



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
WINE MERCHANTS
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED
LONDON



BY APPOINTMENT TO
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES
WINE MERCHANTS
CORNEY & BARROW LIMITED
LONDON

CORNEY &
BARROW

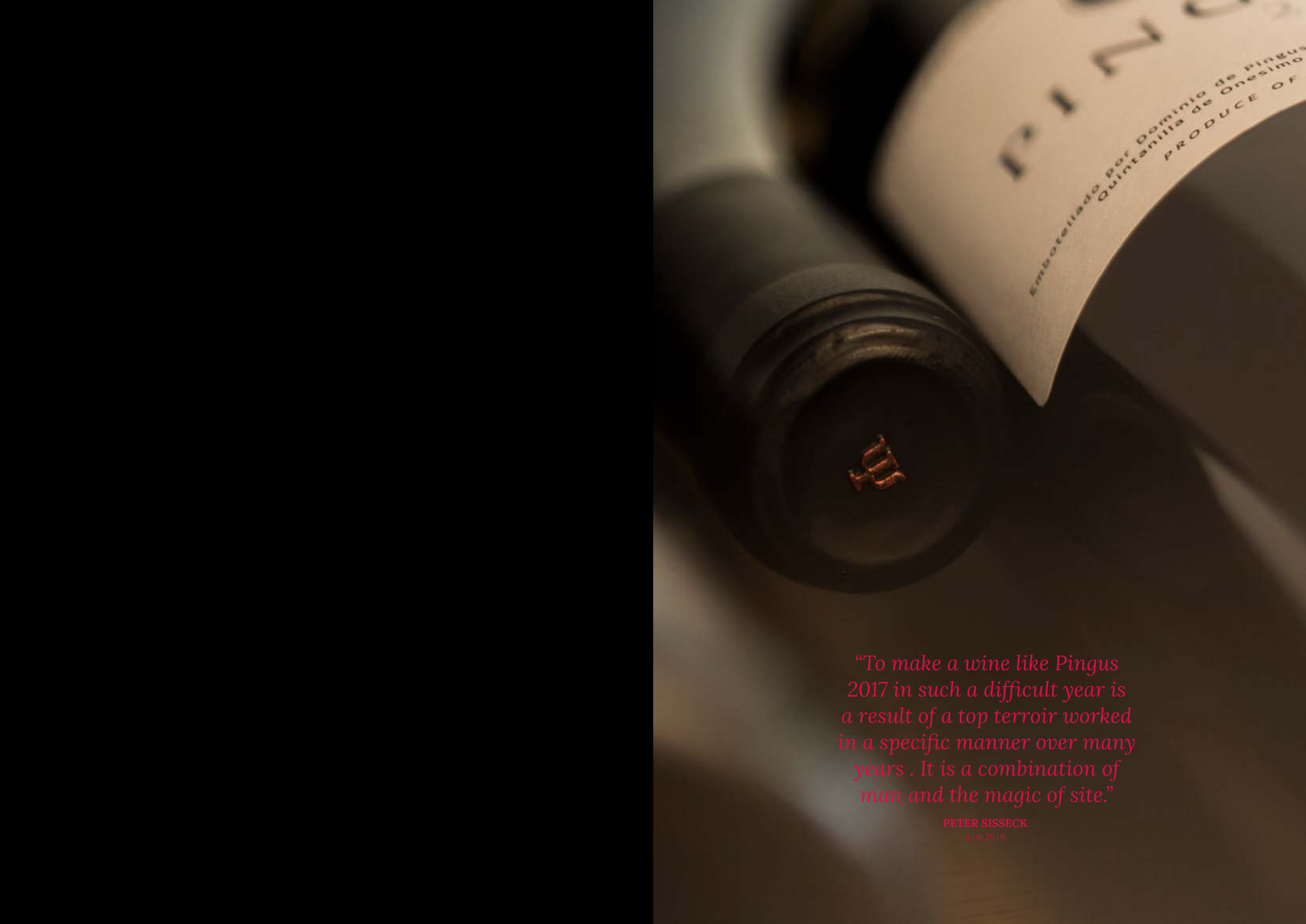
INDEPENDENT WINE MERCHANTS-1780

P.D. DIBENA DEL 1984
FLOR DE
PINGUS
2017

DOMINIO DE PINGUS

2017 RELEASE

EXCLUSIVE TO CORNEY & BARROW IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND HONG KONG



*“To make a wine like Pingus
2017 in such a difficult year is
a result of a top terroir worked
in a specific manner over many
years . It is a combination of
man and the magic of site.”*

PETER SISSECK

June 2018

DOMINIO DE PINGUS

Welcome to our 2017 release of the celebrated Dominio de Pingus, an estate of which we are extremely proud to be exclusive agents for both the UK and Hong Kong.

