



PORTUGAL

2014 & 2015 VINTAGES, EN PRIMEUR

There are insufficient superlatives to describe the arresting, majestic beauty of the Douro Valley, recognised in 2001 as a World Heritage Site. Dramatic in scale with spectacular diversity, deep side valleys and remarkable, imposing, terraced slopes it is simply breath-taking. This is home to a very ancient history of winemaking.

Tourists and wine merchants are able to admire the stunning landscape with scant thought to the difficulty in producing grapes on these vertiginous slopes and hard schist soils. Yet, through the ages, some of the world's most highly prized wines – Ports - have been produced here, despite the difficulties. Increasingly, the names better known for Port are producing table wines and we have long been a fan.

In addition to a great variety of aspects and meso-climates, the Douro enjoys an abundance of grape varieties – largely co-planted – from which to forge their blends. They have so much on their side, a wealth of knowledge and experience, climate, a bounty of indigenous varieties and refreshing energy and drive. The best producers are inspired by the ingredients they nurture throughout the growing season and by the terroirs they aim to translate. Respecting and harnessing this individuality has been key to the Douro's renaissance.

The best producers are tireless in their ambitions for placing the Douro firmly on the map. Their wines themselves combine top quality with excellent value for money, particularly here in the UK. Prices are often less than in Portugal itself. Many of the wines listed here, if available at all, are priced in euros more expensively than we offer in sterling.

Here we offer wines from our friends Cristiano Van Zeller and, man and wife team Jorge Serôdia Borges and Sandra Tavares de Silva.

We believe that this new generation of winemakers combine the best of tradition and modernity to produce slick, rich, balanced wines with a classical feel – world-class.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Alison Buchanan', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

ALISON BUCHANAN
March 2017

2014 VINTAGE REPORT

“The viticulture year 2013/2014 was very rainy, which provided good water reserves. The wet winter was followed by a mild spring and summer with significant temperature variations between day and night- perfect for gaining intensity and achieving a balanced ripeness.”

CRISTIANO VAN ZELLER
November 2016

“Conditions in 2014 were perfect for a balanced ripeness with good concentrations of polyphenols and a great ratio of sugars and acidity.”

SANDRA TAVARES
November 2016

Cristiano Van Zeller describes this as “a memorable vintage”. Judging by these wines, it is certainly concentrated, aromatic and fresh. Our producers Jorge, Sandra and Cristiano are in agreement that the most important factor in the 2013/2014 growing season was the amount of rain, well above average particularly in January, February, July and September. Temperature-wise, January was above average and August below. That, combined with storms in June and July, presented a challenge in the vineyards but resolute vigilance ensured a healthy crop. Spring and summer were mild, with significant temperature differences between day and night, helping to create intensity. This is exciting for the Douro, for wine and port alike.

2015 VINTAGE REPORT

The year 2014/2015 was an unusual year in the Douro – and a vintage with great potential. Winter was dry and cold, followed by an abnormally dry and hot summer. The dry weather and the heat in June and July had a major impact. It advanced the growing season putting it one to two weeks in advance of an average year. The vines and grapes were in rude health, the climatic conditions deterring disease – arguably the healthiest vintage in a decade.

QUINTA DO VALE DONA MARIA

Quinta do Vale Dona Maria is a wonderful, dramatically sited property, overlooking the Rio Torto, a tributary of the Douro. South/southeast facing, there are 17 hectares of vines ranging between 60 and 80 years old, 10 hectares of 30 year old vines and 5 hectares of new plantings.

Dona Maria is from the oldest vines, sustainably grown. There are, in total, some 41 different vine varieties, which provide a remarkable palate of flavours, textures and aromatics, with which to create a blend. The estate has been separated into individual plots, which are fermented and kept apart until blending. Vale Dona Maria has been producing award winning table wine and port, both LBV and vintage, from the outset and we are delighted to follow this impressive estate.

The grapes were foot-trodden in *lagares* for one to three days before fermentation and separated into individual parcels. Fermentation lasted between seven and ten days with *pigeage* by hand. The wine was then racked into new French oak barrels for malolactic fermentation. The wine is then aged for 21 months in oak (75% new oak and 25% 1 year old).

RED

QUINTA DO VALE DONA MARIA 2014

This offers a gorgeous combination of red and black fruit, with a ferrous, mineral backdrop. The palate is equally appealing presenting blueberry and blackberry, rich, rounded and pepper-spiced. The palate and finish are very grown-up, with refined, tannins underpinning a long, elegant, fresh finish.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2018–2028+)
£175/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

17

QUINTA DO VALE DONA MARIA VINHA FRANCISCA 2014

This plot was planted and named after Cristiano's daughter Francisca. It has a very attractive nose, bountiful berries – blackcurrant, wild blackberry - and spice complemented by an impressive structure. "Francisca" perhaps suggests a feminine style but this is powerful, structured – a serious wine – with an aromatic reminder of violet, rose and summer pudding on the finish – impressive.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2018 to 2027+)
£250/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

17 - 18

CV CURRICULUM VITAE 2014

This is from very old parcels with vines over 85 years old – a field blend, foot-trodden as ever. 50% is fermented in stainless steel, 50% in *lagares* before 22 months ageing in 75% new, 25% one year old wood. Intensely coloured, this delivers pretty high-powered, fresh fruit on the nose, blueberry and blackberry, raspberries and hints of tobacco. The texture of the palate is lovely, lush, ripe and sumptuous. The tannic structure is noble, supporting more savoury notes and mineral punch. Layered and complex and very fine, this has a very poised, stylish finish.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2019 to 2029+)
£275/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

