

Wine Appreciation Feb 2023

1. Casal de Ventozela Vinho Verde 2020/21

Aromatic hints of blossom/white flowers, green apple and white pepper.
Crisp and dry, with delicate flavours of soft **citrus fruit, melon / peach and green apple**.

Grape: Arinto

12% ABV. £9-99 (£7-99 when 6 or more bottles bought)

Notes: Vinho Verde is in the far north of Portugal, a cool area with tempering Atlantic breezes and frequent rainfall. This unique climate retains acidity in grapes, giving this wine its bright, crisp finish. Expect **aromas of white pepper, green apple and citrus fruit**. Its aromatic complexity makes it superb match for lightly-spiced dishes and seafood.

Producers create white Vinho Verde wines with a blend of several grape varieties, including Arinto, Azal, Trajadura, Loureiro, and Alvarinho (a.k.a Albariño).

2. Mimo Moutinho Dao Limited Edition 2020

Crystal White with Green Hues. Dry & Elegant. White Fruits, Herbs and Citrus

Grape: Encruzato

12.5% ABV Normally £5-49 on special offer £2-69

Notes: The mountainous Dão region is absolutely plastered with pine trees and it cannot be a coincidence that the grape offers fresh pine needle on the nose and a resinous pine quality on the palate, alongside elegant floral notes, bright citrus acidity and a life-affirming wet stone character.

3. Adega de Pegões 'Selected Harvest' White 2020/21

Creamy, Stone Fruit and Vanilla Spice, oak

Grapes: Arinto, Verdelho, Chardonnay, Antao Vaz and Fernao Pires

ABV 13.00% £9-99 (£8-99 when 6 or more bottles bought)

Notes: This elegant white is made by Portugal's most awarded cooperative. Located in the Setubal Peninsula – South of Portugal. They have over 900 international awards. Aged in oak, will develop in the bottle for up to 5 years. A great value alternative to white Burgundy that's fantastic with crab linguine drizzled in chilli oil. In 2022, this is wine won an IWC award for the 2020 vintage.

4. S&R DOURO RED 2019

Blackberry, Violet, Black Fruit, Earth, Red Fruit, Spice, Vanilla, hints of wild thyme and soft tannins.

Grapes Touriga Franca Touriga Nacional, Tina Roriz

13.5% ABV £11-99 (£8-99)

Notes: This is made by two of Portugal's best-known winemakers, José Maria Soares Franco and Jodo Portugal Ramos. Both have played crucial roles in modern-day Portuguese winemaking. And this is the perfect way to discover the reds of the Douro Valley. The area gained its fame producing Port, but today that's just the tip of the iceberg. Its steep, exposed vineyards are cooled by the Douro river and deliver juicy, aromatic reds Fantastic with mature cheeses.

5. HERDADE DE GAMBIA 2021

plum, dark cherry and subtle spice.

Grapes: Touriga Nacional, Syrah, Aragonez

13.5% ABV £9-99 (£7-99)

Notes: The grapes for Herdade de Gambia have been plucked from vines near Portugal's Sado river, just south of Lisboa. The vines are a magnificent backdrop to one of Portugal's most well-protected wildlife reserves. The wine is delicious proof that a harmonious ecosystem contributes to flavour-packed grapes and flourishing vines. Each sip of Herdade de Gambia ripples with intense notes of **plum, dark cherry and subtle spice**.

6. MARQUES DE BORBA VINHAS VELHAS 2021

Black fruit, eucalyptus and spice

Grapes: Alicante Bouschet, Aragonez, Castelão, Syrah

14.5% ABV £14-99 (£11-99)

Notes: Marqués de Borba is leading the way in sustainable wine farming in Portugal's Alentejo. Here, Jodo Maria Ramos, the son of Jodo Portugal, one of the country's most-famous winemakers, is a champion of lesser-known indigenous varieties and artisan techniques. He produces great wines from old vines (vinhas velhas) in Estremoz. Here a blend of red grapes is foot-trodden in traditional lagares tanks then aged in oak barrels. The result? A full-bodied and velvety wine that packs intense sunshine flavours into every sip. Think **black fruit, eucalyptus and spice**. Pair it with roasted meats such as lamb, venison or duck, or richly flavoured vegetarian casseroles.

7. TAYLORS FINE WHITE Port 50CL

Honey and oak and a long, smooth finish

Grape: Malvasia

20% ABV £12-99 (£9-99) for 50 cl

Notes: This is a rich, full-bodied port made from white grapes on the dizzying Douro slopes. It's deliciously fragrant with notes of . Serve with 2/3rds premium tonic water, over ice, and add a slice of orange and a sprig of mint for an excellent long drink.

Comment

I thought I'd go with Portuguese wines because they use unusual varieties of grape that we tend not to see. Wines, were from Majestic, except for the **Mimo Moutinho Dao**. I went to Majestic because none of the local supermarkets had a wide enough range of Portuguese wines to choose from. Having bought six wines, I discovered a fantastic range at Aldi in Ruislip and online. I couldn't resist buying the special offer from them – hence the 7 wines in the tasting.

Because Portugal's wine culture developed in relative isolation, many grape varieties do not grow anywhere else in the world. If you don't recognize the grape variety on a Portuguese wine label, it's a good thing. There are over 250 indigenous varieties and a few imports (including Alicante Bouschet) that have adapted well to the Portuguese landscape (i.e., they are delicious). To many wine experts, Portugal is the last frontier of wine in Western Europe; there is still so much to be tasted and explored.