates

Travessa Barão de Forrester 86, Apartado 26, 4431-901 Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal

Tel: (351) 223 776 300

www.symington.com

The butt of many a pun over its pronunciation, Cockburn is one of the best-known names in the Port trade. The story of Cockburn's success is an intriguing tale of six enterprising families and a multinational. The firm was established in 1815 by George Wauchope and Robert Cockburn (whose younger brother Henry, Lord Cockburn, was a Scottish judge). Originally called Cockburn Wauchope & Co., the name was extended to Cockburn Wauchope & Greig when the two founding partners were joined by Captain William Greig in 1828. Casks branded with the initials 'C. W. G.' can still be seen at Cockburn's lodges in Gaia. The company has always looked outwards, and in 1829 (just fourteen years after it was formed) Archibald and Alexander Cockburn established an office in London. The family was joined in 1845 by Henry and John Smithes and the firm was renamed Cockburn Smithes, the name which survives to this day. John Smithes subsequently married Eleanor Cobb whose brother, Charles, joined the London office in

1863. John Smithes continued to work for Cockburn until the 1970s (see page 73) and Peter Cobb retired in 1999.

In the slump that followed the Second World War, Cockburn became prey to outsiders. The company was taken over by Harvey of Bristol in 1962, a year after Harvey had acquired arch-rivals Martinez Gassiot. Harvey was subsequently bought by Allied-Lyons (subsequently Allied-Domecq) making Cockburn an increasingly small cog within a very big wheel – but with the media support afforded by a multinational, Cockburn became the leading Port brand on the UK market. In the revolving door of takeovers and mergers, Allied Domecq was taken over by Pernod-Ricard, leaving Cockburn with Fortune Brands until it was bought by Symington Family Estates in 2010.

Having invested heavily in vineyards in the 1970s and 1980s, Cockburn has a number of substantial properties in the Douro. Quinta de Santa Maria on the outskirts of Régua relieves the pressure on the lodges in Gaia. Upstream, Cockburn has long-favoured the Douro Superior as a source for its fruit, and in 1978 the company planted 250 hectares of vineyard on relatively flat land at Vilaríça (Quinta do Ataíde). In 1989 it added the spectacular Quinta dos Canais to its vineyard portfolio. Wines from Canais have long formed part of the vintage *lote* and are bottled as single-*quinta* vintage Ports in good, interim years. Once a famous Cockburn estate, Quinta do Tua is now rebranded to Graham and Quintas Vale Coelho and Telhada are attached to Warre.

Cockburn's produced some superb vintage Ports in the twentieth century, notably 1908, 1912, 1927, 1947 and 1963. But despite investing heavily in vineyards, Cockburn neglected their winemaking over many years. Without a central winery worthy of the name, many of Cockburn's wines were made in bits and pieces in some fairly primitive conditions. This goes some way to explain the inconsistency of their vintage Ports from 1975 onwards. During this time Cockburn set their store by Special Reserve, deservedly the bestselling brand of Port in the United Kingdom and, despite the lack of winemaking facilities, one of the most consistent reserve Ports on the market. At the time of writing, the Symington Family are conducting a thorough reappraisal of Cockburn. Special Reserve maintains the same high quality even if it has moved to a younger, fresher style and there are promising signs from recently launched LBVs, tawnies and single-*quinta* vintages.

Castelinho

Castelinho Vinhos SA

Quinta de São Domingos, Apartado 140, 5054-909, Peso da Régua

Tel. (351) 254 320 100

www.castelinho-vinhos.com

Established in 1990, Castelinho is the largest shipper of Port with its headquarters in the Douro (as opposed to Vila Nova de Gaia). The principal shareholder is Manuel Saraiva who made his fortune transporting Port and whose family own Quinta do Castelinho, an A-grade property just downstream from the Valeira dam. All wine bottled with the name Quinta do Castelinho comes from the property whereas Castelinho serves as a brand for wines brought in from elsewhere. The company bought Quinta de São Domingos from

Ramos Pinto. Situated close to the centre of Régua, this serves as the company's lodge and visitor centre, receiving 60,000 people a year. Castelinho produces a full range of Ports as well as Douro wines. Vintages are declared frequently (e.g. 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2002, 2003) and the wines tend to be simple, early maturing but correct. The company has a stock of rather rustic colheitas dating from 1935 to the present day.

Champalimaud

Montez Champalimaud, Lda

Quinta do Côtto, Cidadelhe, 5040-154 Mesão Frio

Tel. (351) 254 899 269

www.quintadocotto.pt

Miguel Champalimaud is a controversial figure in the Douro. Since taking responsibility for his family estate, Quinta do Côtto, in the mid-1970s, he has been vociferous in his criticism of the status quo. Champalimaud's bugbear is that the official system of vineyard classification rates the Cima Corgo and Douro Superior higher than the Baixo Corgo where his own family's properties happen to be situated. With some justification he likes to remind visitors that the Baixo Corgo was the part of the Douro where the Port trade began, but loses respect with his perpetual tirade against today's Port establishment. Perhaps for this reason it has been difficult to take Champalimaud's Ports seriously, and Quinta do Côtto has become much better known for its range of red and white Douro wines. Although he has only declared four vintages to date (1982, 1989, 1995 and 2001), Champalimaud has done much to advance the cause of the 'single *quinta*' (and perhaps much to damage it). In 1986 Quinta do Côtto became one of the first properties to take advantage of the new legislation which permitted Port exports directly from the Douro, whereas previously it had to be shipped from the *entrepoto* in Vila Nova de Gaia.

Miguel Champalimaud has now retreated to the safer haven of property development at Quinta da Marinha near Lisbon. Nonetheless, a rather quirky philosophy remains with the 1995 and 2001 vintages made in a much drier style than is the norm (2.8 degrees Baumé as opposed to around 4 Baumé). With a concentrated raisin-like aroma and a flavour akin to bitter chocolate, the wine bears a strong resemblance to an Italian Recioto. Filtered before bottling, it is enjoyable to drink young but it should never be thought of as serious vintage Port.

Quinta do Crasto

Sociedade Agricola da Quinta do Crasto

Quinta do Crasto, Gouvinhas, 5060-063 Sabrosa

Tel. (351) 254 920 020

www.quintadocrasto.pt

Best known for its unfortified red Douro wines, this well-situated *quinta* midway between Régua and Pinhão also produces both vintage and unfiltered LBV Port. Unusually, many of the best grapes from the older low-yielding vineyards are used to make Douro wine and Port is often relegated to second place. Nevertheless, Quinta do Crasto produces some

attractive firm, middle-weight Ports, entirely foot trodden in *lagares* in the traditional manner. Crasto's vintage Ports are gaining in stature and compare favourably with many shippers' wines but are still some way from matching the truly exceptional Quinta do Crasto 1950, of which painfully few bottles now remain.

Croft*

Croft & Co. Lda

c/o Fladgate Partnership, PO Box 1311, EC Santa Marinha 4401-501 Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal
Tel: (351) 223 742 800
www.croftport.com

Croft is one of the oldest and most distinguished names in the Port trade, having been founded as far back as 1678. It began as a partnership called Phayre & Bradley, the trading name changing frequently as partners joined, retired or died. The Crofts became involved through the Thompsons, a family of merchants from York who began trading with Portugal in around 1660. Thomas Croft married Frances Thompson and it was their grandson, John Croft, who joined the firm in 1736 taking the name to Tilden, Thompson & Croft. The most famous member of the Croft family was another John (born in 1732), who commuted between York, where he was Sheriff, and Oporto where he was a member of the British Factors. John Croft wrote *A Treatise on the Wines of Portugal* (published in 1788), which provides a valuable insight into the evolution of the Port trade.

By 1827, Croft & Co. was the fourth largest Port shipper. The firm continued to grow steadily during the nineteenth century and in 1875 it acquired Quinta da Roêda near Pinhão, which has been retained as Croft's flagship property. In 1911, Croft became part of Gilbey Vintners, who were subsequently taken over by International Distillers and Vintners (IDV). In the corporate merry-go-round, Croft became part of UDV (United Distillers and Vintners), a subdivision of drinks and fast-food multinational, Diageo.

Despite being a significant player in the Port and Sherry business, Croft (and its sibling Delaforce, then known jointly as CD Vintners) became lost within Diageo. In 2001 CD Vintners was acquired by Taylor-Fonseca and now forms part of the Fladgate Partnership. Interestingly, this restored the historical link between Taylor and Quinta da Roêda which was owned in the nineteenth century by John Fladgate, Baron of Roêda, who was a partner in Taylors. Croft's interests in Jerez were acquired by Gonzalez Byass.

The company's reputation for fine vintage Port, built on the back of two outstanding wines in 1955 and 1963, was largely squandered with the 1980s with wines that were simply not worthy of the name. Under the direction of Nick Delaforce, vintages in the early 1990s improved markedly, reflecting the strong, muscular character of the Ports from Quinta da Roêda balanced by wines from Vale de Mendiz and the Ribalonga Valley. The wine making at Croft is now overseen by David Guimaraens who has completely revamped the winery at Roêda, restoring the *lagares* and installing piston plungers in place of the old *remontadores* (see page 130). However, the ugly 1970s winery which was built (for reasons best known to the management of Croft at the time) to withstand earthquakes, is virtually indestructible and is still rather a blot on the landscape.

The bulk of Croft's production is represented by Triple Crown, a soft easy ruby, and Distinction, a rather deeper, richer reserve wine. In 2008, Croft pioneered 'Pink Port' using New World technology to produce a pale, delicate, fruity rosé, which is marketed as a mixer. During the 1970s and 1980s Quinta da Roêda was a rather inconsistent SQVP, but since 1997 the wines have been looking more and more promising. With recent vintages (2003, 2007 and 2009), Croft has found a new house style, producing very satisfying sweet, plump wines that are a reflection of the *terroir* at Quinta da Roêda. Croft is back on form.

Dalva

C. da Silva (Vinhos) SA

Rua Felizardo Lima, 247, Apartado 1530, 4400-140 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 746 040

www.cdasilva.pt

Founded in 1862, C. da Silva is named after Clemente da Silva who came from Brazil in the 1930s. The company now belongs to La Martiniquaise alongside Gran Cruz, the largest single brand of Port. C. da Silva maintain a huge stock of old wine at lodges in the less-fashionable part of Gaia. An eighteenth-century house at the centre of the complex is thought to have belonged to Baron Forrester. The bulk of C. da Silva's wines are standard rubies and tawnies destined for Germany, Belgium, Holland and France, sold under the names Dalva and Presidencial. However, the company has an excellent stock of colheitas dating back to the 1930s which are mostly well kept and used for blending into a competent range of aged tawnies. Deliciously rich 1952 and 1963 'Golden White' colheitas form part of an unusual, mature, honeyed Branco Velho blended to an average age of about fifteen years. Vintage Ports, which tend to be light and early maturing, sometimes show well in comparative tastings. Jim Reader, who used to head the winemaking team at Cockburn, has come out of retirement to advise the firm.

Delaforce

Delaforce Sons & Ca - Vinhos Lda

Rua Azevedo Magalhães, 314, 4430 - 022 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 775 100

www.delaforce.pt

The Delaforce family were Huguenots who fled from France to London in order to escape religious persecution in the seventeenth century. Their connection with Portugal began in 1834 when the young John Fleurriet Delaforce went to Oporto to set up a new Port-shipping company for the partners of Martinez Gassiot. John's son, George Henry Delaforce, founded his own firm of Port shippers in 1868 and rapidly established strong trading links with countries as far-flung as Russia, Scandinavia, Germany and the UK. By the end of the nineteenth century, George Delaforce was purveyor to the Portuguese kings, an unusual honour for a non-Portuguese citizen. Delaforce remained in family hands until 1968. Unable to finance the *lei do terço* (two-thirds stock ratio) during those bleak years,

they sold out to IDV who already owned Croft. The family retained a strong link with the firm until it was taken over by Taylor Fonseca in 2001. Having briefly formed part of the Fladgate Partnership, Delaforce was sold to Real Companhia Velha (RCV) in 2008.

Without a vineyard of its own, Delaforce maintained a long-term agreement with the owners of Quinta da Corte, well located in the lower reaches of the Torto Valley. Alongside wines from the Roncão and Tavora Valleys, Corte provided the basis for Delaforce vintage Ports and, since 1978, has been the source of a single-*quinta* vintage. In the 1970s and 1980s, Delaforce suffered in much the same way as its sister company, Croft. Although the wines improved substantially in the 1990s (Delaforce produced a full, fleshy 1992), you have to go back to 1970 to find a big, concentrated wine in the classic mould. It remains to be seen how Delaforce vintages will fare under the ownership of RCV. Delaforce drew on stocks of old wine at Corte to produce two excellent tawnies: 'Curious and Ancient' is an apt title for a particularly fine, delicate twenty-year-old, and 'His Eminence's Choice' is a richer ten-year-old. At the other end of the spectrum, Germany is the company's principal market with a standard tawny formerly known by the brand name 'Paramount'. Delaforce have recently launched a range of Douro reds from vineyards owned by RCV.

Dow

Symington Family Estates

Travessa Barão de Forrester, 86, Apartado 26, 4431-901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 776 300

www.dows-port.com

Dow is the brand name for Ports shipped by the firm of Silva & Cosens. I have to admit to an in-depth interest in Dow, having written a book – *The Story of Dow's Port* – to commemorate the company's bicentenary in 1998. The story is an intricate tale of five families, each of whom have contributed significantly to the history of Port.

The business was established by Bruno da Silva, who left Oporto for London in 1798. He imported a wide range of Portuguese goods (including Port) and quickly built up a thriving business in England. Bruno da Silva was joined by one of his sons, John J. Silva, who brought in Frederick William Cosens as a partner. Silva & Cosens were then joined by George Acheson Warre, the only son of George Warre, a partner in the eponymous firm. Warre became a driving force in Silva & Cosens and in the Douro, where he was among the pioneers in the restoration and replanting of vineyards that followed the phylloxera epidemic in the 1870s. Dow & Co., a company with roots dating back to the late eighteenth century, merged with Silva & Cosens in 1877, and James Ramsey Dow took charge of the London side of the business. Although considerably smaller than Silva & Cosens, Dow had a fine reputation for its vintage Ports and it was decided to attach the name to the company's entire range of wines. Professor George Saintsbury later wrote 'there is no Shipper's wine that I have found better than the best of Dow's, 1878 and 1890 especially'.

It was in 1882 that Andrew James Symington came to Oporto from Glasgow and began working for the Grahams' textile firm. Taking a greater interest in Port than cloth, he became a partner in the firm of Warre & Co. in 1905; within a few years had become its sole proprietor.

In 1912 George Acheson Warre returned to London and offered Symington the opportunity to manage the Portuguese end of the business with a partnership in Silva & Cosens. This bi-partisan arrangement continued until 1961 when the Symington family took control.

Symington Family Estates (also owners of Cockburn, Graham, Warre, Smith Woodhouse, Quarles Harris, Gould Campbell and Quinta do Vesúvio) has been careful to maintain a separate identity for Dow Port. The wines are closely linked to Quinta do Bomfim at Pinhão, which was bought for the company by George Warre in 1896. Until 1996 it served as the firm's main vinification centre but in order to relieve pressure on the *adeiga*, production is shared between Bomfim and a new winery downstream at Quinta do Sol. Wine from Bomfim's vineyards, supported by Quinta do Zimbardo and Senhora da Ribeira, has formed the backbone of Dow's vintage Port for over a century. Since 1978, Quinta do Bomfim has been released as an SQVP in good years between fully-fledged declaration, followed by Quinta Senhora da Ribeira from 1998.

Dow Ports are made in a slightly drier style than most. In some years the wines can verge on austere with a rather bony structure showing through. This is not to denigrate them in any way, for Dow's vintage Ports are among my personal favourites. In ripe years like 2003, 2000, 1994, 1970, 1966 and 1963 the wines have tremendous appeal with a cast-iron tannic backbone offset by intense concentrated fruit. Dow also performs exceptionally well in lesser years like 1980 and 1975. A tasting in London organised to celebrate the company's bicentenary in 1998 brought together an array of Dow's vintage Ports with stupendous wines from 1945, 1924, 1908 and 1896, all of which are still drinking extraordinarily well.

Mainstream wines in the Dow range share a similar hallmark, right down to ruby, now called 'Midnight' on the UK Market. 'Trademark' is a dense, full-bodied reserve and its LBV is a structured wine packed with berry fruit. Aged tawnies tend to be rich and seemingly on the youthful side – perhaps not as refined or delicate as some. Dow's crusted Ports present much of the breadth and concentration of a declared vintage Port at a fraction of the price. Dow is at the top of its game.

Feist

c/o Sogevinus Fine Wines, SA

Avenida Diogo Leite nº 344, 4400-111 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 746 660

www.sograpevinhos.eu

In 1836, two cousins left Germany and established themselves in London as Port merchants. By the 1870s, the business had expanded to the extent that Carl Feist left London for Oporto to establish a new branch of the business. The company remained in family hands during the first half of the twentieth century, run by the founder's son-in-law and grandson. During the Second World War, the London headquarters were completely destroyed in an air raid and the family retreated to Oporto. Feist was subsequently taken over by Barros and became an integral part of the Barros group. Since Sogevinus bought Barros the Feist name has been quietly dropped, although some old *colheitas* can still be found on sale.

Ferreira

c/o Sogrape Vinhos SA

Aldeia Nova, 4430-809, Avintes, Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 227 850 300

www.sograpevinhos.eu

Founded in 1751 by José Ferreira, it was his great-granddaughter, Dona Antónia Adelaide Ferreira, who effectively built the company up into the force it is today (see page 27). She was nicknamed *Ferreirinha* ('little Ferreira'), an affectionate Portuguese diminutive, which lives on in local vernacular and on some of Ferreira's labels. The company remained under the ownership of her descendants until it was sold in 1997 to Sogrape, progenitors of Mateus Rosé and Portugal's largest winemakers. Until 1999 the company was managed by Francisco ('Vito') Olazabal, Dona Antónia's great-great-grandson, who represented the eighth generation of the Ferreira family. Olazabal himself owns Quinta do Vale do Meão, the spiritual home of Portugal's most prestigious red wine, Barca Velha (see page 251).

Ferreira owns three superb properties in the Douro. Quinta do Porto, just downstream from Pinhão, was purchased by Dona Antónia in 1863. Quinta da Leda is situated high up in the Douro Superior, close to the Spanish border and a third vineyard, the fifteen-hectare Quinta do Caedo, was purchased in 1990. Ferreira's properties have been the subject of considerable research and development in the 1980s. Under the auspices of the late Jorge Maria Cabral Ferreira (to whom this book is dedicated), they pioneered the *vinha ao alto* or vertical planting system at Quinta do Seixo (their fourth property, now rebranded to Sandeman). Ferreira also purchase both grapes and wine from properties owned by members of the family. Until 1989, it had the use of Quinta do Vesúvio, one of the largest and most stately properties in the Douro, which used to belong to the Ferreira family before it was bought by the Symingtons.

Ferreira's vintage Ports are frequently underrated. Although not quite in the heavyweight mould, wines from the 1980s onwards are well structured with richness and staying power. Ferreira 2000 is a middle to heavyweight blend from Quintas Leda, Seixo and Caedo. The company began producing an excellent unfiltered LBV in 1987, and in subsequent years the wines have been consistently solid, dense and fruit-driven. They are among the best of the genre.

Ferreira produce some very fine aged tawnies. Quinta do Porto is a well-developed ten-year-old tawny made from grapes grown on the estate. Blended from a number of properties in the Cima Corgo and Douro Superior, the twenty-year-old Duque de Bragança is a deliciously smooth, refined tawny combining freshness and the complexity that comes with age. With an average age of around six years, Ferreira's Dona Antónia Reserva Pessôal has a hint of true tawny character with summer fruit and a peppery finish. Sound, well-made ruby and tawny (the latter popular in Portugal) complete the range. Ferreira is a leading brand in Portugal, helped by the advertising slogan, *Foi você que pediu ... Porto Ferreira?* (Was it you who asked for ... Porto Ferreira?) which was on everyone's lips in the 1970s and 1980s. France and Canada are also important markets.

Hunt Roope and Constantino are brands belonging to Ferreira. They have been amalgamated in a single subsidiary firm: Hunt, Constantino Vinhos Lda.

Fonseca

c/o Fladgate Partnership

PO Box 1311 EC Sanata Marinha 4401-501 Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal

Tel: (351) 223 742 800

www.fonseca.pt

Catch a Port shipper at a candid moment and many will admit that, aside from their own, Fonseca is their favoured Port. Few other shippers can flaunt quite such an accomplished range of wines.

The company was founded by Manuel Pedro Guimaraens. Born near Barcelos, north of Oporto, in 1798, he began as a trader exporting cloth and a range of comestibles to Brazil both on his own behalf and for an associated company, Fonseca & Monteiro. In 1822, Guimaraens acquired the majority shareholding with the caveat that Fonseca should remain the brand name no matter who owned the business. Manuel Pedro was a controversial character. He took the side of the liberal Dom Pedro in the 1820s conflict with the absolutists and was forced to leave the country on a number of occasions; in one incident he was smuggled on board a ship bound for England, hidden in an empty pipe of Port! Despite the liberal victory in 1832 he remained in London until his death in 1858. Under his stewardship, Fonseca Monteiro & Guimaraens (as it became known) grew into one of the largest Port shippers. The company continued to be based in London until 1927 when it was repatriated to Oporto.

In the slump that followed the Second World War, the Guimaraens family consolidated their holdings with those of Taylor, Fladgate & Yeatman. Successive members of the Guimaraens family have nevertheless continued to steer the firm. Frank Guimaraens, followed briefly in the mid-1950s by Dorothy Guimaraens and then Bruce Guimaraens (see page 172), are collectively responsible for every one of Fonseca's remarkable vintage Ports from 1896 to 1991. The mantle has passed to Bruce's son David who, having graduated from Roseworthy in Australia, is now the company's winemaker.

Fonseca's wines are based on three *quintas*. Cruzeiro and Santo António in the Pinhão valley were both acquired in the 1970s but have long formed the basis for Fonseca's vintage Ports. Having been replanted in the 2000s, Santo António is now certified organic. Quinta do Panascal in the lower reaches of the Távora complements them with a different *terroir*. It is open to passing visitors who want to experience a working *quinta*. Down in Gaia, Fonseca's labyrinthine lodges serve as the workaday production centre for the group, whereas Taylor's lodge has been restored as a showpiece. Just occasionally one senses that Fonseca is somewhat lent upon by its larger sibling. Fonseca's wines are inevitably compared with those produced by Taylor but their markets are surprisingly different. Whereas Taylor's strength is in the UK, Fonseca's main market is across the Atlantic in the USA.

Fonseca's best-known wine is Bin No. 27, a ripe, hearty reserve ruby wine that is based on grapes from Quinta do Panascal. The company also bottles a small quantity

of good, solid LBV. But Fonseca reigns supreme with its fine ten- and twenty-year-old tawnies and some of the most thrilling vintage Ports, which manage to combine both power and finesse. Leaving aside 1983 and 1980 (both of which are light and rather disappointing) 1994, 1985, 1977, 1966, 1963 and 1927 are classic, rapier-like wines that are at the top in comparative tastings. Recently declared vintages like 2003, 2000 and 1997 are also on a par. Wines from good in-between years are sold under a second label, Fonseca Guimaraens. Lacking the verve of great Fonseca vintage Port, they are similarly well made, with Fonseca Guimaraens 1976 consistently outscoring other fully declared vintages, notably many 1977s.

Forrester & Ca.

(see under Offley)

Gonzalez Byass

Sherry giant Gonzalez Byass maintained a strong presence in Oporto from 1896 until its stocks of Port were sold to Vasconcelos in 1983. From the turn of the twentieth century until the 1930s, Gonzalez Byass had an arrangement with the van Zeller family to buy the production of Quinta de Roriz. Fearing that Spain would be invaded by Hitler in 1940, Manolo Gonzalez, the third son of the Marquês de Torre Soto and a director of Gonzalez Byass, was sent to Portugal. After the Second World War, he continued to divide his time between Jerez and Oporto. Some good vintage Ports were declared by Gonzalez Byass as late as the 1970s. Without a reputation to uphold, they are frequently undervalued at auction. In 2001 Gonzalez Byass acquired Croft's interests in Jerez.

Gould Campbell

Symington Family Estates

Travessa Barão de Forrester, 86, Apartado 26, 4431-901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 776 300

www.symington.com

This is one of seven companies belonging to the Symington Family Estates, collectively the largest single Port shippers. Gould Campbell was founded in 1797 when Garret Gould left Ireland for Portugal and established Messrs. Gould Brothers & Co. with offices both in Lisbon and Oporto. Messrs. James Campbell, merchants and bankers, joined the partnership after the end of the Peninsular War. The company was acquired by the Symingtons (along with W. & J. Graham) in 1970.

Gould Campbell is still relatively unknown and is often thought of, somewhat unfairly, as a *sous-marque* of the more famous Symington brands. The company has no vineyards of its own and sources its fruit from independent *quintas*, mainly in the Covas area downstream from Pinhão. Gould Campbell produce some big, beefy vintage Ports, which are often good value for money but lack the finesse and refinement of their better known Symington peers.

Graham*

Symington Family Estates

Travessa Barão de Forrester, 86, Apartado 26, 4431-901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 776 300

www.symington.com

Graham is indisputably one of the great names of Port. The company is of Scottish origin and began as a Glasgow-based textile concern. With an office in Oporto, the firm entered the wine trade by accident in 1820 after accepting twenty-seven pipes of Port in lieu of a bad debt. The Graham family name has a strong presence in Oporto, linked to Port, construction and textiles. There is even an area of the city at the western end of the Avenida da Boavista known as 'Graham'. W. & J. Graham continued to belong to the family until 1970 when, like so many others, the business fell on hard times and was sold. It was bought by the Symington family who also own Cockburn, Dow and Warre.

