

ROY'S 2007 VINTAGE PORT FORECAST

BY ROY HERSH © NOVEMBER 2009



Mission accomplished. Six months and 350+ individual tasting notes later and my 2007 Vintage Port Forecast is complete. The report includes a comprehensive review that actually began in the Douro, with three visits to Portugal during 2007. Months of blind tastings commenced in Vila Nova de Gaia mid-May of this year, encompassing two trips and 25,000 miles to assess cask samples and “finished bottles” culminating with more than sixty distinct Vintage Ports evaluated.

As much as this is fun, there is a lot of work involved and if you’ve ever tried more than a couple of cask samples at the same sitting, you’re certainly aware how difficult this can be on your palate. Ever try 16 at a time, twice in a day for days on end? Ouch! Not that I am complaining as I wouldn’t trade this experience for anything, but it is a palate punishing job and not for the uninitiated.

Back in 2007, it was pretty obvious by the time the harvest rolled around that there was something truly special about the grapes picked. Having been involved in numerous harvests this decade, I can sense when the hype is overblown and simply wishful thinking for “the next great vintage.” In 2007 it was clear that everybody was seeing,

tasting and picking grapes of extraordinary quality and phenolic ripeness. From watching the action at triage tables, treading in lagares and tasting grapes on the vines at several properties and discussing the quality of the grapes that autumn, there was a unique “energy” unlike any other Douro-based harvest I had been around. *More on the growing conditions later in this report.*

HARVEST A PLENTY

As consolidation within the Port trade continues, the latest cycle which began back in 2001 through acquisitions, (Barros, Burmester, Cálem, Cockburn, Croft, Delaforce, Kopke, Roriz and Sandeman as examples) I’ve noted interesting emerging trends. First and foremost is the continued Single Quinta Vintage Port movement where the difference between “general declarations” and that of the annual production of Vintage Ports by the Single Quinta (SQ) producers, is growing ever hazier. The question arises whether or not consumers understand this difference, and more so: are they willing to pay the loftier prices for the generally declared harvests that continue on average three times per decade? Or will Vintage Port prices ebb and flow with a particular year’s quality, as happens with wine regions such as Burgundy and Bordeaux? The jury remains undecided.

Another exciting dynamic is shaping up as the result of consolidation. Instead of the shrinking of the Port trade resulting in the existence of far fewer Port companies, (as was the case during past cycles of consolidation throughout Port’s history) the past five years have seen a renaissance of sorts. Not only is the proliferation of Douro wine producers growing exponentially, but there are many growers turned producers of very solid “Port-folios.” According to the IVDP’s Louisa Fry who checked this for me earlier in the week, there are now 116 registered Port shippers and producers. Wow!

The sheer number of declarations seems to prove this point. 2007 set a record for the largest number of **declarations** in the history of Vintage Port as we know it. So while “survival of the fittest” will always be the case in the Port industry, just like any business, the weak will perish and continue to be bought out by the larger or stronger Port shippers. Ironically, and in spite of this dynamic, a grass roots movement of new producers and winemakers moving to the Douro from other regions in Portugal and other countries, along with existing Duriense grape growers who are becoming Port producers for the first time - - it is impossible to ignore this transformation rolling downhill since the early part of this decade.

There is one other fairly new development I am noticing and this was borne out by observing the 2007 Vintage Ports. Innovative *new concepts* are now reaching the marketplace and no, I am not talking about Pink and Rosé Port. For example, I can’t

remember the last generally declared vintage where *so many* mainstream Port shippers simultaneously declared their Single Quinta Ports side-by-side with their “classic” Vintage Ports of the same year. Here are a few notable examples: Churchill, Cockburn, Poças, Ramos-Pinto, Tedo, Weise & Krohn – just to name a few.

Additionally, there were several brand new Vintage Ports launched: Duorum and Quinta Dona Matilde come to mind, with their 2007 VPs and others by existing Port producers, such as the Quinta do Vesuvio “**Capela**” and Niepoort’s “**Pisca**.” These two new and exciting projects were launched with 2007 on the label – and -- both were also produced in the same year as their classic VP.

I believe that these trendy *advancements* are making a bold statement (squarely in the face of an economic situation that usually thwarts risk taking) and whether or not it has anything to do with *consolidation spurring on innovation*, or not, is a matter of opinion. Food for thought and/or discussion. Nonetheless, this too will serve to blur the line of distinction between vintages being produced every year by SQVP producers and that of the generally declared, classic vintage Ports.

