

GUEST CORNER ARTICLE

Mr. Tawny Visits Paradise:

A visit to Quinta do Mourão



Article and photos by Glenn Elliott © March 2015

It was a brilliant, sunny day when we arrived at Quinta do Mourão, just down the river and around the bend from Peso da Régua in the heart of the Douro's Baixo Corgo. The panorama above was taken facing Northwest-ish from the main house with the Aquapura Douro Hotel on the far left and westernmost outskirts of Peso da Régua on the far right. It makes the area look deceptively flat, but that's because Quinta do Mourão sits right on the edge of what was probably a very old flood plain before the Douro was dammed. Behind the house the terrain begins to rise, giving a more familiar look to the vineyards in the rolling hills of the Baixo Corgo.

Quinta do Mourão has been owned by the Braga family since it was purchased by father Mario in 1972, but its history dates much further back – it is listed on Baron Joseph James Forrester’s famous 19th Century map of the alto Douro. The main house and chapel are believed to date back to the 16th Century, and considerable work was needed to bring them back to serviceable condition. The winemaking and aging was all done in an adega under the main house until a new winery was completed east of the main house in 2002. Long-term aging for their tawny Ports still occurs in an old armazem west of the main house and across highway N222.

The family owns 4 other Quintas, and if you have eaten at D.O.C. then you have probably seen one of them. The picturesque village across the river from D.O.C. in Folgosa is called Covelinhas, and the Quinta overlooking that village from the west (your left) is Quinta da Poisa. That is where the core of the 10-yr old White Port’s grapes come from.

Enough history! Our tour began at the main house with a quick introduction. We then piled into a couple of cars and a flatbed work truck for a ride up to the armazem since our modern and very comfortable motor coach would not have been able to navigate roads that exist purely for work purposes. All the better for an adventure!



Jay and Frank check out our conveyance from the main house to the armazem.

The armazem is a very old building. Parts of its walls and floors appear to be made from schist, like so much else in the Douro. The rest is concrete or larger rocks, all the better to help maintain a consistent temperature for Port storage. The Toneis or at least the ones down in front which a visitor might see, all have fancy frontings that make them look old, sturdy, and even elegant.

We began our sampling at the left end of the building from Tonel #6, which looked to my untrained eye to be ~10,000 liters in size. (Not too bad, as it and the others all turned out to be ~12,000 liters.) Miguel told us that it is a blend that's around 12 years old which he uses as the base wine for the S. Leonardo 10 Year Old Tawny Port.

Just a couple of steps away was our next stop, Tonel #8. Miguel explained that this is a 1984 Colheita that serves as the mother wine of the S. Leonardo 20 Year Old Tawny Port. The group sort of fell silent as we tasted it, because it was amazing. I asked Miguel why he didn't just bottle it straight because it was so good, and he replied with a twinkle in his eye, "this way it lasts longer."

As we returned to the mid-point of the armazem and the main entrance, we also reached our next destination. Tonel #9, the mother-of-all-30-yr-olds. Or at last the ones that come from Quinta do Mourão. Tonel #9 contains a 1972 Colheita which was interesting to many of us because Ports from 1972 are relatively rare. As good as Tonel #8 was, Tonel #9 blew it away. There's something about tasting straight from the cask at the Quinta. We took turns tapping the precious liquid within and talking casually with Miguel and amongst ourselves, enjoying the gorgeous day. After 15-20 minutes we loaded back into the cars and the work truck and headed back down to the main house.



We toured the winery, which was busy with the harvest. It is a very modern facility typical of those that have been upgraded or built in the last 15-20 years. Modern steel tanks hold the product of the stone lagars until it is either ready for bottling or transfer to the larger wooden Tonels in the armazem.

Waiting for us at the main house on a patio with an adjacent (mostly) shaded walkway was a typically-Portuguese array of appetizers and a chilled glass of the S. Leonardo 10 Year Old White Port. It was refreshing and paired very well with the appetizers. This was all meant simply to carry us through until lunch was ready, which it soon was.

Lunch consisted of caldo verde followed by a slow-cooked pork dish in a large cast-iron pot with rice, and the S. Leonardo 10 Year Old Tawny Port and 20 Year Old Tawny Port. These impressed me as easily top tier within their categories. Having some familiarity with slow-cooked pork, I scrounged around in the pot for the smaller crispier bits and was rewarded for my efforts. Absolutely delicious, and the saltiness of the pork provided the perfect complement to the sweetness of the Port.



Mr. Tawny tapping into Tonel #9.

Part of the way through lunch I returned to the table to re-fill my glass with 20-yr old, but Miguel stopped me. "Wait, wait," he said. "I have another bottle." I must have looked confused because there was still plenty of Port in the bottle I was holding, so he said "here, give me your glass," and he disappeared into the house. He returned moments later carrying (and concealing) another bottle and a glass of Port, which he handed back to me. He waited expectantly, so I tried it and my eyes probably rolled back into my head. Whatever it was, it was superb and clearly a notch or two above the 20-yr old I'd just finished. He grinned and revealed a bottle of the S. Leonardo 30 Year Old Tawny Port. This exact scenario played out again ~15 minutes later when I returned for another glass of 30-yr old (and he returned with a bottle of the S. Leonardo 40 Year Old Tawny Port), and then one more time after another ~15 minutes when I returned for another glass of 40-yr old. I was pretty convinced we were done when I returned for more 40-yr old, so actually managed to pour a small amount before Miguel could stop me. This time he just had me wait, though, and went to talk to Roy.