Graham Ports are closely identified with Quinta dos Malvedos overlooking the Douro near Tua, which was bought for the company in 1890. Following the Second World War, the vineyard went into decline and the property was sold off, only to be repurchased in a poor state in 1982. In the interim, much of Graham's finest Port was sourced from Quinta das Lages in the Rio Torto and this continues to be an important component in the vintage *lote*. Malvedos was completely replanted and a new winery has been built on the site, equipped with robotic *lagares*. Over a third of Graham's 2000, one of the best wines of the vintage, was made by robotic *lagar*. Although the Malvedos name has been used purely as a brand in the past, an SQVP is now bottled in good undeclared years under the Malvedos label.

Graham Ports are generally richer, sweeter and rather more fleshy than wines from the other houses belonging to the Symington family (3.8 degrees Baumé as opposed to 3.3 Baumé for Dow). The company boasts a phenomenally good range of wines. Six Grapes is an upmarket reserve that always does well in comparative tastings. Graham's powerful, fruit-driven LBV is also consistently good; richer than most and invariably satisfying. Fined before bottling, it counts among the best of the modern genre and has deservedly become brand leader in the UK market. Graham's ten- and twenty-year-old tawnies have a sumptuous, mellow texture that make them all too easy to drink.

The house style is best illustrated by Graham's exceptional vintage Ports, which are consistently rich, plump and fleshy, yet backed by a rod of tannin, which is often concealed behind the fruit. Among recent vintages, 2007, 2000, 1997 and 1994 are wines in the classic mould, balancing intensely sweet, concentrated fruit with beguilingly firm, broad tannins. Graham's 1970, 1963 and 1945 are among the finest vintage Ports declared in the twentieth century. It already looks as though 2000 will be among the finest vintage Ports of the twenty first.

Cruz

Gran Cruz Porto, Sociedade Comercial de Vinhos SA

Rua José Mariani, 390, 4400-195 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 746 460

www.portocruz.net

Almost unknown in English-speaking markets, Porto Cruz is a bestseller in France and Belgium/Luxembourg. With annual sales of around ten million bottles, Cruz is the largest single brand of Port. The company was established in 1887 and was bought in 1974 by the French drinks distribution group Martiniquaise, who also own Justino's and Henriques & Henriques in Madeira.

Cruz is simple, clever and very efficient exercise in branding. Around 70 per cent of all the wine is bought in from co-operatives and the company has very few employees. The lodges are impressive, with 230 wooden *balseiros* holding 45,000 litres of wine each and stainless steel vats each with a capacity of 350,000 litres. Highly automated, Cruz were one of the first companies to mechanise bottling. The bestselling wine is the Cruz tawny, a soft, easy-drinking, lightweight wine which spends a year in wood and goes down well in France as an aperitif. Cruz also produces white Port, ruby, reserve, ten- and twenty- year-old tawny, LBV and, since 1982, vintage. Wines in the latter category are sweet, rather jammy and early maturing. Cruz also own C. da Silva, and together their annual sales amount to twenty-four million bottles.

At the time of writing Porto Cruz are planning on moving their entire operation to the Douro, leaving a visitor centre and restaurant in Vila Nova de Gaia.

Hunt Roope

Hunt Roope has one of the longest and most colourful histories in the Port business. It was established by a number of the Dartmouth and Devon families of Newman, Roope, Holdsworth, Hunt and Teage. The Newmans carried out a thriving trade in dried cod (*bacalhau*) with their own ships as far back as the fifteenth century. In 1735 Hunt Roope opened lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia and Viana do Castelo, the former for wine, the latter for fish. The company's ships had a number of escapades and adventures; for instance, their brig *Jenny*, en route to London with a cargo of Port, beat off a French privateer with eighteen guns. This is commemorated in a panel of *azulejos* (tiles) on the wall of the *adeiga* at Quinta da Eira Velha, which belonged to the Newmans until 2007. Ferreira bought the firm of Hunt Roope in 1956. With the exception of a Hunt Roope 1963, all vintage Ports were bottled under the name Tuke Holdsworth.

Quinta do Infantado

Quinta do Infantado - Vinhos do Produtor SA

Rua Pedro Escobar, 140-A 4150-596 Porto

Tel. (351) 226 100 865

www.quintadoinfantado.com

Infantado began selling Port on the domestic market in 1979 and was already well established by the time the law changed in 1986 allowing wines to be exported directly from the Douro

without going through the *entrepoto* in Gaia. Until 1978, Infantado sold wine to Taylor. The estate belongs to the Roseira family, who endeavour to farm Quinta do Infantado's forty-five hectares of vineyard using the minimum amounts of pesticide and herbicide. Two plots are completely organic and Quinta do Infantado bottles a small quantity of powerful, concentrated organic reserve Port.

João Roseira is in charge of the winemaking while his sister Catarina runs the business side. Most LBV and vintage Port is foot-trodden *lagar*. Infantado's 2000 was entirely foot trodden. Wines are much drier in style than average (2.4–2.7 degrees Baumé) but make up for this with huge concentration of fruit. Infantado's 1997 vintage Port is incredibly dense and opulent, made from fruit picked at 16 or 17 Baumé and fortified with 50 litres of *aguardente* as opposed to the 100 litres per pipe that would normally be required. Infantado's LBV is only produced from non-vintage years and is effectively declassified vintage Port. In 1991 Infantado produced a varietal vintage Port made entirely from Touriga Nacional. Although the legislation does allow for varietal Port to be sold as such, it is to my knowledge the first such Port on the market.

Casal dos Jordões*

Arlindo da Costa Pinto e Cruz

Casais do Douro, 5130-052 São João de Pesqueira

Tel. (351) 254 738 302 / (351) 259 092 358

www.winedouro.com/index_en.html

The Jordão family are the only producers making entirely organic Port, certified in Portugal by Socert. Their forty-three hectares of vineyard are well located in the Rio Torto at an altitude ranging from 90 to 300 metres above sea level. Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz and Tinta Barocca are the principal grape varieties. The company produces reserve ruby and tawny Ports as well as organic Douro wines under the Quinta da Esteveira label. I have only tasted their reserve Port which is full bodied, rich and spicy. Casal dos Jordões also produce organic olive oil.

Kopke*

C. N. Kopke & Ca. Lda

Rua de Serpa Pinto, 183-191, Apartado 42, 4431-901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 752 420

www.kopkeports.com

Established by a German, Cristiano Kopke, in 1638, this is the oldest company of foreign origin in Portugal. Little is known of the intervening period as much of the company's heritage was destroyed by a fire in 1882. Kopke was bought by Barros Almeida in 1953 and became part of Spanish-owned Sogevinus in 2006 but is still run as a separate entity with its own cavernous lodge in Gaia.

Kopke boasts a very fine range of tawnies and colheitas with stocks going back to 1938. Vintage Ports can also be impressive, particularly the 1970, which has developed better than some of the well-known names. The wines are based on Quinta de São Luíz, which was

acquired by the company in 1922 and now serves as one of the main vinification centres for the companies belonging to Sogevinus. (See also Barros, Burmester and Cálém.)

Krohn

Wiese & Krohn Sucrs, Lda

Rua Dr. António Granjo, 122, Apartado 1, 4401-901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 771 720

www.krohn.pt

Norway is not a country usually associated with Port – until that Portuguese delicacy *bacalhau* (salt cod) enters the equation. Theodor Wiese and Dankert Krohn were in the business of selling fish to Portugal and shipped Port back to Norway, setting up their own firm in 1865. In 1906, an English family by the name of Arnsby briefly entered the business but the company came under the control of Edmundo Augusto Carneiro in 1937. Wiese & Krohn is currently run by the third generation of the Carneiro family, represented by José Falcão Carneiro and his sister Iolanda.

Wiese & Krohn has developed a good reputation for colheitas and aged tawnies. It maintains remarkable stocks of old Port with one wine dating back to 1863, two years prior to the foundation of the company. This is almost undrinkably concentrated with an aroma and flavour of black molasses. Such wines are occasionally used to add complexity to younger blends. Krohn's twenty-year-old tawnies and colheitas from the 1950s and 1960s generally combine a lifted character with the sweetness and concentration that comes from ageing in wood. I have, however, come across some rather rustic and alarmingly oxidised wines.

Krohn's frequent vintage declarations are often overlooked. Although lighter than the mainstream, in many years the wines are soft and elegant for drinking in the mid-term. In 1989 Krohn bought a small vineyard, Quinta do Retiro Novo in the Torto Valley, which serves as the company's main vinification centre. Krohn is unusual in that the winemaking is overseen by two women: Maria José Aguiar and Iolanda Carneiro.

Martinez

c/o Symington Family Estates

Travessa Barão de Forrester, 86, Apartado 26, 4431-901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 776 300

www.symington.com

Martinez is a distinguished, old-established Port firm with a relatively low profile today. It was founded in 1790 by Sebastian Gonzalez Martinez, who sold Port, Sherry and cigars from an office in Mincing Lane in the City of London. In 1822 Martinez was joined by an Englishman, John Peter Gassiot. They acquired a lodge in Vila Nova de Gaia in 1834 and entrusted the management to John Fleurriet Delaforce, founding father of the Delaforce dynasty in Portugal. By the time Sebastian Martinez retired in 1849, the company was the largest shipper of Port and Sherry to the UK. The business passed to the Gassiot. By the turn of the twentieth century, they had no successors and

Martinez Gassiot became a public company in 1902. In 1961 it was taken over by Harvey of Bristol. A year later Harvey acquired Cockburn and two of the keenest rivals in the Port trade found themselves together under the same umbrella. Both companies formed part of Allied Domecq before being taken over by the Symington Family in 2010. The Symingtons intend to retain Martinez as a specialist Port brand in certain markets.

Under Allied Domecq, Martinez was largely relegated to a vehicle for 'own label' sales. Nevertheless, a small amount of Port was bottled under the Martinez label including some good aged tawnies and middle-weight vintage. Past Martinez vintages (like 1963) were relatively lightweight, but wines from 1994, 1991 and 1985 score more highly than those from its sibling Cockburn in comparative tastings. Until 2007 Martinez had the additional support of Quinta da Eira Velha, which was also bottled as a single-*quinta* vintage Port.

Messias

Sociedade Agricola e Commercial dos Vinhos Messias SA

Rua José Mariani, 139, Apartado 1566, 4401-901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 745 770

www.cavesmessias.pt

The Messias family entered the Port business in 1934 and run it in tandem with a winery in Bairrada. The company has a substantial vineyard holding in the Douro with two properties, Quinta do Cachão and Quinta do Rei at Ferradosa in the Douro Superior, adding up to 130 hectares of vines. The company's main markets are Belgium, Holland and Portugal and, reflecting demand, the majority of its wines tend to be light and insubstantial young tawnies. Messias has a rather quirky approach to vintages, declaring years like 1979, 1984 and 1989. From 1989 to 1994, Quinta do Cachão underwent substantial replanting and no vintages were declared. In the 1970s and 1980s, Messias vintage Ports have proved to be very variable in quality but I have tasted some attractive wines from the 1960s, among them the fresh, floral Cachão 1960. Messias also produce a range of Douro wines from Quinta do Cachão.

Morgan

Morgan dates back to 1715 and the company remained in family hands until 1952 when it was bought by Croft. The company had a strong reputation for tawny Port in the nineteenth century and the old Morgan brand of 'Dixon's Double Diamond' is mentioned by Dickens in *Nicholas Nickleby*. When Croft was sold by Diageo to the Fladgate Partnership in 2001, it was a requirement of the sale that the Morgan brand name should no longer be used, owing to the fact that Captain Morgan rum is owned by Diageo.

Niepoort

Niepoort (Vinhos) SA

Rua Candido dos Reis, 670, 4400-071 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 777 770

www.niepoort-vinhos.com

For five generations this Dutch-owned family firm has been hoarding wines in a cramped lodge in the heart of Vila Nova de Gaia. The firm was founded in 1842 and, for many years, Niepoort lay virtually undiscovered, particularly in English-speaking markets. Dirk Niepoort, who took over the reins from his father Rolf, has done much to promote the family name at the same time as maintaining and building on the quality of the firm's wines. Although single-minded about wine, his interests extend way beyond Port and the Douro. Dirk Niepoort has been dabbling in wine throughout northern Portugal and has built up an eclectic cellar of wines from around the world. His commitment shows.

Until the late 1980s, the company had no vineyards of its own. Instead Niepoort built up strong contacts with small farmers, mainly in and around the Pinhão valley. In 1988 and 1989, Niepoort bought two adjoining properties, Quinta de Napoles and Quinta do Carril overlooking the River Tedo, giving them a total of fifty hectares of grade-A vines. The company owns the Museu dos Lagares in Vale de Mendiz where Ports are made under the auspices of Nick Delaforce (ex-Croft and Delaforce). Niepoort have built a new winery, designed by an Austrian architect and mostly for Douro wines, at Quinta de Napoles.

Niepoort earned its reputation for some fine tawnies and colheitas, but from ruby to vintage, Niepoort ship small quantities of excellent wines. Vintage Ports tend to be solid and foursquare in their youth, not as 'showy' as some, needing time for that surly facade to break down to display underlying fruit and finesse. Niepoort 1970, 1955 and 1927 count among the very best of those vintages: huge, concentrated wines with the power and depth to develop further in bottle (even the 1927). Recent vintages have proved impressive with a ripe, tannic underbelly supporting dense, concentrated fruit although there is a worrying incidence of volatile (vinegary) wines from 1987, 1994 and 1997. LBVs produced in larger quantities from interim years are bottled unfiltered and, given sufficient bottle age, they can be more impressive than some shippers' fully declared vintages!

The company also bottles a very fine array of aged tawnies, graduating from so-called 'Junior', through 'Senior' to ten-, twenty- and thirty-year-old wines, all of which belong in the premier league. Stocks of colheitas date back to 1935, becoming increasingly maderised with age, and I was recently presented with a half-bottle of extraordinarily rich dessert white Port dating back to 1895. Niepoort is unique in maintaining a stock of garrafeira Ports, which age in wood followed by glass demi-johns before being 'decanted' into bottles. In an era when many Port shippers have become prey to economies of scale and standardisation, Niepoort is a welcome idiosyncrasy.

Quinta do Noval*

Quinta do Noval - Vinhos, SA

Avenida Diogo Leite, 256, Apartado 1319, 4401-111 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel.(351) 223 770 270

www.quintadonoval.com

Noval brought the word ‘*quinta*’ into the international lexicon. The property first appeared in the land registries in 1715 and passed through the hands of the Rebello Valente family and Visconde de Vilar d’Allen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Having been ravaged by phylloxera in the 1880s, Quinta do Noval was sold in 1894 to Port shipper António José da Silva. The estate was thoroughly renovated and the major part of the vineyard was replanted on phylloxera-resistant American rootstock. It seems, however, that da Silva planted a small parcel of vines on their own roots, thoroughly fumigating the soil in advance. This marked the beginning of Quinta do Noval’s now legendary Nacional Port, produced entirely from ungrafted vines (see below).

António José da Silva was followed into the business by his son-in-law Luís Vasconcelos Porto, who ran Noval for nearly three decades. Vasconcelos continued where da Silva left off, transforming many of the narrow terraces into the wider inclined terraces that made better use of the space and allowed more exposure to the sun. He also did much to build Quinta do Noval’s reputation in the UK, targeting Noval’s sales on Oxford and Cambridge colleges as well as private clubs. Noval claims a number of firsts: the first inclined terraces (*socalcos*) were apparently built here in the 1920s; the first tawnies with an indication of age and, more controversially, Noval claims the first LBV dating from the mid-1950s.

Vasconcelos retired in 1963 and his grandsons, Fernando and Luís van Zeller, took over the running of the company. This marked a turning point. The vineyard was not as well looked after and Noval’s wines began to suffer after 1970. In 1981 the company suffered a fire at its lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia, which destroyed 350,000 litres of stock as well as the company’s archives. This, combined with a long-running family dispute, eventually brought the company to its knees. In 1993 the van Zeller family sold out to the French insurance company AXA. Quinta do Noval is now part of AXA Millésimes, a group that includes a number of distinguished Bordeaux chateaux (Château Pichon Longueville, Château Suduiraut) and owns Disnoko in the Tokay region of Hungary. The Noval vineyard was largely replanted from 1994 onwards. Noval is very ably managed from France by the Managing Director of AXA Millésimes, Christian Seely, who has spent years ‘putting things right’ – to use his own words. Continuity has been maintained by António Agrellos who worked for the van Zellers and looks after the estate and the winemaking.

Taking advantage of the change in legislation in 1986, Noval moved lock, stock, and barrel from the Vila Nova de Gaia *entrepoto* to the Douro. A lodge was built on the estate with air-conditioning to mitigate the summer heat, and a bottling plant has been set up on the cooler *altos* above Alijó. About one third of the company’s production originates from Noval’s own vineyards, which include the neighbouring Quinta das Canadas and

Quinta do Noval Nacional

Ungrafted vines are a rarity in Europe, having succumbed to phylloxera in the nineteenth century. Although the odd survivor is occasionally found, there is nothing like Noval's Nacional vineyard. It comprises around six thousand vines planted on traditional terraces either side of the main drive to the house at Noval. The name is derived from the fact that the vines are planted on their own roots ('attached to the soil of the nation') without recourse to American rootstock. Vines are generally replanted on an individual basis when they become weak from age or disease. The age of the vineyard therefore averages around thirty-five years, although there are individual vines up to eighty years old. It is therefore a complete misnomer to describe them as 'pre-phylloxera vines', a phrase that appeared on the label of Nacional Port as recently as 1994. The Nacional vines are much less vigorous than the surrounding vineyard and berries tend to be small, yielding around 15 hectolitres per hectare (compared to an average of 30 to 35 hectolitres per hectare elsewhere on the estate). There is a relatively high percentage of Sousão, which contributes colour to the blend. The grapes are worked hard with five men treading for five days in a small *lagar* (capacity no more than five pipes). The must is fortified when the sugar levels decline to about 8 degrees Baumé and run off into stainless steel where it spends the winter before being racked into well-used pipes. Over a two-year period, the wine is regularly re-tasted, and if it is not of a sufficiently high standard it is not declared. Christian Seely declares that there are some 'secret Nacionais' that may be released in twenty years, and there is speculation about a future Nacional colheita.

Quinta do Noval Nacional is one of the most powerfully concentrated of all vintage Ports with a deep opaque colour when young and an almost overpowering intensity of liquorice and bitter chocolate fruit. It is not merely confined to generally declared vintages, a trait established in 1931 when just three shippers had the temerity to declare. The wine is all the more remarkable for the fact that the vines were only around five years old at the time. The 1931 Nacional is legendary for being the most expensive bottle of Port ever sold, fetching US\$5,900 (c. £4,000) at the Graycliffe Restaurant in the Bahamas in 1988. It is such a rarity that Christian Seely who manages the Noval estate has never tasted it; neither have I!

The 1962, 1963, 1966 and 1970 Nacional belong to the days when the estate was still being well managed and count among the finest vintage Ports that I have tasted: tight-knit and intensely ripe, with flavours of dark chocolate liquorice and allspice shrouded in tannin. There was a dip in quality in the 1970s and 1980s. Since 1994, recent vintages have been outstanding with 2003, 2001, 2000, 1997, 1996 and 1994 all declared. Noval's Nacional is only available on a strict allocation basis and bottles rarely come to auction where they always fetch more than any other vintage Port. The entire declaration amounts to an average of around 250 cases, of which 80 cases are sold at the time of declaration.

Croft tried to emulate Nacional in the 1980s by planting an ungrafted vineyard at Quinta da Roêda, but the vines were attacked by phylloxera and died.

rented properties in the Roncão valley. Noval now extends to 109 hectares including Canadas, with a further 35 hectares in Roncão. Wines bearing the name 'Quinta do Noval' are produced entirely from grapes grown on the estate whereas 'Noval' signifies a wine sourced from other growers. Around half the *quinta's* production is foot trodden in *lagar*. Noval's technological makeover includes a robotic treader which works in the existing stone *lagares* but each one is foot trodden first.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Quinta do Noval had a somewhat patchy record for vintage Port, preferring to declare 1978 and 1982 to 1977 and 1983 respectively. Since AXA took over, this slightly idiosyncratic approach to vintage declarations has continued with declarations in 1994 and 1995 as well as 2003 and 2004. But since 1994 declarations have been much smaller than in the past, sometimes amounting to less than a thousand cases. The overall quality of Noval's Ports has risen considerably and in recent vintages Noval and Noval Nacional have been among the very best wines of the vintage. Since 1995 the name 'Silval' is attached to a vintage Port made from grapes grown off the property. This is also rich, dense and well-made but is ready to drink earlier than Quinta do Noval itself.

Noval's entire range is extremely competent and well made. From the vibrant Noval 'Black' through a ripe, unfiltered LBV, the wines all retain freshness, power and depth. Bolstered occasionally in the past by declassified Nacional, Noval's aged tawnies are also very good: attractively rich, with a hint of tannic grip still lingering in the ten-year-old. Noval also maintains small stocks of colheita Port dating back to 1937. Colheitas and LBVs are made entirely from fruit grown on the *quinta*.

Noval also make a good range of Douro wines (see page 254) and have a shop on the waterfront at Vila Nova de Gaia.

Offley

c/o Sogrape Vinhos SA

Aldeia Nova, 4430-809, Avintes, Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 227 850 300

www.sograpevinhos.eu

Offley Forrester, as it used to be styled, is a company with a long and distinguished history, which has been kicked from pillar to post for the last fifty years. Fortunately, the quality and reputation of the wines did not suffered greatly in the process. The firm was established in 1737 by William Offley, one of whose ancestors was Lord Mayor of London and another sheriff of Stratford. In 1803 he was joined in the firm by Joseph Forrester. Forrester's nephew became Baron Joseph James Forrester, the great nineteenth-century dilettante cartographer, photographer and artist who did so much to open up the Douro before drowning at Cachão de Valeira in 1862. Offley bought Quinta da Boa Vista from the Barão de Viamonte in the 1820s. In a complicated restructuring of the company involving litigation a century later, Boa Vista became separated from Offley – only to be repurchased in 1979.

In 1962, Offley Forrester was bought by Sandeman. Three years later they sold half the shares in the company to Martini & Rossi who picked up the remainder of the business

in 1983. It was sold again to Sogrape in 1996 where it now sits alongside Ferreira and Sandeman. Sogrape's acquisition of Offley was a shrewd move, reinforcing its position as one of the bestselling brands on the domestic market with an inexpensive ruby and tawny duo known as 'Duke of Oporto'. Ten-, twenty- and thirty-year-old tawnies under the Baron de Forrester label are made to a high standard and since 1988, Offley has been producing a good, unfiltered LBV, which is slightly drier in style than the norm. Offley's vintage Ports have been bottled under the name 'Boa Vista' for much of the twentieth century, even though the *quinta* was outside the company. A certain amount of confusion was created in 1987 when Offley declared two vintage Ports – Offley *per se* and Offley Boa Vista – because of demand from the US. In spite of this, Boa Vista is a brand rather than a single-*quinta* Port. Offley's vintages are not massive, long-lived wines but they do have huge appeal after ten years or so, developing wonderful violet-like aromas. Rainha Santa is a *sous-marque*.

Poças

Manoel D. Poças Junior – Vinhos SA

Rua Visconde de Devesas, 186, 4401-901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 771 070

www.pocas.pt

The Poças family is a relative newcomer to Port, having set up in business as a brandy trader in 1918. This lucrative business ceased abruptly in 1934 when the Salazar regime imposed a monopoly on the distribution of the *aguardente* used to fortify Port. The company was forced to sell its distilleries for a paltry sum and the founder's grandson, Manuel Poças Pintão, who runs the company has been vehemently opposed to the authoritarian politics of the Estado Novo ever since. Helped by the acquisition of Quinta das Quartas near Régua, the Poças family began to export wine. In spite of the depression in the early 1930s, sales grew and Poças captured lucrative markets. However, they never declared a vintage until 1960, preferring to concentrate on colheitas and tawnies instead. The company's founder, Manoel Poças Junior, firmly believed that vintage Port was the preserve of the English houses but this did not stop him from bottling small quantities for his own consumption. When he died in 1976, his grandson found 142 bottles of 1927 vintage Port stashed away in the cellar!

Since 1960 Poças has made up for lost time, declaring 1964, 1978 and 1990, as well as all the mainstream vintages. In good years like 1963, 1970, and 1995, the wines are rich, medium-bodied, middle-distance Ports although in 2000 Poças made a heavyweight which is one of the leading wines of the vintage. In 2000 Poças bought an A-grade *quinta* in the Caedo valley, now rechristened Quinta de Santa Barbara. Bottled as a single-*quinta* vintage since 2001, this will certainly help reinforce the company's position as a serious player among shippers of vintage Port.

In the past the majority of their Poças Ports were destined for Belgium, Holland and Denmark. This was reflected in the sweet, slightly jammy style of standard rubies and tawnies, shipped either under the Poças, Pousada or Seguro brands according to the

market. With Bordeaux-trained Jorge Pintão in charge of the winemaking, Poças has been going upmarket.

