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# FOR THE LOVE OF PORT™

COLLECTIVE PORT WISDOM

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As FTLOP commences its **9th year** of providing Port-centric coverage, we're looking to take on a few new challenges in 2012. We'll add a dynamic new segment to the newsletter later this year, chosen by a member of our Forum. Go there, submit an idea, and if it winds up being used you **WIN A MAGNUM OF 1977 Gould Campbell** Vintage Port from my cellar, delivered directly to you.

Moving the project forward on protecting the place name of Port and spreading that message, is already in progress. Upgrading the website is also part of the plan, adding new content and improving functionality. A few other developments will be released as they reach fruition, as a refresher is long overdue and hopefully, you will find some of these changes to your liking.

My sincere thanks to those who took part in promoting the **Center for Wine Origins' International #PortDay** celebration, last month. Due to the CfWO's efforts to maintain the sanctity of wine place names, they were highly successful in spearheading a simple and effective campaign through social media channels to get their message *out there*; and in particular, putting Port wine in front of many new, and young wine consumers. What could possibly be better than that for Port wine?

This month's edition introduces a new Port website from Sweden. Take a look at what they've created; user friendly and chock full of great content. Next up, we introduce you to our **Grand Prize winner** in FTLOP's **#PortDay** contest. The accompanying [YouTube](#) video is brilliant! Have a read through our **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual - For the Love of Port Awards**. Congratulations to all of the winners of the various categories. The **Lifetime Achievement Award** provides a poignant peak into a living legend with more than 45 years of service to the Port & Douro wine trade.

Also in **#67**: find out which Port company went above the call of duty, providing aid to wounded soldiers from Portugal and Great Britain this year. Our **Guest Corner** article scribed by FTLOP's **Andy Velebil**, puts the spotlight on an epic vertical tasting of **Fonseca Guimaraens** Vintage Ports in London, dating back eight decades. Don't miss it!

**Roy's Tasting Notes** section has some interesting bottles, but it was a slow month for me in terms of consumption. Speaking of videos, **Zev Robinson** produced a new short and you get the first look! Last but not least, **Port Personalities, In Focus**: introduces you to one of Porto's shining stars; **Beatriz Machado**, the inspired young Wine Director of **The Yeatman Hotel**.

Thanks for your sup**PORT**!

Roy

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# PORT WEBSITE RECOMMENDATION

One of the finest new informational Port sites was devised by three men in Sweden, who offer their information in English. They've created a highly functional site packed with concise historical facts and it is fun to read. Additionally their website features a vast assortment of tasting notes encompassing 1,100+ unique Ports, quickly accessed by vintage or producer.

**Stefan Sällberg**, **Jörgen Bergengrip** and **Sten Ivarsson** are all avid Port devotees, related by marriage and they belong to the ***Danish Port Wine Club*** and ***The Wine Society***. There's no question about it, this trio tastes and/or consumes a boatload of Port, as tasting notes are added with great alacrity. In addition to their tasting notes they also provide ratings using a 20-point scale. Evidently, the vast majority of their imbibing and note taking is focused on Vintage Ports, the oldest of which dates back to a rare bottling of 1873 Sandeman.

The site maintains sections on the *storing* and *drinking* of Port, which offers excellent basic info for consumers new to Port; something that many sites overlook. I liked the information on how to cellar Port wine properly, and found the section on how-to-open and decant Port very well done. I believe this will be a useful resource for individuals seeking an introduction to Port wine or those who have been intimidated by it in the past.

Someday I will meet these three serious Port aficionados and we shall share some great bottles together. Their compilation of the most comprehensive listing of Port producers I've ever seen is praiseworthy. I also like their descriptions on the various Port categories that can be found in the section on "Types of port". This site has only been online several months and I can imagine how well it will evolve in the future. One suggestion is to include some graphic content to add color, but otherwise, it is wonderful to have yet another reliable resource for checking tasting notes. **This strong content-based Port site should be added to your favorite places!**



<http://www.vintageport.se/index.php>

# LIFE ON THE DOURO

## INTERVIEW & VIDEO

Zev Robinson was gracious in putting together a short video for FTLOP's anniversary issue, which includes facets of our 2011 Port Explorer's Tour and a brief interview about my connection to Port and the Douro.

Since finishing the filming and editing of the documentary, Zev began screening the film and also selling it to individuals on DVD ([http://lifeonthedouro.com/?page\\_id=20](http://lifeonthedouro.com/?page_id=20)). In April, he will be rejoining us for another Port Explorer's Tour, but will be focusing his lens on different aspects of Life on the Douro. This will enable Zev to expand his current film into a five or six part mini-series to air on television.

It was fun to have Zev on last year's tour and to introduce him to several of the key individuals in the Port trade. We worked as a great team, as Zev worked his magic behind the camera and I interviewed some of the people who appear in the documentary. The stories told are fantastic.

In the YouTube clip linked below, Zev asked me to recount my path and passion with Port wine and how that led to FTLOP and the tours with Mario Ferreira. Additionally, the connection between my enthronement in the Confraria do Vinho do Porto and transition to dedicating my career to the promotion and education of Port, and eventually Douro and Madeira too.

I converted a serious hobby into my life's work focused on helping people to better understand Port through a newsletter, website with vibrant interactive community, guiding tasting seminars for consumers and retailers in North America, and developing an ongoing program to invigorate Portuguese enotourism. This year I will surpass my 20<sup>th</sup> visit to Portugal and when I am not there, as my family can tell you, I miss it and talk about it incessantly. When in Porto/Gaia and the Douro, it feels so natural and I still dream of living there someday and writing a book or two.

Bringing guests to visit the large, medium and small producers of Port, DOC Douro and Madeira has been one of the great ongoing adventures in my life. Knowing how this creates some ripple effect on Port sales and excitement for others to visit Portugal's winelands, is truly rewarding. It is fascinating to see the vast difference in the tourism infrastructure compared to my first visit to the Douro in 1994, when there was not a single hotel in the entire region (that I am aware of). Finding a place to stay was virtually impossible unless you had good connections within the Port trade. Although it might sound crazy, finding a restaurant attractive to visitors was almost non-existent back then. Douro's tourism infrastructure has improved dramatically in recent years.

As Zev mentioned when screening his film in California, "everyone should visit the Douro at least once in their lifetime." The natural beauty is nearly indescribable and the centuries old terraced vineyards that stretch as far as the imagination, with steep slopes rising up on either side of the river. I always tell potential guests, "You will never forget your first time seeing the Douro." The pure bliss and awe of that first experience, has mesmerized me for eighteen years. Nowadays, I get to see that wonderment on the faces of our first-time guests and that's a major reason why I love going there with our groups. In some ways, the Douro is evolving quickly as a region, yet memories of my first visit, along with my love of Port, the river valley and its people, will prevail.

**Watch Zev's new short: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcNyycm1TcE>**

# THE 2<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL FOR THE LOVE OF PORT AWARDS



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FTLOP's award categories for the **BEST OF:**

- Late Bottled Vintage Port
- Tawny Port
- Colheita Port
- Vintage Port – new release
- Douro white wine
- Douro red wine
- Innovative Marketing
- Career Achievement Award
- Hospitality & Tourism

Listed below are the winning selections of our 2nd ANNUAL **FOR THE LOVE OF PORT AWARDS** from 2011, in an assortment of “**Best of**” Port related categories. Congratulations to all the winners!



## LATE BOTTLED VINTAGE PORT: 2005 QUINTA DO NOVAL

**2005 Quinta do Noval LBV Port** – Unfiltered and bottled in 2011. Fragrant fresh carnations, red licorice and raspberry jam with a hint of chocolate to sex up the nose. Dense and succulent, this could easily pass for Vintage Port and between day two and three, the flavor profile really explodes and seems far more balanced, although a drop more acidity would add even more pizzazz. Noval has nailed it in 2005 and this is one of the better LBV's of the vintage. Boysenberry dominates the palate in an off-dry style with a fabulously long finish and ripe tannins. **93 points – 8/21/11**



## TAWNY PORT: QUINTA DA ROMANEIRA 40 YEAR OLD TAWNY

**Quinta da Romaneira 40 Year Old Tawny Port** – From the very first whiff, I knew this was going to be something quite special, and it didn't disappoint. Leading off with orange pekoe tea and joined by aromas of hazelnut, walnut shells and lime zest, the bouquet was dazzling. The palate was every bit the equal, exhibiting great harmony even with a gentle warming sensation in the mid-section. Medium-bodied, but I'd bet my house that had this been open a few more days, it would've evolved to be a solid heavy weight. Nonetheless, it was a voluptuous and unctuous tawny, rich and smooth. The acidity was "out of this world" and created quite a buzz around the table, almost Madeira like in its cut. Texturally it was like a beautifully aged Burgundy, filled with layers of complexity and lush butterscotch in the middle and end, with extraordinary persistence on the finish. The Quinta da Romaneira is in a different league than almost any other forty year old Tawny Port, with very few rivals that can deliver at this level. **96 points - 4/25/11**