16.5 - 17

VINTAGE PORT

QUINTA DO VALE DONA MARIA 2014

Intensely coloured, this has a very pure nose of blueberry and raspberry, including some fresh berry leafy character. The plate is both fresh and aromatic, with vibrant red fruits, violet and pepper, mineral complements and hints of cedar through to a long finish.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2025)
£230/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

17 - 18

VZ 2014

This has an appetising, stunning nose, rich in fruit, elegant and floral. Nose and palate are charming, truly lovely, upbeat and almost unfortified in its freshness and accessibility. Refined, the balance here is impeccable – lovely wine.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2027)
£230/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

16.5 - 17.5

WINE & SOUL

Wine & Soul was founded by Sandra Tavares and her husband Jorge Serôdio Borges in 2001 – both celebrated winemakers. The name of the company reflects how Jorge and Sandra throw themselves into producing wines of quality, true to terroir. When first married, they even bought a winery and vineyard instead of a house. This old port lodge in Vale de Mendiz would produce the first vintage of the iconic wine Pintas in 2001. Given their combined talent the wines, unsurprisingly, won accolades from the outset.

The vineyard itself is special, steeply sloped, with two hectares of eighty year old vines, covering thirty different Portuguese varieties. The couple then inherited Quinta da Manoella in 2009, a property established in 1838 by Jorge's great-great-grandfather who bravely bought a number of estates after the devastation of phylloxera. The estate has remained with the family for 5 generations and houses vines of over 100 years with 29 different indigenous grapes. Like Pintas, it is in the acclaimed Pinhão Valley, with southern exposure.

In both estates, the age of the vines and the number of indigenous varieties deliver an enormously complex palette of aromatics. They also however present challenges which are not seen in other wine producing regions. Ruthless sorting is essential as the different vines mature at different times – an extraordinarily skilled job, rewarded by the quality of the finished wines.

Jorge and Sandra share the philosophy that where wine is concerned, the devil is in the detail:

"All the details are crucial, from the smallest operation in the vineyard to the quality of the label."

WHITE

Guru comes from a 51 year old vineyard in the Cima Corgo, planted with four varieties: Gouveio, Viosinho, Rabigato and Códaga do Lariño. The wine is fermented at low temperatures in new French oak before being aged for 6 months, with *batonnage* (lees-stirring).

GURU 2015

This is a really luxurious wine from the Douro. It starts with a rich pastry shop nose, vanilla and toasted notes, richly fruited. There is a wonderful sense of opulence, drive, focus and tension, all playing a part. The palate is rounded with the freshness of orchard fruit, quince and starfruit – and just a hint of white pepper. Sandra and Jorge have produced such a harmonious blend of luxuriant fruit and bright acidity – lovely wine, beautifully crafted.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2016– 2019+)

17

£125/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

RED

MANOELLA 2014

This is an open, bright, refreshingly honest wine, which delivers real Douro character, a blend of Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz and Tinta Francisca. Made from younger vines, matured in old oak. Deeply coloured, this offers a combination of fruit, floral and savoury notes on the nose and palate, raspberry, blackberry, violet and smoky spice. Energetic and focused, with engaging purity this has an elegant finish.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2017 – 2020+)

16.5 - 17

£70/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

QUINTA DA MANOELLA VINHA VELHAS 2014

This exudes old vine intensity from the outset with its jet-plum depth of colour and impressive intensity. Much more serious than the younger vine Manoella, it offers violets, dark fruit and toasted notes on the nose and palate, the latter multi-layered and underscored by fine silky tannins. This is rich, with considerable finesse, but warrants time. With patience, this will deliver real pleasure. There is a lot of energy, freshness and drive – good wine

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2017– 2023+)

16+ - 17.5

£250/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

PINTAS CHARACTER 2014

In order to meet increasing demand, whilst protecting the integrity of Pintas, Sandra and Jorge now source old vine fruit from vineyards surrounding Pintas, also field blends of thirty varieties. The grapes as at Pintas are traditionally foot-trodden and fermented, spending 18 months in 50% new, 50% one year old French oak *barriques*. Deeply coloured, this presents a wonderful blend of violet and rose, cherries and berries, with a persistent seam of herbs and minerals. Delightful freshness and elegance, this 2014 may be the best Character yet.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2017– 2020+)

16+ - 17

£110/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

PINTAS 2014

This year's Pintas is remarkably lively on the nose, with much more red fruit to the fore, and fresh, upbeat top notes. Summer pudding berries are spiced in pepper and punctuated by minerals. Gradually, considerable tannins show through which are beautifully integrated, finishing with a dark chocolate and black fruit flourish – this is very fine.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2017 – 2027+)

17 - 18

£125/CASE OF 3 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

VINTAGE PORT

PINTAS 2014

This is very primary, fresh with intense red fruit and grilled fennel, peppery and super-fresh. There is lovely fruit on nose and palate, violet and rose-scented, with a long, poised finish – lovely purity.

CORNEY & BARROW SCORE
(RECOMMENDED DRINKING FROM 2025)

17

£220/CASE OF 6 BOTTLES, IN BOND UK

TASTING GUIDE

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

Wines are scored out of 20. Customers seem to like it and it has the benefit of simplicity.

We will often use a range of scores (e.g. 16.5 to 17) to indicate the potential to achieve a higher mark. When a '+' is shown it adds further to that potential. Wines from lesser vintages will, inevitably, show a lower overall score.

Wines are judged, in a very broad sense, against their peers. Why? Well, you cannot easily compare a Ford with an Aston Martin, other than they are both cars and have wheels. It is not that different with wine.

A score is a summary only. The devil is in the detail, so please focus on the tasting notes and, as always, speak to our sales team.

TO ORDER

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