Miguel then explained that he had two very unique Ports for us to try. As you all know, the IVDP only allows sales of Tawny With An Indication Of Age in four categories – 10, 20, 30, and 40 (or "over 40" in the US). But what if they had more categories? What would a 50-yr old taste like? What would a 60-yr old taste like? As Miguel put it, "they won't allow me to sell it, but that doesn't mean that I can't make it!" These two bottles had no labels... just a simple "50" or "60" in white ink at the bottom. These were so over the top that we pretty much fell silent while tasting them.



The lunch lineup: 60- through 10-yr old tawny plus the 10-yr old White.

Dessert eventually emerged – a huge plate full of Pastéis de Nata. This is a must-have any time you visit Portugal, as there is hardly any dessert that is more Portuguese. They are little custard-like pies that have had the top toasted like a crème brûlée. Wonderful!

But Miguel wasn't done yet. While we were enjoying the Pastel de Nata, Miguel went into the house to get one last bottle. It was similar to the "50" and "60", but this one's small hand-written label had 3 digits. Miguel explained that the mother wine for this special bottle came from 1895, and that the average age was over 100 years old. There really are no words, but I've given it a try in the TNs below.

I would like to thank Miguel and Roy for a wonderful visit. Tawnies are my favorite kind of Port, and the Ports of Quinta do Mourão are in my opinion the greatest expression of what a Tawny Port can be. Getting to try the S. Leonardo lineup at the quinta where they are made, and getting to talk to Miguel about their history, was an honor and a privilege.



Tasting Notes: Quinta do Mourão, September 30, 2014

Tonel #6, directly from cask

Tonel #6 is a roughly 12-yr old blend that serves as the base for the S. Leonardo 10 Year Old Tawny Port. Medium dark red-brown with red highlights. Aromatic spirit, soft red fruits, some black cherry, and something like the pith from an orange on the nose. The palate is smooth and well-integrated. Very sweet, but with great acidity to keep it in balance. Something cola-like – Lisa says Dr. Pepper and I can't disagree. The overall impression is much closer to a 20-yr old than a 10-yr old, which shows through in the finished product. **93 points.**

Tonel #8, directly from cask

Tonel #8 is a 1984 Colheita that serves as the base for the S. Leonardo 20 Year Old Tawny Port. Yes, the S. Leonardo 20-yr old starts with a 30-yr old Colheita. Medium dark amber-brown with orange-red highlights. Butterscotch, bourbon vanilla, and Kraft caramels on the nose. The palate exhibits orange peel, Christmas spices (but without the sweeter ones like clove and allspice), more butterscotch, and something between a fresh apricot and a dried apricot. Also light brown sugar and possibly some toffee. The Kraft caramels return on the finish, which is unusually long for a "merely" 30-year old tawny. The finish tails off with Granny Smith apples, which is always pleasant for me. Truly outstanding – I wish this were bottled and sold as-is. **96 points.**

Tonel #9, directly from cask

Tonel #9 is a 1972 Colheita that serves as the base for the S. Leonardo 30 Year Old Tawny Port, and was the first wine made by Miguel's father, Mario Braga. At 42 years old, no wonder S. Leonardo is many people's standard by which all other 30-yr olds are measured! Dark brown with orange-red highlights, somewhat cloudy in the glass. Signs of leather and varnish are beginning to show on the nose, along with bourbon vanilla, dried apricot, and faint caramel. The palate is impressive and mouth-filling. Huge amounts of residual sugar, but kept in check by almost Madeira-like levels of acidity. The result simply overwhelms your palate without hitting you in the face. Notes of spiced orange peel, toasted brown sugar, toffee, dark caramel, and perhaps faint anise. Extremely long finish, provided you're capable of not taking another sip long enough to experience it. Which is difficult. **98 points.**

NV S. Leonardo 10 Year Old White Port, bottled 2014

Light golden color, very clean and crisp appearance. Wonderfully floral with just a whiff of lemon pledge on the nose, along with some peach and some papaya. Sweet entry backed up by excellent acidity. Faint tropical fruits are delivered by a creamy texture. There's an interesting toast-like note in the mid palate. Artisanal honey and Meyer lemon linger briefly on the finish.

92 points.

NV S. Leonardo 10 Year Old Tawny Port, bottled 2014

Appears more tawny in the glass than is usual for a 10-yr old – the red is starting toward the orange side of things and the purple is long gone – but it is still a medium to medium dark tawny color with red highlights. The nose is mellow and smooth showing hints of strawberry, cherry, and soft red raspberry, but with a solid tart apricot foundation. Big and full in the mouth. Very unctuous and mouth-coating. Blood orange, apricot, spice. Great acidity. Nice, long finish. **93 points.**

NV S. Leonardo 20 Year Old Tawny Port, bottled 2014

Medium-dark brown. Brown sugar, orange peel, vanilla, and faint caramel on the nose. Darkly sweet entry backed by acidity, then some cherry and brown sugar. Faint cloves and possibly cinnamon in the late palate carrying over into the finish. A new standard in the 20 Year Old category for me. **94 points.**

NV S. Leonardo 30 Year Old Tawny Port, bottled 2014

This is the age at which the S. Leonardo lineup really begins to shine, in my opinion. I've always found the appearance to be a bit out of character for the age, though. It's a medium tawny without the red I'd normally associate with that description, so it seems light and airy for a 30-yr old. Orange peel, cinnamon, cardamom, possibly some pipe tobacco, and some dust on the nose. In the mouth it is full and smooth, creamy, and softly sweet. The acidity of the finished blend is not at the level of the '72 Colheita from which it is derived, but is sufficient. The late palate/early finish shows a not-quite-fully-caramelized caramel-like quality. Excellent finish.