For those wishing to cut to the chase, well aware of the extraordinary journey of Peter Sisseck from ambitious schoolboy in Denmark to one of the world's top winemakers, a brief summary of the vintage can be found below, with prices.

There are however newer customers who may as yet be unaware of this unlikely trajectory and it is a story which warrants telling.

Please forgive our indulgence in relating the tale from the conception of an idea, through the burgeoning early life of Dominio de Pingus now to a world which thoroughly embraces both highly sought after, iconic wines, Pingus and Flor de Pingus and now, the related, inspirational project, Psi.

The big question is how it ever came to pass that a Dane became a world-class winemaker in rural Spain, massively respected by a wine-appreciating public AND his peers.



Peter Sisseck

THE HISTORY

As a boy of around 12, Peter Sisseck visited his uncle – as it happens a great friend of Corney & Barrow – Peter Vinding-Diers, who was then making wine in Bordeaux.

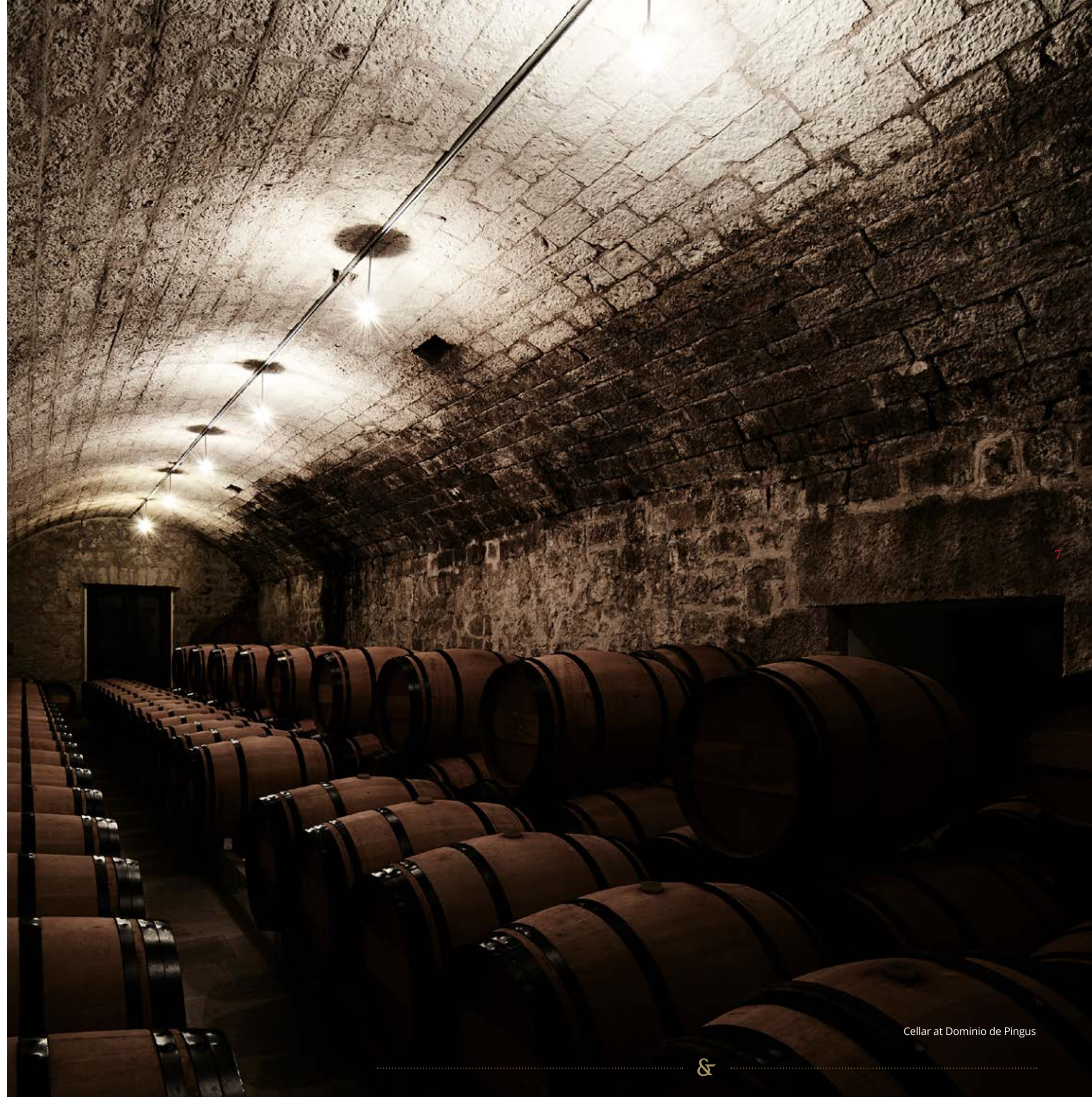
Returning to school in Denmark, our Peter (nicknamed Pingus) had already, somewhat incongruously, resolved to become a winemaker.