Quinta do Portal

Praça Francisco Sá Carneiro, 2933E 4200-314 Porto

Tel. (351) 225 512 028

www.quintadoportal.pt

The Mansilha family has owned vineyards in the Favaio area for over a century and, in 1991, set up their own company producing Port and Douro wine with a well-equipped winery near Celeirós. Grapes are sourced from four *quintas* owned by the company, all in or above the Pinhão valley. After a somewhat shaky start, the Ports have been improving, especially aged tawnies which regularly win awards. Vintage Ports have gained stature from the 1999 vintage onwards. Portal is one of very few firms to specialise in fortified Moscatel, mostly grown at Quinta de Abelheira near Favaio. Two wines are produced under the Portal label: a simple, clean, aromatic youthful non-vintage and a richer, more subdued *reserva* with the appeal of thick-cut marmalade. Unusually for this style of wine, it also has a hint of new oak.

Quarles Harris

Symington Family Estates

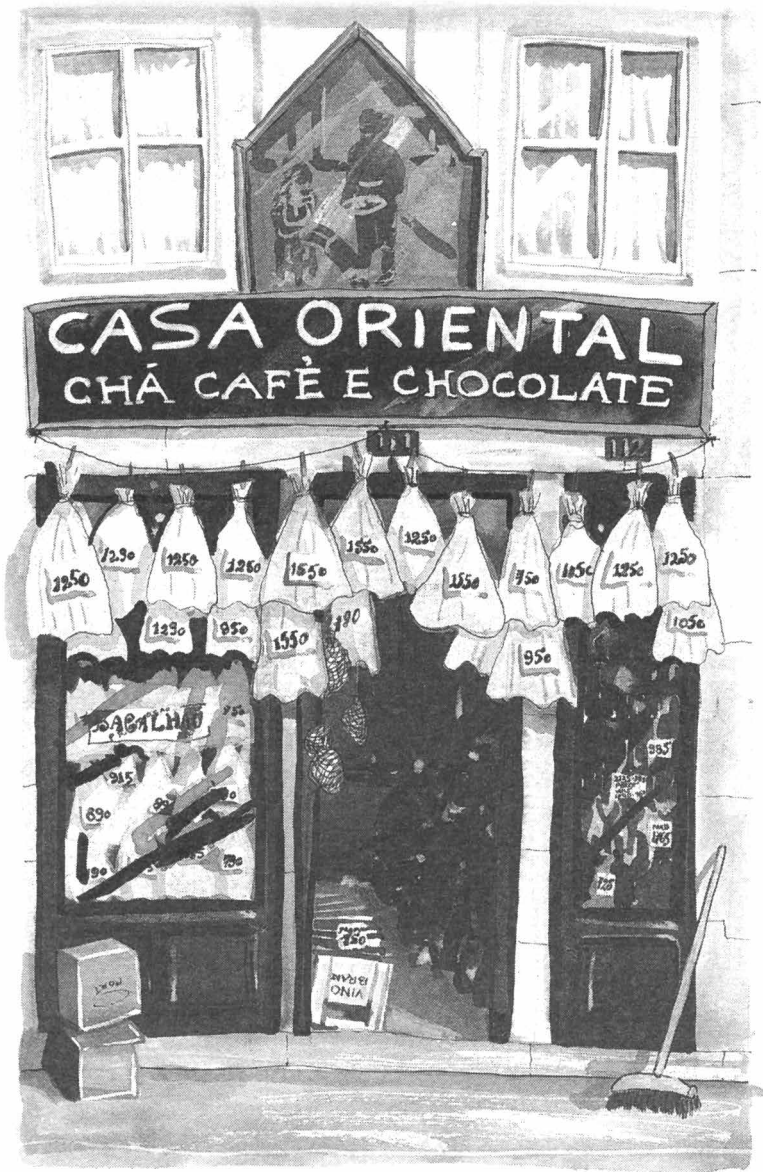
Travessa Barnão de Forrester, 86, Apartado 26, 4431-901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 776 300

www.symington.com

Founded by Thomas Dawson in 1680, Quarles Harris is among the oldest of all the Port houses. The Harris family were wine suppliers in the City of London and entered the company when Quarles Harris married Dorothea Dawson in 1752. The firm grew substantially during the latter part of the eighteenth century and by 1792 Quarles Harris was the second largest Port shipper. It remained independent until the 1920s when Reginald Quarles Harris sold the firm to Andrew James Symington, who was related to him by marriage.

The Symington family manages Quarles Harris in tandem with two other subsidiary brands, Smith Woodhouse and Gould Campbell. It is the least well known of all the Symington houses and the name is often incorrectly pronounced ('Quarles' rhymes with 'squalls'). The company has no dedicated vineyards to call its own and represents a deft exercise in blending. At the upper end of the spectrum, Quarles Harris produces some good vintage Ports that are well made and well priced. Vinified and blended to a firm, dry style that often resembles Dow, the wines don't have the same depth or staying power. In a comparative tasting with Smith Woodhouse and Gould Campbell vintage Ports from 1970 to 1994 held in 2011, Quarles Harris was the weakest of the three.



Bacalhau

Ramos Pinto

Adriano Ramos Pinto (Vinhos) SA

Avenida Ramos Pinto, 380, 4400-266 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 707 000

www.ramospinto.pt

Ramos Pinto has long been a company with foresight. In 1880 Adriano Ramos Pinto founded a Port shipper in his own name with the idea of tapping into the competitive Brazilian market. At this time most wine was shipped in bulk and little attention was paid either to marketing, presentation or image. Ramos Pinto backed his sales drive with a series of rather risqué posters depicting scantily clad women. *Tentação* (temptation) was the byword – the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms would certainly draw the line at such advertising today! The campaign succeeded and Ramos Pinto managed to sell its wines at twice the price of Ports normally shipped to Brazil.

The firm suffered more than most when the Brazilian market collapsed in the 1920s, but continued in family hands. In the early 1970s José Ramos Pinto Rosas was among the first to enter the brave new world of the Douro Superior when he purchased Quinta de Santa Maria (now Quinta da Ervamoira) for the company (see page 121). Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, Ramos Pinto was at the forefront of research and development in the Douro, while its ornate, brightly painted lodge on the waterfront at Gaia remained in a time warp without a computer in sight. In 1990 the Champagne house Louis Roederer stepped in to purchase a controlling stake in the firm and began introducing some necessary changes in the management of the company as well as maintaining a commitment to investment in the Douro. Winemaker João Nicolau de Almeida (son of Fernando Nicolau de Almeida of Barca Velha fame and a direct descendant of the founders) exudes enthusiasm for all the work that has been carried out at Ramos Pinto's four widely spread Douro *quintas*: Bom Retiro and Urtiga in the Rio Torto and Bons Ares and Ervamoira in the Douro Superior. The latter, threatened for many years by a hydro-electric dam project, was saved following the discovery of Palaeolithic rock engravings in the Côa valley. In 1998 it was declared a World Heritage Site.

Ramos Pinto is better known for its wood Ports than for vintages. Single-*quinta* vintages from Quinta de Ervamoira can be impressively ripe and minty in style. Fruit from Quinta da Ervamoira provides the basis for a rich, candied ten-year-old tawny, with Bom Retiro producing one of the finest of all twenty-year-olds: pale, delicate, poised and supremely refined. The company produces 'Collector', a ripe, spicy, reserve Port and also a rich, unfiltered LBV, which has the capacity to age. A 1927 'LBV' from Bom Retiro (bottled in 1932) was still alive though soft and creamy with age when the cork was drawn in 1998. In line with its forward-thinking approach, Ramos Pinto was one of the first of the major Port shippers to spend time and effort in producing a range of unfortified Douro wines (see Chapter 7).

Robertson

Established in 1847, Robertson Bros. once owned the famous Quinta do Roncão upstream from Pinhão. In 1881 the company took over Rebello Valente, which it reserved as a brand name for its renowned vintage Ports. After a number of changes of ownership, Robertson was taken over by Sandeman in 1963. Since 1970 Rebello Valente Vintage Ports have been disappointingly light in style and are no longer produced.

Romariz

Rua de Rei Ramiro 318, 4400-280 Vila Nova de Gaia
Tel. (351) 223 742 800

With a strong presence in Portugal and on the continent of Europe, Romariz is almost unknown in English-speaking markets. The company was founded in 1850 by Manoel de Rocha Romariz and spent many years trading with South America, especially Brazil. In 1966 the last of the Romariz family retired and sold the brand to Guimaraens & Co. It was subsequently reconstituted as an independent company in 1987 by a British consortium closely linked to Taylor. The company is now managed by Albino Jorge. Without any vineyards of its own, Romariz is mostly a commodity business selling large volumes of standard tawny under the Reserva Latina label, as well as Douro wines.

Quinta de la Rosa*

Quinta da Rosa – Vinhos do Porto, Lda

Quinta de la Rosa
5085-215 Pinhão
Tel. (351) 254 732 254
www.quintadelarosa.com

Father and daughter, Tim and Sophia Bergqvist, are leading pioneers of single-*quinta* Port. This A-grade property near Pinhão has been in the family since 1906, but by the early 1980s the Bergqvists felt that the wines were underperforming. Helped by the change in legislation in 1986, the family wrested control of the winemaking from Sandeman (who used La Rosa for Robertson/Rebello Valente) and began to produce their own single-*quinta* vintage Port. Despite being soft and relatively early maturing, their first vintage (1988) was a significant improvement on wines from the 1970s and early 1980s. All the grapes for La Rosa's vintage Port are now trodden in stone *lagares* before fermentation whereas Sandeman used the ill-fated *movimosto* system (see page 132). With increasingly rigorous selection, recent vintages have gained greatly in stature and, depending on the year, are now wines for drinking in the medium to long term. 1997 and 2000 are the best wines that La Rosa has produced to date. In 1999 a super-concentrated vintage Port was bottled from Vale do Inferno, the most sheltered part of the Quinta with some of the oldest vines.

La Rosa works on the 'chateau principle', declaring a vintage in all but the poorest of years. At the time of writing, 1993 is the only year to have been bypassed. With one of the largest traditional *armazens* in the Douro, La Rosa also acts increasingly like a Port house in its own right. The Bergqvists ship an increasingly broad range of wines spanning standard ruby and tawny, a robust

premium ruby known as 'Finest Reserve' and a ten-year-old tawny. Apart from vintage Port, La Rosa's most fulfilling wines are a firm-flavoured, unfiltered LBV and a properly wood-aged, dry white Port. All the wines are aged on the property, which reinforces the house style.

Quinta de la Rosa began producing a red Douro wine in 1990 (see Chapter 7). They also sell olive oil from the property.

Royal Oporto

Companhia Geral da Agricultura das Vinhas do Alto Douro, SA

Rua Azevedo Magalhães, 314, Apartado 22, 4431-952 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 775 100

www.realcompanhiavelha.pt

Known in English as 'Royal Oporto' and in Portuguese as Real Companhia Velha (RCV), this company has a controversial history. It was established in 1756 by Royal Charter as a monopoly controlled by the then Prime Minister, the Marquês de Pombal. With its headquarters at Régua, the Companhia continued to enjoy numerous privileges and regulatory powers into the nineteenth century. It was briefly dissolved but re-established in 1865 as a public company.

The firm grew quickly in the twentieth century, becoming the largest single Port shipper some years before downsizing in the late 1990s. For many years the fortunes of the company have centred on one man, Manuel da Silva Reis, who began as an office boy in the firm of Souza Guedes and by the early 1970s owned twelve wine-producing companies including Pombal's former monopoly. Then came a setback: following the 1974 revolution, Royal Oporto was occupied by its workforce and nationalised by the government. In an effort to keep afloat, much of the company's better-quality Port was sold off to other shippers. The company was returned to the Silva Reis family in 1978, stripped of its most important asset, and Manuel da Silva Reis never forgave the other shippers for purchasing Royal Oporto's stock. In 1990, 40 per cent of the firm was bought by the Casa do Douro, one of Port's quasi-official controlling bodies. Tantamount to insider dealing, this sent a wave of protest through the establishment. The government nevertheless consented to the sale before acting to withdraw many of the Casa do Douro's regulatory powers. The acquisition of RCV virtually bankrupted the Casa do Douro.

RCV is the second largest single vineyard owner in the Douro after the Symingtons. The company's principal estate is Quinta das Carvalhas, which covers an entire hill opposite Pinhão, crowned by the famous round house. Quinta dos Acipretes faces Tua, Quinta do Cidró is on the plateau near São João de Pesqueira, and Quinta Casal da Granja, on the *altos* near Alijó, serves as the company's main vinification centre.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, RCV tended to put quantity before quality. Frequently declared vintages were weak and the company's main focus lay in shipping large volumes of standard tawny to France at bargain-basement prices. The wines have been sold under any number of different names, among them Silva Reis, Souza Guedes, Hooper's, Pitters, Real Companhia Velha and Royal Oporto. Since the late 1990s the company has changed direction under the under the auspices of Pedro da Silva Reis (Manuel's second son). Douro

wines have gained in importance and the company is focusing on higher quality across the board. Aged tawnies (particularly the twenty-year-old) are balanced, refined and delicate. After a let up in vintage declarations in the early 1990s, Royal Oporto's 1997 vintage Port showed a return to form perhaps not seen since the 1950s.

Rozès*

SPR Vinhos SA

Rua Candido dos Reis, 526-532, Apartado 376, 4401- 070 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 771 680

www.rozes.com.pt

The fortunes of Rozès have been linked inextricably with those of France since the firm was founded by Bordeaux wine merchant Ostende Rozès in 1855. His son Edmond developed the brand name 'Rozès' and established a lodge in Vila Nova de Gaia. During the Second World War the company ceased trading when the partners returned to France to take part in the Resistance. Activities only resumed again in 1956 when Guy and Yves Rozès returned to Portugal. The company was sold by the family in 1974 and, after a number of changes of ownership, Rozès was bought by the French luxury goods conglomerate LVMH (Louis Vuitton Moët-Hennessy) in 1987. Having built up the brand, the company was sold on to the Vranken Group (now known as Vranken-Pommery-Monopole) in 1999 who merged the company with São Pedro das Águias three years later.

Having had no vineyards of its own, since 1999 Rozès has built up a vineyard holding high in the Douro Superior on the Spanish border. Many of the wines bear the brand name Terras de Grifó and are made from the three properties in the Douro, the principal one being Quinta de Grifó, named after the vultures in the area. Rozès Ports have improved in quality and since 2000 vintages are to be taken more seriously. Prior to 1997, Rozès vintage Ports tend to be simple and early maturing.

Sandeman

c/o Sogrape Vinhos SA

Aldeia Nova, 4430-809, Avintes, Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 227 838 104

www.sograpevinhos.eu

The Sandeman Don is one of the most instantly recognisable of all logos (see page 39) and helped to propel Sandeman into being one of the largest single Port brands. The company was formed by a Scotsman, George Sandeman, in 1790. He was lent £300 by his father and began selling Port from Tom's Coffee House off Cornhill in the City of London. The business flourished and by 1792 Sandeman was representing the sherries of James Duff of Cadiz (forerunner of Duff Gordon). In the same year he shipped and bottled one of the earliest vintage Ports: Sandeman 1790. As the business grew, Sandeman moved from the coffee house and eventually established a headquarters at St Swithin's Lane, also in London. The company remained there until the lease finally expired in 1969.

On his death in 1841, Sandeman was followed into the business by his nephew, George Glas Sandeman, who enlarged the company to include insurance and the export of British linen and textiles. The firm even ran its own schooner, the *Hoopoe*, which plied the high seas under the company flag until 1875. George Glas Sandeman was the first in a long line of Sandemans whose direct descendants continue to oversee the firm today. Under his son, Albert George Sandeman, the firm began to promote its own brand name and in 1880 the House of Sandeman became the first Port shipper to export wine bottled and labelled in Oporto. In the early years of the twentieth century, the firm began a high-profile marketing and advertising campaign based on the Sandeman partners. 'Three Star', 'Picador' and 'Partners' were the Sandeman Port brands of the day. The Don reinforced Sandeman's pre-eminent position at a time when other shippers were still shipping Port in bulk without brand names of their own.

Despite the focus on volume, Sandeman's vintage Ports were among the very best in the business. A vertical tasting held in London in 2011 showed how the wines excelled, sometimes in unusual years like 1948, 1950, 1965 and 1967. There were some outstanding wines from mainstream vintages like 1966, 1955, and 1935, even back to an ethereal 1873. But standards began to change after the Sandeman family lost control of the company when it was forced to go public in 1952. For the late David Sandeman, who chaired the firm from London in the 1980s, this marked 'the beginning of the end'. The company became easy prey for a takeover. Forestalling an unfriendly bid from Rumasa, chief predator in the Sherry trade of the 1970s, the firm was sold to drinks multinational Seagram in 1980. With control of the company remote from both Jerez and Oporto, Sandeman seemed to wander directionless and the wines lacked something as a result. From 1970 onwards vintages shed much of their depth and dimension while Founder's Reserve, one of the bestselling brands of Port in the US, became a pale relic of its former self.

In 1990 Sandeman celebrated its bicentenary. It proved to be something of a milestone in the company's history, marking the beginning of a period of retrenchment. George Sandeman was appointed Managing Director in Oporto, bringing back the direct involvement of the family. Quinta do Confradeiro, a relatively low-grade vineyard, was sold and over three hundred farmers were laid off, leaving the firm with Quinta do Vau, an A-grade riverside vineyard which the company purchased in 1988. After a run of rather light vintage Ports in the early 1980s, Sandeman decided not to make a declaration between 1985 and 1994. Based on Quinta do Vau, which was extensively replanted at the end of the 1980s, Sandeman's vintage Ports changed in style with the 1994 and subsequent declared vintages showing more depth and breadth.

One style of wine, which never suffered during the years of upheaval, is aged tawny. Sandeman possess excellent stocks of old wine, some of which are aged at Cambres in the Douro, which form a chain of tawnies from Imperial Tawny Reserve (approximately seven years old) to a distinguished forty-year-old. These wines regularly win trophies in international wine competitions.

In 2001 Sandeman's Port and Sherry interests were acquired by Sogrape, who now run the company in tandem with Ferreira and Offley. Quinta do Seixo, once a Ferreira

property, has been rebranded to Sandeman. As if to show their intent, in 2007 Sandeman made a solid, serious vintage Port for the first time in over forty years. Sogrape are working hard to revive the Sandeman brand in the US, UK and the Republic of Ireland which have traditionally been Sandeman's strongest markets.

Senhora do Convento

Sociedade de Vinhos Senhora do Convento, SA

Quinta de S. Pedro das Águias – Tavora, 5120 Tabuaço

Tel. (351) 254 782 070

www.senhoradoconvento.com

This magnificent property deep in the Tavora valley dates back to the twelfth century. It was a Cistercian monastery until 1834 when it fell into the hands of the state following the abolition of the religious orders. In 1986 it was bought by Paul Vranken who established São Pedro das Águias ('St Peter of the Eagles') as a Port brand, mainly for the French market. A decade later, the monastery and vineyards were separated from the brand as part of a divorce settlement and Quinta de São Pedro das Águias now belongs to Vranken's ex-wife, Mauricette Mordant. The estate comprises eighty-five hectares of vineyard split between four *quintas*, all in the Tavora valley. Much of the vineyard property is on granite, so only forty-two hectares have *benefício* for Port. In 1999 Mme. Mordant established Porto Heredias, which now produces a full range of Ports from ruby through to vintage; Senhora do Convento is the company's second brand. The wines are not, as yet, made on the estate although there are plans to build an *adeiga*; however, the cool granite cellars underneath the monastery are unique in the Douro and perfect for ageing (one of the cellars even served as the local prison until 1986). With the exception of old tawnies which are bought in, Senhora do Convento Ports are characterised by their fresh, vibrant fruit flavours. Vintage Ports declared from 2000 and 2001 not as big or bold as some but fine, middle-distance wines with lovely purity of fruit. Senhora do Convento also produce Douro wines. The monastery has been restored and is open to overnight guests (*turismo de habitação*).

C. da Silva

(see under Dalva)

Silva & Cosens Ltd

(see under Dow)

Skeffington

c/o Fladgate Partnership

PO Box 1311, EC Santa Marinha, 4401-501 Vila Nova de Gaia, Portugal

Tel: (351) 223 742 800

www.fladgatepartnership.com

Charles Neville Skeffington was a nineteenth-century partner and vineyard manager in the firm of Taylor, Fladgate & Yeatman. Facing increasing competition from own-label sales

in the 1980s, Taylor's created a new associate company, adopting the name Skeffington for the purpose. Since the suspension of bulk shipments in 1996, Skeffington has increasingly become a brand in its own right, with a full range of Ports from a fruity ruby through to a good but relatively early-maturing vintage.

Smith Woodhouse

c/o Symington Family Estates

Travessa Barão de Forrester, 86, Apartado 26, 4431-901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel: (351) 223 776 300

www.symington.com

Sometimes considered to be a second-string shipper, Smith Woodhouse is an old-established company producing Ports that can compete with the best. The company was founded in 1784 by Christopher Smith, a British Member of Parliament who went on to become Lord Mayor of London. His sons were joined by the Woodhouse brothers in 1818 and the firm acquired its present-day name. In the late nineteenth century, Smith Woodhouse vintage Port gained a high reputation, with Professor Saintsbury claiming in *Notes on a Cellar Book* that 'I have never had a better '87 than some Smith Woodhouse...'. The brand was taken over by Louis Gordon & Sons Ltd of London in 1956 and the wines were shipped by W. & J. Graham. When Graham was sold to the Symington family in 1970, Smith Woodhouse became part of the group.

The company has a small vineyard, Quinta da Madelena, in the Rio Torto, although most Smith Woodhouse wines are an exercise in blending. Much of the company's production is standard tawny destined to be sold as own-label Port. This is not to denigrate the wines sold under the Smith Woodhouse label, for the fact is that these Ports are good, and sometimes extremely good. Through the 1970s, 80s and 90s, Smith Woodhouse vintage Ports have been on consistent form, perhaps midway between Dow and Graham in style, combining sweetness and muscular strength if a little one-dimensional compared to their bigger and better-known brethren. The 1977 Smith Woodhouse is particularly good with plenty of life remaining when many wines from this rather over-rated vintage are on a downhill path. Without the cachet of some of the big names, Smith Woodhouse Ports are frequently good value, making them wines to drink rather than collect.

Smith Woodhouse was one of the first shippers to produce unfiltered LBV. Unlike many of the more recent so-called 'traditional' LBVs, the wine is not released until it has been aged in bottle for six to ten years. The result is a poor man's vintage Port.

Taylor

Taylor, Fladgate & Yeatman SA

Rua do Choupelo, 250, 4400-088 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 742 800

www.taylor.pt

Taylor has built up the reputation as a 'first growth' among Port shippers and is now the leading house in the Fladgate Partnership alongside Fonseca and Croft. Partners have come

and gone but Taylor is the only British company to have been handed down through the generations without having been sold, bought or taken over. The company was founded in 1692 by Job Bearsley, who started out in the port of Viana do Castelo around 1670. Like so many Port shippers, Taylor began as general traders and the enigmatic 4XX symbol, which continues to form part of the company's livery, originated as a wool mark.

The Bearsleys left the firm at the end of the eighteenth century and a number of families, Webb, Sandford, Grey and Carmo, came and went before the first Taylor entered the partnership in 1816. Joseph Taylor joined a firm known as Campbell, Bowden & Taylor but within ten years he was running the firm under his own name. In 1836 he was joined by John Fladgate, and two years later Morgan Yeatman, a wine merchant from Dorset in southern England, became a partner in the firm. Joseph Taylor himself died in 1837 but his name was retained. In 1844 Fladgate bought Quinta da Roêda and John Fladgate, ennobled as a baron by the Portuguese, took his title from the property. Due to his daughter's marriage, Quinta da Roêda later went to Croft but Taylor duly compensated for this by acquiring Quinta de Vargellas in 1893. Having been devastated by phylloxera, the property produced a miserable six pipes, but by the great harvests of 1908 and 1912, Vargellas was making up a third of Taylor's 300-pipe vintage *lote*. Today it serves as one of the company's flagship estates. Quinta de Vargellas and São Xisto in the Douro Superior are joined by Quinta da Terra Feita and more recently by two properties from Borges, Quinta do Junco and Quinta de Casa Nova, making up a substantial holding in the Pinhão valley.

Much of Taylor's nineteenth- and twentieth-century success was due to the Yeatman family who continued to run the firm until Dick Yeatman, great-grandson of the Dorset wine merchant, died in 1966. His widow, Beryl, briefly took charge and asked her nephew Alistair Robertson to join the firm as a partner. He was ably supported by two partners: Huyshe Bower (Sales Director and a cousin of Dick Yeatman) and the late Bruce Guimaraens (Estates Director and a descendant of the Fladgates and of the family who sold Fonseca Guimaraens to Taylor shortly after the Second World War). This is the team that steered Taylor through the 1974–1975 revolution and transformed a small old-fashioned concern into one of the most successful of all players in the Port trade. Their not-so-secret weapon has been LBV, a style which Taylor popularised during the 1970s (see page 45).

The success of Taylor's LBV has undoubtedly been reinforced by their reputation as one of the leading producers of vintage Port. For over a century two vineyards, Quinta de Vargellas and Quinta da Terra Feita, have provided the backbone for the blend. In great years like 1927, 1963, 1977, and more recently 1994, 2000 and 2007, Taylor's vintages have a massive structure with a characteristic 'peacock's tail' of powerful tannins on the finish. Few other wines rise to the challenge in comparative tastings although Taylor is sometimes pipped at the post by wines from its sister company Fonseca, which seem to be slightly more opulent in style. Taylor were the first of the current generation of shippers to commercialise a single-*quinta* vintage Port. In good interim years, both Quinta de Vargellas and Quinta da Terra Feita are bottled individually. Whereas Vargellas tends to

produce firm, tannic wines that sometimes seem rather reserved when young, the wines from Terra Feita are big and powerful with huge amounts of ripe fruit. It is intended that wine from Quinta do Junco will also be bottled as a single-*quinta* vintage Port.