## COLHEITA PORT: 1960 KROHN COLHEITA

**1960 Krohn Colheita Port** – FTLOP 6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. Bottled in 2006. The last time I had this was nearly a decade ago and it did not wow me back then, at least that bottle didn't. This is a few shades darker than the Kopke 1957; coffee-molasses brown with a golden-amber rim. It delivers a reductive nose of soy and teriyaki sauces, potpourri, toasted almonds and a tangy streak of citrus peel. As breathtaking as an extreme rollercoaster ride, the palate of the 1960 Krohn dazzles with intensity due to the laser focused cutting edge of the acidity. Beyond the cut is a rich, chewy and velvety textured crème brûlée-like profile with chocolate nuttiness, tangerine sweet and sour, and maple syrup drizzled on slowly to add an extra layer that lingers on the profound, delicate finish. This was the winning Port of the entire tasting and a huge surprise at that (at least for me). Sheer elegance in a glass! **97 points - 7/30/11**



## VINTAGE PORT: 2009 Taylor's Vargellas Vinha Velha

**2009 Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas Vinha Velha Vintage Port** – Reticent nose that finally emerged on day two, exploding on the scene with scents of rose petals and spicy notes of pepper, licorice, mint and an undertone of pencil shavings and char. It is a harmonious, voluptuous, and massively fruited Vargellas with provocative tannins and an enormous, long, smooth finish. This old vines Vargellas is a prodigious and hedonistic young Port, and clearly the valedictorian of the 2009 class. It will develop beautifully and still show its youth at age forty! 300 cases were produced. **96+ points - 9/3/11**



## DOURO WHITE WINE: 2008 NIEPOORT

### REDOMA BRANCO RESERVA

**2008 Niepoort Redoma Branco Reserva Douro white wine** – Along with 2005, this is my favorite vintage of Niepoort's Reserva. Others may find past vintages more to their liking but this to me epitomizes the finesse and freshness which Dirk loves his whites (and reds) to deliver. I typically find the Redoma Branco Reserva to elicit similarities to premier cru Meursault and the 2008 definitely heads into that spectrum. Lots of minerality, limestone, along with grapefruit, peach and cantaloupe fruit fragrances that are fantastic as this warmed up in glass. There's a slight oak influence but far less than previous vintages at the same stage. It was a near-perfect accompaniment to Dungeness crab cakes in terms of the flavors melding and in particular the intensity, nervy edge to the acidity and opulent texture; the latter of which is so rare in such a young white wine unless it's gone through malolactic fermentation (it hasn't). I recommend laying this down for 2-4 more years before opening one, as it will be absolutely seamless at that point and should drink beautifully for an additional decade or more. This 2008 is one of the best Douro whites I've consumed. **94+ points 10/22/11**



## DOURO RED WINE: 2004 QUINTA DO CRASTO

### VINHA DA PONTE

**2004 Quinta do Crasto Vinha da Ponte Douro Red Wine** – Vancouver "Dueling Douro" Wine event. Decanted for nearly four hours, this could have used another five or six hours. OMG! In a stunning lineup of brilliant Quinta do Crasto and Vale Dona Maria reds, this was the ultimate show stopper. The alluring fragrances screamed Douro, with loads of briary red and purple fruits and flowers, along with minerals, tar and a hint of vanilla. The remarkable full body and monumental palate crushing concentration of fruit is literally breathtaking. Loaded with ripe tannin and extract and beautifully integrated acidity, this Vinha da Ponte delivered on all cylinders and even with a short decant, it still managed to best any previous showing I've had of this 2004. It's a hedonistic Douro red wine that will live long and prosper. I've never done this before, but this particular bottle absolutely deserves ... **97+ points 4/2/11**





## HOSPITALITY & TOURISM: VILLAR d'ALLEN

After a pair of visits to the estate of the Allen family, located just a few kilometers from the heart of Porto, what had the greatest impact on me was the Allen family's old world sense of welcoming guests. By the end of a long afternoon into evening appointment to Villar d'Allen, I felt as if we were saying goodbye to close relatives after a glorious visit.

The property dates back to 1839 when João Allen bought the property as a summer residence on the outskirts of Porto. On October 15<sup>th</sup> of that same year, JJ Forrester paid a visit to João and signed the guest book. The medieval architecture of the buildings are photo worthy and the enormous park-like setting with extensive botanic gardens and arboretum replete with a lovely pond and trails encircling the grounds; allows for a relaxing meander.

Once inside the large home, which is owned by José Alberto Allen and his wife, it appears more like a museum, with historic artifacts in every single room, on all walls, in displays and everywhere you look. José is a kind and gentle soul and loves to recount the history of the property and the ancestry of his family, which I will write about in an upcoming article. The wine cellar and the treasures buried down there must be seen to be believed, but I will do it justice soon enough.

When one understands the historic link between the Allen's antecedents, the Rabello Valente family and the fact that they were directly involved with a few of the ownership cycles of Quinta do Noval, everything starts to fall into place. A must visit for Port historians or casual Port-loving tourists. You will never forget the experience or the warmth shown by the Allen family! **By appointment only.**



## INNOVATIVE MARKETING: SYMINGTON FAMILY ESTATES

2011 was a busy year for the marketing department of the Symington Family Estates. Congratulations to Henry Sizaret and his entire team! I am not aware of all their incredible accomplishments from last year, but I can certainly highlight some of them and it is quite an impressive list of achievements:

- a. Recreated and successfully launched their progressive website: [www.thevintageportsite.com](http://www.thevintageportsite.com)
  - b. Launched new packaging on some of their Ports, including entry level Graham's Port labels as well as an extraordinary presentation with the Graham's 40 Year Old Tawny Gift Pack
  - c. Released 1970 Graham's and 1963 Warre's from the family's cellar in individual wooden gift boxes
  - d. Commenced a major renovation of the Graham's lodge and constructing a restaurant too
  - e. A boxed gift set directly targeting Chinese New Years and the Asian market
  - f. Presentation of a specially prepared case of Warre's 1972 "Jubileum" Colhieta presented by Dominic Symington to the Amalienborg Palace in Copenhagen in commemoration of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Danish Queen's accession to the throne.
  - g. Excellent blog and a significant ongoing presence using social media; e.g. Graham's FB page
10. Sponsored the Concurso dos Saltos (An international equestrian jumping event) in Porto





## CAREER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: Francisco “Vito” Olazabal

Cut from a very different cloth, but with some of the same admirable qualities that define some of the world’s great leaders; this year’s Career Achievement Award goes to **Francisco Javier de Olazabal**; selected for his decades of influence on the history and prosperity of the Douro region and its greatest resources, Port and Douro wine.

Mr. Olazabal is a rare breed in the Port trade today. An erudite Portuguese statesman, with an abundance of vitality, Vito remains actively involved in guiding his family’s Quinta do Vale Meão. This gentle man has held nearly every possible position in the Port business over the past 45+ years that he’s been directly involved. When Zev Robinson filmed an interview segment with Vito last year, I listened intently to his every word as he recounted what it was like growing up in the Douro region decades before there was television, or even electricity in the valley. His wonderful stories painted a vivid picture of what it must have been like back then and he offered colorful details which enriched the experience of our guests who enjoyed Vito’s storytelling as they sipped Vale Meão’s Port.

I first met Mr. Olazabal in 2003, having approached him draped in my black robe at the Palácio da Bolsa, with George Sandeman at his left flank. The oath I took and tastevin placed around my neck by Vito that day, (as he was Chancellor of the Confraria do Vinho do Porto) forever changed my life, two decades after first falling head over heels for Port wine.

This award is a testament to Mr. Olazabal, whose prolific achievements you will get to read, simply and humbly, in his own words. His reply to my questions were sent back recently, by his daughter Luisa (thank you again!), who did not let on to why I was asking them. His duly generous spirit and ultra sharp mind is not only apparent when in his presence; but as you will glean from his answers, Vito has the extraordinary ability to relay his life’s experiences while kindly responding to what must have seemed like just another detailed interview.



**Francisco Javier de Olazabal, during his term as Chancellor of the Confraria do Vinho do Porto**

*Photograph by kind permission of Jorge Castro*

**Info on the Confraria - (<http://www.fortheloveofport.com/history/port-wine-brotherhood>)**



## 1. How (and at what age) did you realize your life was destined to be shaped by Port/Douro wine?

Since my birth, I was privileged to live in a wine environment. Both my father, Jaime de Olazabal and my grandfather, Ramon, were Directors and shareholders of Ferreira. My paternal grandmother Maria Luisa Ferreira de Mendonça, shared with a sister the ownership of Quinta do Vale Meão. On my mother's side, my great-grandfather José Maria Rebello Valente owned Quinta do Noval, and was a port shipper. Later on, the brand Rebello Valente was acquired by Robertson which used it to name their Vintage Port. Curiously, that brand now belongs to Sandeman and therefore, Sogrape!