95 points.

NV S. Leonardo 40 Year Old Tawny Port, bottled 2014

Color is almost gone, as this Port shows primarily brown tones in the glass. Think of luxurious, dark, polished wood and you're probably in the right ballpark. A bit of mahogany does hint at some color. Leather, faint pipe tobacco, and faint varnished wood on the nose give it an aged feel. The palate is expansive, powerful, and mellow all at the same time. Creamy, very full texture. Beautifully integrated sugars and acidity. Meyer lemon, candied blood orange, toasted brown sugar, deep toffee, bourbon vanilla, and candied dried apricots all show at various times while you're sipping. The finish isn't as long as some of the others, but still what I would consider to be long. The mouthfeel is simply luxurious. **97 points.**

Cask Sample, "50", bottled 2014

I'm always a little slower than everyone else at tastings, so by the time I started on the "50" others had moved on. When Vic saw the look on my face as I stared at this glass in my hand, he leaned over and said "leave room." I looked at him incredulously and he simply offered a tip of his glass as a toast. Deep, dark, rich brown and cloudy in the glass. The nose is intense and complex. Dark brown sugar, leather, old varnished wood, bourbon (without the vanilla this time), and candied lemon. The palate is just as intense – candied orange peel, caramelized brown sugar, richly buttered caramel, and candied dried apricots. The sugar level and acidity are both higher than the 40-yr old, remaining in perfect balance but with even more oomph. The finish is epically long and even. This is magic in a bottle. **99 points.**

Before I get to the last two Ports, I have to explain my use of the 100-point scale a bit. I don't try to figure out a number to give to each Port as I taste it, but rather I use words to describe it first. I've then assigned those words to various ranges on the 100-point scale. "Good" (or similar terms such as "Okay" or "Fine") means something in the 80-84 range, and can be interpreted as something I'd drink if you handed me a glass, but that I probably wouldn't pour for myself nor would I take a second glass if offered. It's good, but one's enough. "Very Good" is 85-89, and sure I'll have another if offered, but I probably won't ask for one. "Excellent" means 90-93, and may I have another? "Outstanding" represents 94-96, and is as high as I go for most wines. I'm going to want to know where you got the bottle so that I can get some for my own cellar. This represents the peak of mechanical perfection in winemaking for me – there are no flaws, there's nothing to nitpick, it's made as well as it can be made. "Magnificent" covers 97-99 and requires that there be magic in the glass. Something about the Port has to sing to me; call to me. These are Siren wines that lure you in. They are rare, and they are incredible. As you've seen above, we'd just had two.

Which leaves only one number. I've labeled it "Perfect" on my scale, but that isn't correct. Perfection is impossible because it implies that there can be no equal. Instead, what I require before I award a 100-point score is that the Port alters my perception. "I never knew Port could be like this!" I want to be speechless. I want to forget that there's anyone else in the room. I want to just sit there and absorb the feelings, smells, flavors, and emotions. I want it to blow my mind.

Cask Sample, "60", bottled 2014

What can I say? Vic was right. If the 40-yr old is turned up to 10, then the 50-yr old is turned up to 11 and the 60-yr old is turned up to 12. Imagine, if you will, reducing a pot of loose leaf Assam tea (which has a slightly reddish hue when brewed) until it is almost a syrup and you'll be pretty close to what this looks like in the glass. Very deep, rich, rare wood brown in color. Murky. The nose is full of leather, cigar box, old varnished wood, bourbon, brown sugar, blood orange, and spices like cinnamon and cayenne pepper. The mouth feel is incredible – silky and luxurious, mouth-coating, unctuous. The flavor comes in wave after wave and echoes the nose, adding orange Creamsicle and a variety of intriguing and complex grain-like impressions (wheat, steel cut oats, brown rice) which add considerable depth. The viscosity leaves a coating throughout your mouth, but especially on your tongue. The finish just doesn't stop. Minutes later – 10 minutes later! – you can still taste it as if you'd just taken a sip. Consider my mind blown. **100 points.**



Cask Sample, "100", bottled 2014

The mother wine for this blend comes from 1895 and the average age is just over 100 years. It just keeps getting... "more." Thicker, darker, more powerful. More intense. More crazy. The 100 almost looks like molasses in the glass, but it isn't that thick. It *is* opaque, though. Opaque like a brand new just-bottled Vintage Port. The legs are crazy – the Port practically sheets off the glass rather than form legs, and the viscosity is so high that they take 10+ seconds to disappear. Legs are normally pretty clear and just show a reminder of the Port's actual color, but these stain the glass a mahogany or burnt umber. The nose reveals aged and brewed molasses, buckwheat honey, supple very old leather, maybe some varnish, pipe tobacco, cigar box, steel cut oatmeal, and candied citrus. Much of that is echoed in the palate, which has the texture of heated honey. It makes me think of what the syrup used to make Coca Cola in a fountain must be like intensity-wise. A small bottle of syrup makes gallons of Coke. This isn't something you drink, it's something you sip in tiny little sips so that your brain can have any hope of keeping up processing the smells, flavors, and feelings. As it turns out, yes it is possible to have your mind blown twice in a row. **100 points.**

For the record, that makes three for me. The first was a 1906 Brunheda Colheita, so all three have been very old tawnies.