With so much adulation over wines at the top of the spectrum, it is easy to overlook Taylor's rich reserve wine known as First Estate after the property at Salgueiral established by Bartholomew Bearsley in 1744. Taylor also produce a full range of aged tawnies which includes a delicate, fresh twenty-year-old and culminates in a supremely refined forty-year-old. The winemaker currently responsible for this exceptional range of wines (and those of Fonseca and Croft) is David Guimaraens, who took over from his father Bruce in the early 1990s. Alistair Robertson retired as Managing Director in 2000 handing over the day-to-day reins to his daughter Natasha and son-in-law, Adrian Bridge. With an energetic approach, they look well placed to sustain Taylor's role as a trendsetter in the Port establishment. Capitalising on Oporto as a tourist destination, their latest venture has been the Yeatman Hotel (see page 268).

Tuke Holdsworth

(see under Hunt Roope)

Quinta do Vale Dona Maria

Quinta do Vale D. Maria

5130-141 Ervedosa do Douro, Portugal

Tel. (351) 223 744 320

www.quintavaledonamaria.com

After Quinta do Noval was sold in 1993, Cristiano van Zeller began producing both Port and Douro wine from his wife's family estate, Quinta Vale Dona Maria in the Rio Torto. Van Zeller has restored the *lagares* on the property and, having relied on outside

Vargellas Vinha Velha: a new classic?

One of the attractions of vintage Port is its rarity and collectability, something that Taylor have addressed since 1995 with Vargellas Vinha Velha. The wine is a *lote* blended from five plots of old vineyard at Quinta de Vargellas: Polverinho (the varietal plot planted by Frank and Dick Yeatman in 1927), Renova do Depósito, Renova do Armazém, Gricha and Vinha Grande. The age of the vines varies from around 80 to 120 years. Six vintages have been declared to date (1995, 1997, 2004, 2007, 2008 and 2009) with around 200 cases having been made each year, representing about 2 per cent of the total production of Vargellas. Made from a time-honoured field blend of grape varieties, Vargellas Vinha Velha doesn't have the impressively deep colour of a modern-day vintage Port (see note on colour on page 159), yet the wines are remarkable for their elegance and refinement, evident even at a relatively early age. The underlying structure and rapier-like tannins suggest the wines will last and last.

help for a number of years, employed Sandra Tavares de Silva as winemaker. Vintage Ports, all foot trodden in the traditional manner, are declared most years on the Bordeaux *chateau* principle. They are mid-weight, fine, well balanced and usually offer great value for money.

Quinta do Vale Meão

F. Olazabal & Filhos Lda

Quinta do Vale Meão

5150 - 501 Vila Nova de Foz Côa

Tel. (351) 279 762 156

Francisco ('Vito') Olazabal is no stranger to the Port business, having been Managing Director of the Port shipper Ferreira until he retired to take charge of his own property in 1999. In the past Quinta do Vale Meão has supplied both Ferreira and Taylor but the Olazabals, father and son, are now making some fine Douro wine and opulent vintage Ports. Vintages are also shipped under the name of Whytinghams.

Quinta do Vesúvio

c/o Symington Family Estates

Travessa Barão de Forrester, 86, Apartado 26, 4431-901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel: (351) 223 776 300

www.symington.com

The Symington family bought this stately *quinta* from the Ferreiras in 1989 and turned Vesúvio into an independent shipper in its own right. There was much to be done to restore the property which extends to over 400 hectares and includes a twenty-three-bedroom house, much the largest in the Douro. The eight granite *lagares* (each with a capacity of twenty-five pipes) are some of the most impressive in the region and have been equipped with an ingenious cooling system, very necessary in this part of the Douro. Under the legislation, as well as being made on site, all the wine must be aged and bottled on the property. The *armazém* has therefore been restored and the old olive oil bins have been modified to store bottles of Port, with air-conditioning installed to maintain a constant temperature over the summer months. The 132 hectares of vineyard on the property produce around 800 pipes, of which around 3,000 cases are bottled as a vintage Port in all but the poorest years (1993 and 2002). The first Vesúvio vintage was 1989. Despite its relatively short track record, the Symingtons have established Quinta do Vesúvio as one of the leading properties in the Douro making red wine as well as outstanding vintage Port.

Vista Alegre

Vallegre, Vinhos do Porto SA

Rua do Sporting Club de Coimbra, Apartado 101, 4431-902 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 745 630

www.vallegre.pt

Vallegre belongs to the Cunha Barros family who own two *quintas*, Vista Alegre and Valle Longo, located close to Pinhão and in the Têdo valley respectively. Like many Douro families, Cunha Barros used to sell to other shippers but in 1988 decided to go it alone and produce wines under their own label. Vista Alegre is now the brand name for a full range of Ports from white and ruby to vintage. All the wines, including Douro red under the Encostas de Pombal label, are vinified at Quinta de Vista Alegre and aged in the company's *armazém* in Régua. With two magnificent *quintas*, Vallegre cannot be short of good fruit but in the past I have found Vista Alegre Ports to be rather variable in quality, although in some years the estate can excel.

Warre

c/o Symington Family Estates

Travessa Barão de Forrester, 86, Apartado 26, 4431-901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel: (351) 223 776 300

www.symington.com

Established in 1670, Warre (pronounced 'War') is the oldest of the British-owned houses. The first name associated with the company is John Clark, who may have brought the company to Oporto from Viana do Castelo, where it began as a general trader. Certainly by the time the Indian-born William Warre joined the firm in 1729 it was firmly established in Oporto and trading in wine. Warre married Elizabeth Whitehead, sister of John Whitehead who was later British Consul in Oporto and was instrumental in building the Factory House. Warre's eldest son, also named William, followed his father as Senior Partner and went on to become British Consul himself.

In the late nineteenth century, the Warre family ceased to be directly involved in the firm. Dr Edmond Warre was Headmaster of Eton from 1884 to 1905 and Provost from 1909 to 1918. George Acheson Warre became a partner in the competing firm of Silva & Cosens. It was in 1905 that Andrew James Symington, who had arrived from Glasgow in 1882, became a partner in Warre. He soon took a share in Silva & Cosens as well and established the foundations of the Symington's dominion, which now includes Cockburn and Graham as well. The Symingtons and the Warres ran the firm of Warre & Co. in tandem until the Warre family sold out in the early 1960s. William ('Bill') Warre M.W. continued to work for the company in London until he retired in 1991.

Warre has always been on the top tier of the Symington family Port houses and produces some of the finest, most elegant of vintage Ports. Grapes for Warre's vintages were traditionally sourced in the Rio Torto. The wines were on the light side in the 1940s and 1950s but regained substance and flesh during the 1960s and 1970s. They are characterised by their fragrant, perfumed aromas and opulent fruit and yet, as the 1963,

1966 and 1970 vintages of Warre prove, they have the structure to last. In 1978 the company acquired Quinta da Cavadinha, an A-grade property overlooking the Pinhão valley, followed by Quinta do Retiro Antigo in the Rio Torto in 2006. Together these two properties form the backbone of the Warre *lote*, the style of which is deliberately in between that of Graham and Dow. In good interim years, wine from Cavadinha is declared as a single-*quinta* vintage, which shares much of the fragrant aromatic character of Warre's vintage. Quinta de Cavadinha has an *adega* equipped with robotic *lagares* which produces about 45 per cent of the company's needs with the rest produced either at Quinta do Bomfim or Quinta do Sol.

Warre's LBVs are unfiltered and bottle-matured, released around six years after the harvest. These wines have genuine vintage character. Warre also produce a pair of excellent aged tawnies bottled as Otima, as well as a good reserve Port known as 'Warrior'. The wines are drawn from the same properties that produce Warre's vintage Port and 'Warrior' has much more substance and character than many other wines in this category. In continuous production since the 1750s, it is the oldest brand in the Port business.

Wiese & Krohn

(see under Krohn)

An eighteenth-century prankster

Plenty of good pranks are played after a glass or two of good Port. William Warre, born in Oporto in 1784, used sealing wax to fix the pigtail of Pedro Alves (an elderly Portuguese member of the firm) to his desk as he slept, no doubt after a heavy lunch. The ensuing indignation meant that the young William Warre left the firm and pursued a military career. Having distinguished himself in the Peninsular War, being present at every major battle except Bussaco, he went on to become Lt. General Sir William Warre. His letters, edited by his namesake William ('Bill') Warre, show that Wellington asked to be supplied with Warre's Port. A portrait of Lt. General Warre hangs in the Factory House.

7

DOURO WINES

CLARET FOR BOYS, PORT FOR MEN

Alongside Port, unfortified wines from the Douro used to be considered something of a poor relation. This was reflected in the lexicon. Unsure of how to make the distinction, unfortified wines were called *consumo*, with all due reverence reserved for the fortified big brother. The task was made easier after 1979 when unfortified wines were awarded their own DOC (*Denominação de Origem Controlada*): Douro. Despite this, Douro wines are still referred to, often misleadingly, as ‘light wines’ (to distinguish them from fortified wines) or table wines (*vinho de mesa*).

Unfortified wines are not new to the Douro and pre-date Port. Until the late eighteenth century, most of the wine produced in the region was fermented dry and occasionally bolstered with a small amount of fortifying spirit to lend stability to the wines for shipment abroad. The evolution of Port into a sweet fortified wine is covered in Chapter 1, but as late as the mid-nineteenth century the eclectic Joseph James Forrester continued to advocate a return to dry, unfortified red wine considering Port to be ‘adulterated’ by the addition of *aguardente*. Writing in the 1870s Henry Vizetelly refers to ‘natural Port’ and ‘Alto Douro wine made without adventurous spirit’ as something of a novelty. He observes:

‘Having consumed all its natural sugar by means of its more perfect fermentation, it has none of the rich fruity flavour of the younger vintage wines, nor the refined liqueur-like character of the older growths to which Port-drinkers have been accustomed, and they naturally refuse to accept it as a substitute for their favourite beverage. We have tasted at different times numerous wines of the above description made from the best varieties of grapes, and on the manufacture of which unusual care and attention had been bestowed. Undoubtedly they were all wines of some character; still they were not to be compared, either as regards flavour or bouquet, with the highest growths of the Medoc or the Cote

d'Or, simply because the Douro vines, with all their advantages of soil, climate, and aspect, are not equal to the carbenet [sic] and the cruchinet rouge of the Gironde or the pineau [sic] noir of Burgundy. There is no reason whatever why a perfectly fermented and consequently dry Alto Douro wine, which has received no addition of spirit should not find a market in England...

The market failed to materialise and shortly after Vizetelly visited the Douro, phylloxera finally put paid to unfortified wine, much of which had to be distilled to provide the *aguardente* for Port. As Ernest Cockburn records, in 1877 'prices in Oporto started to rise all round in view of the position created by the phylloxera and the heavy demand from Brazil for Consumos at a time when the Consumo districts had failed at the vintage. This caused prices of Portugal brandy ... to rise appreciably'. The shortage continued into the 1890s when Cockburn mentions that there had not been enough '*Consumo*' (Claret-type wine of the Douro District) in Portugal to satisfy the demands, and even the price for home consumption in the country constituted a record. The situation existed in the north and south of Portugal, and firms found it necessary to pay excessive prices for wines for '*Beberagem* [drinking] for their employees'.

The dismissive tone adopted by Cockburn, writing in the 1930s, was shared by the majority of Port shippers for the greater part of the twentieth century. '*Consumo*', '*beberagem*', 'table wine' (call it what you will) was accorded the lowliest status in the Douro caste system with the best grapes reserved exclusively for the production of Port. The majority of shippers embraced Samuel Johnson's opinion that 'Claret is for boys, Port

MEN WHO SHAPED THE DOURO

Fernando Nicolau de Almeida (1913–1998)

In 1950 Ferreira's former chief taster and Technical Director made a visit to Bordeaux to study production techniques for unfortified wines. With characteristic self-effacement, he was fond of explaining that he found it impossible to conceive how the Bordelais could possibly tread their grapes in huge wooden vats. Nicolau de Almeida soon found out that the Bordelais employed softer, more gentle extraction methods than was customary in the Douro.

Inspired by this he returned to his family estate, Quinta do Vale Meão in the Douro Superior, and began to put their ideas into practice using high-quality Port grapes. There was no electricity at the time (ironically there is now a hydro-electric station nearby) so Nicolau de Almeida had to be inventive. In order to combat the raging heat, he rigged up a Heath Robinson system of temperature control using blocks of ice which were brought up by train from Oporto insulated with sawdust. Ferreira's Barca Velha was born in 1952 and quickly earned itself the reputation as Portugal's uncrowned 'first growth', commanding a price in excess of many vintage Ports. Fernando Nicolau de Almeida is the father of Douro wine.

for men'. The wine accompanying stately lunches at the Factory House or in the shipper's lodges was usually a parsimonious glass of rather weedy local red. All the serious talk took place at the end of the meal over a decanter of vintage Port.

REVIVAL

The modern revival of the Douro's unfortified wines can be dated precisely to 1952, the first vintage of the wine named Barca Velha. Its success caused other producers to sit up and take notice and twenty years later a flurry of new Douro wines began to appear on the market. Initially they were no more than a byproduct, made from grapes surplus to the annual Port *benefício*. In a productive year perhaps half the region's grapes would be directed into Port while the remainder (mostly from the more lowly rated vineyards) would be fermented out to make a dry red wine. Production techniques were outmoded, with vinification (often autovinification) still geared towards the extraction of tannin for the production of Port. With a complete absence of temperature control the resulting wines were stewed, fruitless and astringent. There were a few exceptions, however. The Symingtons, who have now launched their own range of Douro wines, made a few experimental wines for home consumption. Made from surplus Port grapes, a 1970 red produced at Quinta do Bomfim (tasted in 1998) still retained its deep colour and hugely powerful sinewy tannins. It must have started out akin to 'black-strap', the derisive term used to describe the strong Douro reds exported to Britain in the early eighteenth century.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s a number of other Port producers began to look seriously at Douro wine. Fernando Nicolau de Almeida's son João inherited his father's curiosity and began experimenting for Ramos Pinto. Frustrated by the *benefício* which left him with a surplus of grapes at a C-grade property, Miguel Champalimaud at Quinta do Córto also began looking at ways to create added value from unfortified wine. However with these few exceptions, unfortified Douro reds continued to embody the principle that has dogged Portugal's wine industry for years: great potential, rarely realised. The entire wine industry was given an enormous fillip by Portugal's accession to the then European Community in 1986. This brought the necessary finance to some of the continent's poorest regions and in the early 1990s, sometimes from one vintage to the next, many wineries were re-equipped with up-to-date technology. Yet there remained a lack of technical expertise – not to mention winemaking flair – among producers blinkered by their total commitment to Port. 'Why waste good grapes on *consumo* when you can make them into Port?' was a common cry well into the 1990s. One leading Port shipper still holds this view.

Over the past fifteen years, a new generation of winemakers (many with experience outside Portugal) have brought new life to the Douro. The leading light is Dirk Niepoort who took over the reins of his family Port shipper in the mid-1990s. Unlike his father who rarely ventured into the Douro, Dirk (who had already built up a fine, eclectic wine cellar at home) was continually scouring the region for plots of old vines with the potential to

make something different. He began in the late 1980s making tiny quantities of red and white wine in the most primitive conditions. After a few years of trial and (occasionally) error, Niepoort launched a range of Douro wines (see below) that reflect the character and substance of the region. One of Dirk Niepoort's great achievements has been in getting producers to co-operate with one another. With the help of an Austrian PR company, he formed a loose association of young (and a few not so young), like-minded winemakers known euphemistically as the 'Douro Boys'. They hold tastings around the world and have helped put Douro wines on the map.

Douro wines are no longer an afterthought. With an appreciative audience in Portugal and a growing export market, the most prestigious Douro wines are commanding prices similar to, or in excess of, vintage Port. Despite (or perhaps because of) some voracious pricing, the wines are also getting rave reviews in the international press. But this image of Douro wine is just the apex of a very large pyramid. Big shippers, independent *quintas* and small growers have all been looking for an alternative to Port. From 2000 onwards there have been times when there has been a fight between the Port producers and Douro winemakers for the best grapes. But the continued planting of vineyards, combined with the reduction in the *benefício* since 2007, has left the region with a huge surplus. By 2011 the market had become saturated and the price of Douro wines collapsed.

RED WINES: TAMING TANNINS

The successful vinification of red Douro wine revolves around the need to tame the tannic excesses of the Douro's grapes. With careful handling, three of the most planted grape varieties, Touriga Franca, Touriga Nacional and Tinta Roriz, are eminently suitable for Douro reds and there is now a raft of varietal wines made from these grapes. Low yields produce the best wines and, provided you can afford to be selective, old vines are sometimes interplanted with as many as twenty or thirty different varieties produce the most concentrated wines. Many properties have now installed sorting tables to weed out grapes like Mourisco and Bastardo (and white grapes) which would dilute the concentration afforded by other varieties. Tiny quantities of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah are creeping into the region but their use is only permissible in a second category of wines bottled under the uninviting name of the Vinho Regional: Terras Durienses. The characteristics of each of the Douro's grape main varieties are covered in detail in Chapter 2.

Douro winemakers look to source grapes from temperate locations. Much depends on the year, but the suitable parts of the region appear to be the Cima Corgo downstream from Pinhão or the so called *meia encosta* ('half slope') upstream. Exposure plays a part, and in a hot year, a north-facing vineyard can perform much better than one facing south where the grapes will shrivel or raisinise on the vine. Grapes from the Douro Superior and the sheltered tributaries around Pinhão produce the most robust wines; big but sometimes unbalanced and lacking in acidity. Tinta Roriz and Tinta Barroca are generally the varieties with the highest pH which often exceeds 4.0 and are not used in any quantity for premium reds. The timing

of picking must be carefully judged if the grapes are not to be over-ripe and substantial acid adjustment is to be avoided. At the other end of the spectrum, grapes from the higher westerly margins of the region on the *altos* around Lamego and Vila Real lack the warmth and tend to produce pale, thin wines, particularly in a cool year. Within single estates like Quinta do Crasto and Quinta de la Rosa, there is an altitude difference of around 300 metres which promotes a natural balance in the final blend. However, there are so many different mesoclimates within the Douro as a whole that there is an argument in favour of blending components from different areas. Just like a vintage Port, this approach can produce a wine that is greater than the sum of its parts. Conversely, some producers started to set aside wines from individual plots, bottling them separately as an expression of *terroir*.

In their endeavour to produce softer, more supple red wines, most producers destalk the greater proportion of the crop once it reaches the winery. Although stalks help when it comes to pressing, they often impart a green character to the wine. A few single *quintas* continue to ferment grapes in *lagar* but others will tread for an hour or so and ferment in stainless steel which gives them much greater control. Some producers use robotic plungers that emulate the action of human feet (see page 134). All except the most hidebound producers have given up autovinification for Douro wines in favour of pumping over in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks. Selected yeast cultures are generally favoured over wild yeasts that frequently lead to stuck fermentations at higher levels of alcohol. Fermentation temperatures are generally controlled to between 24°C and 28°C (a few degrees lower than for Port) and maceration is increasingly carefully managed. Wines destined for early drinking remain on the skins for the duration of the fermentation (five days on average) whereas those destined for longer ageing generally undergo a period of *cuvaison* on the skins extending to fifteen or twenty days. Pressing has become much less extractive and some producers have installed gentle pneumatic presses for the production of Douro wines. Some *quintas* have reinstated their vertical basket presses which yield a richer press wine.

Malolactic fermentation (the natural transformation of malic to lactic acid) generally takes place straight after the vintage, as ambient temperatures in the Douro remain quite warm to the end of October/early November. Hygiene has improved across the board and most wineries have turned their backs on old wooden vats in favour of stainless steel and/or ageing in oak *barriques*. Portuguese oak from Gerês and Trás-os-Montes was initially favoured, which seemed to contribute a distinctive but not very beneficial green-vanilla character to some Douro wines, Barca Velha included. But in the absence of any co-ordinated forest management, Portuguese oak has now been virtually wiped out and producers have mostly turned to using French oak. There has been an unwelcome tendency for winemakers to view oak as a panacea and there are many examples of Douro wines flattered by too much new wood (a characteristic shared by parts of Spain and Italy). But most Douro wine producers are gradually becoming aware that too much oak merely masks the vibrant primary fruit character that is the hallmark of good Douro wine.

The Douro has established a firm track record for unfortified wines and the region is producing some of Portugal's leading reds. The best are world class and deserve a much

wider audience. The finest wines combine power with elegance and finesse, words not usually associated with unfortified Douro wine in the past.

WHITE WINES: ALL ABOUT ACIDITY

White grapes were traditionally interplanted with red and in the widespread replanting that took place in the 1980s and 1990s, the supply of white grapes diminished. Where old interplanted vineyards remain, the separation of red and white grapes is often too painstaking to be worthwhile (unless it is the intention to make a special *lote* or cuvée of old vine red). But there are a number of good local grape varieties that, with careful handling, are capable of producing some dry white wines with character and depth. Gouveio, Viosinho and Rabigato lead the field (see pages 71–74). Small quantities of Moscatel may be favoured to lend an aromatic character to the blend. Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Riesling have also been planted and are permitted for wines labelled with the Vinho Regional Terras Durienses.

The best white grapes (indigenous or international) tend to originate from the *altos*, the higher, cooler districts around Lamego, Vila Real, Alijó and São João de Pesqueira. Here the acid balance is better than at lower altitudes and, depending on the year and time of picking, acid adjustment is not always necessary. With patience and persistence, a number of producers are now making some good white wines at all price levels, capturing the character of the Douro. As with the reds, there has been a tendency to over-do the oak which masks the fruit. A few wines are truly excellent, achieving a Burgundian richness and finesse from old low-yielding vines. They clearly demonstrate that the Douro's schistous soils are not merely the preserve of red grapes.

PRODUCERS

There are now so many producers of Douro wine that it is well beyond the realm of this book to include them all. From extensive tastings that I have undertaken over a number of years, I have selected the wines that have impressed me the most and/or those producers with a genuinely good story to tell. They have all earned a name for their wines both at home and in export markets.

Domingos Alves de Sousa

Domingos Alves de Sousa

Apartado 15, 5030-055 Santa Marta de Penaguião.

Tel (351) 254 822 111

www.alvesdesousa.com

It is hard to keep up with Domingos Alves de Sousa and his son Tiago, representing the third and fourth generation of their family to grow vines. They have one of the largest vineyard holdings in the Baixo Corgo with seven properties amounting to over a hundred

hectares. Since giving up his profession in civil engineering in 1991, Alves de Sousa has revamped his father's winery at **Quinta da Gaivosa** near Santa Marta de Penaguião where he is continually experimenting and expanding his range of wines. Quinta de Gaivosa is his flag-bearer; a wine made only in the best years from old interplanted vineyards, some of which date back over a century. The wine is solid with ripe morello cherry fruit and well-integrated spicy (French) oak. Grapes from a vineyard that was almost abandoned are bottled as **Abandonado**; a deep, dense, powerful red that is as good as any red from the Cima Corgo or Douro Superior. Wine from an adjoining property with slightly younger vines, Quinta do Vale da Raposa, is softer with supple plummy fruit, bottled after short ageing in oak. Two properties downstream from Régua, **Quinta das Caldas** and **Quinta da Estação**, produce simple, easy-drinking wines with the emphasis on berry fruit. Sensing the interest in Douro varieties, Alves de Sousa has also released a series of red wines from Tinto Cão, Tinta Roriz, Touriga Nacional and Sousão, all of which are true to the variety. A partly barrel-fermented white wine, Branco de Gaivosa, is to my mind, the least successful of Domingos Alves de Sousa's range of innovative Douro wines.

Churchill Estates

Churchill Graham, Lda

Rua da Fonte Nova, 5, 4400-156 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 703 641

www.churchills-port.com

Since the acquisition of their first vineyards in 1999, Churchill have been developing their own Douro wine project with the help of an enterprising Portuguese winemaker called João Brito e Cunha. Between 1999 and 2001 three experimental wines were made using blends of different grape varieties from different locations. These wines, each very different in style, sold successfully in Portugal under the Churchill label. Since 2004 the decision has been made to base the wine on **Quinta da Gricha**, Churchill's principal vineyard. With a range of wines including white and rosé bottled under the name Churchill Estates, these are expertly made avoiding the excessive extraction that makes some Douro reds over-tannic and unapproachable in their youth. A single-estate red, Quinta da Gricha, is more traditional in style, made from a field-blend of grape varieties from vineyards with an average age of fifty years. All of Churchill's wines are competitively priced for the export market.

Quinta do Côtto

Montez Champalimaud, Lda

5040-154 Cidadelhe.

Tel. (351) 254 899 269

www.quinta-do-cotto.pt

This imposing eighteenth-century property above the Baixo Corgo village of Cidadelhe is much admired as a producer of some of the finest Douro wines. Port takes second place in the hierarchy and the cream of the crop from this mainly C-grade vineyard is directed towards two Douro wines; **Quinta do Côtto** and **Quinta do Côtto Grande Escolha**. The

straightforward red Quinta do Côtto is produced nearly every year from a blend of Tinta Roriz, Touriga Franca and Touriga Nacional. Since the mid-1990s, the quality of Quinta do Côtto has improved markedly. It has now grown up to be a refined Douro red with firm, ripe tannins and supple plum-like fruit. Quinta do Côtto is one of very few Portuguese reds to be bottled with a screw cap, a decision that is considered almost treasonable in the world's largest cork producing country.