On this side of the family, my great-grandfather, Afonso Cabral was the owner of Quinta do Cachão and Quinta do Paço do Monsul, which still belongs to some of his descendants. It was there and by his knowledgeable and loving hand that I had my first and unforgettable contact with the Douro. So, when I graduated Oporto University with a degree in Economics, my choice was already made and in 1968, I married Maria Luisa Rosas Nicolau de Almeida, (Zinha) daughter of Fernando Nicolau de Almeida, who was Chief Oenologist of Ferreira for 62 years. As a matter of fact I feel that I didn't choose wine – it was wine that chose me!



Francisco & Zinha Olazabal

## 2. Beyond your parents, who was the greatest mentor or influence in your career?

It's difficult for me to select one single person as the greatest mentor or influence in my career. I must start by mentioning my father, who used to say that the best education resulted from the example. Truth be told, he had a great influence on me and on all his collaborators through his intelligence, dedication and extreme honesty.

Then I had the good fortune of sharing the responsibility of running Ferreira together with men of great quality; first my father-in-law Fernando Nicolau de Almeida, who joined Ferreira in the same year as my father and worked there for 62 years (this must be a world record!). He was a brilliant oenologist and a great humorist, who taught me amongst other things that if you don't feel pleasure in making your wines they will not please the consumer! My cousins Jorge Ferreira and Mário Flores, followed by Guilherme Alvares Ribeiro and Alvaro Ferreira and more recently, during the Sogrape period, Fernando and Salvador Guedes, Gastão Lopes and Joaquim Cabral Menezes.

From outside my wine circle, I owe a lot to Artur Santos Silva. We have been friends since our youth. He was the best Law student at Coimbra University, and besides his short but successful stint as *Treasury Secretary of State*, Artur followed an outstanding banking career as the founder and promoter of BPI, the first privatized bank, following the bloodless revolution of April 25<sup>th</sup>1974.

In 1979, I introduced Artur to my father, who was deeply impressed by his intelligence, his refined stature and his moral standing. We had the good sense to encourage him to become the Chairman of the Shareholders' Meeting at Ferreira. In that esteemed position he provided me with invaluable assistance on so many occasions, that ever since then, I seek out his profound wisdom and friendship every time I have a difficult problem to face. Besides being Chairman of BPI, Artur was recently elected Chairman of the gigantic Gulbenkian Foundation. I refer to him as "my guardian angel".

VITO OLAZABAL



**3. Can you please give a basic “timeline” from your entry into the Port business, throughout your career path, mentioning the positions you have held during these years?**

- 1966 – Managing Director of Sociedade dos Vinhos do Porto Constantino, a Ferreira subsidiary, and assistant Director of Ferreira
- 1982 – Succeeded my Father, Jaime de Olazabal, as President of Ferreira
- 1987 – Further to the takeover of Ferreira by Sogrape, I was reelected as its President.
- 1989 – President of Sogrape Distribuição, a company created to distribute the whole range of Sogrape wines in the domestic market.
- 1990 – Elected as member of the Board of Sogrape Vinhos de Portugal S.A.
- 1994 – Together with my children I purchased 62% of Quinta do Vale Meão from my cousins, thus becoming sole proprietors
- 1998 – I renounced my posts in the Sogrape Group in order to develop my own project at Vale Meão. The first DOC Douro wines were launched – Quinta do Vale Meão and Meandro – both from the 1999 vintage. Our first Vintage Port was the 2000.

**I have also served in several wine institutions:**

- 1974 to 1979; 1991 – 1992 member of the Board of Directors of the Associação de Exportadores de Vinho do Porto, founded in 1974; between 1992 and 1994, President of the Board.
- 2001 to 2009 – “Chancellor” ( Chairman) of the Confraria do Vinho do Porto.
- 1999 to 2004 – President of The Oporto Golf Club, the oldest club in the Iberian Peninsula; founded in 1890 by the British Port Wine shippers.
- In 2004, I received from President of Republic, Jorge Sampaio, the degree of “Grande Official” of the Order of Agricultural Merit.
- In 2011 the Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro (UTAD) granted me the title of “Doutor Honoris Causa”

**4. Running a company as enormous and multifaceted as Ferreira, and later Quinta do Vale do Meão; how were you able to maintain balance between time spent with family and business?**

I'm trying to compensate for a moderate but undeniable negligence towards my family during the Ferreira years, by now having most of them as my partners and collaborators!

**5. Which unforgettable moments can you share from your years as Chancellor of the Confraria do Vinho do Porto?**

The revamping of the Ceremony of the Annual Enthronization, which now involves walking through the Old Oporto streets in procession from the Palácio da Bolsa to the Old Customs House, at which takes place a gala dinner followed by a ball. I believe these changes gave a better visibility and brilliance to this event.

The Confraria do Vinho do Porto is presumably the Wine Brotherhood which has the biggest number of Government Leaders and Chiefs of State as its honorary members (Cancelários). I was happy to enthrone 11 of them during my mandate, although I cannot compete in that field with my predecessor and friend António Filipe who enthroned 21 of them in one day - during the Iberian-American Summit Conference held in Oporto, (The King of Spain and Fidel Castro were amongst them)

**José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission and former Prime Minister of Portugal.**





## **6. During your lifetime, what is the single greatest change you've witnessed in the Douro Valley?**

I believe that the generation which includes my son Francisco, Enologists and Agricultural Engineers that decided to come to the Douro after graduating at the University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro and also at the Biotechnology School of Oporto University gave a tremendous push to the international recognition of the Douro region as the source of wines of great quality and character. It is a fact that they have been more focused in dry wines, because Port was a more mature market dominated by long-established brands. But I feel that they are increasingly attracted by Port

## **7. What are a few of the achievements you are most proud of in your career?**

During the Ferreira years, I was directly involved in the decision, (during the 1970's) to abandon bulk shipments and concentrate efforts on selling our Ports under our own brands and bottling them in Portugal. This was not an easy task since the import duties in most countries penalized bottle imports. We managed however, to persuade our distributors to partner with us in these efforts, and the move turned out to be a great success.

At the same time, we decided to invest in the domestic market with an aggressive marketing campaign – we were the first company to advertise on television! Besides reinforcing Ferreira's brand leadership, I believe we greatly contributed to the explosion in domestic consumption.

In a different register, becoming the sole owner of Quinta do Vale Meão was the realization of a lifelong dream. My father had only owned a 6.25% share in Meão, and we were five children. In my father's generation there were 16 owners. So for more than twenty years, until 1994, I kept buying shares from my relatives, when finally the remaining 6 co-proprietors decided to propose that I buy their 62% share. I almost lost my breath.

I am also proud that I was retained as President of Ferreira by Sogrape after the take-over, and then, being invited to join the Sogrape board three years later. I am deeply grateful to the Guedes family, not only for that, but also for having managed the integration of Ferreira into their group while showing the utmost respect for the people and core values of our company.

**8. Would you please share some of the most memorable Port wines you've tasted from your own company, as well as those of your competitors?**

Ferreira Garrafeira 1815 and 1847 (the latter of which is from Moscatel grapes). The 1983 Ferreira Vintage Port; 1931 Quinta do Noval Vintage Port; 1970 Taylor; 1994 Graham's, and some of the Niepoort Colheitas. May I add, without looking too partial, the 2000 Quinta do Vale Meão Vintage Port?



**9. Looking into a crystal ball at the future, what do you foresee to be the most significant development in Port and/or the Douro in the coming generation?**

I think that we must adapt ourselves to the probable decline of the markets where Port is basically drunk as an aperitif, and therefore, to a general decrease in export volumes. This should be compensated by a more concentrated and sustained effort in promoting the premium Port categories in order to increase the average prices, and also by focusing efforts on promoting and improving the image of Douro wine throughout the world. Additionally, this evolution should be complemented and supported by attracting the right type of tourists to the Douro valley and to Oporto.

**10. As a direct descendant of Dona Antonia Adelaide Ferreira, how reassuring is it to know that her property, and now yours, Quinta do Vale Meão, will continue on to your children and to theirs someday?**

Since he was a young boy, my son Francisco (Xito) always intended to become an oenologist. His desire to bring his family to live in Vale Meão was vital to our decision of developing the project to produce our own wines. Some years later, my daughter Luisa, who had benefited from a good training in the wine trade by working for 8 years at Rozés/Vranken/Pommery, decided to accept my invitation to join our company. My other son, Jaime works in a bank, but he loves the Quinta as well and goes there very often with his friends to go hunting and fishing. And my wife Zinha plays the fundamental role of making sure that all of our numerous guests keep good memories of their visit to the Quinta.

So I feel that my great-great-grandmother, Antónia Adelaide Ferreira had a vision of the future and was thinking about us when she decided, against the will of some of her closest collaborators, to buy a big area of barren land and transform it into Vale Meão.

Therefore, I have good reason to trust that my descendants will happily carry on this long standing family tradition!



# GRAND PRIZE WINNER

## International #PortDay Contest

How do you celebrate your birthday Chicago style? Well, if you are wondering what that has to do with the **#PortDay** contest held by FTLOP, the answer is ...