Miguel Braga

FTLOP's buying op**PORT**unity for “free-version” recipients



Quinta do Mourão

Nearly a half year in the making; this offering created a learning curve for many of the players involved in bringing you one of the greatest buying ops ever touted on these pages. I believe that is an understatement, but you be the judge. It was important to include “Mr. Tawny’s” Guest Corner Article above, so that you would have independent corroboration that the Ports offered are for the most part, absolutely mind-blowing. The Douro wines stunningly priced too!

Thanks to the patience of Miguel Braga, the owner/winemaker at Mourão for allowing FTLOP to present his Douro wines and Ports to 24 distinct countries, mostly in Europe as well as two brand new markets: Canada and the United States. In the past six years, we’ve never had more than **2** countries able to take part in our offerings, so trust that managing the magnitude of moving parts in order to thank our subscribers is something FTLOP is very proud of. We won’t bog you down with all the nitty gritty details of IVDP approvals for a couple of Ports outside of the usual categories, or remarkable efforts by two new North American importers working through label approvals, price and margin negotiations and yeah, I’ll stop right there and get right down to it!

This op**PORT**unity, (ok, so you knew that would be wedged in here at some point) includes:

- A handful of well-aged Douro reds and one from the great vintage of 2011.
- Followed by a trio of finely tuned Vintage Ports that you will love.
- Then we roll out the notorious and rarely seen S. Leonardo tawnies that you’ve read about on FTLOP for the past decade. They run the gamut from 10 and 20 Year Old “every night sippers” to extraordinary 30 and 40 Year Old *rock stars*.
- Next up you’ll find something new and completely different: think lightning striking in your mouth; but in a very good way! Two wood-aged blends, one 60 the other 104 years old.

Normally this is where I'd rant on about how FTLOP enhances the value of your paid subscription and shows gratitude for your loyalty. All of which is true, of course. However, this exclusive week-long offering is solely for subscribers and will not appear anywhere else. Certainly not without other tiers all adding their margins onto the imported price. It doesn't get any more DIRECT than this and by that I mean, layers of tiers and extra percentages left on the cutting room floor. **And when the week is up – BAM!!! Prices immediately go up and you will then truly appreciate your privilege.** The combination of fantastic wines @ LOL pricing ... keep reading.

Find your country [HERE](#) to see if you can participate, or figure out a way to pick them up in one of the European or No. American countries below, or come visit Portugal and pick them up LIVE:

- **AUSTRIA**
- **BELGIUM**
- **BULGARIA**
- **CANADA – not offered to NON-subscribers**
- **CZECH REPUBLIC**
- **DENMARK**
- **ESTONIA**
- **FINLAND**
- **FRANCE**
- **GERMANY**
- **HOLLAND**
- **HUNGARY**
- **IRELAND**
- **ITALY**
- **LATVIA**
- **LITHUANIA**
- **LUXEMBOURG**
- **POLAND**
- **ROMANIA**
- **SLOVAKIA**
- **SPAIN**
- **SWEDEN**
- **UNITED STATES**
- **UK**

PLEASE NOTE: What is included here was originally for FTLOP's paid subscriber base only, but all parameters will also apply to recipients of the free version of the newsletter too. You'll be able to buy in at prices provided on the last page of this offering. A \$59 subscription would have paid for itself quickly as you will see, but the prices for the rest of our readers are still advantageous. **Look for type in blue which from here on will apply to all of our non-subscribers.**

Now I ask you all to pay very close attention, because there are 3 different programs here. ☺ There is one for the 22 countries across Europe, which will have the shipping split into two distinct segments as will be explained below. The 2nd is for the USA. And the 3rd is for Canadian Province of Alberta. **Alberta isn't participating in this offering, only during the subscribers op.**

Let's start with the easy dynamics. You can read some of my tasting notes below, although admittedly, there are some wines in this offer that I was just not able to get to, due to serious illness for over a week and then losing my ability to taste at all during the last week. Location aside: **There is a minimum purchase of one full mixed case of 12 bottles.** Thereafter, you can purchase in lots of 3: So you can buy 12, 15, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 33 or 36 bottles, **or more.** Correct, there are NO limits. I have intentionally negotiated this to work so that if you want one 100+ year old bottle, you could fill the rest of the case very reasonably with 10 or 20 year old tawnies or even some of the advantageously priced Douro wines ... or a mix of all of the above.