Tradition has a funny way of remaining pertinent and I hope there is room for both and urge the Port wine trade and industry groups like the IVDP and even ViniPortugal **to increase the focus on educating consumers about these differences and Port in general.**

GROWING CONDITIONS

It is difficult at best, to provide insight into the weather and growing conditions of an entire harvest with a region as diverse as the Douro. There are 3 unique sub-regions that make up the Douro and two sides of the river with vineyards growing up along the banks on both sides. The expositions and differences in terroir within these three sub-regions are as enormous as the macro-climate conditions found in a specific vineyard or even parcel within the vineyard itself. Neither is checking a weather station in Régua or Pinhão or up in the Douro Superior, going to provide accuracy. For this facet of the 2007 report, I have had to gain insight from the people who were working and living there.

We have to look back to the 4th quarter of 2006 to note there was a good deal of precipitation which helped the water tables in the Douro. Three of the first four months in 2007 were mostly dry and only had sporadic rainfall; February being the wet exception and generally warmer than usual for that specific month. Due to this weather, bud break took place early, in some areas of the region (mid-March) while others experienced it a week or two earlier (or later) depending on location and flowering took place nearly two months later, in mid-May.

May was cloudy and with some rain, but moderate temperatures prevailed and this was not advantageous for the fruit set and potential yields were reduced. June saw a lot of rain in the middle of the month and presented potential problems with fungus. July also had rain mid-month and that brought on more serious concerns with fungus and some that left their vineyards untreated had serious mildew issues, while the leaf set on the vines was rampant due to all the water and nutrients in the schist. June and July had relatively cool temperatures too, but then came August.

August was the turning point and what looked like it was going to be a later harvest (I was pleased with the dates chosen for our Port Harvest Tour) did not wind up that way. Half the normal average rainfall fell during the month of August. The temperatures started out much cooler than is typical of this crucial month, with cool nights providing excellent acidity levels and slowing down the maturation of the grape's ripening. It did get warmer towards the end of the month and into the beginning of September. With grape skins already soft and full from the earlier rains, September was going to be pivotal. If it rained before the harvest, issues with oidium and other fungal problems could be serious, but with soft and plumped up skins, all could be lost. Fortunately it was a significantly dry month and very little rainfall took place and when it did, it was light and brief. Harvests took place under exceptional conditions and the Duriense were particularly thrilled.

Unlike some prime wine regions in France, 2007 shaped up to be an exceptional growing season with just enough moisture/rainfall to provide great nutrition for the grapes and long hang times which worked in the favor of the natural phenolic ripening of the grapes. In Pinhão, considered the heart of the Douro, there was actually half as much rainfall in 2007 as measured against the average annual rainfall.

IMPRESSIONS OF 2007 VINTAGE PORTS & WHEN TO DRINK THEM

From all accounts 2007 was something very special. As I mentioned, when visiting the Douro during the harvest in 2007, the energy was palpable and virtually everyone we came in contact with, was glowing and chatting us up about the quality of the grapes. Admittedly, there is always some hype surrounding the vintage time, but in 2007, it just "felt" different. Later in this newsletter you will read the professional opinions of a dozen noted Port personalities and their views on the 2007 Ports overall.

In 2008, when "unofficially" tasting some very early barrel samples and taking a premature glimpse at a number of 2007 VPs, I was somewhat confounded at that point, finding lots of "green" elements in several samples. The structure of the wines eluded me and all I could ascertain was the enormous juicy fruit-forward nature of the fledgling Ports, not too dissimilar to other years at that same point in time. Of course it was way too early to make any real judgments and beyond the "regulations" this is why decisions don't take place until the following winter. In fact, the producers/shippers wait until

January and/or February of the second year following a harvest in order to begin their serious evaluations of their Vintage Ports, to ascertain whether they have the *right stuff*.

Having the opportunity to try some of the 2007 Vintage Ports on as many as 15 distinct occasions and having written specific tasting notes for each, overall, I have logged between 350-400 tasting notes since May, about 50 of which were not done blind and therefore, were not used for my report ... except in two specific cases, which are clearly mentioned in the tasting notes that follow.