You enter the **#PortDay** contest, and by submitting the best youtube.com video as per our simple rules, you learn that you've just won an all expense paid trip to Portugal on our **Port Explorer's Tour** in April. That's the story of our *Grand Prize* winner: **Chantelle Pabros**, an accomplished Sommelier and owner of a wine consulting firm. She will be sitting for the Master Sommelier exam in Aspen, less than a month after returning from her first tour of Portugal, although she has visited many wine regions during her career in the wine biz.

It was a wild coincidence (for both of us) to find out that Chantelle had won the contest on her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday, which made her celebration even more fun later that evening. Chantelle is no stranger to Port wine, as she's had her share including a remarkable 1931 Quinta do Noval Nacional, and lots of other impressive bottles too, as you will get to see.

On global **#PortDay** which was celebrated this year on January 27<sup>th</sup>, Chantelle organized a Port event in her home for a few dozen guests, who included: other sommeliers, wine buyers, wine collectors, young professionals, wine enthusiasts, bloggers and a few local restaurant owners, which lasted from 8 p.m. – 1 a.m.

There were 27 different selections of Port and two hand-crafted Port cocktails for her guests to sample upon arrival. Chantelle reported that the group's consensus "Port of the night" was a bottle of 1963 Quinta do Noval; one of several excellent bottles opened from the 1963 vintage.



As good as that all sounds and kudos to Chantelle for organizing such an extensive **#PortDay** event, the video her friend **Aaron Michael Wells** created for her, was absolutely fantastic; and the reason why she will be joining us in Portugal in April. I believe when you see this, you will certainly agree that Chantelle deserves the Grand Prize. It is the best short video I've ever seen on Port wine!

[Port Party 2012](#)

# SYMINGTONS IN SUPPORT OF TROOPS

**Paul Symington** wrote, "I was very proud that our idea of helping wounded soldiers who are serving their country, by making a limited edition (500 cases only) of a Warre 2009 Vintage Port, should have worked out so well. Next week we give a further Euro 3,550.00 to the Portuguese equivalent military charity called Liga dos Combatentes on the sales of the Warre '09 in Portugal. So we raised in total £18,240 and Euro 3,550.00 for the wounded and their families.

## **Soldier's bravery two centuries ago raises money for heroes today**



In 1809 William Warre, a 25 year old soldier from a Port producing family, fought with the Duke of Wellington in the famous battle that liberated his home town of Oporto. He was awarded Portugal's highest military honour, the Ordem de São Bento d'Aviz for his bravery.

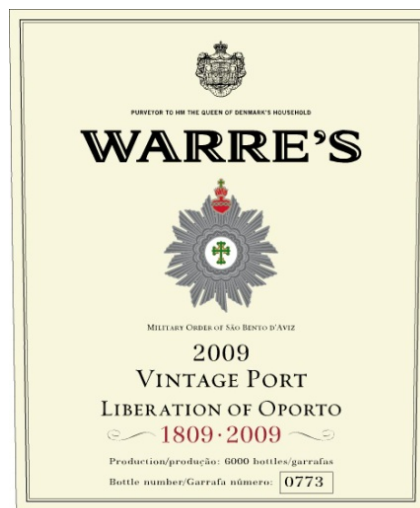
Exactly 200 years on, the Oporto-born Symington family made a Warre's 2009 Vintage Port in honour of this young warrior and resolved to donate the profits to today's soldiers through Help for Heroes.

On 16<sup>th</sup> February Paul Symington and his cousin Clare, presented a cheque for £18,240 to **Help for Hero's** at Tedworth House in Wiltshire, the new Personal Recovery and Assessment Centre.

Paul Symington said "We are really delighted that our decision to launch a Warre's Vintage Port in honour of this young soldier should have raised so much money for today's wounded, Captain William Warre would undoubtedly have been pleased.

The Warre 2009 is an incredibly elegant and complex wine that will age superbly for many decades." The Symingtons also donated a case of the Warre's 2009 Vintage Port to Help for Heroes.

Bryn Parry, CEO and Co-founder of Help for Heroes: "We are very honoured that Warre's Port and the Symington family chose to mark this anniversary with this donation to **Help for Heroes**. It's heartening to think that the actions of one soldier 200 years ago have gone towards helping fellow soldiers in another era. H4H is all about 'doing your bit' and Warre's support is fantastic. The money raised is greatly needed and it is hugely appreciated; ensuring the wounded and their families get the support they deserve, for life. On behalf of everyone at Help for Heroes and all those who the money will benefit, thank you.'



COMMEMORATIVE BOTTLING TO MARK THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE RETAKING OF OPORTO BY THE ANGLO-PORTUGUESE ARMY COMMANDED BY SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY, DUKE OF WELLINGTON.

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EDIÇÃO COMEMORATIVA DOS 200 ANOS DA LIBERTAÇÃO DA CIDADE DO PORTO PELO EXERCITO LUSO-BRITÂNICO COMANDADO POR SIR ARTHUR WELLESLEY, DUQUE DE WELLINGTON.

## **About Help for Heroes**

Thanks to the fantastic British public, Help for Heroes (H4H) has raised over £126m since its launch in October 2007. All funds raised to date are either allocated or spent on the direct, practical support of those Servicemen and women who are wounded, injured or become sick while serving our country. H4H has funded a variety of projects including the £8.5m Rehabilitation Complex at Headley Court, a new £3.5m treatment centre for Combat Stress, adaptive adventure training through the Battle Back programme and the creation of a £6m Quick Reaction Fund to support individuals in need.

In February 2010, H4H announced its key role in the creation of five regional Personnel Recovery Centres (PRCs), which provide, in partnership with the MOD, The Royal British Legion and other Service charities, ongoing training and support for the wounded after Headley Court. Locations of the PRCs include Edinburgh, Colchester, Catterick, Tidworth and Plymouth.

The centres provide training facilities, classrooms and gymnasiums with state-of-the-art sports equipment as well as opportunities to learn new skills and gain qualifications. H4H does not seek to criticise or be political. We just want to help and we work closely with the Army, Navy and RAF to provide support where it is most needed.

For more information on how we spend your money visit:  
[www.helpforheroes.org.uk/how\\_we\\_spend.html](http://www.helpforheroes.org.uk/how_we_spend.html)



# GUEST CORNER ARTICLE

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## FONSECA - GUIMARAENS TASTING ROYAL AIR FORCE CLUB LONDON, ENGLAND

APRIL 04, 2011

Article and photos by Andy Velebil © February 2012



**Roy's Note:** Andy Velebil is no stranger to FTLOP'ers as he's written several Guest Corner articles here in the past and of course, he's the moderator of our Forum too. Andy has been drinking Port for a dozen years now and made his first of many trips to Portugal on the 2006 Port Harvest Tour. You will find his article recounting a fantastic Fonseca-Guimaraens vertical tasting held a year ago in London, an informative read.



In April 2011 I once again made the long flight from Los Angeles to London to join many friends and fellow Port lovers for several days of Port tasting. Almost a year of detailed planning was about to come to fruition and April 4<sup>th</sup> would be the main event. With the help of The Fladgate Partnership CEO Adrian Bridge, this mammoth and monumental tasting of Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Ports was about to begin. As with a previous years tasting, we added in some key Classic Declarations from Fonseca as comparison.

Before I continue I must inform readers that during the tasting, Adrian Bridge mentioned the history of this company was very complex. I later found out when doing research for this article just how complex it was. With David Guimaraens and Chris Forbes very gracious help after the fact, I've done my best to accurately condense that complex history here.

Fonseca was founded in 1815. In 1822 Manuel Pedro Guimaraens gained control of the Fonseca Monteiro Co., left Portugal for London, and began selling Ports under many names; including Manuel Pedro Guimaraens, Fonseca Monteiro & Guimaraens, Fonseca Monteiro & Co, Fonseca & Guimaraens and Fonseca & Monteiro. By 1840 the company was the second largest shipper of wine and this was also the year that saw the very first Vintage Port released under just the "Fonseca" label. From this point forward the company only used the "Fonseca" label for it's finest Vintage Ports, retaining the other labels for lesser quality ones.

While Quinta d. Terra Feita was under contract to Fonseca to supply Ports, the 1909 and 1911 vintages were released under the Quinta d. Terra Feita label and not a Fonseca label. For all intents and purposes, 1931 is considered the first vintage under the Fonseca-Guimaraens label. 1931 also saw a Fonseca Special Reserve released as well. In 1933 and 1934 the company released Vintage Ports under both Fonseca and Fonseca-Guimaraens labels. However, after 1934 the company changed their policy and the two labels were never again released in the same year.

The London company of M P Guimaraens & Son closed in 1928 and the offices were moved to Oporto and operated under Guimaraens & Co name. Yet Guimaraens & Co. and Fonseca remained separately run companies until 1967 when Alistar Robertson merged the two companies together. A move that saved both companies from financial ruin and eventually led again to their rise in prominence. I must clarify this last point, while the administrative parts merged, the stocks of wine remained separate to retain each houses distinctive heritage, traditions, and wine style.