WINDOW OPENS: This is a **pre-sale** offer and is valid for placing orders between **Sunday, April 5th and Saturday, April 11th 2015.** That is the case in all 24 countries and this will be strictly adhered to. All sources have been advised to check with me, so they can ensure that there are no surreptitious "friends and family" offers placed and they will quickly find out who is an FTLOP subscriber before consummating the deal. **For "free version" newsletter recipients, the buying op will take place: Sun. May 3rd – Saturday, May 9th 2015.**

ORDERING + SHIPPING:

- **Europeans:** will ALL place orders by email with and receive deliveries directly from Qta do Mourão. Please use this email address: geral@quintadomourao.pt and follow directions below. If some of these wines are sold in your country already, please do not rub these prices in the face of importers/agents or retailers. Again this a one week offering, that will expire on April 11th. This is what I call *buying direct* and will result in perfect provenance. Because your banking/payment systems are leagues ahead of ours, (most people here still mail hand-written paper checks) you will be sent a confirmation email with your total and Mourão' banking info, so you can make payment directly by electronic wire transfer from your bank account/credit card.

Mourão will use IBEROMAIL to ship to ALL European clientele, but not until your payment has cleared their account. The prices below INCLUDE all VAT/taxes, cost of ground shipping and insurance. Mourão is also willing to discuss expedited shipping at your cost. If you need them to hold your wines to be shipped during cooler weather this must be explained to them. On the list of countries on the prior page, the countries in **RED** will require 3-5 days to deliver to. Countries in **BLUE** will require 4-6 days to deliver to. **Free version recipients will still benefit from buying producer-direct.**

- **In the USA:** All pre-orders will be *importer-direct*, with So. Cal-based D'ouro Vino (I flew to CA on my nickel to meet the owner of the company) who has diligently slashed their margins to make this work to your advantage. Please send all emails to the importer at: mourao@d-ourovino.com We spent a ton of time on the *subscribers only* pricing as well as logistics for the subscriber's week. Afterwards, the good news is that once product arrives in the USA, (although prices will rise to normal retail) the USA will now have access to Miguel's Rio Bom / S. Leonardo wine and Ports which is great, and a first for Americans. **You may pay by credit card: Visa/MasterCard or AMEX.** D'ouro Vino will send you an email confirmation and request your payment information and will put that through. Read below about shipping UPS vs. holding deliveries until cooler weather prevails. **Free version recipients will still benefit from buying importer-direct, compared to when pricing goes through a distributor and retailer. So these FTLOP prices are still quite advantageous.**

For all 23 countries: when placing email orders, please include the following info:

- 1.** Your first and last name that must match your FTLOP subscription.
- 2.** Your telephone number (in Europe please include your country code. In Canada and the USA please include your area code).
- 3.** Address where you will want to have your wines shipped.

PLEASE NOTE: In North America only – wines will likely arrive in June or maybe even July. In the USA, the wines will come directly from Mourão, have to clear customs and arrive in the LA area. The importer will ship using UPS ground unless you'd rather pay for overnight, 2nd day Air, or 3rd day Select, so please do convey that at the time of placing your order. **In the near future, we will be opening this up to all of the same venues ... at the increased, regular retail pricing to kick off these wines more widely in North America, but again the pricing is going to be SIGNIFICANTLY lower during the subscriber's only buy in week.**

DISCLAIMER: First and foremost, Roy Hersh, nor FOR THE LOVE OF PORT have ANY financial involvement, benefit or prior arrangement with the seller of these wines. FTLOP is not responsible for any purchases, deliveries or exchanges agreed to between buyer and seller. Individuals who participate in purchases based on the above offer, are fully responsible for making sure they adhere to shipping laws + all other legal (age) requirements in their respective states/countries. Roy has negotiated pricing with Quinta do Mourão, and its importer/agents on behalf of FTLOP subscribers and will only insure that the prices quoted and the offer that follows is accurate. He puts buyers and sellers together and prefers NOT to be involved in any ordering or shipping disputes and asks you to please resolve all issues directly with Quinta do Mourão, the U.S. importer D'ouro Vino.

PRICING – As sold to “subscribers only” in mid-April

	USA	EUROPE	ALB.
Douro Wines			
2002 Rio Bom Reserva	\$16.95	15.00 €	\$29.00
2003 Rio Bom Touriga Franca	\$25.25	23.00 €	\$43.00
2004 Rio Bom Grande Reserva	\$29.75	27.50 €	\$50.50
2005 Rio Bom Reserva	\$19.95	19.00 €	\$30.00
2011 Rio Bom Colheita (Tinto)	\$14.50	13.00 €	\$20.50
Vintage Port			
2000 S. Leonardo	\$39.75	38.00 €	\$65.00
2007 S. Leonardo	\$44.50	49.00 €	\$70.00
2009 S. Leonardo	\$38.00	37.00 €	\$68.50
Tawny Port			
S. Leonardo 10 Year Old	\$23.95	22.00 €	\$37.50
S. Leonardo 20 Year Old	\$39.75	39.00 €	\$70.50
S. Leonardo 30 Year Old	\$64.95	63.00 €	\$111.50
S. Leonardo 40 Year Old	\$87.50	84.00 €	\$144.00
S. Leonardo Old Tawny Port "60"	\$179.99	170.00 €	\$336.00
S. Leonardo Velhissimo 100 (500 ml)	\$750.00	740.00 €	\$1,220.00