The aspirations of youth are largely fleeting but Peter remained resolute. After *stages* in Bordeaux and California he travelled home to study agriculture in Copenhagen, before returning to Uncle Peter, from whom he amassed hugely useful vineyard and cellar experience.

In time, becoming a little restive, Peter sought to broaden his horizons and to learn more. Uncle Peter suggested his travelling to Spain to assess a project he knew about in the relatively unknown Ribera del Duero. Unbeknownst to anyone, the die was irreversibly cast. In 1990, Peter was appointed technical director of what was then a rather chaotic association, a young Dane, unable to speak the language, schooled only in the traditional winemaking of Bordeaux. Fortunately he was perhaps shielded from the extent of the challenge by sheer naivety, borne of youth.

In fact, Peter was ideally placed to research the Ribera del Duero region. The arid, dramatic beauty of the hard and rugged landscape and the wonderful, indigenous old vines really captured his febrile imagination and earned his uncompromising respect. Peter developed an inner certainty that the area had the potential to produce exceptional wines, and what had been a tiny germ of an idea finally blossomed, bolstered by the discovery of some perfectly-sited old vineyards in La Horra.

The dream would become a reality in Pingus – the product of these ancient, gnarly, limited production vines.



Cellar at Dominio de Pingus



Peter Sisseck



TODAY

Peter's cellar space has been transformed over the years from a corner of another producer's warehouse to a wonderful site, on the bank of the river, at Quintanilla de Onésimo, his own cellar over which he can exercise complete control.

From the outside, the building is simple and traditional, yet those outer walls frame a winery of inspired vision and complexity.

The pristine, whitewashed walls of the upper cellar make for an almost monastic feel. The fresh morning air flows freely through wide open windows, which look onto an inner courtyard, cooling the cellar naturally, before the sun is too high. The place is immaculate, housing large, open-topped vats and glistening stainless steel. Below, a surprise is to be had in a very rare, underground, vaulted barrel cellar originally built in 1832, hidden for years and now beautifully restored by Peter.

Returning to ground level, across the courtyard, we find rather chic offices and a state of the art laboratory, one area of which is dedicated to the preparation of biodynamic treatments.

This juxtaposition of traditional and modern is of course extremely apt, as it reflects the style of Peter Sisseck's wines, all of which have a very modern look and feel, whilst retaining classical balance at their core.

We are delighted to present here Peter Sisseck's portfolio from the 2017 vintage – three exceptional, inimitable wines which are so true to their origins.