Unlike many Shippers who release a Single Quinta Vintage Port in non-classic declared years, Fonseca-Guimaraens isn't a Single Quinta. It is a blend from the same Quinta's that classic declared Fonseca's come from. This allows them to be very selective in choosing the top barrels to blend into a high quality product. In essence, a Fonseca-Guimaraens is nothing more than a true Fonseca in a year not deemed a classic.

While my tasting notes on each wine are a bit longer than usual I thought it necessary to also include a summary, or in many cases direct quotes, from the actual Vintage Reports written at the end of each harvest by the current winemaker. I felt the historical significance and educational value is immense and worthy of the extra reading to gain a true context of how the vintage year played out.

I also must add the reason for a general lack of descriptors on the nose was the choice of stemware used. While the glasses were fine for tasting, they weren't very good for obtaining descriptors on the nose. Then again, it's not easy to find over 400 glasses suitable for mature Ports to use all at one time. As usual in these tastings, about half way through we took a much needed break for dinner.



### **Fonseca 30 Year Old Tawny Port**

Unknown when this was bottled, as it had no year printed on it, although according to Adrian Bridge it was quite old. The color was a murky brown with lots of oranges and toffee on the nose. Apricots, nuts, wood showed promise but a very soft texture with little acidity to keep it fresh led to a rather disappointing experience. Newer bottles are far better than this one showed so don't take this score as representative of current releases. **85 points**

### **1933 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

A very light ruby color. Soft silky apricots on a fully mature palate laced into a long and very sweet finish. Well past its prime but a pleasure to be able to try such a rare old Port. Interestingly, this was sealed with an old white t-cork with "Guimaraens & Co" printed on the top. **87 Points**



**The white T-cork sealing the 1933**

### **1942 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

The color was similar to the 1933 but a touch paler. Plenty of bold oranges, honey, and tobacco on the nose. The palate was fuller and brighter than the 1933 with tangerines cedar, tobacco, and a lovely silkiness across it. A dry winter and cold spring, rain in June helped. A hot summer and some rain in September helped did good. The vintage started on September 2<sup>nd</sup> and some weather from the 28<sup>th</sup> onward caused slow fermentations. While the wines had good colour they seemed to be lacking in body. **90 Points**

### 1955 Fonseca Vintage Port

A dark reddish color was holding up well. Plenty of tobacco, brown sugar, noticeable tannins, with a semi-sweet texture. A long similar finish rounded out an excellent bottle. One that is still holding up very well and should for some time to come. **95 Points**



**Me pouring the 1955 Fonseca VP**

### 1957 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port

A very light ruby color with a strange sweet vegetal nose. Compared to the others before it, this was a drier style with tobacco and odd notes on the back end. I've never had this so I don't have a reference but something did not seem correct with this bottle. I'll score it, but take it with a grain of salt. Picking started on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. **78 Points**

### 1960 Fonseca Vintage Port

A light ruby with no noticeable browning. The nose was a mix of sweetness and meats. Still quite tannic and full bodied with that typical sweetness these have shown so far, coupled with solid acidity, licorice, anise, and a long rich full finish. Still holding up well and I wish I could easily find more of this. Although May was wet, June was warm, and July was hot. Good berry set and then mature berries appeared larger than usual. Picking generally started on September 19<sup>th</sup> and the weather was fine and warm till the 23<sup>rd</sup> after it was dull, rainy, and cool. The wines took a lot of work and the color was good. **94 Points**

### **1961 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

Ruby with browning. A very poignant menthol nose. The palate was very soft and creamy with tobacco, licorice, oranges and brown sugar on the finish. A slightly simple mid palate hurt the overall score. My first time trying this vintage of it so I don't know if that would have fleshed out with a longer decant. A wet and cold May, then a wet July caused sporadic outbreaks of mildew and a hail storm caused some damage on higher slopes. Wines seem to be more flavory than last year and sugar graduations were high, although the musts did not "stick" to the fingers as one would have expected. Yields were low and many farmers did not make up their full authorizations. **88 Points**

### **1964 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

A brownish ruby color with a licorice nose. Tons of cedar on a very sweet palate, but a clipped finish hurt what was otherwise promising. A cold Spring lasted until the end of May causing the grapes to be 3 weeks behind normal. Hot June weather helped. Harvest started on October 1<sup>st</sup> and slow fermentations with light colours. The wines seemed to be lacking in body, but were sweeter than last year. **85 Points**

### **1965 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

Sadly this was corked. A dry winter and a wet spring was followed by a hot dry summer. Due to lack of rain the grapes had little juice. Picked started generally on September 27<sup>th</sup>, rain fell on the 24<sup>th</sup> and did more good than harm. **N/R**



**Adrian Bridge deep in thought while taking notes**

## 1966 Fonseca Vintage Port

A nice dark ruby color that is still youthful looking. While this showed a lot of heat, it had typical tobacco and cherry notes I've come to expect. However, this was a bit rougher than other bottles I've had and wasn't showing its best on this evening. A very wet and warmer than normal winter. A very hot summer saw May setting records. The vintage started on September 26<sup>th</sup> with fully ripe grapes with fairly high sugar degrees, 13°. Rain on the 30<sup>th</sup> helped keep fermentations temperatures down. The musts took a lot of work and samples had deep colour.

**91 Points**

## 1967 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port

Light ruby with a soft soapy nose full of licorice. This was immediately lovely on the palate, balanced with cherries and some tannins that led into a long full finish. Holding up very well considering many 1967's are starting to show signs of fading. Rainfall from October to March was 13.69 inches, slightly less than average. May had 2.54 inches and caused poor berry set. But July thru September were hot with almost no rain falling. Musts were slightly green and unripe, but had lots of colour and the wines should develop well. **92 Points**

## 1968 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port

A medium dark ruby with some purple still evident. Plums and licorise on the nose. The palate is pleasant yet simple. Dusty tobacco with a clipped finish. If this bottle is representative it's time to drink these up soon. A warm and dry winter with a little rain in early Spring and a very hot June. The general picking date was September 30<sup>th</sup>, although the last farm started in October 14<sup>th</sup>. Sugar degrees varied in the lower Douro farms from 9° to 15° and in the upper Douro they were slightly lower at 13°. Musts took even more work than last year due mainly to the cool nights. **87 Points**



**A well needed break for dinner**

## 1970 Fonseca Vintage Port

A light purple that belies its true age. The nose is no different with dark plums dominating. Black cherries, medium sweet, lots of tannins, and some menthol showing late in the game. An amazingly long full finish rounds out a Port with a very long life ahead of it. Winter rainfall was above average at 16.78 inches followed by a dry Spring and rain in May and June. Almost no rain fell from July to October and the vintage was made under ideal conditions. Picking started on September 21<sup>st</sup> and the bunches were in perfect condition and completely free from disease. Sunny and cool nights resulted in musts with tremendous depth of colour that took a lot of work. Yields were high and it is expected that the new wines will be of a high quality. **96 Points**

## 1972 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port

Compared to others the color was very pale, almost watery with an unpleasant odd medicinal smell that wasn't pleasing. The palate tasted of soapy rotten oranges and also wasn't pleasant. A vintage not often seen as this was the first of two years affected by the aguardente scandal. A vintage that saw very low yields, picking generally started on September 25<sup>th</sup>. The price of musts rose 20% but brandy prices remained the same as 1971. The price differential between the lower Douro and the best musts in the upper Douro is standing at around 60%, which is now a true evaluation of the difference in quality between these two areas. Fermentation temperatures were low and musts took a considerable amount of work. **68 Points**



### **1976 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

The color of this was amazing dark, being solid black with a tawny colored rim around the outside. I can't ever remember seeing a color like this on this old VP. The nose was very gummy and thick with a floral aspect similar to the elderberry flower. Very reduced on the palate with thick tar, raisins, and green stems. Yet it was still tannic at the same time. The finish was moderate with a rich mint aspect to it. While good in its own right, served blind this could have easily been mistaken for a lighter style PX Sherry. An extremely dry winter was followed by a hot summer causing springs and wells to dry up for the first time in living memory. Some older vines didn't survive the summer. Some rain started to fall in August and September was cool with light rains. Picking started on September 23<sup>rd</sup> and fermentations were slow due to cool weather. Yields were down over 30% compared to 1975. **89 Points**

### **1977 Fonseca Vintage Port**

Lighter ruby in color with cherries dominating the nose. On the palate there were plenty of cherries, leather, cedar, and a touch of heat which lead into a long tannic finish. A good bottle but not up to par for what this bottle can normally show. **91 Points**

### **1978 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

A pale ruby color with that now familiar light cherry and cedar nose. Very pleasing on the palate with licorice, tobacco leaf, anise, and a lovely sweet medium long finish. Based on this bottle it appears to be fully mature and in a perfect drinking spot at the moment. A very wet winter. Flowering was good but affected in some regions by cold, wet weather in May. Long hot summer was followed by light rain in September. At harvest, bunches were well formed and free of disease. Relatively long maceration times, due to warm days and cool nights, produced wines of excellent depth of colour and intensity of aromas, although with slightly less body than those made the previous year. **90 Points**