The real acclaim must be reserved for the Grande Escolha. The name (literally meaning 'Great Choice' and by extension 'finest selection') has been purloined by other producers in the Douro but Quinta do Côtto is the first and remains the best of the genre. Grande Escolha is only produced in the most successful years from the oldest vineyards on the property. It undergoes an extended maceration or cuvaïson followed by eighteen months in new oak. The resulting wines are tight-knit and concentrated. The vineyard at Côtto has a high percentage of Sousão which explains why, with age, Grande Escolha retains its extraordinary deep colour. With Touriga Nacional and Tinta Roriz making up the remainder of the blend, the wine also retains its fruit and structure, gaining in character and complexity.

CARM

Casa Agricola Roboredo Madeira Lda

Rua da Calabria, 5150 - 021 Almendra

Tel. (351) 279 718 010

www.carm.pt

The Madeira family has owned property in the Douro Superior since the seventeenth century. They currently farm 500 hectares of olives, almonds and vines split between seven properties, mostly in the Ribeira d'Aguiar around the village of Almendra. With a rainfall averaging less than 400mm a year, this is the driest part of the Douro and the Madeiras practice organic farming. Wines are the responsibility of Rui Madeira who also runs a consultancy service in the Douro Superior. Three reds are bottled under the CARM label, **Classico**, **Grande Reserva** and **CARM CM** in ascending order. All three display the natural ripeness of the Douro Superior and in hot years they also display a certain amount of heady, hot country fruit. CARM also produce small quantities of single-estate wine from Quinta da Urze, Quinta do Bispado, Quinta das Verdalhas and Quinta da Côa. Rui Madeira also produces a range of good and relatively inexpensive wines under the Castello d'Alba label based on fruit grown around Freixo de Espada a Cinta, north of the Douro. As well as wine, CARM also produce a range of organic olive oil, pressed on the property.

Quinta do Crasto*

Sociedade Agricola da Quinta do Crasto

Quinta do Crasto, Gouvinhas, 5060-063 Sabrosa. Tel. (351) 254 920020

www.quintadocrasto.pt

On one of the most spectacularly situated properties in the Douro, the Roquette family at Quinta do Crasto produce some of the region's most alluring red wines. The sixty-five hectares

of vineyard are split between mixed plantings of old vines over seventy years old and newer varietal planting which began in 1986. Port plays second fiddle to Douro wine and Crasto's consultant Australian winemaker, Dominic Morris, has the pick of the crop. A proportion is still foot trodden in traditional *lagares* but most of the wines are fermented in an impressive stainless steel winery and finished in new oak. Starting out in 1994 with just one wine, Crasto's range has grown to include a white wine, a Reserva based on low-yielding old vines and varietal wines selected from among Tinta Roriz, Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca and Tinto Cão according to the year. Crasto succeeds in capturing the quintessence of Douro fruit tempered by judicious use of French and American oak. A combination of carefully chosen grapes and thoughtful, even-handed winemaking yields wines that are well structured and supple without being over-extractive, hard and tannic. A pair of wines named **Vinha do Ponte** and **Maria Teresa** are made from separate plots of eighty-year-old vines that might otherwise produce great vintage Port. Ponte lies just above the Gouvinhas–Ferrão road and Maria Teresa faces due east on the slope below the *adega*. Grapes for both wines are foot trodden for an hour in *lagar* before being run off and fermented in stainless steel. Both wines are aged for a maximum of twelve months in new French oak followed by a further six months in second year oak. Maria Teresa tends to be the bigger of the two wines but both are outstanding, combining rich, succulent, vibrant fruit with polish, style and finesse.

Ferreira

c/o Sogrape Vinhos SA

Aldeia Nova, 4430-809, Avintes, Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 227 850 300

www.sogrape.pt

When the manager of the Chelsea football team, José Mourinho, wanted to send a present to Sir Alex Ferguson of Manchester United, the 'special one' chose a bottle of 1964 **Barca Velha**. Ferreira's Barca Velha continues to be Portugal's most famous red wine, sixty years after it was first produced. To date only sixteen vintages of Barca Velha have been released: 1952, 1954, 1958, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1978, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1985, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2000 and 2004. Twelve of these were made by the wine's creator, Fernando Nicolau de Almeida (see page 244), three by José Maria Soares Franco and two by Barca Velha's current custodian, Luís Sottomayor. Over the years the production of Barca Velha has become much less of a hit-and-miss affair. In 2001 the wine moved from its birthplace, Quinta do Vale Meão, to a new purpose-built *adega* at Ferreira's Quinta da Leda. Tinta Roriz has traditionally formed the backbone of the wine, let out with smaller quantities of Touriga Francesa, Tinta Barroca and Tinta Amarela. More Touriga Nacional has gradually entered into the blend, lending it more power and body. Most of the grapes for Barca Velha now come from Quinta da Leda with a small proportion sourced from higher, cooler vineyards to balance the wine. Once they reach the winery, the grapes are de-stemmed and fermented in stainless steel vats at around 25°C. Regular, carefully managed pumping over ensures that extraction is controlled according to the character of the grapes and vintage. Immediately after the vintage, the wine is transferred to a dedicated lodge at Vila Nova de Gaia where it

spends around eighteen months in new oak, formerly Portuguese, now French.

Adopting something of the philosophy of vintage Port, Barca Velha is the product of an exceptional harvest and the wine is only released after spending seven years in bottle. It starts out with the in-house designation of 'Douro Especial' and the wine is continually reassessed before a decision is taken as to whether or not the wine should be launched under the Barca Velha label. Since 1962, any wine that is not considered to be quite up to Barca Velha standards is declassified as Reserva Especial, renamed **Reserva Ferreirinha** in 1989. Not surprisingly the two wines share an affinity with each other, combining open, sweet, fragrant aromas with suave tannins, often a touch of eucalyptus and dense, concentrated, almost minty fruit. In some of the older wines a slightly sappy undertone creeps in from Portuguese oak. After an apparent dip in quality in the 1980s, Barca Velha returned to form in 1991 with a powerful wine which has the capacity to develop in bottle, like earlier vintages, for twenty or thirty years. The 1966 (last tasted in 1998) is an extraordinary wine, still upright and concentrated with a touch of tobacco box and the long sinewy finish that has become Barca Velha's hallmark. Reserva Ferreirinha from years like 1980 and 1989 (nearly 'declared' as Barca Velha) can be almost as impressive, showing similar build without the 'first growth' cachet or price.

Since Ferreira became part of Sogrape in 1987, the company has invested heavily in the production of Douro wines. Barca Velha and Reserva Ferreirinha are complemented by a single estate wine from **Quinta da Leda**; an impressively ripe, upfront, blend of Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca and Tinta Amarela which is released earlier having spent a maximum of eighteen months in French oak. I always detect cassis and an intriguing hint of *esteva* (gum cistus) and menthol eucalyptus in the wine. **Callabriga**, named after the hill that separates Leda from the Douro, is made in a similar style from grapes grown in neighbouring vineyards. **Vinha Grande** is a full-flavoured red made from grapes grown both in the Douro Superior and Cima Corgo and aged in casks that have previously been used for Barca Velha, Leda and Callabriga. It is often excellent value for money. At the bottom of the hierarchy, **Esteva** (named after the gum cistus which fills the Douro air with its heady smell), is a lighter red from grapes grown at higher altitudes above Pinhão. Easy to drink and early maturing, it is regularly voted 'the best every-day red' by readers of Portugal's consumer wine magazine, *Revista de Vinhos*.

Lavradores de Feitoria

Zone Industrial de Sabrosa, Lote 5, Paços, 5060 Sabrosa

Tel (351) 259 937 380

www.lavradoresdefeitoria.pt

In an attempt to bridge the gap between small growers and large shippers in the Douro, eighteen *quintas* spread over all three sub-regions of the Douro have come together to form Lavradores de Feitoria. The central idea of the company is to pool 'their know-how and experiences with the aim of adding value to Douro grapes'. Lavradores de Feitoria is led by consultant winemaker João Brito e Cunha, helped by Dirk Niepoort. Supported by a resident tasting panel, Brito e Cunha is the arbiter behind the selection of wines, which are

either bottled separately from the best-performing single *quintas* or blended from properties within the group. Each year a good, well-balanced and affordable red is made under the **Três Bagos** label.

Quinta dos Macedos

Paul Reynolds – Sociedade de Explorações Agrícolas e Agro-Vitivinícola Ltd.

Sarzedinho 5130 – 141 Ervadosa do Douro

www.quintamacedos.com

With six hectares of vines in the Rio Torto planted between 1920 and 1945, brothers Paul and Raymond Reynolds produced their first single estate wine in 2000. There are sixteen different grape varieties in total but the predominant grape is Touriga Franca. The grapes are foot trodden and fermented in granite *lagares*, and aged for up to twenty months in new French (Allier) oak. With tiny yields, **Quinta dos Macedos** is a traditionally dense, super-concentrated wine with a thwack of new oak. Like a vintage Port, it is a wine that is made to last. Lagar dos Macedos is the second wine from the property and is (slightly) lighter in style. Reynolds also produces a more accessible Douro red from fruit in and around the Rio Torto known as **Pinga do Torto**.

Niepoort

Niepoort (Vinhos) SA

Rua Candido dos Reis, 70, 4400-071 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 777 770

www.niepoort-vinhos.com

Dirk Niepoort has *the* most comprehensive and impressive range of wines in the Douro. Making the most of a network of long-established growers and suppliers, many with no more than a patch of octogenarian vines, Niepoort made his first Douro red, Redoma, in 1990. Five years later he produced his first white followed in 1999 by a rosé, both also christened Redoma. These were followed by three more reds, Batuta, Charme and Robustus. Then along come two more reds, Vertente and ‘Drink Me’ to complete the range – except that Niepoort’s range is never complete as he is always experimenting with something new and different.

You might be tempted to think that one region is not capable of this much differentiation but each wine reflects a certain style and/or *terroir*. **Vertente** (meaning ‘slope’ or ‘angle’) underpins the Niepoort range but it is very far from basic. It is made from grapes produced by younger vines (fifteen to sixty years old) on predominantly south-facing slopes. A high proportion of Touriga Nacional shows through in the deep colour, fragrant berry-fruit aromas and refined yet fleshy fruit on the palate and wonderful balance and length. The red **Redoma** is sourced from older vines, growing mostly on north-facing slopes at Niepoort’s own estate, Quinta do Carril and Quinta de Napoles, which are adjacent to each other on the lower reaches of the Têdo Valley mid-way between Régua and Pinhão. Redoma started out as a rather rustic, dense, uncompromisingly traditional red (perhaps closer in style to a top Alentejano wine) but more recent vintages have become supple and

voluptuous in style with the morello cherry character of well-ripened Douro fruit. Dirk Niepoort himself describes it as ‘a wine that shows the roughness of the wine without being rustic’. **Redoma Branco** (white) is a field blend of the Douro’s leading white grapes (Rabigato, Gouveio, Codega and Donzelinho) from vineyards at altitudes of between 400 and 800 metres, mostly in the upper reaches of the Pinhão valley. Once again, old vines produce a wine with wonderful concentration but Niepoort is keen to preserve the acidity and minerality in the fruit by picking early. Around 40 per cent of the wine is barrel fermented and spends around twelve months on the lees, lending a fine Burgundian quality. A Reserva from 110-year-old vines which spends eighteen months on the lees, mainly new oak, has the poise and richness of fine white Burgundy. **Redoma Rosé**, with its wonderful strawberry and cream aromas, is 25 per cent barrel fermented ‘to keep the wine alive’. It is based on early-picked Tinta Amarela and, relatively deep in colour and full-bodied, is a versatile wine for drinking through the summer months – but unlike most rosés it will keep for five years in bottle.

Batuta is Redoma’s big brother; a deep, dense, bold red based (unusually) on Tinta Amarela and aged for twenty-eight months in new French oak. It has bitter chocolate concentration mid-palate and a fine peacock’s tail finish, both of which are characteristics of the finest vintage Ports. **Charme** is the antidote to Batuta, an altogether more elegant red billed by Dirk Niepoort as the Douro’s answer to Côte de Nuits. Grape vines ranging between 80 and 120 years old at Vale de Mendiz in the Pinhão Valley are picked relatively early and fermented in *lagar* (sometimes on the stems) to produce an open, soft, quite luscious red with sophistication that is rare in the Douro.

A wine that just qualifies for a mention here is Niepoort’s **Dado**, a unique blend of some of the best wines from Douro and Dao. Needless to say it forfeits the right to either DOC being classified as no more than a *Vinho da Mesa*, but it combines the structure, depth and character of two of Portugal’s leading regions.

Quinta do Noval

Quinta do Noval - Vinhos, SA

Avenida Diogo Leite, 256, Apartado 1319, 4401-111 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel.(351) 223 770 270

www.quintadonoval.com

Noval began experimenting with Douro reds in the 1980s and made some ‘black-strap’ reds which were never released. Under the ownership of AXA Millésimes, Noval’s winemaker António Agrellos has taken the production of Douro wines to a level of excellence compatible with their superlative vintage Ports. **Quinta do Noval** is a complementary blend based of Touriga Nacional and Touriga Franca, solid but supple and full of fragrance. **Cedro do Noval**, the estate’s second wine, includes a small proportion of Syrah and Tinta Roriz to produce a suave, yet spicy wine with freshness on the finish. **Labrador**, named after Agrellos’ dog, is 100 per cent Syrah yet still manages to express the *terroir* of the Douro. Given the foreign input, the latter two wines qualify as Vinho Regional Terras Durienses.

Quinta do Passadouro

Vale de Mendiz, 5085-101 Pinhão

Tel: (351) 254 731 246

www.quinta-do-passadouro.com

Deep in the Pinhão valley, Quinta do Passadouro makes Port and Douro wines from twenty hectares of vineyard, much of it old and interplanted. The wines, expertly made by Jorge Serôdio Borges (see Pintas below), include a fragrant, fruit-driven dry white and two firm, well-defined reds. **Quinta do Passadouro Reserva** is outstanding with power, elegance and poise.

Pintas

Wine & Soul Lda

Av. Julio Freitas 6, Vale de Mendiz, 5085-101 Pinhão

Tel. (351) 254 731 948

Husband and wife team Jorge Serôdio Borges and Sandra Tavares de Silva are experienced winemakers. He works for Quinta do Passadouro and she has a day job at Quinta Vale Dona Maria as well as overseeing her family estate, Quinta da Chocapalha, in Estremadura. In 2001 they bought an old Port lodge together and began making wine from a two-hectare plot of seventy-year-old vines interplanted with more than thirty different grape varieties. **Pintas**, meaning the 'spots' or splashes of wine found during vintage, is the result. This is a powerful wine; often impenetrable when young, it needs time to emerge and express itself. From neighbouring vineyards in the Pinhão valley, **Pintas Character** is softer, more accessible red yet tight-knit and very expressive of the local *terroir*. **Guru** is a soft, peachy dry white made from grapes grown near Murça at an altitude of 550 metres. This trio has now been joined by **Quinta da Manoella**, a characteristically dense Douro red with fine-grained tannins, from a hundred-year-old family-owned vineyard replanted after phylloxera.

Poeira

Quinta do Poeira

5060-283 Provesende, Sabrosa

Tel: (351) 939 506 699

www.poeira.pt

Jorge Moreira spent six years working alongside Jerry Luper at Real Companhia Velha before starting out on his own. In 2001 he purchased a small, predominantly north-facing vineyard (Quinta da Terra Feita da Cima) in the Pinhão Valley and now has nine hectares of his own vines. With three hectares of *vinha velha* (old vines) at its core, **Poeira** is powerful but has great finesse. Moreira's aim is to manage the natural power of the Douro in order to produce something more elegant than some of the heavily extracted wines that have appeared in recent years. **Pó de Poeira** is a firm, middle-weight wine for earlier drinking. Jorge Moreira also works as winemaker for Quinta de la Rosa (see below).

Quinta do Portal

Celeirós do Douro, 5060 Sabrosa

Tel: (351) 259 937 104

www.quintadoportal.pt

Huge amounts of capital have been poured into this property near Celeiros, owned by Oporto accountant Eugénio Branco. With ninety-five hectares of vineyard split between four different sites in the Pinhão valley (mostly at a fairly high altitude) and an up-to-date winery designed by Álvaro Siza Vieira, Portal has all the right ingredients to make some fine Douro wine. Portal's wines have a style of their own, helped by Frenchman Pascal Chatonnet, the self-styled 'wine alchemist'. The range is huge; perhaps too large and too eclectic to send a clear message. Portal's whites are lifted with a portion of Moscatel from Quinta de Abeleira near Favaio. There's a rosé, varietal reds and some ripe yet well-balanced Reservas and Grande Reservas.

Prats & Symington

Prats & Symington Lda

Travessa Barão de Forrester, 4400 - 034 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 776 300

www.chryseia.com

Prats and Symington is a joint venture between Bruno Prats, former owner of Château Cos d'Estournel in Pauillac, and the Symington Family, owners of Cockburn, Dow, Graham and Warre. In 1998 the two families resolved to make a top-class red in the Douro, combining the Symington's knowledge of the region with Prats' reputation as a producer of fine red Bordeaux. A few experimental *lotes* were made in 1999 to identify the best grape varieties and vineyard plots and in 2000 they produced their first wine. The wine was named **Chryseia**, the classical Greek translation of Douro which means 'of Gold'. Since 2009, the wine has been based on two vineyards, Quinta de Perdiz in the Rio Torto and Quinta de Roriz. Roriz is north facing and produces well-defined, minerally, aromatic wines; Perdiz yields softer, riper reds. Both estates have high proportions of Touriga Nacional and Touriga Franca, with smaller quantities of Tinta Roriz, Tinta Barroca and Tinto Cão occasionally incorporated into the blend of second wines, **Post Scriptum** and **Prazo de Roriz**. All the wines are made at Roriz. There is a strong French input. After *triage* (grape selection at the winery), vinification and *élevage* follow Bordeaux methods, with the aim of producing a wine with more finesse than is usual in the Douro. Aged for between eight and twelve months in new 400-litre French oak barrels, Chryseia has developed as a big, structured style of wine with fine-grained tannins lending some Bordelais finesse.

Ramos Pinto

Adriano Ramos Pinto (Vinhos) SA

Avenida Ramos Pinto, 380, 4400-266 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 707 000

www.ramospinto.pt

João Nicolau de Almeida took over from where his father, Fernando (of Barca Velha fame), left off. Their backgrounds could hardly be more different. Whereas his father learnt about

wine on the hoof, João studied oenology at Bordeaux University and joined the family Port shipper Ramos Pinto in 1976 (see profile on page 66). Sometimes betraying the countenance of an eccentric professor, João Nicolau de Almeida has an insatiable thirst for experimentation, having been one of the principal brains behind the Douro's red varietal breakthrough in the early 1980s. Nicolau de Almeida has turned his attention to white varietals like Viosinho, Gouveio and Rabigato. Benefitting from growing at an altitude of 600 metres, **Bons Ares** is a crisp blend of local white varietals lifted by a little grassy Sauvignon Blanc. A red from the same property combines Touriga Nacional with Cabernet Sauvignon. Both wines are classified under the far from snappy Vinho Regional Duriense. The Douro is represented by the red **Duas Quintas**. It combines the fruit of two very different properties (hence the name 'Two Quintas'). The wild and remote Quinta da Ervamoira in the Douro Superior provides the ballast and richness which is offset by lighter, more elegant wines from Quinta dos Bons Ares. Duas Quintas has established a good track record as a supple, balanced Douro red which even performs well in weaker years. It is reinforced by a **Reserva**, made mainly from Touriga Nacional, which manages to capture a hint of the New World with its intensely ripe, almost minty fruit and ripe but dense tannic structure.

Duas Quintas Reserva Especial is the product of old, interplanted vines at Quinta do Bom Retiro in the lower reaches of the Rio Torto. This was made for the first time in 1999 when, after twenty years developing new wines, João Nicolau de Almeida felt the need to reinvent the traditional way of producing wine in the Douro. Reserva Especial spends a week fermenting in *lagar* before spending eighteen months ageing in used oak 'to let the fruit talk'. Actually the fruit sings. With a massively rich, Port-like nose, a hint of *esteve*, eucalyptus and velvety concentration, this wine is the very essence of the Douro.

Real Companhia Velha

Companhia Geral da Agricultura das Vinhas do Alto Douro, SA

Rua Azevedo Magalhães, 314, Apartado 22, 4431-952 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 775 100

www.realcompanhiavelha.pt

Real Companhia Velha (also known as Real Vinicola) has the longest continuous history of any of today's producers of Douro wines. Founded in 1889 under contract with the Portuguese government, it was entrusted with the task of selling wines from various regions in northern Portugal. With brands spanning Vinho Verde, Bairrada and Dão and a decidedly patchy record in the 1980s, Real Vinicola is concentrating on wines from the Douro. In 1996 Real Vinicola created a Fine Wine Division accompanying this with a substantial revamp of its huge *adeiga* at Granja near Alijó. Under the combined direction of Pedro da Silva Reis and Californian winemaker Jerry Luper, Real Vinicola has produced some impressive and innovative Douro wines. White wines made from Douro varieties grown on the *planalto* around Alijó are fresh, clean and aromatic without being anything to write home about in an international context. The exception, however, is the white **Quinta do Cidrô** made from low-yielding Chardonnay planted at the eponymous C/D-rated *quinta* near São João de Pesqueira. Fermented and aged in new Portuguese oak, it combines a richly textured concentration of flavour with unusually

good natural acidity. Quinta do Cidrô is also producing varietal whites from Sauvignon Blanc and Alvarinho. The 2002 vintage saw the welcome revival of an old brand, **Grandjô**. This is a late-harvest wine made from botrytis-affected Semillon grapes from Granja and Cidrô picked at the end of October. It has a very good botrytic nose, wonderfully rich texture and a flavour of ripe apricots. None of these international grapes qualify as a Douro variety and the wines are therefore sold under the epithet Vinho Regional Duriense.

The scope of Real Vinicola's red wines has been greatly increased by a winery at Granja equipped with a battery of small stainless steel fermentation tanks and corresponding storage vats. With so many tiny plots of old vines in the Douro, many of which undoubtedly have the potential to produce wines of excellent quality, Luper seized on the idea of vinifying selected batches of grapes on a Burgundian scale. Real Vinicola's principal Douro reds are **Evel** and **Porca de Murça**, both of which started out as respected brands when they were conceived in the 1920s and 1930s but began to look rather lacklustre half a century later. Since the creation of the Fine Wine Division, both have received a much-needed makeover, so much so that they are now well-accepted, reliable reds with plenty of sappy, spicy Douro fruit softened by short ageing in oak. The pride of the range is **Evel Grande Escolha**. Produced since 1996 from small plots of old vines growing at lower altitudes around Pinhão with a preponderance of Touriga Franca and Touriga Nacional, it combines ripe berry fruit and well-integrated new oak. Quinta de Aciprestes opposite the railway station at Tua is now the source of some exciting reds from Portuguese varietals whereas Quinta do Cidrô combines Touriga Nacional and Cabernet Sauvignon in a 40/60 blend respectively.

Quinta da Romaneira

Cotas 5070 - 252 Alijó

Tel: (351) 259 957 000

www.quintadaromaneira.pt

Owned by a consortium of twelve investors including Christian Seely who manages Quinta do Noval, Romaneira is a 400-hectare estate with 86 hectares of vines. It was bought in a run-down state and much of the property has been replanted, plus there's a new purpose-built winery on top of the hill above the *quinta*. Despite sharing the same winemaker as nearby Noval, Romaneira's reds are in a class of their own. **Quinta da Romaneira** is a blend of Touriga Nacional and Touriga Francesa made in a soft, beautifully expressive style. **Quinta da Romaneira Reserva** is made for ageing, being solid, dense and profound. A second wine, made from younger vines, is bottled as **Sino de Romaneira**.

Quinta de la Rosa

Bergqvist Vinhos SA

Quinta de la Rosa, 5085-215 Pinhão

Tel. (351) 254 732 254

www.quintadelarosa.com

Port and Douro wine are given equal weight at this prime A-grade *quinta* near Pinhão. With help from Australian David Baverstock, the Bergqvist family were among the first to see the

potential in Douro wines when they made their first in 1990. Baverstock moved the Alentejo and has been replaced as winemaker by Jorge Moreira, formerly of Real Companhia Velha, who also produces his own wine, Poeira. La Rosa's reds have gained enormously in stature over the past decade and are good across the range. In particularly successful years a small quantity of wine is kept back and bottled as a Reserva which combines intensity with a certain elegance and finesse. The 2009 Reserva came top in a tasting of over 250 Douro reds organised by *Decanter* magazine in 2011. Rosa also produce a soft, barrel-fermented white from Gouveio, Rabigato and Malvasia Fina. The Bergqvists' commitment to Douro wines is displayed by their investment in a new *adega* and an air-conditioned cellar for both barrels and bottles.