ALISON BUCHANAN
June 2018





THE VINEYARDS

PINGUS

Planted at altitudes of more than 800m above sea level in La Horra, Pingus vines generally enjoy warm, sunny days and refreshingly cool nights during the growing period. These swings in temperature extend the growing period and ensure increased complexity and vibrant freshness. There are two complementary *terroirs* covering 4.5 hectares. The first, “Barrosso” lies on gravel and sand over alluvial limestone. The second, “San Cristobal” is on southwest facing clay slopes. From the outset, in terms of vines, Peter favoured indigenous Tinta del País and determined to push the varietal to dizzying heights. Unusually for this grape, in this region, he decided to use French, rather than American oak.

From these squat, gnarled plants (Tinta del País being the local name for the Tempranillo grape) of sixty years and more, Peter coaxes a ridiculously small production ranging from 20 hectolitres per hectare (hl/ha) at best, to as little as 9 hl/ha. Organic from day one, Pingus has been farmed according to biodynamic disciplines since 2000. Pruning and sorting are rigorous and ruthless. Production in 2017 was 76% of a normal crop.

FLOR DE PINGUS

A jewel of an estate, Pingus was nonetheless a precarious stand-alone business, as production would always be subject to the whims of Mother Nature. Other opportunities beckoned and Peter chose a pragmatic option which would allow him to protect the integrity of Pingus, spread risk and increase production. He sought out different plots of land, well-sited, with younger vines. The fruit from these plots would produce Flor de Pingus.

Flor exhibits a very individual style, albeit bearing the peerless Sisseck hallmark of purity and freshness. Flor de Pingus is a great wine in its own right, with richly-deserved, faithful followers. It is the product of 18 different vineyard sites, some older and some younger vines, with a very respectable average age of 35 years. The more recent plantings are set at between 6,000 and 10,000 vines per hectare to encourage competition. In this way, the individual vine’s roots need to dig deeply for nutrients, the aim being added complexity. The parcels are vinified separately in stainless steel with the malolactic and subsequent ageing in French oak, 30% new, for 18 months.

Both Pingus and Flor de Pingus are in great demand. Having set enormously high standards from the outset, Flor de Pingus has become even more focussed as Peter, mirroring Pingus, has fully embraced organic principles, with biodynamic viticulture having been the ultimate goal. Flor de Pingus has, in fact, been fully biodynamic since 2005.

PSI Ψ

Psi was a very different, though complementary project from the outset – a very new idea. Peter had established a network of growers with interesting *terroirs* and, of course, old vines. Together they created a new company under the name of Bodegas y Viñedos Alnardo, a vehicle for Psi, the first vintage of white being 2007.

The Psi project (his initials make up the Greek letter Psi Ψ) is very different from either Flor or Pingus. With Psi, Peter seeks to capture and protect the very essence of Ribera del Duero, revisiting and reinventing tradition, whilst adding a philanthropic touch for good measure.

For all his relaxed, convivial bonhomie and his passion for wine, Peter has a serious side. Over recent years, wine production in the Ribera del Duero has soared, although not always at the quality end of the spectrum. The region's heritage of old vines is under threat, as they are seen simply to be an impediment to efficiency and growth. Peter has forged relationships with growers who might otherwise have been tempted by the promise of an easier life, offering them an alternative way of working. The threat to these old vineyards is very real. Peter has watched desperately as farmers run their vineyards into ruin. Incentivised by payment based on weight, they are effectively encouraged to overproduce, using labour-saving chemicals and pesticides which add to the problem.

Peter is conscious that these are proud people and that as a fair, blue-eyed Dane, he would be ill-advised to try and instruct them. He therefore began by working alongside the farmers in an advisory capacity, encouraging moves to organic viticulture, which he rewards by paying a premium. He pays three or four times the going average rate for his grapes – a powerful incentive. Over the years these farmers have developed a deep trust and respect for Peter, who has a great deal of passion for Ribera del Duero, as well as a profound sense of gratitude. Psi has become so much more than a wine: it is a philanthropic endeavour to preserve the traditions and way of life built up over decades and is a means to give something back to the region. The fact that the wine happens to be hugely characterful bears witness to Peter's almost obsessive focus on quality and sustainability.

For Psi, Peter feels that he is gaining ever deeper knowledge of the vineyards and growers he has selected and, as they have in turn grown in their trust, Peter was able to vinify half of the crop in his cellar in Aranda, allowing him better control in pursuit of ever increasing quality.