### **1982 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

While not corked, this bottle had a signature oaky/woody aspect on the palate that set it apart from other vintages. There was an odd flavor of bacon which I don't normally encounter in a VP. Still tannic but out of balance with the rest of it. A short simple finish wrapped up this Port from what has become a variable vintage. The drought from the previous year continued throughout 1982 and by September only 6.75 inches of rain had fallen in Pinhao. What rain did fall, did so at the most appropriate time and flowering and budset were above the mean. A long hot summer meant picking started early on September 13<sup>th</sup>. Fruit was generally healthy and sugar levels were high. Hot weather lead to some rapid fermentations, but the wines still showed extremely good colour, firm structure, and an unusually powerful and fragrant aroma. **84 Points**



## 1984 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port

A nice even medium ruby in color. Lighter bodied than other vintages with a touch of heat and a simple short finish. Pleasant and drinking well, but at peak if this bottle is representative. A very wet, cold, and humid winter continued into the Spring delaying flowering and general growth. However, later summer and early Autumn the weather changed for the better and the Douro was blessed with exceptionally hot and sunny weather. The vintage began with bunches of grapes that were well formed although lacking in some natural sugar content. Then mid vintage the Douro suffered cyclonic weather for 3 days which stopped picking and lowered sugar readings for a while. The weather then cleared and the vintage continued under ideal conditions.

**84 Points**



**Derek helping with pouring**

## 1985 Fonseca Vintage Port

When you see a Port this old that still has purple showing good things are hopefully to follow and this didn't disappoint. Big rich and young fruit coupled with youthful harsh tannins, cigar, a bold body and a long rich tannic finish. This is still a baby and has decades ahead of it. There is a reason this holds a top spot in this vintage and this is it. A cold and wet winter continued into Spring and bud burst came early in April. Berry set was above average and the rain in April was extremely beneficial. A hot summer with no rain was broken by a 3-hour thunderstorm on September 7<sup>th</sup>. Fonseca decided to start picking earlier than most other Shippers and were able to get all their first class grapes in under ideal conditions and before the rain which fell later in the month. **95 Points**

## 1986 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port

Seducing sweet red cherries, with cigar box flavors dominating the palate. Drinks very well now, but a bit delicate and based on this bottle I'd recommend drinking these sooner for maximum pleasure. There were no extreme temperatures but the cold weather continued until middle of May. A heavy thunderstorm on May 25<sup>th</sup> caused considerable damage in the Alijo/Sabrosa area and damaged some young shoots in certain top quality areas. Plant growth was delayed until early May when an extremely hot streak caused extremely rapid shoot growth. A very hot June and July, and a cooler than normal August. By the beginning of September the fruit was slightly backwards in maturation. Sporadic rain between September 11<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> caused some rot, mainly in the lower Douro. Warmer weather then prevailed and sugar and acidity readings returned to normal. 1986 turned out much better than had been originally envisaged. **89 Points**



The bottles after being decanted and poured

### **1987 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

As with its older brother the 1985, this also still had a purple hue in the color. Still young and rough with lots of chocolate, tannins, and a big rich long finish. So inviting at the moment but with lots of future ageing potential. Another stellar bottle from a vintage that arguably should have been a classic declaration. Winter rainfall only totaled 7.14 inches. A warm dry Spring and flowering in the Valley started in early May although it was a month that was very humid causing outbreaks of mildew and oidium. Summer had intense heat in June, July and early August with a few days of light rain the last three days of August. By the time picking started on September 16<sup>th</sup> it was extremely hot and orders were given only to pick until the early afternoon. By harvest the grapes already were suffering from hydric stress and were subsisting on their own fruit. Uneven maturation even within the same bunches, with outside berries small and wrinkled and inside berries were just ripe. Sugar levels were exceptionally high. By the 23<sup>rd</sup> rain started to fall which was beneficial as the plants quickly absorbed the water. Interesting is what Bruce Guimaraens stated at the end of his report, "It is too early at this stage to predict the quality of the 1987 Ports." **94 Points**

### **1988 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

Like the 1987 this too still had a purple hue to it. Where the 1987 was dense and rich, the 1988 was fresh and crisp with red fruit, plenty of tannins, figs that showed later, and a young rough finish. While this probably won't make as old of bones as the 1987, this still has a nice long life ahead of it. A superb job in a vintage rarely talked about. A warm wet winter and Spring that led to a number of fungus diseases which caused serious damage to the crop in spite of constant treatment. A hot and wet spring and early summer helped spread fungus spores and hot August weather resulted in the desiccation of the affected berries, which were cut off during harvest. This caused a significant reduction in quantities produced. The upper Douro was generally down 50% and the Baixo Corgo was approximately down 30-40%. The Port Wine Institute authorized 140,000 pipes to be produced, the largest amount in history. Yet, it would be unlikely if even 100,000 pipes are produced. **92 Points**

### **1991 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

I've had this many times and something was slightly off from the moment I tasted this; eucalyptus, tobacco, and some stewed fruit. This appeared to have suffered some poor storage conditions somewhere along the way and was slightly cooked. Yet despite that this was still pleasant and a testament to how well this Port normally can be (which is far better than this bottle). A generally dry winter until heavy rain broke out in early January that lasted until March. Flowering took place in May in warm dry conditions. A hot and dry summer with excellent flower set. Due to lack of rain the grapes were unbalanced and showed high acidity levels until early September when rain brought it back down. Sugar levels were above average and the grapes showed balanced maturity. Bruce Guimaraens wrote, "It remains to be seen how the young wines will develop during the forthcoming Winter months, but at this stage they look very promising." **88 Points**

### **1992 Fonseca Vintage Port**

I was immediately struck by the large youthful tannins on first sipping this. Then a dense wall of fresh red fruit and berries, and tobacco leaf which envelope the senses. The finish seemed to last forever and was no different than the palate, just a seamless Port from start to finish. 1991/1992 was a split declaration and choosing this vintage was clearly the right choice for Fonseca. A dry winter with only light rain falling in April and May. Flowering started the second week of May and a few days of rain in June was extremely beneficial. While most shippers started picking on the 21<sup>st</sup>, the Taylor/Fonseca group did not start until the 28<sup>th</sup> when the fruit was fully mature. Well balanced acidity levels combined with high sugar levels and excellent color extraction resulted in musts of very high quality. Bruce Guimaraens wrote, "Whilst it is still far too early to predict how the 1992 Ports will develop, the first signs...bodes well for the future." **96 Points**

### **1995 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

While this was still tannic and tasting of fresh red fruit like the 1992, this didn't have the depth that the '92 possesses. Drinking well now, but with a good many years to come, this well-made Port will be a very good one to sip while you wait for the 1992's to mature. A warm winter with heavy rain fall and a dry February with hot early Spring. Budding started earlier than normal, in mid April, as a result. A cool early summer was followed by a hot August causing some shrinking in the grapes. That led to some shippers to start picking in last week of August which was far too early. Picking started on September 11<sup>th</sup> and except for one day of rain on the 19<sup>th</sup>, the weather remained fine. Bruce Guimaraens wrote that sugar readings were highest in his 40 years of winemaking. "An abundant vintage in quantity, and excellent in quality, the young wines have a promising future." **92 Points**

### **1996 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

A bit of departure with this one, as this was dominated by bitter chocolate, some slightly stewed fruit, and then a massive wave of chocolate late on the finish. This bottle may not have been perfectly on-par, yet it still performed well. I'd like to try this one again as I think it will show much better. A wet winter which saw some flooding. Flowering took place in hot weather on May 25<sup>th</sup>. August was cool and ripening was uneven and by early September the grapes were tasting green and lacking in flavor. September 7-8<sup>th</sup> saw almost an inch of rain followed by a week of rain during the 16<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup>. Strong winds and hot weather arrived starting on the 27<sup>th</sup> which dried things out and allowed the grapes to fully ripen. **89 Points**

### **1998 Fonseca Quinta do Panascal Vintage Port**

I really enjoyed the fresh vibrant ruby fruit, moderate tannins, and well-balanced chocolate that shows later on the medium length finish. Drinking very well at present, this makes a fantastic mid-term drinker. Very high rainfall during winter replenished the water reserves but caused widespread erosion issues. A cold and wet April delayed shoot growth but a warmer May, coupled with plentiful water reserves, caused a large shoot growth. From flowering until harvest there was no rain. The month of July was extremely hot with average record temperatures being recorded. Powdery mildew was a major problem for many farmers in the region. Rain started to fall on September 20<sup>th</sup> and it rained almost daily for the duration of the picking. Yields were the lowest in the past decade, in some cases 60% lower than average. Although the rain caused some dilution the potential for quality was enormous. **90 Points**

### **1998 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

Better balanced than the Panascal with its fresh cherries, dustier tannins, more complex body and a sexy long finish. I was very impressed with this bottle and must seek some out for my own cellar. See above tasting note for David Guimaraens Vintage Report summary. **92 Points**