After lots of consideration and in retrospect, I am still somewhat divided in my opinion of this vintage overall. There is no denying that there were many fantastic, well made vintage Ports in 2007. The upshot is that I found myself writing, "the greatest young _____ Port I have ever tasted" from a number of houses. With 2007, they seemed to raise the bar to a distinctly higher level than ever before.

On the other hand, I believe that the percentage of truly great Vintage Ports is less than I would have expected from such an exalted vintage. I only rated ten of sixty three Vintage Ports with baseline scores over 94 points. Additionally, several of the historically most prestigious producers of Vintage Port made very solid but not outstanding Vintage Ports in 2007, most of which I have had enough times to make sure it was not bottle variation. Again, this is just one man's opinion, and I realize this may not be the most popular one to put in writing.

From 1991/1992 when I first started trying cask samples of Vintage Ports, and through 2003, I typically have found a larger percentage which deserved scores in the upper 90-point range. With 2007, I found so few at the very top ... above 95 points, that I am a bit surprised when looking back at my own scores. I guess what I am trying to say is that although 2007 has a greater number of excellent (90-95 point) Ports; at the upper end, there are remarkably few that I found ... say, in comparison to 2000 and/or 2003.

What conclusion can I draw from this information? It possibly shows that I prefer the Vintage Ports from classic hot years like 2000 and 2003, even better. I am not the first to admit having preferences in wine and certainly with Port. Although I love "harmonious" characteristics and "elegance" in Port -- and 2007 certainly epitomizes both; I probably tend to buy Vintage Ports that are more about power, concentration and big-boned tannins. Fonseca 1985 and 2000 come to mind, so does Graham's 1994 and 2003, Taylor's 1992 and 1994, Niepoort 1997 and 2000, Vesuvio 1994 and 2000, Quinta do Portal in 2000 and 2003 and I can go on and on. Only some of these aforementioned beauties come from hot growing seasons.

That said, and to be fair -- when evaluating Ports blind for these annual Forecasts, I tend to divorce my own stylistic preferences and report what I taste. I do believe after 25+ years as a Port lover, having tasted many thousands of bottles of Port, I can keep an open mind when evaluating them and can certainly rate Ports that do not fit the profile I tend to like most, wearing a more objective hat in that regard. I learned that skill from putting together wine lists, where I would avoid my own personal preferences in

order to place wines on lists I was creating, knowing they'd be better appreciated by the consumer.

Taking a more macro view of the 2007 vintage, I believe it is a very solid vintage with a diversity of Ports at all qualitative levels. Improvements in the vineyards, greater winemaking capabilities, deft use of robotics and foot treading all have had a much greater impact as well as the cooler and very balanced growing season and phenolic ripeness levels reached – make 2007 stand out in modern times. There are those that have mentioned that the Port trade is intentionally making Vintage Port which won't age as long and to this I say, "rubbish." Although I firmly believe that today's Vintage Ports are being made in a more-accessible-at-an-earlier-stage style than the VPs from even two or three decades ago; the 2007s exhibit the ability to age beautifully as the group overall presents phenomenal balance, with excellent structural components along with extracted, rich and lush fruit.

To repeat, the 2007s as a whole, will age brilliantly. Moreover, most will be quite approachable early as well, which is a different dynamic. In most cases, 2007s will be able to age for decades, but there's a softer side to 2007s than 2003, just using one example. In this way, I liken the 2007s to 1994 at the very same stage. Fruit forward and some in which the underlying structure is subverted to the opulent fruity character. The proof is in the tasting.

BUYING ADVICE

The question is simple, do you want to own Ports which have been in your cellar since they were first released or would you rather gamble 5-30+ years down the road that the bottles had been stored well prior to your purchase? Were they shipped during times when temperatures were within reason? I prefer to know that Ports have been in my own cellar and that I can control the conditions under which the VPs mature. Maybe if I lived in the UK where cellars were cooler and damper and there was a greater understanding of Port, I'd have a different view. But in the USA in particular, where it is not hard to occasionally find cooked wines and Port at auction, or less than stellar bottles with signs of previous leakage etc., no thanks, buying on release is the way to go.