Sogrape

Sogrape Vinhos SA

Aldeia Nova, 4430-801, Avintes, Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 227 838 104

www.sograpevinhos.eu

Portugal's largest winemaking concern, owners of Sandeman, Ferreira and Offley Port shippers with interests throughout the country and in South America, began life in the Douro. The Sogrape winery at Vila Real was originally constructed in the 1950s to produce Mateus Rosé from grapes growing in small vineyards on the surrounding *altos*. Production of Mateus has gradually shifted away from the Douro, and the Vila Real plant (not much more than a stone's throw from the famous Mateus Palace) has been thoroughly updated to make the most of the grapes growing on the northern margins of the Douro region. Sogrape's diversification began with the revival of the **Planalto**, a crisp blend of Viosinho, Malvasia Fina and Gouveio from the high plains above the Douro. Apart from **Pena do Pato**, a well-made bright juicy red, most of Sogrape's Douro wines are now produced under the Ferreira banner (see above).

Symington Family Estates

Travessa Barão de Forrester 86, 4431 - 901 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel. (351) 223 776 300

www.symington.com

One of the biggest names in the Port business turned to producing Douro wines in 1999. The Symington family, owners of Cockburn, Dow, Graham and Warre (among others), are now producing a wide range of different Douro wines. The main brand is **Altano**, named after the warm, evening winds that blow through the Douro Valley. Mostly sourced from Vilariça in the Douro Superior, Altano is an easy going mid-weight red with attractive Douro fruit, tempered by a touch of oak. There is also **Altano Organic** which is made in a similar style but has a little more weight and grip. **Altano Reserva** is an altogether bigger, more serious wine, sourced some of the Symington's prime vineyards in the Cima Corgo and Douro Superior and aged for twelve months in French oak. There is also an Altano Branco, a mouthwateringly fresh dry white with a touch of Moscatel made from fruit grown on the high margins of the Douro at Peter Symington's Quinta da Fonte Branca near Lamego. The

Symingtons also produce a pair of broad, ripe, single-estate reds from **Quinta do Vesúvio** in the Douro Superior, the second wine bottled under the name **Pombal do Vesúvio**.

Quinta das Tecedeiras

5130-114 Ervadosa do Douro, São João de Pesqueira

Tel. (351) 232 960 140

www.daosul.com

Quinta das Tecedeiras is the Douro outpost of Dão Sul, a rapidly expanding company with interests in Dão, Bairrada and also Brazil. The property is well located on the south side of the Douro opposite the Roncão valley. Within the fifteen hectares of vines are five hectares of mixed varieties with an age of eighty to a hundred years. This forms the core of **Quinta de Tecedeiras Reserva**, a deep, solid, structured wine, first produced in 2001.

Quinta da Touriga – Chã

Jorge Rosas – Vinhos Unipessoal Lda

Quinta da Touriga, Chã Caixa Postal 17, 5150 Vila Nova da Foz Côa

Tel. (351) 279 764 196

Quinta da Touriga was twenty hectares of virgin territory until it was discovered by José Ramos Pinto Rosas after an extensive search of the Douro Superior in the early 1990s (see profile on page 66). He planted 8.5 hectares of vines, mostly with Touriga Nacional, and consequently named the property Quinta da Touriga. José Rosas died in 1996, before his dream could be fulfilled. The property is now run by his son Jorge who is Export Director for Ramos Pinto. Since 2001 a small quantity of wine has been vinified on the property and bottled as a single-*quinta* wine. With a predominance of Touriga Nacional, **Quinta da Touriga – Chã**, as the wine is known, has a wonderful aromatic quality and great purity of flavour. Unlike some wines in the Douro Superior, this is not overbearing. Depth and concentration are matched by finesse.

Quinta do Vallado

Quinta do Vallado – Sociedade Agrícola Lda

Vilarinho dos Freires, 5050-364 Peso da Régua

Tel. (351) 254 323 147

www.quintadovallado.com

This property, overlooking the River Corgo, has been in the hands of the Ferreira family for six generations. In 1995 the present representatives of the family, Maria Antónia Ferreira and Gilherme Alvares Ribeiro, decided to divert about half the crop towards Douro wines bottled under the **Quinta do Vallado** label. With thirty-eight hectares of vineyard spanning an altitude of 47 to 325 metres above sea level, Vallado produces tawny and vintage Port and a range of Douro wines which succeed in being ripe, but not over-ripe. The straight Vallado is a supple, fruity red for early drinking. The **Quinta do Vallado Reserva** made from a high proportion of old interplanted vines is a dense, well-structured red with plum, cherry and dark chocolate flavours. A relatively high proportion of Tinta Amarela along

with some Sousão give this wine a character of its own. The latter grape is sometimes bottled as a fascinating, dark, dense varietal red. Vallado's wines are made by Francisco ('Chito') Olazabal who is also responsible for Quinta do Vale Meão (below).

Quinta do Vale Dona Maria

5130-005 Ervadosa do Douro

Tel. (351) 223 744320

www.valedonamaria.com

Since 1996, Cristiano van Zeller (ex-Quinta do Noval) has been running his wife's family *quinta* in the Rio Torto. Besides single-*quinta* Port, van Zeller is also making some excellent Douro wines from twenty hectares of vineyard. The wines are made by Sandra Tavares da Silva who also has her own wine project, Wine and Soul. The grapes are foot trodden in *lagar* and the wines ferment in temperature-controlled stainless steel before being aged for twelve months in new French oak casks. **Quinta Vale Dona Maria** is a firm, well-structured red with fine-grained tannins and expressive, plummy Douro fruit. **CV**, made from the oldest vines on the estate, is rich and dense with massive tannic structure and length of flavour.

Quinta do Vale Meão

F. Olazabal & Filhos Lda

Quinta do Vale Meão, 5150 – 501 Vila Nova de Foz Côa

Tel. (351) 279 762 156

www.quintadovalemeao.pt

Dona Antónia Ferreira was an astute businesswoman who bought and developed this magnificent property on a meander in the Douro in 1877, ten years before the arrival of the railway at nearby Pocinho which transformed the Douro Superior. The property remained with the Ferreira family until it was bought out by Dona Antónia's great-great-grandson, Francisco 'Vito' Olazabal, in 1994. Vale do Meão was the source of Portugal's most famous red wine, Barca Velha, from 1952 until the source changed to Quinta da Leda in the mid-1990s. In 1999, following his retirement as Managing Director of Ferreira, Olazabal severed all ties with the company and, together with his son Francisco ('Chito'), is now producing Port and Douro wine independently.

The famous *lagares* at Vale Meão have been completely restored. Each *lagar* has been divided in two to create six *lagares* with a capacity of fourteen pipes each, as opposed to three for thirty pipes. The Olazabals have invested heavily in a robotic treading system similar to that used by Noval, but hydraulic rather than pneumatic which they claim exerts greater pressure. Vale Meão's first wine was produced in 1999, a rich if rather solid, foursquare red with ripe tannins. Subsequent vintages have been hugely rich with powerful fleshy fruit, structured but with beguilingly soft, ripe tannins. Within five years, **Quinta do Vale Meão** had followed in the footsteps of Barca Velha and was rated as one of Portugal's leading reds. A second wine named **Meandro** shares the ripeness but not the structure and is excellent value for money.

8

DIRECTIONS IN OPORTO AND THE DOURO

Most visits to the Douro begin and end in Oporto. The atmosphere of Portugal's second city is encapsulated in the Portuguese saying that while 'Lisbon shows off, Oporto works for a living'. The city has expanded both upwards and outwards in recent years but the central, downtown area with its workaday nineteenth-century atmosphere has an uncanny resemblance to Manchester or Newcastle in the north of England. Like Manchester, rain is frequent and plentiful so Oporto's soberly dressed commuters carry umbrellas just in case.

Between the Praça de Liberdade which marks the centre of the city and the riverfront there is a maze of medieval streets. The cathedral, a small but solid thirteenth-century building with later add-ons, surveys Oporto's welter of rooftops and the long, low roofs of the Port lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia beyond. On a clear day the eighteenth-century **Torre dos Clérigos**, Portugal's tallest church tower, provides the best overall view of Oporto and Vila Nova de Gaia. There are 240 steps to reach the top.

The historic centre of commerce is located close to the river along the Rua Infante Dom Henrique (formerly the Rua Nova dos Ingleses – 'New English Street'). This used to be a rather run-down area but tourism has brought new restaurants, smart shops and boutiques. The Port and Douro Wine Institute occupies a sober granite building on the Rua Ferreira Borges. Close by, the **Salão Árabe** or Arab Hall of the Oporto Stock Exchange is worth viewing for the ostentatious internal decoration inspired by the Alhambra in Granada. It is completely out of sorts with the staid and rather grey character of the old financial district.

The British still have a significant presence in Oporto, with life centred on their own club. This used to be located near the city centre on the Rua das Virtudes, inappropriately named because it also served as the red light district! In the 1960s the club decamped to the Rua do Campo Alegre ('happy field') and became known as the Oporto Cricket and Lawn Tennis Club. The oldest British institution is the **Factory House** on the Rua Infante Dom Henrique. Behind the austere grey facade is an elegant interior with English-style furniture and some fine china on display. There are two identical dining

rooms placed end to end which are used by Port shippers and guests. The meal is served in one room and then you leave, taking your napkin, and sit at the same place in the adjoining room where vintage Port can be enjoyed free from the detracting smell of food. Membership is restricted to British-owned Port shippers who meet at the Factory House every Wednesday for lunch. At times when no function is arranged, the Factory House is open by appointment to visitors.

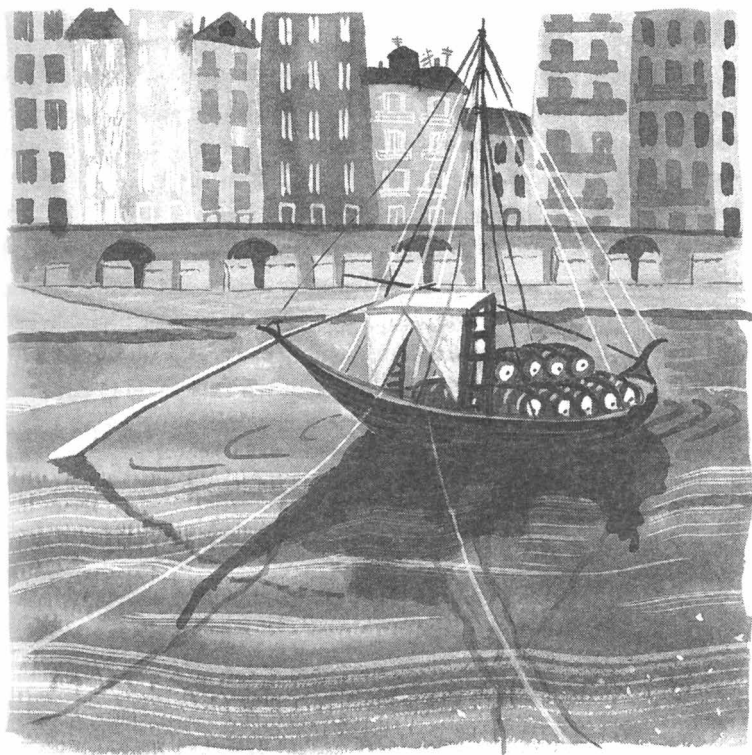
Oporto is connected to Vila Nova de Gaia by a two-tier iron bridge, the **Ponte D. Luíz**. The upper tier, now closed to traffic, carries the metro. There is a cable-car linking the upper part of Gaia with the waterfront. Gaia is best approached from the lower tier of the bridge that takes you directly to the **Port lodges**. Some shippers have an enviable location on the waterfront whereas others are hidden up narrow granite alleyways that smell of Port (see map 3). Many of the larger shippers conduct regular tours, finishing with a tasting and an opportunity to buy wine (although don't expect a bargain). Each firm has a different atmosphere. Among the most visible, and therefore most popular, are Cálem and Sandeman, the latter set back from the waterfront in an elegant building that is frequently flooded in the winter. Outdoor bars and cafes sponsored by the shippers look across the river to Oporto, and boat trips are available throughout the summer months.

Access to the Douro has improved greatly in recent years. Whereas it used to take a good three hours to reach the region by car, the vineyards of the Cima Corgo are now a daily commute, but if you have time to spare you would be well advised to leave the car behind. This is not for the sake of the Port but because most of the region's corkscrew roads traverse the valley and afford few good views of the river and vineyards.

Second only to the cruise boats which ply the river in the summer months, much the best way to appreciate the grandeur of the Douro landscape is to board the train. The journey upriver begins at Oporto's **São Bento** railway station from where trains leave for Pocinho, the end of the line. **São Bento** station itself is worth a visit. Built on the site of an old convent, its sepulchral concourse is covered from floor to ceiling with blue and white tiles (*azulejos*) depicting some of the more glorious moments from Portuguese history.

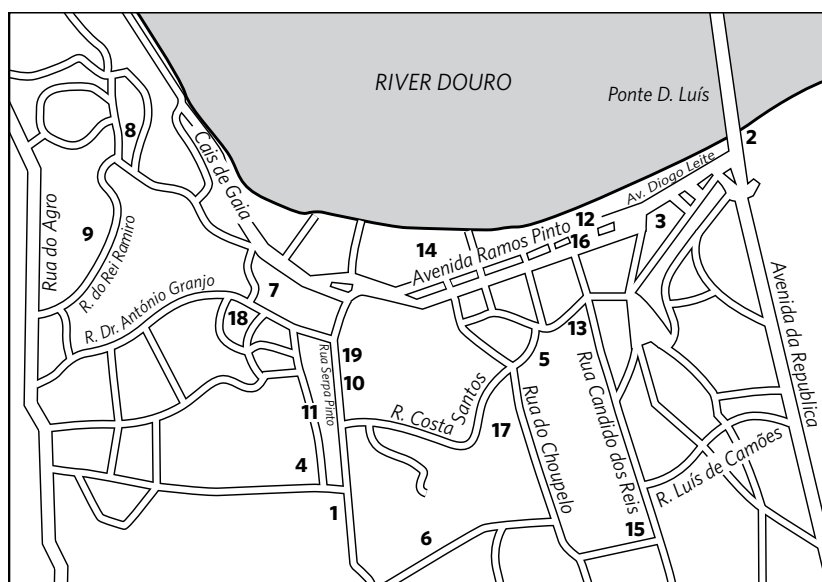
The journey to Pocinho lasts four hours but it is worth taking the train at least as far as Pinhão. Allowing for an early start, the return journey can be undertaken in a day. On leaving the tall suburbs of Oporto, frequently swathed in morning mist, the train emerges into Vinho Verde county. Pergola-trained vines, often strung with washing, brush alongside the windows of the carriage but there are no views of the River Douro until after Marco de Canaveses when about an hour of the journey has elapsed. From here until the end of the line, the train snakes alongside the river through country that is so rugged in places that neither mule nor motor vehicle could gain access. On the old trains when the weather was hot the doors of the carriages were left open so the brave (or foolhardy) could sit on the steps of the carriage. In places the train runs so close to the edge of the river that it would be possible to dive from the carriage into the Douro. The new trains on the line are air-conditioned, so this pleasure is now denied.

It is quite easy to see where the Vinho Verde region ends and the Port vineyards begin. As the river curves at Barqueiros, hard granite gives way to flaky schist and terraced

*Barco rabelo*

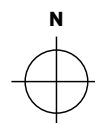
REGATTA DE SÃO JOÃO

During the summer the main road along the waterfront, the Avenida Ramos Pinto, is lined with creaking gondola-shaped *barcos rabelos*, mothballed after years of service bringing Port down the Douro. Once a year on the morning of 24 June, the feast day of São João, Oporto's patron saint, they cast off from the quayside and make their way down to the mouth of the River Douro. There is much consternation as these unwieldy craft find an imaginary starting line in front of the huge concrete arch of the Arrábida bridge, which is the beginning of a good-humoured race between Port shippers (it is billed as a regatta rather than a race). Many an incident has been recorded as the boats sail slowly upstream to the finish by the Ponte D. Luíz. Some are either blown into the fishing port of Afurada (much to the annoyance of the fishermen) or beached by the sewer outfall upstream on the opposite side. During one regatta a *barco rabelo* famously sank and a rather corpulent senior shipper was rescued floating down river on an empty Port pipe!



Port Lodges

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1 Barros | 9 Graham | 17 Taylor |
| 2 Burmester | 10 Kopke | 18 Warre |
| 3 Cálem | 11 Niepoort | 19 Wiese & Krohn |
| 4 Cockburn | 12 Noval | |
| 5 Croft | 13 Offley Forrester | |
| 6 Dow | 14 Ramos Pinto | |
| 7 Ferreira | 15 Rozès | |
| 8 Fonseca | 16 Sandeman | |



The location of Port lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia

vineyards, like hanging gardens, take over from the unruly pergolas. The first major stop inside the Douro region is the 'city' of **Peso da Régua** and this is the terminus for some trains known as *inter-cidade* (inter-city). Apart from its setting, Régua itself has never been an attractive town and over recent years its modicum of charm has been further eroded by indiscriminate modern construction. The only building worthy of note is the headquarters of Pombal's old Companhia, around which the town grew in the mid-eighteenth century; it now houses the **Museu do Douro** (Douro Museum). During the summer months a steam engine plies between Régua and Tua. Although this is an atmospheric way to see the Douro, spare a thought for some of the vineyard proprietors whose vines have been known to catch fire from sparks issued by the passing train.

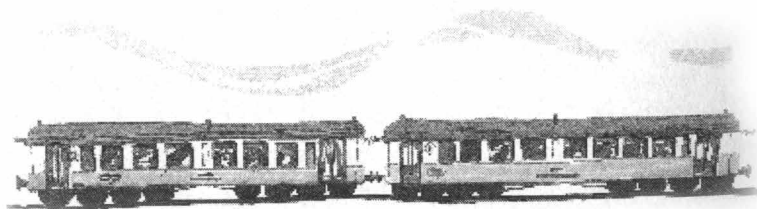
Soon after leaving Régua, the railway passes under the monolithic concrete bridge that carries the new north–south highway over the Douro. Shortly after passing over the River Corgo and the village of Covelinhas, a number of famous *quintas* come into view. Quinta do Crasto can just be seen to the left of the train with Barros Almeida's Quinta de São Luíz on the opposite side of the river. Quinta Nova, Offley's Quinta da Boa Vista and

Ferreira's Quinta do Porto, Sandeman's Quinta do Seixo and Quinta de la Rosa all follow in fairly quick succession before the train arrives at Pinhão.

Pinhão owes its existence to the railway and the station, with its remarkable panels of *azulejos* illustrating scenes from the Douro, is the only building of any note. It is also a passing place on the single track railway where the 'up' train meets the 'down' train. At vintage time, the station platform frequently resembles a cocktail party as wine-trade visitors and Port shippers converge and exchange invitations and the latest vineyard gossip. Pinhão's position is spectacular and there are many famous Port *quintas* within easy walking distance from the cobbled main street, especially since a new footbridge has been built over the mouth of the River Pinhão. The town itself is a disappointment. Once described to me by the late Bruce Guimaraens, not inaccurately, as a 'one horse town where the horse left', Pinhão has nevertheless improved considerably in recent years. A four-star hotel and a number of local *quintas* offering accommodation make this a good place to stay. Rather like Vizetelly, who described nineteenth-century Pinhão in some detail (see page 301), first-time visitors still gaze in some amazement at the antics of local dogs, which have a propensity to stand on one leg and scratch themselves with the other three.

Upstream from Pinhão, the train passes a succession of the most famous estates. Royal Oporto's Quinta das Carvalhas faces Dow's Quinta do Bomfim. Croft's Quinta da Roêda, Quinta da Romaneira, Sandeman's Quinta do Vau, the Symington's Quinta da Vila Velha, Graham's Quinta dos Malvedos and Quinta da Tua can all be seen clearly from the train. The hamlet of **Tua** is the next important stop and the station is always a scene of confusion as railway passengers alight to buy bread from the little motorised cart that sits on the platform before returning hurriedly to the train. Tua used to serve as a junction for the narrow gauge train that crawled up the Tua valley and over the *planalto* as far as Bragança but, sadly after a number of serious accidents, the line has closed.

Continuing on the Douro main line, the train passes an abandoned halt called Alegria ('happiness'), presumably named because of the relief felt by the boatmen at having descended the rapids of Valeira immediately upstream. Quinta do Castelinho can be seen on the opposite bank. The train proceeds beneath the 1970s dam and emerges from the tunnel in the forbidding chasm where Baron Forrester drowned in 1861. The water no longer smashes over the rocks but Cachão de Valeira is still a sinister place with lofty grey mountains reflected in the jet-black waters of the river. Storks, herons and the occasional bird of prey can be seen hovering above the crags. **Cachão de Valeira** marks the boundary

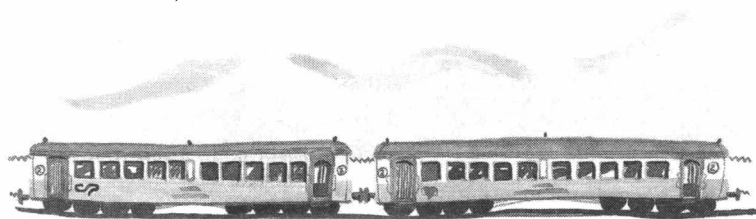


One of the world's great train journeys

between the Cima Corgo and Douro Superior. At Ferradosa, just above the former rapids, the railway crosses to the south bank of the river and some of the largest and most stately of all *quintas* come into view. Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas and the Symington family's Quinta do Vesúvio both have their own railway stations. On the opposite side of the river, Cockburn's Quinta dos Canais, Dow's Senhora da Ribeira and Warre's Vale Coelho and Telhada can all be seen from the window of the train. As the train reaches **Pocinho** the valley opens out and, apart from Quinta do Vale Meão, there are more olive trees to be seen than vines. Pocinho itself is no more than a collection of down-at-heel buildings and a few rusting steam engines. It feels more like the end of the world than the end of the line.

For anyone with a car, there are a number of good vantage points from which to appreciate the sheer scale and extent of the Douro region. The belvedere or *miradouro* at **São Leonardo da Galafura** is one of the best. Approached from the main road that runs between Régua to Vila Real (via Vila Seca), on a clear day it provides a vista of much of the Cima Corgo, with the Baixo Corgo and the outline of the Serra do Marão in the distance. Upriver, but only for those on foot or with a four-wheel drive, the **Chapel of São Domingos** at Provesende commands a spectacular view of the deeply incised Pinhão Valley. On the border between the Cima Corgo and the Douro Superior, the view from the five chapels of **São Salvador do Mundo** (Saint Saviour of the World) is even more dramatic. It is reached from the São João de Pesqueira–Ferradosa road and allows you to peer down from amongst the cactus plants and crags to the river more than 400 metres below.

Away from the river, a number of the older towns and villages are of both historical and architectural interest. On the south side of the Douro, the rural city of **Lamego** is dominated by the sanctuary of **Nossa Senhora dos Remédios**, the steps from which cascade into the main avenue that bisects the town. Just outside Vila Real on the northern margin of the region, the baroque **Palace of Mateus**, which lent its name to the world-famous rosé, is open to visitors. Overlooking the Pinhão Valley in the Cima Corgo, the village of **Provesende** (near Sabrosa) is one of the few villages to have survived the constructional onslaught of recent years and the eighteenth-century manor houses, built from profits generated by Pombal's Companhia, have largely escaped alteration. There are ruins of defensive castles north and south of the river at **Lavandeira** and **Numão**, both of which afford fine views of the surrounding countryside (one well-known Port shipper used to hide a bottle of tawny Port in the rocks at Lavandeira, handy for a drink whenever he and his friends visited).



The remote town of **Vila Nova da Foz Côa** in the Douro Superior boasts a richly decorated parish church. Foz Côa has also become the centre for visiting the extraordinary **Côa Valley** archaeological park (a UNESCO World Heritage Site). Between 1992 and 1995, a whole series of Palaeolithic engravings were discovered, etched into the rock along a 20-kilometre stretch of the River Côa. A number of engravings in the lower reaches of the **Côa Valley** undoubtedly disappeared under the waters of the Douro when it was dammed in the 1970s, and for a time in the early 1990s it seemed as though the remainder might vanish under a new dam to be built near Vila Nova da Foz Côa. Fortunately the dam was shelved and a number of archaeological sites in the Côa Valley have been opened up to visitors. A museum is being built above the half-completed dam and the engravings, mostly depicting wild animals, can be visited by four-wheel drive vehicles from visitor centres at Castelo Melhor and Muxagata. The existence of the engravings had been common knowledge among local shepherds long before the archaeologists 'discovered' the site. At one place on the Côa, a local wit has added to the prehistoric graffiti, etching a charming picture of the old Douro *paciência* (steam train) into the schist!

WHERE TO STAY IN OPORTO AND VILA NOVA DE GAIA

Oporto and Vila Nova de Gaia are well served by hotels although, until recently, there were not many with any real character. **The Yeatman Hotel** (*****) in Vila Nova de Gaia is the most luxurious and atmospheric place to stay. Recently built by the family who own Taylor, Fonseca and Croft, The Yeatman is a wine-themed hotel with a Michelin-starred restaurant and bedrooms that look out over a swimming pool, the river and the city beyond. On the opposite side of the river, the **Hotel Infante de Sagres** (****) in Oporto city centre was built in the 1930s and has a spacious interior and an elegant dining room. The **Pestana Porto** (****) is probably the best place to stay to soak up the atmosphere of the city. It occupies a terrace of restored houses on the waterfront and overlooks the Port lodges on the opposite side of the Douro. It can, however, be noisy, especially during São João. The nearby **Hotel da Bolsa** (***) is convenient for visiting both the Port lodges and city centre whereas **Hotel Boa Vista at Foz** (***) is quieter, outside the city overlooking the mouth of the Douro.