TASTING NOTE SECTION FOLLOWS



2002 ~ Rio Bom ~ Reserva ~ Douro Red Wine – All but a few remember that 2002 was a warm but not hot year and phenomenal phenolic ripening of the grapes took place and looked near-perfect until a week-long storm arrived between the second and third week of September amidst harvest. Picking decisions told the story from there. Those who were able to get their grapes ripened and picked early (Meão is a great example) were very fortunate and made a wonderful Vintage Port and Dirk Niepoort some very fine Charme. Miguel's Rio Bom grapes somehow managed to be picked before the deluge and they were quite ripe too. This is a blend of Touriga Franca, Touriga Nacional and Tinta Roriz, aged in French oak for 14 months and 10,000 were bottled June 2005; giving the impression he had a lot of grapes to choose from. My first whiff was remarkably Port-like, overtly sweet and floral and shocking. I can't think of another DOC Douro wine that ever struck me like that. A hint of Douro bake as well, hmmm. I decided to put this in a decanter for an hour. When I came back it was so different that I poured a fresh glass to try beside the decanted one. Intriguing! I preferred the decanted one and it showed very well and likely could have handled another hour, but time was of the essence. There's a fine contrast between ripe black cherry fruit and Nestlé's Quick cocoa powder, along with dried rose petals and cigar wrapper; very smoky. I looked forward to see if it was Port-like on the palate, but that was not the case; much drier than the nose portends. I would strongly recommend decanting for 90 minutes for the best showing. There is loads of ripe red fruit, tar and char nuances. Yet this is certainly drinking nicely at the moment and one you must try at least once. It is that unique.

No question as to its region of origin, but beyond the elegance, there is the absolutely sublime texture and concentration, with enough acid to keep it from getting out of line and the tannins are totally refined and chalky and a finish of excellent length. It would be great to pair with either pheasant or quail, or even lamb or Osso Buco. It has another 5-6 years of good drinking ahead. Idiosyncratic and complex, I will need to try this again, kind of like loving 1988 Chateau Musar! ~ **90 points.**

2003 Rio Bom Touriga Franca Douro red wine – We brought several bottles over to a friend's home for dinner and along with a white from Alentejo, were two Douro reds; one from each of our daughter's birth years. Although they are best friends, our daughters have quite different personalities and I wanted to show the same contrast with these reds as well. The 2003 Touriga Franca is a superb wine and was served last. This juice sat in French oak for 26 months and was not even bottled until the summer of 2006, a production run of 4,000 bottles. This is not a grape you see bottled on its own too often in the Douro, which is why I found it intriguing and worthy of a case purchase. At a dozen years of age, this is far more youthful than the 2002 Ferreirinha it was paired with. Fully opaque scarlet red with a bright ruby edge. There is a ripe sweet essence to the exotic bouquet accompanied by spicy rose petal, redcurrant and pomegranate fruit aromas and a cedar-pipe tobacco undertone. Rich, vibrant, full and chewy with a dense yet velvety seductive texture. Given the depth of the mid-range, it is fascinating to realize this wine depicts the soul of just one grape, in the context of many other Douro wines. The balance, lively acidity, intensity of flavor and great length bode well, as this Rio Bom is clearly at its best now. It will remain at this level through 2021, but may have a few more years in the tank beyond that too ... IF you enjoy drinking mature reds. **93+ points**

2004 Rio Bom Cuvée Mario Braga Grande Reserva Douro Red Wine – I opened a bottle of this wine several weeks ago when Gonçalo Devesas came to visit our home for the first time, and Stewart Todd joined us for dinner. That bottle was good, but marred by Brett. Having had the wine a year earlier on my birthday and being wowed by it, I knew this was a really fine and still rather young Douro red. Besides, it was from 2004 and you really had to try hard to make a Douro wine that was not excellent that year. This bottle was enjoyed with friends in town brought to one of our favorite restaurants. The nose was exceptionally earthy, filled with black truffle and sous bois like a great Burgundy, but also loaded with primary plum and fresh fig fragrances followed by an undertone of savory herbs. Youthful and rich, smooth and chewy, the blackcurrant, tobacco and kalamata flavors were evocative and the Douro essence, profound in its sense of place. Glad to see that my last bottle was an anomaly, this one definitely was far superior and had a remarkably long and sensuous brambly aftertaste. Should drink exceedingly well at least through 2023; but likely longer. **94+ points.**

2005 ~ Rio Bom ~ Reserva ~ Douro Red Wine – 2005 is known for producing some fine Douro wines and a handful of excellent Single Quinta Vintage Ports. A drought had ensued since the previous year and throughout winter, spring and summer '05 until two badly needed storms blanketed the entire region and provided vivacity to both grapes and workers alike. Game changer! This wine is a blend of 60% Touriga Franca and 40% Touriga Nacional that spent 14 mos. in French oak, yet it was not bottled until June 2009. That extra time allowed the cuvee to meld and harmony to show in spades along with its hallmark Douro typicity. The bouquet is loaded with blackcurrant and floral scents, a seasoned interplay of cocoa and fresh vanilla bean accents. One whiff and you know this is purely Douro! The palate offers an earthy, dry sense early on, with concentrated tart black and brambly cranberry fruit flavors that play off stony minerality and a distinctive black pepper nuance that traces to the finish. The tannins provide some grip and chalkiness late and led to a slightly riper medium long finish. While fun to drink now I believe this will begin to peak over the 2nd half of this decade and should drink well for five to eight years beyond that point. It was significantly better four hours later which bodes well. Another solid Reserva from 2005! **92+ points.**