VINTAGE REPORT

“Thank God the wines are very good. Both Flor and Pingus...have a powerful attack...with a lot of freshness, due to the early harvest. The finishes are impressive...very long on the palate.”

PETER SISSECK

May 2018

So, why was Peter so insistent in thanking the almighty for 2017?

It may surprise readers, in the generally perceived context of torrid Spanish summers, that 2017 in Ribera del Duero will be best remembered for the frost that hit the region late in April – not for the first time either. The frost of the 28th April affected the whole of Ribera del Duero. It was exacerbated by an intensifying, strong North wind which had brought down temperatures during the preceding afternoon and the mercury dropped to minus 6°C on the slopes and in the valleys. As day dawned, there was strong sun and a change to warm wind, adding to the effects of the night frost.

After a previous frost in 2007, Peter had installed wind machines at Pingus itself and these helped, to a degree but a dry spring, July and August further limited potential volumes. This dryness was a real stickler in 2017. With water supplies low, the vines were less inclined to recover from the cold conditions, particularly in the case of the second attempt at growth. This occurred under dramatic physiological stress with dry soils and a dry atmosphere leading to irregular growth. June and July were then particularly warm, although the rest of the year enjoyed average temperatures. These two months of incessant heat mean that 2017 is classed as a warm year.

Autumn then, leading up to harvest, was also warm, but within the normal range and it too was dry. 19 barrels were made rather than, more normal, 25. Actually, in the light of the climate report, this seems like a good result. Harvest was early, during the second half of September, with ripe, small grapes, wonderful aromatics and low acidity over all.

Flor de Pingus suffered more. Less than half of a normal harvest was produced.

Psi is always more complicated, the grapes being sourced from a total of 27 villages, 841 small plots. The average yield is an almost ridiculously low 10hl/ha. Harvest began 19th September and finished on the 29th of the month. Production of Psi was also marked by the frost of the 28th April, necessitating a search for additional growers to compensate for the low yields. Even so, production was lower than in 2016.



TASTING NOTES

“We could not be more happy with the quality of the wines, but of course sad that we have so few bottles”

PETER SISSECK

PINGUS

2017

Intense, jet-plum, with a tight, bright rim, we find rich, ripe cherries here on the nose, Morello and blueberry, bramble and raspberry – wonderfully aromatic and inviting. The palate is upbeat and floral, violets and rose to the fore. The palate is juicy, vibrant and fresh with lovely focus and energy, underpinned by significant, ripe tannins and crushed stone minerals. The tannins, enveloped in fruit, are obscured but are there to support the wine in the long term. Power, muscle, focus and elegance here – quite a feat!

Corney & Barrow Score 18.5 – 18.5+
Recommended drinking from 2024 – 2032+

£1475/Case of 3 bottles, in bond UK
£985/Case of 1 magnum, in bond UK

This wine will be sold on allocation.

FLOR DE PINGUS

2017

Deep plum, almost opaque, the nose here presents very beguiling fruit, initially playful but with innate power, intense black fruit complemented by shades of violet and wild herbs. There is heat and spice here, all revealed on a palate which offers an abundance of generous fruit, layered with fine tannins and stony minerals. The finish shows drive, earthy minerals and dark fruit concentration – great ambition.

Corney & Barrow Score 18
Recommended drinking from 2021 – 2027+

£525/Case of 12 bottles, in bond UK
£265/Case of 3 magnums, in bond UK

PSI

2017

The blend this year is 97% Tinta del País (Tempranillo) and 3% Garnacha.

Deep plum-velvet, with a tight, bright rim, this exudes fresh primary fruit on the nose, as vibrant as unfermented must with red fruits, cranberry and plum all vying for dominance – pretty and lifted. The palate continues this refrain with well-concentrated, generous fruit, floral notes and hints of both citrus and spice, all underscored by hot stone minerals and ripe tannins. This combines accessibility and generosity with defined grip throughout, on to a persistent finish – rather impressive.

Corney & Barrow Score 18 – 18+
Recommended drinking from 2018 – 2025

£210/Case of 12 bottles, in bond UK
£120/Case of 3 magnums, 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. For the benefit of simplicity, wines are scored out of 20. 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.

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