WHERE TO STAY IN THE DOURO

When I first went to the Douro in 1979, it was very much a place for travellers rather than tourists. Hardy souls would return from the region bristling with tales of privation and discomfort. Hotel accommodation was non-existent and a visitor to the Douro would easily recognise Henry Vizetelly's description from a century earlier:

'... owing to the absence of any kind of accommodation, the traveller is entirely dependent on the courtesy of owners or occupiers of quintas along his lines of route. When an invitation is given to you to take up your quarters in one of these quintas, it is invariably accompanied by the intimation that you must be prepared to "rough it". But it usually happens that the only roughing of it you have to undergo is over the villainous roads which lead to your destination. There is no lack of hospitality, and you are feasted on fowls, turkeys, and hams, and on beef and mutton – which, by the way, have to be sent for a distance of ten miles ... the finest grapes are of course in abundance. The choicest of Tawny Port, which has lost all its fruitiness during a quarter of a century in cask, is at your service...'

Accommodation in the Douro is much better than it was in Vizetelly's day and there is plenty of choice. In the Baixo Corgo, the **Solar da Rede** (****) near Mesão Frio is a grand eighteenth-century mansion with views over the river, now converted into a luxurious hotel with the atmosphere of a private country house. Upstream and on the opposite side of the river is the **Aquapura** (*****), a spa hotel on an old Port *quinta*. Régua boasts a large modern hotel (**Hotel Régua Douro** ****) but it does not have much in the way of local character. Pinhão provides much the most convenient base for visiting the Douro. In 1998 Taylor converted their riverside *armazém* into **The Vintage House Hotel** (****). No longer owned by Taylor, it is managed by C. S. Hotels who also run the Solar da Rede. There is more modest accommodation in Pinhão, but the best way to soak up the atmosphere of the Douro is to stay on a Port *quinta*. **Quinta de la Rosa** offers bed and breakfast accommodation and has two houses to rent on the estate. Nearby at Chancelheiros, a German family have converted an old manor house (**Casa Visconde de Chancelheiros**) into holiday accommodation with both a swimming pool and a squash court. In a quiet setting away from the river at Vale de Mendiz, **Quinta do Passadouro** also offers bed, breakfast and evening meal. For luxurious accommodation, it is worth climbing to Casal de Loivos above Pinhão where the Sampaio family have converted a seventeenth-century house (**Casa do Casal de Loivos**). Don't be put off by the scruffy approach through the village: at the front of the house is a terrace and swimming pool with a magnificent view of the Douro. Just upstream from Pinhão is the **Romaneira, Quinta dos Sonhos** (*****). This Relais et Châteaux Hotel is a destination in itself. It stands above the river and is on a 400-hectare *quinta*, producing its own Port and Douro wine.

WHAT TO EAT IN OPORTO AND THE DOURO

The inhabitants of Oporto are known as *Tripeiros* (tripe eaters) after the city's staple dish, *tripas a moda do Porto*. This seemingly unappetising but spicy dish is served in restaurants throughout the city. Another local speciality is the *francesinha*, bread topped with steak, sausage, tomato and melted cheese. Often eaten as a snack, it is a weighty dish best washed

down with a *fino*, a refreshingly cold draught beer. The trusty *bacalhau* (salt cod) can be seen – and smelt – hanging outside old-fashioned grocers' stores. There are 365 ways to cook *bacalhau* but one of the most famous dishes which originated from Oporto is *bacalhau à gomes de sá*: salt cod layered with sliced potato, onion, garlic, olive oil and chopped boiled eggs, and baked in the oven. Some of the best fresh fish in the world is landed at Matosinhos just north of the city. It is worth taking the metro to try one of the restaurants there which range from expensive shellfish restaurants to simple *tascas* grilling fish on the street.

There is no shortage of good restaurants in Oporto, many of which are in obscure locations. Among my favourites are these: **Bull and Bear**, below the stock exchange on the Avenida da Boa Vista; **Foz Velha**, in Foz Velha; **Shis**, on the beach at Foz; **Barão de Fladgate** in Taylor's Port lodge; **Portucale**, on the thirteenth floor of a 1960s tower block with the original retro décor; **D'Oliva**, a converted warehouse in Matosinhos serving Portuguese and Italian *petiscos* (small dishes).

Organised by the Port and Douro Wine Institute, the **Solar do Vinho do Porto** is a good place to sample a wide range of Ports. It occupies an eighteenth-century mansion with a fine view across the Douro to Vila Nova de Gaia. Located west of Oporto city centre, it is to be found below the Palácio de Cristal on the Rua Entre Quintas. It also houses a museum and art gallery.

With the development of tourism in the Douro, a number of modern Portuguese restaurants have opened in the region, the best of which is **DOC** built on stilts over the river at Folgosa, between Régua and Pinhão. For more traditional but well-cooked Douro fare try **Cepa Torta** in Alijó. I always enjoy the **Calça Curta** by the railway station at Tua which has a terrace with good views over the river. There is another excellent little restaurant in the main square at Provesende called **Papa Zaide** (look out for **A Loja Amarela**, a handicraft shop nearby). The best Douro food is homespun and limited in availability. Soups are hearty and eggs are plentiful, but after a few days in the region it is easy to see why there are those 365 ways of cooking *bacalhau* (salt cod)! Don't be afraid to ask restaurants for their recommendations; in a simple roadside restaurant, the *prato do dia* (dish of the day) is often the best option.

9

POSTSCRIPT

The future for Port and the Douro

At the start of the new century, the Port trade had never had it so good. With three decades of steady growth and investment, new markets and buoyant sales, the outlook seemed positive. Twelve years later a sharp dose of reality has set in. Port sales peaked in 2000 and have been falling slowly since. Three markets, France, Holland and Belgium, account for nearly 60 per cent of worldwide sales and the average price per litre has barely moved over the past decade. At the same time, the cost of growing grapes and producing Port has been rising steeply. As I write this postscript, the shippers are being faced with a 60 per cent rise in the cost of *aguardente*, the spirit that makes up 20 per cent of Port.

The Douro is never going to be a cheap place to produce wine. The terrain does not lend itself to mechanisation and with labour in short supply, the region is potentially one of the most costly regions in the world to produce wine. The extreme fragmentation of the landholdings limits economies of scale. As old farmers retire and die off, grape growing is not appealing to their children who prefer the bright lights of the cities and the coast to the hard slog of the Douro. For large parts of the Douro, there will have to be some consolidation of vineyard holdings over the medium term.

There are plenty of properties for sale in the Douro but few buyers. The financial crisis in 2008 put a stop to the international speculation in *quintas* that had driven prices sky high. With the wave of takeovers and mergers that have taken place following the retreat of the multinationals, the main shippers have the vineyards they need and are not looking out for more. There has been overplanting in recent years, mostly in the Douro Superior, and the region is currently facing a surplus of grapes (see below).

Tourism continues to gain in importance and the construction of new roads (which is continuing despite the international debt crisis) will further open up the region, making it accessible for day trips from Oporto and the coast. Oporto has become a hub for low-cost airlines and a destination for short breaks, but the hotel building that took off during the 2000s has come to an abrupt halt and occupancy both in Oporto and the Douro has been disappointingly low. Tourism has helped to diversify the economy and promote the

image of both Port and Douro wines worldwide, but it is not the cure-all for the region's problems. It has to be hoped that future tourist development will be tightly regulated. Portugal has never been very good at conservation but the World Heritage status granted to the centre of Oporto, the heart of the vineyard region and the C  a Valley has raised awareness of the unique character of the Douro, both at home and abroad.

Like so much of European agriculture, the Port industry is tied up with rules and regulations that are refreshingly absent from much of the New World. Many of Portugal's state institutions and much of the country's legislation date back to the 1930s and 1950s. While it is fair to say that the *beneficio* system has served the Port trade reasonably well for over sixty years, there is now a clear need for fundamental and far-reaching reform. The *beneficio* may have helped to keep Port production and sales in check (avoiding the grape glut that so undermined Sherry) but it takes no account of Douro wines, an increasingly important part of the overall equation. At the same time as limiting the production of Port, the authorities have allowed the total area of vineyards in the Douro to grow out of all proportion. When I wrote the first edition of this book in 1998 there were 38,000 hectares of vineyard. This has risen to over 45,000 in 2011. This planting has taken place at the same time as yields have increased with the new, mostly EU-subsidised, vineyards planted in the 1990s, which are now in their prime. At the time of writing there is a huge imbalance between the production and sale of Douro wines, leading to a chronic over-supply of grapes. Whereas the price of Port grapes is controlled by the *beneficio*, grapes for Douro wine are market priced, and the Port shippers complain that by paying an artificial price for Port grapes they are effectively subsidising Douro wine. The consequences of a continuing decline in Port sales do not seem to have been considered by the authorities.

The consolidation of the Port trade into five groups brought strong and mostly healthy competition to the trade. With many fewer brands, the business is much less fragmented than it was. Two family-owned groups, the Symington Family Estates and the Fladgate Partnership, dominate the market for premium Port. In spite of the overall decline in sales, the so-called 'Special Categories' continue to grow. From just 5 per cent of world sales in 1990, the Special Categories have risen to account for 20 per cent of sales by volume and 37 per cent by value. This growth has been based on sensible marketing and a substantial increase in the overall quality of grapes produced in the Douro. With the new vineyards planted in the 1980s and 1990s now in their prime and technology paying dividends in the winery, it is fair to say that the quality of Port has never been better. But the premium market is concentrated in too few hands. The Symingtons and Fladgate Partnership together produce nearly two-thirds of the Special Categories market between them.

The Port trade is often thought of as being stuck in an eighteenth-century time warp, but in fact it has changed more in the last three decades than at any time over the past three hundred years. Not all the changes have been for the better. Much of the vineyard planting carried out in the 1980s was badly conceived and is going to be costly to put right. But on past record the Port industry has had a remarkable capacity for reinventing itself and renewing its appeal. The Port shippers are by no means in an ivory tower and the trade in general is so much less isolated than it was when I first came to know it in

the early 1980s. There is a healthy spirit of co-operation between producers that didn't exist in the 1990s, helped – I think – by the proliferation of Douro wines and the need to promote and publicise them. Port and the Douro are facing some grave structural problems that are in urgent need of attention. Concluding with a postscript that is the most negative of those in the three editions of this book, I am still certain that the Douro will continue to be one of the world's most captivating wine regions and that Port will remain among the greatest of wines.

GLOSSARY OF PORTUGUESE AND TECHNICAL TERMS

ABAFADO (as in *vinho abafado*): a general term for a fortified wine where the fermentation has been arrested by the addition of *aguardente* (q.v.) leaving residual sugar. From *abafar*, meaning to choke, smother or stifle.

ADEGA: winery.

ADEGA CO-OPERATIVA: co-operative winery.

AGUE PÉ: (literally 'foot water'); the name of a local drink made by adding water to *bagaço* (q.v.), which is then trodden and fermented for a second time.

AGUARDENTE: brandy. It is also the name of the grape spirit (77% ABV) used to fortify Port.

ALMUDE: a liquid measure determined by the quantity of Port a man might reasonably be able to carry on his head: 25.44 litres. Twenty-one *almudes* make up a *pipa* (q.v.) or pipe.

ALOIRADO: the Portuguese expression used to signify 'tawny' (from the words *loira/loura* meaning 'blonde' or 'fair').

ALTOS: colloquial expression referring to the high plateaux north and south of the Douro valley.

ARMAZÉM (plural *armazéns*): warehouse, store or wine lodge.

ARTISTAS: skilled employees on a *quinta* (q.v.).

AZENHA: the building on a *quinta* (q.v.), which houses the olive press.

AZULEJOS: panels of decorative tiles, so-called because they are traditionally blue (*azul*) and white.

BACALHAU: dried salt cod, a staple dish in the Douro and throughout Portugal.

BAGA (DE SABUGUIRO): elderberry.

BAGACEIRA: marc distilled from the *bagaço* (q.v.).

BAGAÇO: skins, stalks and pips left over after fermentation and pressing.

BAIXO: low/lower (as in *Baixo Corgo*: Lower Corgo).

BALÃO (plural *balões*): literally 'balloon'; large concrete storage vessel for Port. Also known colloquially as *mamas* or *ginas* (after Gina Lollobrigida) because of their distinctive shape.

BALSEIRO: large upstanding wooden vat used for storing and maturing Port prior to bottling.

BARCO RABELO: traditional Douro boat used for bringing Port downstream.

- BENEFICÍO: literally meaning 'benefit', it signifies the annual authorisation of must which may be fortified to produce Port in any one year. Intended to keep supply in line with demand, the *benefício* system is complex and is explained in detail on pages 62.
- BICA ABERTA: fermentation off the skins.
- BRANCO: white (as in white Port, *vinho do Porto branco*).
- CADASTRO: register of vineyards (see page 62).
- CAMÂRA: town hall or town council.
- CANADA: liquid measure (2.12 litres), which has now fallen from regular use. There are 252 *canadas* in a *pipa* or pipe (q.v.) and twelve *canadas* in an *almude* (q.v.).
- CARDENHO: dormitory building for the pickers during vintage.
- CASAL: the couple who manage a *quinta* (see also *caseiro*).
- CASEIRO: the farmer-manager of a *quinta* who lives permanently on the property. The *caseira* is his wife.
- CASTA: grape variety.
- CÊNTIMO: cent. There are 100 *cêntimos* in one Euro.
- CEPA: an individual vine (see also *pé*).
- CESTO DA VINDIMA: the traditional baskets used to carry grapes during vintage, sometimes referred to as a *gigo*.
- CIMA: top or upper (as in *Cima Corgo* – Upper Corgo).
- COLAGEM: fining to clarify wine with potentially unstable material remaining in solution.
- COLHEITA: literally 'harvest', it also signifies a style of Port.
- CONCELHO: municipal district.
- CONTO: one thousand *escudos*. Despite the change to the Euro in 2002, many people still talk in *contos*.
- CORTE: literally 'cut', it signifies the first stage in the treading of a *lagar* (q.v.).
- COSTA: bank or slope; coast.
- CUBA: vat (as in *cuba de inox*: stainless-steel vat; *cuba de cimento*: cement vat).
- DESAVINHO: uneven development of individual berries within a bunch of grapes provoked by cold, wet weather at the time of flowering. Known as 'hen and chickens' in English or *millerandage* in French.
- DÔCE: sweet (see also *lagrima*).
- DORNA: a large steel hopper with a capacity of up to 1,000 kilos of grapes.
- ENCARREGADO: the foreman on a *quinta* (q.v.).
- ENCOSTA: slope.
- ENGAÇO: stalks, stems.
- ESCOLHA: choice, selection.
- ESCUDO: the main unit of Portuguese currency, replaced in 2002 by the Euro.
- ENSAIBRAMENTO: earth moving (prior to planting a new vineyard).
- ESTUFAGEM: the heating process used in Madeira to advance ageing. Ports can also be subject to natural *estufagem* if they are left for an extended period in the Douro. From the word *estufa* meaning 'stove' or 'greenhouse'.

FREGUESIA: parish.

GENEROSO: literally 'generous'; also meaning fortified as in *vinho generoso*, fortified wine.

GEROPIGA: grape must prevented from fermenting by the addition of *aguardente* (q.v.). Sometimes used in blending.

GIGO: see *cesto da vindima*.

GRANEL: bulk (as in *vinho de granel*, bulk wine).

GRAU: degree of temperature, sugar or alcohol.

INOX: the colloquial word for stainless steel (from *aço inoxidável*).

JEROPIGA (occasionally spelt *geropiga*): grape must prevented from fermenting by the addition of spirit or *aguardente*. It is commonly used for sweetening fortified wines. The South Africans commercialise an intensely sweet wine known as *jerepigo*.

LAGAR: stone (usually granite) or concrete tank for treading and fermenting grapes.

LAGRIMA: literally 'tears'; depending on the context *lagrima* signifies free-run grape juice or a very sweet, unctuous white Port.

LEVE: light (as in the category of white Port known as *leve seco* – light dry).

LOTE: a 'lot' or parcel of wine.

MACACO: literally 'monkey', it also denotes the spiked plungers that are used to keep the floating manta (q.v.) in contact with the fermenting *mosto* (q.v.).

MANTA: literally 'blanket'; in the context of Port vinification it means the cap of grape skins and stalks that floats to the surface during fermentation.

MIRADOURO: a vantage point to admire the view.

MORTÓRIOS: literally 'mortuaries', the term signifies the terraces abandoned during the phylloxera epidemic of the 1870s and 1880s.

MOSTO: grape juice, must.

OBRAS: works or alterations. The word has entered the Anglo-Portuguese lexicon because of the seemingly continual *obras* and the disruption that they cause!

PATAMAR: vineyard terrace without a retaining wall.

PATRÃO (plural *patrões*): the owner of a *quinta*; the boss!

PATROA: the owner (if female) or the owner's wife.

PÉ: literally 'foot' but often used to refer to an individual vine or *cepa* (q.v.). *Pisa a pé* means to tread by foot.

PILHEIRO: hole in a vertical terrace wall formerly used for planting vines.

PINTOR: literally 'painter', meaning *veraison* or the colouring of the grapes during ripening.

PIPA: a 'pipe' or cask used for ageing wine. A *pipa* is also a unit of measurement: 550 litres in the Douro, 620 litres in Vila Nova de Gaia and 534.24 litres for export purposes.

PLANALTO: the high plains on the northern and southern margins of the Douro.

PODA: pruning.

PRENSA: press (as in *vinho da prensa*, press wine).

PROVA: tasting.

QUINTA: literally a farm, estate or landed property (see page 87 for a fuller definition in the context of the Douro).

- RAMADA: overhead pergola system used for training vines in the Vinho Verde region and for table grapes/decorative purposes in the Douro.
- RAMO: literally a branch, it also signifies the festooned palm or bamboo branch that is traditionally presented to the wife of the *patrão* (q.v.) by the *roga* (q.v.) at the end of the harvest (see page 140).
- REI: literally 'king' but also a common unit of currency in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries representing a thousandth of an *escudo*. One *milrei* therefore equals one *escudo*.
- REMONTAGEM: pumping over (see page 133).
- RETINTO: literally 're-dyed'; a very deep red colour (as in a young vintage Port).
- RIBEIRA: riverside/quays.
- RIBEIRO/A: a small river.
- RIO: a river.
- ROGA: the gang of pickers who work on a *quinta* (q.v.) for the duration of the vintage.
- ROGADOR: the leader of the gang of pickers who acts as drill sergeant in the *lagar* (q.v.).
- ROLHA: a cork.
- SACA-ROLHAS: corkscrew.
- SECO: dry (as in *vinho branco seco*, dry white wine).
- SOCALCO: a walled terrace.
- SOLAR: a manor house.
- TANOARIA: cooperage.
- TANOEIRO: cooper, barrel maker.
- TINTO: red (as in *vinho tinto*, red wine).
- TONEL (plural *toneis*): a large wooden cask with a capacity of between twenty and sixty *pipa* (q.v.) used for storing and ageing wine.
- TURISMO DE HABITAÇÃO: guest accommodation in private houses found in the Douro and throughout rural Portugal.
- UVA: grape.
- VINAGRINHO: literally 'a touch of vinegar'; descriptive term for a wine that is 'high toned' with noticeable but not necessarily detrimental levels of volatile acidity.
- VINDIMA: vintage or harvest.
- VINHA: vineyard or plot of vines.
- VINHA VELHA: an old mixed vineyard.
- VINHO: wine.
- XISTO: schist.

GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

Portugal has a bewildering number of different acronyms. These are the initials of organisations, institutions and projects most closely involved in the day-to-day life of the Douro.

ADVID: Associação para o Desenvolvimento da Viticultura Duriense (Douro Viticultural Development Association).

AEVP: Associação das Empresas do Vinho do Porto (Port Wine Shippers Association).

AVEPOD: Associação dos Viticultores Engarrafadores dos Vinhos do Porto e Douro (Port and Douro Wine Growers and Bottlers Association).

CD: Casa do Douro.

IVDP: Instituto dos Vinhos do Porto e do Douro (Port and Douro Wine Institute).

IVV: Instituto do Vinho e da Vinha (Institute of Vines and Wine – formerly the Junta Nacional do Vinho).

PDRITM: Projecto de Desenvolvimento Rural Integrado de Trás-os-Montes (Trás-os-Montes Integrated Rural Development Project).

UTAD: Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e do Alto Douro (University of Trás-os-Montes and the Alto Douro).

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

Anthocyanins: the principal member of a complex group of organic chemicals responsible for the red/purple hue in wines.

Baumé: a measure of dissolved compounds in grape juice and therefore its approximate concentration of sugars. The number of degrees Baumé is a rough indicator of percentage alcohol by volume (i.e. grape juice with 12 degrees Baumé will produce a wine with about 12% ABV). Its inventor was Antoine Baumé (1728–1804), a French pharmacist.

Cuvaison: a French term that applies to red winemaking, for which there is no English translation. It signifies an extended period of maceration on grape skins following fermentation, resulting in the greater extraction of both colour and tannin.

Elevage: a French winemaking term which defies translation into English. It literally means ‘rearing’ or ‘raising’ as it might be applied to either young livestock or humans, but in the context of wine it is the term applied to the series of operations between the end of fermentation and bottling. At this stage in the process, the winemaker’s role is analogous to that of a parent and there is much that can go wrong before a wine is finally bottled, shipped and consumed.

Ethyl Acetate: the most common ester in wine formed by the reaction of acetic acid with ethanol. At low to moderate concentrations, ethyl acetate contributes to the aroma and flavour of the wine, but at high concentrations a wine will be unacceptably vinegary. Many old tawny Ports have relatively high levels of ethyl acetate.

- Fining:** the process where microscopic particles are removed from a wine by the addition of a fining agent. The most commonly used fining agents are bentonite, casein, egg white, or gelatin, which adsorb or coagulate with potentially unstable colloidal material suspended in the wine, causing it to precipitate more quickly. The fining of Port is discussed on p. 145.
- Pectolitic Enzymes:** used by winemakers to break up natural pectins in the grape skins and occasionally to aid colour and flavour extraction.
- pH:** hydrogen power; a measure of the concentration of the acidity. Low pH indicates high concentrations of acidity and vice versa. All grape must is acidic, usually registering pH values between three and four. The scale is logarithmic, so a wine with a pH of three has ten times as much hydrogen ion activity as one whose pH is 4. Most Douro grape musts are naturally at the upper end of the spectrum (occasionally in excess of pH4) and have to be corrected by the addition of tartaric acid (see also Total Acidity).
- Phenolics:** a large group of reactive chemical components responsible for the tannins, pigment (anthocyanins) and many of the flavour compounds found in wine. Most of the phenolics come from the skins of the grape.
- Sulphur Dioxide (SO²):** a disinfectant and anti-oxidant used by winemakers. The efficacy of sulphur dioxide is influenced by the wine's pH.
- Total Acidity:** a measure of both fixed and volatile acids in wine usually expressed in Portugal as grams per litre tartaric. The ideal range for grape musts is between 7 grams per litre and 10 grams per litre with wines varying between 4.5 grams per litre and 8 grams per litre. Port naturally tends to be towards the lower end of the spectrum with musts registering as little as 5 grams per litre expressed as tartaric acid. The addition of tartaric acid is therefore commonplace.
- Volatile Acidity:** a measure of the naturally occurring organic acids in a wine that are separable by distillation. The most common volatile acid in wine is acetic acid, which imparts a vinegary character if present in excessive concentrations. The Portuguese use the term *vinagrinho* ('little vinegar') to describe a wine with noticeable but not detrimental levels of volatile acidity (usually found in old colheita and tawny Ports).

APPENDIX I – INSTITUTIONS REGULATING AND PROMOTING PORT AND DOURO WINES

INSTITUTO DOS VINHO DO DOURO E DO PORTO (IVDP)

Rua dos Camilos, 90, 5050 Peso da Régua

Tel: (351) 254 320 130

Rua Ferreira Borges, 27 4050–253 Porto – Portugal

Tel: (351) 222 071 600

www.ivdp.pt

Formed in 2003, the Port and Douro Wine Institute is an interprofessional public body resulting from the merger of former Port Wine Institute (IVP), established in 1933, with the Comissão Interprofissional do Região Demarcada do Douro (CIRDD), established in 1995.

Now based in Régua, the IVDP is a powerful body with a wide and far-reaching remit. An Interprofessional Council is responsible for promoting the convergence of interests between growers and shippers, determining and regulating the total amount of grape must that may be fortified to produce Port in any one year (the *benefício*). The IVDP controls the quantity and quality of Port and Douro wine (including wine designated ‘Terras Duriense’) by regulating production and certifying the wine after a rigorous quality-control process. All Port and Douro wines have to be submitted to the IVDP for analysis and tasting before seals of origin are granted to the wine in question.

The IVDP is also responsible for the generic promotion of Port and Douro wine worldwide, defending the region and using every available means to combat fraud. It acts alongside the Portuguese government in European Union negotiations with non-EU countries to restrict the use of the name ‘Port’.

CASA DO DOURO

Apartado 10, Rua dos Camilos, 5050-272 Peso da Régua

Tel: (351) 254 320 811

Created in 1932, the Casa do Douro has lost much of its statutory power since it purchased a 40 per cent share of the Real Companhia Velha in 1990. It operates today as a federation purporting to represent the interests of growers and co-operatives in the demarcated Douro region. The Casa do Douro's principal role is to maintain a complete register (*cadastro*) of every farmer and all vineyards within the demarcated region. All growers are obliged by law to register with the Casa do Douro.