2011 Rio Bom Colheita Douro Red Wine – From arguably one of the two greatest Douro vintages to date, (2004 the other). 50% each Touriga Franca and Touriga Nacional; aged in French oak for 9 months. Fragrant multi-spice and white pepper notes adorn pure essence of strawberry. The palate delivers fresh, lively red fruits with crisp, juicy acidity and soft dusty tannins providing the symmetry. Given this is an entry level quaffer and priced to sell, it is approachable and shows plenty of Douro character and is easy to enjoy now with room for improvement, just not for the long haul. So you don't want to open one of these when inviting your wine tasting group buddies over for a steak and wine dinner on Saturday night. But it will do just fine thanks on a Tuesday night when you want to be able to drink a really well-balanced and well-made Douro wine to enliven your hamburger, stew or roasted meat dish instead of another mundane bottle of Zin or Merlot. Only 533 six-packs were made, bottled in 2014. The extra bottle aging prior to release speaks volumes of the producer considering it's a "just a Colheita." Drink tonight or anytime through 2023. **87 points.**

PORTS

NV S. Leonardo 10 Year Old Tawny Port – bottled 2014. The last time I remember having this was a 2009 bottling and this 2014 version seems much darker than I remember and offers more aged character than your typical Tawny 10 delivers, with only two exceptions that I can think of. The S. Leonardo exhibits an explosive aromatic profile including tropical fruit compote, lemon meringue, maple bars, buttered toffee and toasted macadamia nuts. The palate is bound by the S. Leonardo's greatest strength, the near-perfect level of acidity in all of its Tawny Ports. Along with the richness and tongue caressing texture and swirling flavors; it is all about that acid, about that acid; no trouble! Blind I'd be in the 20 category for sure, actually even knowing it is a 10, it still has me believing 20. A masterful performance for such a Tawny of finesse and lightness of being! **92 points.**

NV S. Leonardo 20 Year Old Tawny Port – bottled 2014. Miguel Braga was taking us to school and pulling out the entirety of his family's Tawny Ports for us to try. The mother wine for this 20 YO Tawny Port comes from his father's 1984 Colheita and is the heart and soul of this 20 year old, which displayed an amber-orange optic with golden rim. Intense, power packed aromatics with an array of baking spice, dried fruit, almond paste and candied hazelnuts. The palate is even more impressive and this suave and viscous Port possesses silky caramel and butterscotch flavors along with peach and apricot preserves and a velvety ultra-rich texture. The vibrancy stands out and I can only think of the Ferreira's 20 Year Old Duque being blessed with acidity this sharp yet focused. The lingering finish is superb and I could sit back and drink several glasses of this on its own, or even with a great cigar. It absolutely needs no food accompaniment as this is dessert; however, there are many after dinner dishes that would pair beautifully. The depth and complexity of this Tawny is right up there with the very best of the genre. **93 points.**

NV S. Leonardo 30 Year Old Tawny Port – Bottled 2013. I've popped corks on at least four or five of these since the last time I've put a note into the newsletter, but this bottle was shared with my brother on his recent visit and was a very recent bottling. Medium dark orange-amber color with deep golden meniscus. This exotic tawny presents a stunningly evocative nose of tangelo, caramel sauce, blanched almond, nectarine and very mild VA, which added a classy overtone to the fragrant silhouette. Mouthwatering, medium-bodied and acid laden; the S. Leonardo has the "wow factor" that puts it in the upper echelon of all 30 year olds. Unctuous and alluring with a seamless consistency, the flavors morph with every sip, framed by pure maple, orange, praline and toffee. The finish is sultry and long-lasting. An irresistible Port that never disappoints, one can never own enough bottles of this. **95 points.**

NV S. Leonardo 40 Year Old Tawny Port – bottled 2014. I believe Miguel mentioned that the 1948 Colheita was the basis for this blend. Dark coffee color with slight apple-green edge. Lovely and evocative scents of Maduro leaf, dried apricot, VA, crème Anglaise and nutmeg. Captivatingly complex, this actually seems quite a bit older in terms of its sheer delivery of depth, both in the packed mid-section and sinful butterscotch infused aftertaste; yet it manages to retain its freshness and is a real cutting-edge 40 year old. Love this forty and outside of the Romaneira ...? The length here is nearly impossible to measure if one wants to approach our next glass, which appears to be a “50”. Tough day at the office! **96+ points.**