### **2000 Fonseca Vintage Port**

No signs of even the slightest fading in color, this is still opaque as ever. From the first sip there is no hiding the fact this is a monster. Massive dense berries with lots of furry tannins laced between expressive flowers and cassis that overwhelm. Impossible to tell where the palate stops and the long finish begins. This has an amazing laser precision to it. I'm confident this will become a legendary Fonseca in due time. **97 Points**

### **2001 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port**

Plenty of lush rich cherries on a medium body with furry tannins, which bordered on being too tannic at this moment in its young life. But a good lush fruity finish rounds out another excellent vintage for this Port. One of the wettest winters on record, Pinhao recorded 1,057mm (17.3"). A moderately hot summer with light winds which helped prevent disease. Harvest started at Quinta de Vargellas on September 17<sup>th</sup> and on the 20<sup>th</sup> in the Pinhao Valley. 10mm of rain on the 29<sup>th</sup> and again on the 5<sup>th</sup> of October affected only the end of the vintage. Yields were up almost 30% over 2000. David Guimaraens wrote, "This year is certainly distinguished by being a year of larger production with a consistently high overall quality, as has not been seen since 1995." **91+ Points**

## 2004 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port

Just a solid wall of black fruit, with primary large tannins, solid acidity, and a lush quality that really makes it stand out. A nice dose of chocolate on the long lingering finish rounds out a Port which had me coming back for more. A very dry winter and summer lead to worries about the vines abilities to ripen the grapes. Along with a cool summer, with only one day above 40° recorded in Vale de Mendiz, was saved by the rains of mid-August that allowed the grapes to ripen. A late start to harvest on the 20<sup>th</sup> and hot weather brought Baume's up to 15°. **92 Points**

## 2005 Fonseca Guimaraens Vintage Port

Full of primary grapes and cherries still, this was quite tight and took some coaxing to express itself. Tannic and acidic, this was rougher than the 2004 at the moment. While the 2004 drinks better now, this has better structure and will be the better of the two years down the road. A fantastic showing of this Port. With the exception of winter rains in October and November of 2004, it was a very cold and dry winter. Budburst started later than normal, on March 24<sup>th</sup>. The whole growing season was marked by the vines struggle to grow. With only 100mm of rain in the Spring, three distinct heat waves in June, July, and the first week of August caused a tremendous amount of stress on the vines, limiting their development in every aspect. However, the grapes showed a remarkable capacity to slowly develop and are the healthiest in years. An extremely hot August gave way to 20-30mm of rain between September 6<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, which gave critical relief and allowed the grapes to finish ripening. Perfect weather during picking led to "Great Portos being made from the Douro, regardless of region or altitude." **93 Points**



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# Roy's Recent Tasting Notes



## FORTIFIED WINES

**Jose Maria de Fonseca 20 Year Old "Roxo" Moscatel de Setubal** – From the Setubal Peninsula across the Tejo River from Lisboa. Bottled 1992 and purchased by the case around 1997. I've nurtured these hard to find bottles and opened them on special occasions; this sadly, was my very last bottle. Fine nectar with peach and apricot aromas, mirrored on the palate with viscous mouthcoating richness and flavors of marmalade, caramel, lychee and praline. Always a delicious wine with sharp acidity that holds the sweetness in check. The finish is as decadent as it is long. I'd seriously consider buying more, but the price escalation has been steep over the years. Remaining bottles are quite scarce since Roxo production was discontinued several years ago and a new blend "Alambre" was created (slightly inferior but more affordable). **94 points**  
**6/8/11**

**2006 Catano “Estate Bottled Dessert-Wine” Sierra Foothills, CA – 20% alc.** from Calaveras County comes this excellent dessert wine that incorporates Touriga Nacional, Tinta Cão and Tinta Roriz (although the Roriz grapes were “Tempranillo” on the label). The bouquet of this wine showed that the winemakers “get” Port wine, as it delivered fragrant lavender, dark blackberry and a ton of chocolate. Really breathtaking! The palate was equally striking, with brambly currant, plum and fig fruit flavors in a medium weight frame, super smooth and even three days later this was delicious and in synch. The finish was long and silky and shows that there are some producers in CA that can really hit the bullseye. **90 points 2/15/12**

**Catano “port-style wine” San Andreas, CA – 20% alc.** Expressive nose of bittersweet chocolate, anise, clove and cocoa beans with ripe figs. Catano is doing a very nice job with their dessert wines. This one is rich and velvety, offering stewed prune, sultana and fig fruit flavors with hints of velvety dark chocolate and unctuous molasses after the swallow. Well made and lots of acidity provide the balance here, but the sweetness is kept in check and overall this is a delicious drink. I am not sure of the price for this 375 ml bottle, but if sub-\$30, it would be well worth exploring. There would be no confusion with a Portuguese Port wine, but that’s not the point. The lingering finish with raisin and licorice character was quite appealing. **87 points 2/17/12**

**Quinta do Tedo “Barrique No. 31” Finest Reserve Reserve Ruby Port –** A blend of 18 grapes from Tedo’s property, vinified and aged for three years in oak. Nice scents of violets, mocha and grenadine. Medium-bodied and soft, with a gentle kiss of spirit, this Port was filled with purity of plum and boysenberry flavors and balanced to the hilt. It was loaded with zesty acidity and the subdued tannins were all but an afterthought, as this was ready to drink and showed very nicely from the very first sip, and it was even richer by the time it was finished the third day. The finish was penetrating early on, sweet and medium long. Very good QPR. **88 points 1/14/12**





## DOURO

**2008 Quinta do Portal Branco Douro white wine** – The grapes came from the 20 hectare parcel of assorted white grapes in Portal's vineyard across the street from the winery. Lovely bouquet of honeysuckle, lemon and tropical notes of peach and melon, with generous minerality. This is a pretty basic Portal white and was filled with ripe fruit and succulent, mouth watering acidity and a lengthy finish. More of a summer quaffer or a white to pair with a pasta, seafood or cheese course. This was the opening wine served at the 2010 Edmonton tasting. **87 points 11/12/10**

**2001 Quinta do Portal Grande Reserva Douro red wine** – I am a sucker for the 2000 vintage edition and don't remember having tried the 2001. My initial whiff brought some significant funky earth driven qualities, in a good "sous bois" way, in addition to smoky, tobacco, clay and cranberry notes. The velvety smooth texture, fully resolved tannins and luxurious essence made this immediately approachable and gave me the impression of an even older wine, while its bright ruby color shows much younger than the 2000. Its earth driven qualities had some in the deVine's crowd crowing that this reminded them of an aged Chateauneuf du Pape, and that made sense. This will drink best through 2017, but may hold on a few years after that. **93 points 11/12/10**

**2009 Crasto Douro red wine** – 35% Tinta Roriz, 25% Tinta Barroca, 25% Touriga Franca and 15% Touriga Nacional make up this fine blend. At 14.5% alcohol, I was eager to see if it would stand out but must say, it was well integrated. Fragrant lavender, spiced plums and potpourri make for an enticing whiff. Fresh and vibrant medium-bodied juice, easy to approach in a pop n pour scenario but next time I will decant this to see how it opens up. Seemingly a much "bigger" version of Crasto's entry level red wine, with ripe purple and black fruits and a touch of Douro earth, the tannins remain mild and chalky, but there's no question this can be cellared for a half decade, possibly even eight to ten years if you are daring and prefer maturity in your red wine. A fine food wine, but this could certainly be consumed on its own. It ended with a fresh, fruit filled persistent finish. I'd recommend drinking this from 2013-2018 for best results. It was so good and offered such stunning value that I went out and bought two cases. What more do I need to say? **90+ points 1/16/12**

**2009 Crasto Douro red wine** – Tannic enough on first sip that I put this into a decanter for two and a half hours. From there the spicy aromas emerged along with dark cherry, black raspberry fruit notes, minerals and cocoa. Extracted, supple and smooth, it is harmonious and bright, yet has the potential for near term aging. Will drink best through 2020. **90 points 2/15/12**

**2009 Quinta do Crasto Old Vines Reserva Douro red wine** – Decanted for 5 hours, 14.5% alc by volume. This wine carries the alcohol well and also the oak, which is obvious and still requires time to integrate, yet is unobtrusive at this point in time. Dark brooding scents of black fruits, pure essence of vanilla and mocha. Absolutely gorgeous and concentrated blackcurrant and boysenberry fruit with overt oak that is more integrated at this point than many previous versions of this old viney stuff. There's a rich and soft mouthfeel, plenty of acidity and fine grained tannins here to provide the focus and stellar balance. Hold onto your bottles for another two years when this will have even greater symmetry, although it can certainly be enjoyed now, especially as an accompaniment to a hearty meal, like stew, roasted meat or a grilled steak. However, the long term potential of this Vinha Velha and quality overall, may just trump some of the great bottlings such as 2003-2004-2005. This is worthy of a case purchase and the price has come down this year. 106,000 750 ml bottles produced and 600 magnums. The make up of this wine explains why it is such a beauty; as two thirds of the Vinha Maria Teresa and all of the Vinha da Ponte production was blended in here. It should drink quite nicely from 2014-2025+. **94+ points 2/17/12**