ASSOCIAÇÃO DAS EMPRESAS DO VINHO DO PORTO (AEVP)

Rua António Granjo, 207, 4400 – 124 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel: (351) 223 745 520

www.aevp.pt

The successor to the former exporters' guild or *grémio*, the Port Wine Shippers Association is a private voluntary body to which nearly all of the major shippers belong. The main object of the AEVP is to promote and defend the interests of the exporting companies both at home and overseas. At the time of writing, the following shippers are members:

Adriano Ramos Pinto

C. da Silva

Caves Vale do Rodo

Gran Cruz Porto

J. H. Andresen

Manoel D. Poças Junior

Niepoort

Quarles Harris & Ca

Quinta do Noval

Quinta de Ventozelo

Quinta and Vineyard Bottlers

Rozès

Sociedade dos Vinhos Borges

Sogevinus Fine Wines

Sogrape

Symington Family Estates

Wiese & Krohn

ASSOCIAÇÃO DOS VITICULTORES ENGARRAFADORES DOS VINHOS DO PORTO E DOURO (AVEPOD)

Rua da Alegria, 39-1.º, 5050-256 Peso da Régua

Tel: (351) 254 324 363

The Association of Port Wine Growers and Bottlers was formed in 1986 to represent and promote those producers based in the Douro region, making and marketing their own Ports and Douro wines. At the time of writing, the following thirty-three producers are members:

Aida Coimbra Aires de M. e Filhos, Lda

Bernardo Albuquerque Nápoles de Carvalho

César Augusto Correia de Sequeira

Domingos Alves de Sousa

Eduardo Francisco B. da Costa Seixas

Eduardo M. Freire de Serpa Pimentel

Fernando Manuel Bahia Machado

João B. C. Girão de Azevedo Leme

José Carlos de Moraes Calheiros Cruz

José Carlos Monteiro Pinto

José Manuel de Barros Vizeu

José Pedro Pinto Gregório Sousa

José Viseu Carvalho & Filhos, Lda

Laura Maria Valente Barreto Regueiro

Lemos & van Zeller, Lda

Macário de Castro Coutinho

Manuel Pinto Hespanhol

Montez Champalimaud Murças, Lda

Casa dos Miguéis

Quinta dos Avidagos

Quinta dos Fojos

Quinta de Sairrão-Sociedade Agrícola, Lda

Quinta do Infantado-Vinhos do Produtor, S.A

Quinta do Valado

Sociedade Agrícola da Romaneira, S.A

Sociedade Agrícola Folgosa Velha, Lda Sociedade Agrícola Vila Velha da Vilarça, Lda

Sociedade Clemente Menéres, Lda Sociedade

Quinta Seara D'Ordens, Lda Sociedade vitivinícola

Quinta de Sta. Eufemia, Lda

Solar da Rede – Sociedade Exploração Turística e Agrícola, Lda

CONFRARIA DO VINHO DO PORTO

Rua Dr. António Granjo, 207 4400-124 Vila Nova de Gaia

Tel: (351) 223 745 520

confraria@confrariavinhodoporto.com

The Port Wine Brotherhood was established to diffuse, promote and consolidate the prestige of Port worldwide. One of its activities is the organisation of the annual boat race between *barcos rabelos* that takes place each year on 24 June to commemorate Oporto's patron saint, São João. The author of this book is a *Cavaleiro* ('knight') of the Confraria do Vinho do Porto.

CONFRARIA DOS ENÓFILOS DO DOURO

Praça Renato Aguiar- Ed. S. Tomé – R/C Esq. 5050 – 243 Peso da Régua

Tel: (351) 254 321 323

Established in 1990, this brotherhood was formed to defend and promote Douro wines.

UNIÃO DAS ADEGAS COOPERATIVAS DA REGIÃO DEMARCADA DO DOURO (UNIDOURO)

Apartado 60 5054-909 Peso da Régua

Tel: (351) 254 850 100

Co-operatives produce around 20 per cent of all Port and are an important lifeline for small growers. The union of co-operatives was formed to co-ordinate and promote the activities of the co-operative wineries in the Douro. All the major co-ops in the Douro are members, as follows:

- Adega Cooperativa de Alijó
- Adega Cooperativa de Armamar
- Adega Cooperativa de Favaios
- Adega Cooperativa de Freixo de Espada-à-Cinta
- Adega Cooperativa de Lamego
- Adega Cooperativa de Meda
- Adega Cooperativa de Mesão Frio
- Adega Cooperativa de Moncorvo
- Adega Cooperativa de Murça
- Adega Cooperativa de Penajoia
- Adega Cooperativa de Sabrosa

Adega Cooperativa de Sanfins do Douro
Adega Cooperativa de São João da Pesqueira
Adega Cooperativa de Trevões
Adega Cooperativa de Vale da Teja
Adega Cooperativa de Vale do Douro de Tabuaço
Adega Cooperativa de Vila Flor
Adega Cooperativa de Vila Nova de Foz Côa
Adega Cooperativa de Vila Real
Adega Cooperativa Regional de Pegarinhos
Caves Santa Marta
Cooperativa De Viticultores e Olivicultores de Freixo Numão
Cooperativa Vitivinícola do Peso da Régua – Caves Vale do Rodo

APPENDIX II: PORT *BENEFÍCIO* AND PRODUCTION OF PORT AND DOURO WINE 2001–2011

Year	Benefício / Authorisation	Port wine*	DOC Douro	Total***
2011	85,000	107,354	76,264	240,032
2010	110,000	140,323	91,649	298,655
2009	110,000	140,676	63,415	241,151
2008	123,500	158,521	59,983	249,802
2007	125,000	159,528	56,987	261,853
2006	123,500	157,656	71,458	312,341
2005	120,000	153,666	86,358	312,355
2004	126,000	159,227	59,536	293,745
2003	107,900	138,415	**	311,384
2002	135,000	172,404	**	267,467
2001	154,000	198,352	**	364,216

*Fortified with aguardente

** No data available

*** Includes Port, DOC Douro, IG Duriense, Moscatel, Espumante Douro and declassified wine.

Source: Instituto dos Vinho do Douro e do Porto

APPENDIX III

Referência	Principal Name	Recognised Synonym	Port	Douro	Duriense
1	Agronómica		B		X
2	Água Santa		T		X
3	Alcoa		T		X
4	Alfrocheiro		T		X
5	Alicante Bouschet		T	X	X
6	Alicante Branco		B		X
7	Almafra		B		X
8	Almenhaca		B		X
9	Alvadurão		B		X
10	Alvar		B		X
11	Alvar Roxo		R		X
12	Alvarelhão		T	X	X
13	Alvarelhão Branco		B	X	X
14	Alvarelhão Ceitão		T	X	X
15	Alvarinho		B	X	X
16	Amaral		T		X
17	Amor-Não-Me-Deixes		T		X
18	Amostrinha		T		X
19	Antão Vaz		B		X
20	Aragonez	Tinta Roriz	T	X	X
21	Aramon		T	X	X
22	Arinto	Pedernã	B	X	X
23	Arinto do Interior		B		X
24	Arinto Roxo		R		X
25	Arjunção		T		X
26	Arns Burguer		B		X
27	Assaraky		B		X
28	Avesso		B	X	X
29	Azal		B		X
30	Babosa		B		X
31	Baga		T	X	X
32	Barca		T	X	X
33	Barcelo		B		X
34	Barreto		T	X	X
35	Bastardo		T	X	X
36	Bastardo Branco		B		X
37	Bastardo Roxo		R		X
38	Bastardo Tinto		T		X
39	Batoca		B	X	X
40	Beba		B		X
41	Bical		B	X	X
42	Boal Barreiro		B		X
43	Boal Branco		B		X
44	Boal Espinho		B		X
45	Bonvedro		T		X
46	Borraçal		T		X
47	Bragão		T	X	X
48	Branca de Anadia		B		X
49	Branco Desconhecido		B		X
50	Branco Especial		B	X	X

Referência	Principal Name	Recognised Synonym	Port	Douro	Duriense
51	Branco Gouvães	B			X
52	Branco Guimarães	B	X	X	X
53	Branco João	B			X
54	Branda	B			X
55	Branjo	T			X
56	Budelho	B			X
57	Cabernet Franc	T			X
58	Cabernet-Sauvignon	T			X
59	Cabinda	T			X
60	Caínho	B			X
61	Caladoc	T			X
62	Calirão	T			X
63	Camarate	T			X
64	Campanário	T			X
65	Caracol	B			X
66	Caramela	B	X	X	X
67	Carão de Moça	B			X
68	Carignan	T	X	X	X
69	Carrasquenho	B			X
70	Carrega Branco	B	X	X	X
71	Carrega Burros	T			X
72	Carrega Tinto	T	X	X	X
73	Cascal	B			X
74	Casculho	T	X	X	X
75	Castália	B			X
76	Castelã	T	X	X	X
77	Castelão	T	X	X	X
78	Castelão Branco	B			X
79	Castelino	T			X
80	Castelo Branco	B			X
81	Casteloa	T			X
82	Cerceal Branco	B			X
83	Cerceal	B	X	X	X
84	Chardonnay	B			X
85	Chasselas	B	X	X	X
86	Chasselas Roxo	R			X
87	Chasselas Sabor	B			X
88	Chasselas Salsa	B			X
89	Chenin	B			X
90	Cidadelhe	T	X	X	X
91	Cidreiro	T			X
92	Cinsaut	T			X
93	Côdega do Larinho	B	X	X	X
94	Colombard	B			X
95	Complexa	T			X
96	Concieira	T	X	X	X
97	Coração de Galo	T			X
98	Cornichon	B			X
99	Cornifesto	T	X	X	X
100	Corropio	T			X
101	Corval	B			X
102	Corvo	T			X
103	Crato Espanhol	B			X
104	Dedo de Dama	B			X
105	Deliciosa	T			X
106	Diagalves	B	X	X	X
107	Doçal	T			X
108	Doce	T			X
109	Dona Branca	B	X	X	X
110	Dona Joaquina	B			X
111	Donzelinho Branco	B	X	X	X

Referência	Principal Name	Recognised Synonym	Port	Douro	Duriense
112	Donzelinho Roxo	Maria Gomes	R		X
113	Donzelinho Tinto		T	X	X
114	Dorinto		B		X
115	Encruzado		B		X
116	Engomada		T	X	X
117	Esgana Cão Tinto		T		X
118	Esganinho		B		X
119	Esganoso		B		X
120	Espadeiro		T	X	X
121	Espadeiro Mole		T		X
122	Estreito Macio		B	X	X
123	Farinheira		T		X
124	Fepiro		T		X
125	Fernão Pires		B	X	X
126	Fernão Pires Rosado		R		X
127	Ferral		T		X
128	Folgasão		B	X	X
129	Folgasão Roxo		R		X
130	Folha de Figueira		B		X
131	Fonte Cal		B		X
132	Galego		T		X
133	Galego Dourado		B		X
134	Galego Rosado		R		X
135	Gamay		T		X
136	Generosa		B		X
137	Gewurztraminer		R		X
138	Gigante		B		X
139	Godelho		B		X
140	Gonçalo Pires		T	X	X
141	Gorda		T		X
142	Gouveio		B	X	X
143	Gouveio Estimado		B	X	X
144	Gouveio Preto		T		X
145	Gouveio Real		B	X	X
146	Gouveio Roxo		R		X
147	Graciosa		T		X
148	Grand Noir		T	X	X
149	Grangeal		T	X	X
150	Granho		B		X
151	Grenache		T		X
152	Grossa		T		X
153	Jacquere		B		X
154	Jaen		T	X	X
155	Jampal		B	X	X
156	Labrusco		T		X
157	Lameiro		B		X
158	Larião		B		X
159	Leira		B		X
160	Lilás		B		X
161	Listrão		R		X
162	Loureiro		B		X
163	Lourela		T	X	X
164	Lusitano		T		X
165	Luzidio		B		X
166	Malandra		T	X	X
167	Malvarisco		T		X
168	Malvasia		B		X
169	Malvasia Bianca		B		X
170	Malvasia Branca		B		X
171	Malvasia Branca de São Jorge		B		X
172	Malvasia Cabral		R		X

Referência	Principal Name	Recognised Synonym	Port	Douro	Duriense
173	Malvasia Cândida	B			X
174	Malvasia Cândida Roxa	R			X
175	Malvasia Fina	B	X	X	X
176	Malvasia Fina Roxa	R			X
177	Malvasia Parda	B	X	X	X
178	Malvasia Preta	T	X	X	X
179	Malvasia Rei	B	X	X	X
180	Malvasia Romana	B			X
181	Malvia	B			X
182	Malvoeira	B			X
183	Manteúdo	B			X
184	Manteúdo Preto	T			X
185	Mário Feld	T			X
186	Marquinhas	B			X
187	Marufo	T	X	X	X
188	Melhorio	T			X
189	Melra	T	X	X	X
190	Merlot	T			X
191	Mindelo	T			X
192	Molar	T			X
193	Molinha	B			X
194	Mondet	T	X	X	X
195	Monvedro	T			X
196	Moreto	T	X	X	X
197	Moscadet	B	X	X	X
198	Moscargo	T			X
199	Moscatel Galego Branco	B	X	X	X
200	Moscatel Galego Roxo	R			X
201	Moscatel Galego Tinto	T			X
202	Moscatel Graúdo	B			X
203	Moscatel Nunes	B			X
204	Mourisco	T	X	X	X
205	Mourisco Branco	B	X	X	X
206	Mourisco de Semente	T	X	X	X
207	Mourisco de Trevões	T	X	X	X
208	Mourisco Roxo	R			X
209	Mulata	T			X
210	Müller Thurgau	B			X
211	Naia	B			X
212	Negra Mole	T			X
213	Nevoeira	T	X	X	X
214	Padeiro	T			X
215	Parreira Matias	T			X
216	Patorra	T	X	X	X
217	Pau Ferro	T			X
218	Pé Comprido	B	X	X	X
219	Pedral	T			X
220	Perigo	B			X
221	Pêro Pinhão	T			X
222	Perrum	B			X
223	Petit Bouschet	T	X	X	X
224	Petit Verdot	T			X
225	Pexem	T			X
226	Pical	T			X
227	Pilongo	T			X
228	Pinheira Branca	B	X	X	X
229	Pinheira Roxa	R			X
230	Pinot Blanc	B			X
231	Pinot Gris	R			X
232	Pinot Noir	T		X (*)	X
233	Pintosa	B			X

Referência	Principal Name	Recognised Synonym	Port	Douro	Duriense
234	Português Azul		X	X	X
235	Praça		X	X	X
236	Preto Cardana				X
237	Preto Martinho		X	X	X
238	Primavera				X
239	Promissão				X
240	Rabigato		X	X	X
241	Rabigato Franco				X
242	Rabigato Moreno		X	X	X
243	Rabo de Anho				X
244	Rabo de Lobo				X
245	Rabo de Ovelha		X	X	X
246	Rabo de Ovelha Tinto				X
247	Ramisco				X
248	Ramisco Tinto				X
249	Ratinho		X	X	X
250	Ricoca				X
251	Riesling				X
252	Rio Grande				X
253	Roal				X
254	Rodo				X
255	Roseira		X	X	X
256	Roupeiro Branco				X
257	Roxo Flor				X
258	Roxo Rei				X
259	Rufete		X	X	X
260	Saborinho				X
261	Sabro				X
262	Samarrinho		X	X	X
263	Santareno		X	X	X
264	Santoal				X
265	São Mamede				X
266	São Saúl		X	X	X
267	Sarigo		X	X	X
268	Sauvignon				X
269	Seara Nova				X
270	Semilão				X
271	Semillon		X	X	X
272	Sercial	Esgana Cão	X	X	X
273	Sercialinho				X
274	Sevilhão		X	X	X
275	Síria	Roupeiro	X	X	X
276	Sousão		X	X	X
277	Syrah				X
278	Tália				X
279	Tamarez		X	X	X
280	Tannat				X
281	Teinturier				X
282	Terrantez				X
283	Terrantez da Terceira				X
284	Terrantez do Pico				X
285	Tinta				X
286	Tinta Aguiar		X	X	X
287	Tinta Aurélio				X
288	Tinta Barroca		X	X	X
289	Tinta Bastardinha		X	X	X
290	Tinta Caiada				X
291	Tinta Carvalha		X	X	X
292	Tinta Fontes		X	X	X
293	Tinta Francisca		X	X	X
294	Tinta Lameira		X	X	X

Referência	Principal Name	Recognised Synonym	Port	Douro	Duriense
295	Tinta Lisboa	T			X
296	Tinta Martins	T	X	X	X
297	Tinta Mesquita	T	X	X	X
298	Tinta Miúda	T			X
299	Tinta Negra	T			X
300	Tinta Penajoia	T	X	X	X
301	Tinta Pereira	T	X	X	X
302	Tinta Pomar	T	X	X	X
303	Tinta Porto Santo	T			X
304	Tinta Tabuaço	T	X	X	X
305	Tintém	T			X
306	Tintinha	T			X
307	Tinto Cão	T	X	X	X
308	Tinto Pegões	T			X
309	Tinto Sem Nome	T	X	X	X
310	Touriga Branca	B	X	X	X
311	Touriga Femea	T	X	X	X
312	Touriga Franca	T	X	X	X
313	Touriga Nacional	T	X	X	X
314	Trajadura	B			X
315	Transâncora	T			X
316	Trigueira	R			X
317	Trincadeira	T	X	X	X
318	Trincadeira Branca	B			X
319	Trincadeira das Pratas	B			X
320	Triunfo	T			X
321	Uva Cão	B			X
322	Uva Cavaco	B			X
323	Uva Salsa	B			X
324	Valbom	T			X
325	Valdosa	T	X	X	X
326	Valente	B	X	X	X
327	Valveirinho	B			X
328	Varejoa	T	X	X	X
329	Vencedor	B			X
330	Verdelho	B	X	X	X
331	Verdelho Roxo	R			X
332	Verdelho Tinto	T			X
333	Verdial Branco	B	X	X	X
334	Verdial Tinto	T			X
335	Vinhão	T			X
336	Viognier	B			X
337	Viosinho	B	X	X	X
338	Vital	B	X	X	X
339	Xara	T			X
340	Zé do Telheiro	T			X
341	Zinfandel	T			X

T=red B=white R=roxo (purple)

(*) Only for Douro Espumante

Source: Instituto dos Vinhos do Douro e do Porto

APPENDIX IV: SALES OF PORT WINE

PRINCIPAL MARKETS	2011			2010		
	10 ³ €	10 ³ cases of 9 litres	€/litre	10 ³ €	10 ³ cases of 9 litres	€/litre
FRANCE	82,000	2,631	3.46	86,248	2,733	3.51
PORTUGAL	50,321	1,185	4.72	55,327	1,343	4.58
HOLLAND	43,041	1,341	3.57	43,507	1,363	3.55
UK	41,917	1,001	4.65	42,280	993	4.73
BELGIUM	35,454	1,067	3.69	39,228	1,197	3.64
USA	26,577	404	7.31	23,934	374	7.11
CANADA	14,846	178	9.26	16,007	202	8.82
GERMANY	11,947	350	3.79	12,918	382	3.76
DENMARK	8,782	157	6.22	13,522	199	7.53
BRAZIL	5,366	131	4.55	5,022	121	4.59
SPAIN	5,217	130	4.45	5,240	129	4.52
SWITZERLAND	3,802	74	5.70	3,534	74	5.32
ITALY	2,738	65	4.65	2,982	71	4.69
IRELAND	2,112	36	6.58	2,065	35	6.62
SWEDEN	1,874	37	5.63	1,985	41	5.44
JAPAN	1,863	23	8.86	1,519	20	8.53
POLAND	1,672	58	3.22	1,169	39	3.34
RUSSIA	1,484	25	6.50	1,064	17	6.92
CZECH REP.	1,270	32	4.47	1,477	37	4.47
NORWAY	1,099	16	7.54	982	15	7.25
FINLAND	1,035	17	6.89	920	15	6.61
LUXEMBOURG	934	23	4.50	1,151	27	4.70
AUSTRIA	889	18	5.58	809	16	5.63
MEXICO	665	13	5.91	727	13	6.13
N. ZEALAND	522	9	6.26	810	14	6.64
OTHERS	8,485	148	6.38	6,374	114	6.20
TOTAL	355,912	9,169	4.31	370,801	9,583	4.30

2009			2008			2007		
10 ³ €	10 ³ cases of 9 litres	€/litre	10 ³ €	10 ³ cases of 9 litres	€/litre	10 ³ €	10 ³ cases of 9 litres	€/litre
86,947	2,743	3.52	88,253	2,781	3.53	89,369	2,857	3.48
51,876	1,224	4.71	59,578	1,390	4.76	61,704	1,427	4.80
39,646	1,250	3.52	48,050	1,510	3.54	50,757	1,636	3.45
41,602	1,018	4.54	39,661	1,009	4.37	49,826	1,150	4.81
38,384	1,165	3.66	40,096	1,215	3.67	41,690	1,288	3.60
21,823	350	6.93	24,683	412	6.65	29,437	443	7.38
13,862	194	7.94	15,034	205	8.15	18,241	239	8.49
15,864	490	3.60	16,453	478	3.83	13,655	414	3.67
7,449	134	6.18	6,046	123	5.46	7,535	153	5.47
4,162	93	4.96	4,408	116	4.21	4,074	106	4.28
5,482	134	4.54	5,355	129	4.63	6,917	168	4.57
3,499	71	5.47	4,186	88	5.31	4,331	89	5.40
2,839	67	4.69	3,279	77	4.75	3,930	85	5.16
1,870	32	6.40	2,246	36	6.91	2,166	36	6.72
1,931	39	5.56	1,915	36	5.84	2,124	43	5.53
1,541	23	7.58	1,664	26	7.05	1,854	28	7.25
795	26	3.34	936	27	3.81	946	30	3.54
655	11	6.55	830	12	7.44	1,299	16	8.86
1,365	32	4.75	1,589	35	4.99	1,689	39	4.86
1,356	19	7.83	1,043	15	7.66	1,292	17	8.20
942	17	6.27	988	15	7.09	993	14	7.75
909	21	4.92	958	21	5.10	945	21	4.99
722	14	5.59	831	17	5.57	759	15	5.60
531	10	6.04	731	16	5.03	714	13	6.22
466	7	7.26	433	7	6.80	989	17	6.60
5,585	106	5.87	6,557	116	6.28	7,019	127	6.12
352,103	9,290	4.21	375,800	9,913	4.21	404,254	10,472	4.29

APPENDIX V: SHARE OF PREMIUM PORTS

PRINCIPAL MARKETS	2011		2010		2009	
	By value (%)	By volume (%)	By value (%)	By volume (%)	By value (%)	By volume (%)
FRANCE	15.8	8.0	16.3	8.5	16.1	8.1
PORTUGAL	35.4	14.4	32.7	13.7	34.6	14.7
HOLLAND	21.0	8.9	20.7	9.3	16.9	7.4
UK	65.5	52.6	69.1	56.3	64.7	51.5
BELGIUM	14.1	7.2	13.5	6.4	13.4	6.0
USA	76.1	57.6	75.4	58.2	74.4	56.8
CANADA	83.7	72.7	82.4	71.7	83.5	72.6
GERMANY	21.3	10.6	20.5	11.2	16.9	8.3
DENMARK	65.5	38.1	78.5	54.7	61.2	33.5
BRAZIL	26.0	11.7	28.4	12.2	22.7	11.6
SPAIN	14.3	7.5	15.7	8.0	14.2	6.7
SWITZERLAND	38.7	12.5	34.7	12.4	36.7	12.0
ITALY	16.4	7.1	17.2	7.9	17.3	6.8
IRELAND	42.1	37.0	42.8	36.2	39.5	34.4
SWEDEN	51.3	35.3	47.4	33.5	52.7	38.2
JAPAN	8.2	3.1	9.9	4.0	9.8	3.5
POLAND	13.2	4.3	13.0	4.6	10.9	3.2
RUSSIA	52.5	26.6	58.5	33.4	49.1	20.5
CZECH REP.	23.9	8.2	25.8	9.6	28.5	11.7
NORWAY	79.2	72.9	74.1	67.8	78.3	69.3
FINLAND	61.6	45.4	58.2	43.5	51.0	36.1
LUXEMBOURG	27.8	11.9	29.1	12.5	31.6	14.6
AUSTRIA	28.8	12.0	30.3	13.4	30.0	13.5
MEXICO	43.8	15.6	39.6	14.9	48.9	17.9
N. ZEALAND	64.7	54.0	63.8	50.3	67.1	53.7
OTHERS	50.2	26.0	47.3	25.6	45.4	24.9
TOTAL	35.8	18.6	35.9	19.1	33.3	17.6

2008		2007	
By value (%)	By volume (%)	By value (%)	By volume (%)
17.8	9.3	18.2	9.2
34.7	14.2	34.2	14.9
21.6	9.5	19.8	8.8
64.5	52.7	73.0	60.6
14.2	6.2	13.6	5.5
76.0	57.9	79.5	62.0
84.2	73.5	84.1	73.5
26.0	13.8	21.6	11.2
53.7	30.5	55.5	31.1
22.7	11.6	22.1	10.1
20.9	10.6	19.8	9.5
30.9	10.7	29.9	10.0
21.7	9.3	28.2	11.9
46.2	39.0	41.4	35.0
56.2	39.8	53.5	37.8
16.1	5.8	15.6	5.4
16.9	6.0	12.8	4.2
64.8	38.1	70.1	41.9
30.8	11.5	27.9	10.0
74.1	64.9	77.6	65.2
62.2	45.9	62.0	40.8
29.6	14.6	27.9	12.8
23.6	10.2	31.9	14.6
36.7	10.1	46.6	15.8
71.5	62.0	63.8	48.0
48.4	24.0	46.9	24.9
34.7	18.5	37.2	19.9

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