NV S. Leonardo Old Tawny Port “60” – A nice way to finish off Thanksgiving with my family. It was my third time having this Port in the past six weeks, a great privilege. What I wouldn't give to have a pipe of this in my cellar. After several white and red Burgundies this Port was just what the doctor ordered with pecan and pumpkin pie. Actually, the pecan pie paired perfectly! This producer seems to fly under the radar, but makes some of the finest wood-aged Ports in the entire Douro region, in my opinion. This is equivalent to what would be a 60 Year Old Tawny Port if such a category were to exist; Miguel's blend here is 80% from 1948 and 20% from his phenomenal “mother wine” from 1972. Dark chestnut color with a golden rim. Its ethereal aromatic profile is sublime and Madeira-like, beginning with high-toned mahogany stain, candied praline, coffee, roasted nuts and singed caramel. It is chewy, warm and sweet, and stained the glass golden brown with its gobs of glycerin. It's dense and smooth as the best of Pedro Ximenez, but far more balanced and less linear due to the piercingly tangy acidity that provided extraordinary balance. The palate is on a par with many of the renowned old Single Harvest Tawny Ports that have been released and luxury priced in recent years. The flavors of raisins, molasses, crème brûlée, hazelnut and dried apricots linger about as long as any wine I've ever had. I saved about six ounces and waited two weeks to try it again. The only real difference was an increase in viscosity and even at room temperature this held up admirably and both the fragrance and flavor was consistent with night one. It's a spectacular Tawny with a mind numbing, orgasmic aftertaste. My score may be a bit stingy, as both previous bottles scored higher, but I chalk that up to a few exceptional bottles of Burgundy that came directly before it. **98+ points.**

From Miguel Braga regarding the blend of his S. Leonardo Old Tawny Port “60”

In 1948 the world tried to heal wounds provoked by the violence of World War II. The United Nations General Assembly approved the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and Europe initiated the restructuring of the Old Continent with the implementation of the Marshall Plan. Subsequently in 1972, the Portuguese Poet Miguel Torga, in *Diário XI* praises the bread, the wine and the freedom learned in the steeply terraced vineyards of the Douro Valley. From these same terraces, Mário Braga, founder of Quinta do Mourão began his life's work producing Port wine.

This old S. Leonardo Tawny Port is a blend that brings us the wines from the years 1948 and 1972. It is therefore the Port wine that like the events of those times, combines the purity of its origin and the silhouette drawn by the men of the Douro Valley slopes.

And then came the 100+ ...

NV S. Leonardo Velhissimo Tawny Port – An equal blend of 1895 and 1927 wood-aged hedonism, equating to 104 years of age. This looks more like a cup of freshly brewed espresso with its ultra-dark brown, fully opaque aspect. When swirling, this appeared to be syrupy and I could not stop looking at the residual dark amber color and thick glycerin adhering to the sides of the glass. The swirling complexity of the aromas filled my head for a long time and while I was able to write down every unique smell that came to mind, that seemed simplistic and ritualistic for this oldie that deserved better. Descriptor listing won't do this type of experience any justice. Period! Nonetheless, as this will appear in a future buying op that Miguel and I discussed today, I feel compelled: a full arsenal of all manner of tropical fruit hinting at peach sorbet, salted toffee, saddle leather, Fig Newton, bitter almond and earthy marijuana. After about ten minutes of *swirl-sniff-write*, taking the first sip was difficult, as it meant I had to first remove my proboscis from the glass, which I was very reluctant to do. As striking as the flavor profile was, the overwhelming viscosity was just ridiculous; yet the balance is perfection due to the diamond-edged precise cut of acid that created a piercing palate presence like few Ports I've ever tasted ... and I was actually thinking of the 1802 Acciaioly Terrantez, the best Madeira I've ever had. The difference here is that this is big and fat and is nearly flabby, until the acid just drills right through the heart of this Port and prevents any sense of “syrupy” from entering my mind.

A neat trick! I'll toss in a few descriptors from the dozen plus in my notebook, but this is almost futile as tasting just one sip of this ... well, our entire group sat silently and sipped while just looking at one another, literally speechless. Quite the feat. Off-dry exotic flavors of candied orange/grapefruit rind, sweeter nuttiness of praline and almond paste, dried apricot, lychee, and some darker notes filter in: molasses, malt, coffee bean. It did not possess an actual "finish" as in fact, the only finish came when there was no more in my glass. ☺ But while one could taste this until having their next meal, if not the next day -- the end game brought a decadently delicious toasted pecan nuance infused with a peach melba-butterscotch aftertaste. If recorked and kept refrigerated, this Tawny could last for months, like great Madeira. Simply put, this makes music in the mouth and as incredible as the "60" was ... I've only had one other wood-aged Port in my life that was this emotionally captivating. Beyond the pure silence of the people around the table, across from me, two of our guests had tears streaming down their faces. I could certainly understand and quietly nodded. **99 points**, (*In retrospect, I don't know why I didn't I rate this 100 points?*).

PRICING – Offered to non-subscribers: May 3rd – 10th 2015

	USA	EUROPE
Douro Wines		
2002 Rio Bom Reserva	\$21.95	19,50 €
2003 Rio Bom Touriga Franca	\$29.95	29,90 €
2004 Rio Bom Grande Reserva	\$38.50	35,75 €
2005 Rio Bom Reserva	\$24.95	24,70 €
2011 Rio Bom Colheita (Tinto)	\$19.75	16,90 €
Vintage Port		
2000 S. Leonardo	\$49.50	53,20 €
2007 S. Leonardo	\$49.75	68,60 €
2009 S. Leonardo	\$46.27	51,80 €
Tawny Port		
S. Leonardo 10 Year Old	\$29.49	30,80 €
S. Leonardo 20 Year Old	\$49.95	54,60 €
S. Leonardo 30 Year Old	\$85.00	88,20 €
S. Leonardo 40 Year Old	\$107.95	117,60 €
S. Leonardo Old Tawny Port "60"	\$219.00	238,00 €
S. Leonardo Velhissimo 100 (500 ml)	\$899.00	1036,00 €