**2007 ~ Kopke Reserva ~ Vinha Tinto ~ Douro red wine** – From Quinta São Luiz. Decanted five hours. Simply put, this is the finest red wine ever made by Kopke, and I hope to be able to find more. The extra couple of years of bottle age and 14 months in new 225 liter French oak casks have resulted in a terrific terroir driven red. Showing spicy and dark fragrances of black licorice, tar, briar patch and pomegranate with a captivating earthy edginess. The palate screams dark blackberry and black plum flavors with a sublime smoothness that is really fascinating. In five years it has already developed an elaborately layered middle and this remains a very young wine today with its best years down the road. Ripe and rich the fruit is balanced by ample acidity and ripe, granular tannins. From here, there's no question the upside is for a dozen years from now with ease and likely the 2007 will drink best at two dozen years of age. I don't say that too often! ~ **94+ points ~ 2/17/12**

**2009 ~ Crasto ~ Douro red wine** – Expressive nose of bittersweet chocolate, anise, clove and cocoa beans with ripe figs. Catano is doing a very nice job with their dessert wines. This once is rich and velvety, offering stewed prune, sultana and fig fruit flavors with hints of velvety dark chocolate and unctuous molasses after the swallow. Well made and lots of acidity provide the balance here, but the sweetness is kept in check and overall this is a delicious drink. I am not sure of the price for this 375 ml bottle, but if sub-\$30, it would be well worth exploring. There would be no confusion with a Portuguese Port wine, but that's not the point. The lingering finish with raisin and licorice character was quite appealing. **87 points 2/17/12**

**2007 Pinalta Tinto Douro red wine** – Fermented in lagar and aged nine months in tank and an additional ten months in used oak. This had a very unique aromatic profile and had it been blind, I doubt that Douro would have come to mind. Notes of green tobacco leaf, herbs, tea and Asian spices. Light to medium weight the alcohol was impossible to ignore as it dominated the flavors of red licorice, tart cranberry and under-ripe raspberry fruit. Clunky and simple, with fully refined tannins, again I searched for the link to the Douro and came up empty. It showed a surprisingly astringent, hot and short finish. I've had several vintages of Pinalta bottlings in the past and they have always been considerably better than the few bottles of assorted samples which arrived late last year from the Douro and I wondered if something might have happened during the shipping process. **80 points 1/11/12**

**NEW RELEASE:**

**2009 Pinalta Tinto Douro red wine** – 17% alcohol by volume. Wow! Spicy and smoky bouquet with an earthy dark red berry scent of dry pomegranate and cranberry, along with vanilla, tar and cedar. The palate also provides an initial earthy, rustic quality with some minerals and tart red fruits, almost identical to the nose. This needed a lot of air time to evolve with loads of dusty tannins and nice acidity. A bit simple throughout. The heat on the palate was evident but not overwhelming, while the chocolaty finish was medium in length. Drink now through 2018. **85 points 1/28/12**





## Port Personalities

### In Focus

The FTLOP series, **Port Personalities, In Focus**, alternates with **A Question for the Port Trade** every other month. **In Focus** concentrates on bridging the gap, introducing readers to people who are not usually in the media's spotlight, with some license to occasionally "interview" someone that is. **In Focus** brings you candid comments, personal perspectives, and a better understanding of the people inside the trade. From sales and marketing professionals, to master blenders, winemakers and vineyard managers, to distributors and importers, owners and managing directors; **In Focus** will introduce you to Port personalities who work at small family-owned operations to the largest wine companies in Portugal. We hope you'll benefit from meeting the people on these pages!

This month FTLOP is proud to introduce you to **Beatriz Machado**



Opting for a wine education at UC Davis has served Beatriz well. Along with her dedication to learning everything she could about the wines of the world, Beatriz then landed one of the greatest jobs in all of Portugal! How many people get to create a 25,000 bottle cellar filled with international wine gems from scratch, in less than 20 months? **Read more ...**



Here is Beatriz's story:

**1. How did you break into the Porto and Douro wine trade and at what age?**

I would have to say it is in my "rootstocks"! Both sides of my family were great wine enthusiasts.

But it was only after studying viticulture and enology, working in production, traveling through vineyards in the US, Australia, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, South Africa and taste what is done in the rest of the world, that made me value the great product and heritage that Portugal has.

Twenty four years later and at the age of 29, I accepted the challenge to be the first Wine Director of a 5-star wine hotel in Portugal and joined The Yeatman team. Since June 2010, I have selected and now manage a 25,000-bottle wine cellar, which stocks the world's most comprehensive collection of Portuguese table wines and Ports.



**2. What is your favorite style of Douro wine and also Port to drink at home, and can you name two or three of the greatest one's you've ever tried?**

Each wine is unique. It tells a story, it can be brief or long. It brings out memories and takes you on a journey through different flavors and places.

It is difficult to name a style. I always look for a personality in each wine. I tend to go for blended reds. I find much more layers and flavors in the complexity of Douro's heritage, with all the different varietals which make a Douro red different from any other wine in the world. It has the complexity of orchestra with several "music instruments".

At home: my number one rule is to always keep a 10 or 20 year Old Tawny bottle in the fridge door and custard pastry in the freezer. Whenever someone drops by unexpectedly for dinner you will have the best dessert and port pairing in the world!

**Greatest ones I have ever tried:**

Taylor's Scion Very Old Tawny Port, 1855

Graham's Private Cellar Vintage 1970

Taylor's Vintage 1963

Fonseca Vintage 1992

Dow's Vintage 1980

**3. Besides wines from your own company, what others do you most enjoy drinking?**

German and Alsace Whites – Rieslings mainly. Littorai and Lynmar Pinots from California; Pomerol and St. Emillion blends from Bordeaux, and both Terrantez and Bual Madeiras.

**4. What brings you the most joy in what you do within the Douro wine trade?**

When we are able to exceed the Yeatman guests' expectations, providing a unique sensory experience of food and wine.



**5. *Would you please share one piece of unique trivia or historical information about your company that would be new to FTLOP readers?***

The Yeatman is named after Dick Yeatman, a Port personality who in the 1920's introduced the first varietal plantings at Quinta de Vargellas in the Douro Superior. In 1934 Dick Yeatman created the first Dry White Port wine, Taylor's Chip Dry, made from traditional white grape varieties, fermented for longer than usual to give it an appetizingly crisp dry finish. Several years of ageing in oak vat and careful blending complete the fresh fruit flavours with an elegant, complex nuttiness.

**6. *Which individual has been your greatest mentor and how have they inspired you?***

That would have to first be my husband Antonio, who has consistently inspired me to be better, to learn, to overcome challenges, and to reach for the extraordinary.

Then a few of the people that I respect most in the world, three Professors from UC Davis who were also on my thesis committee: Hildegard Heymann, Ann Noble and Roger Boulton.

## **7. What is the greatest challenge facing the Douro wine trade today?**

The greatest challenge is to shift from commodity wines in volume to iconic wines.

Douro has to adapt to the dynamic nature of the wine sector, mainly due to:

- the globalization of the wine market
- the stronger competition
- a tougher economic situation
- the growth and diversification of wines offered
- the rise of new wine consumer demographics
- the consumption decrease in “Old World” countries
- and the “New World” emerging market of both producers and consumers, contribute to make product improvement a key point for ongoing competitive advantage. Suddenly, it is not important just to understand ‘why’ people purchase but it is crucial to know, ‘who’ is purchasing, ‘what’ they are purchasing and during ‘which’ occasions.

For the Douro to map their wines in the wine-world “radar”, new questions are arising that marketing alone cannot answer. Why did the consumers choose wine A over B? Which attributes were they looking for in the wine? What is driving the consumer’s preferences? Who decides that one wine is worth less and another one is priceless?





**8. Can you share one new project or improvement that your company is involved with?**

That must be The Yeatman. The first luxury wine hotel in Portugal, recently also a member of the Relais & Chateaux. With only one year has already been awarded with a Michelin Star and the best collection of Portuguese wines.

**9. What can the industry do to improve the promotion and education of Port and Douro wine and grow market share in the ever evolving beverage marketplace?**

Out shopping or in a restaurant, when exposed to a myriad of wines and information, the consumer faces overwhelming pressure to make the “right” decision. Any cue, extrinsic or intrinsic, leading to “quality perception”, might constitute the decision-making variable of interest. Wine is a global business, with different markets, appellations, brands, varietals and styles. In this context, it seems crucial to me to assure not only a consistent quality of our wines, but to provide a knowledgeable and excellent wine service to match a new generation of skilled Chefs, and deliver the best of Portugal’s local action to global consumers.

**10. What non-wine activities do you enjoy?**

Travelling, photography, music, sailing, running and snowboarding.



Beatriz Machado – on youtube ...

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mj71I4d0Pe4>

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Instituto dos Vinhos do Douro e do Porto

When you see this label on a bottle of Port or wine from the Douro, you can rest assured of a high quality product.



*Art de Vivre*