Given that yields were down significantly in 2007 and the quantities produced by the majority of shippers and producers was smallish, the likelihood of pricing going up in years to come, is something a consumer must not overlook. The decision of whether to buy now, given the economic crisis is certainly one that will need to be considered by individuals too. But this is the first time since I have been buying Port where pricing did not increase from the previous vintage. In the vast majority of cases, pricing from Port shipper/producer into the USA is at or below 2003 levels. One may argue that 2003 was overpriced, but regardless, 2007s did not increase and I was pleased when seeing that. Unlike the UK where there are only two tiers in which to control pricing, we in the

USA and Canada (and some European countries) have less advantageous systems in place.

On the FTLOP Forum, a discussion point turned to: “Why shouldn’t I buy a 1985 Vintage Port from a producer who is charging the same price for their 2007?” Although this is not a new thought, I would never argue with someone looking to back fill with older vintages. I also understand that people who are middle-aged or in their later years (whether that is 40, 50 or even 80) may not want to have to wait to have their Vintage Ports mature for decades in cellar. To those individuals I would recommend they buy older Vintage Ports instead of 2007. However, it should be duly noted that unlike some hot, young vintages ... the Ports from 2007 are extremely approachable and easy to enjoy now, with softer underbellies and tannins more cloaked in fruit.

One thing I have noticed and heard too. In the USA, there were a very small number of retailers who put out futures pricing (in the USA more aptly known as pre-release pricing) compared to previous campaigns from the past 15-20 years. I am sure this is directly tied to the quantities of current stock they still have on the shelf and in their warehouses of 1997, 2000, 2003 VPs. In the UK, according to several sources, the early tranches of 2007 Vintage Ports have moved well, but we’re also talking about smaller allocations than in past campaigns.

So it really boils down to personal preference. My last word harkens back to my initial thought. Do you want to have control over the conditions in which your Port wines mature? For me, that is the deciding factor, not whether I can save \$5 or \$10 per bottle, by buying now or in 20 years. I am sure the economists in the group will have their own opinions, using the value of money scales and justifying their expense or lack thereof, based on what they believe the relative merits of tying up capital, but the decision is much easier for me. Do I like the 2007 Vintage Ports enough to buy in or not? The quality is there, the rest you’ll have to decide for yourself. With the tasting notes that follow, I hope to guide you towards a 2007 Port that you will enjoy.



TASTING REGIMEN

In May, I had a great time on the Fortification Tour and was also looking forward to the following week. I had leased a tasting room (shown in the pictures in this article) in Vila Nova de Gaia, which would provide me with privacy, 24 hour access, great lighting and a staff that would wrap and number bottles, provide clean glassware daily and remove empties. This made it easy to taste VPs over the course of several days, blind of course, without any noise (beyond my Fado music playing on my computer) or outside distractions. It made staying intensely focused on the Ports at hand, very easy for me.

The week in which I was sequestered in this room, provided the perfect environment for this undertaking and allowed the Port trade to easily ship samples directly, rather than trying to get them to my home in the USA, which is always a hardship and real pain in the neck for all involved.

While in Gaia, there were 49 samples sent (most of which had sent two bottles) and these were tasted in daily flights of 16, 16 and 17. All samples were tasted **at least** four times over several days, with a separate tasting note entered on my computer including the organoleptic characteristics and other details, each time I tasted a Port. Some Ports required further sampling, while others remained static after a few days and did not warrant further evaluation. By the end of the week, I had a very clear picture of how these 49 Vintage Ports “behaved” and I typically spent at least one hour with every sample ... as a minimum.

The process continued. I hand carried back all that I could possibly carry in my wine luggage, boxes taped together and buried within my clothing in my checked baggage. Thirty four bottles in all, none broken and much to the dismay of the US Customs agent I faced upon arriving back on American soil. I was prepared to “go the distance” to ensure my 2007 samples were to make it back home safely ... and fortunately, succeeded in this mission.



I removed all of the capsules with identifying marks and set the bottles on a shelf in my wine cellar where they rested for a couple of weeks. My wife Dorene deserves lots of credit for her assistance, mixing up the placements, then randomly bagging Ports 1-20 and hid all the rest out of sight. I told her the night before how many I would be tasting next and she would set them out in my tasting room below grade and quite cool. I spent at least three days with all bottles and with over 90% of these samples, four days. My tasting procedures remained constant between the bottles I had in Gaia and the tastings at home.

I also received a bunch more samples through importers in the USA and “other methods” in order to obtain a broader sampling and my wife then mixed these in with other flights which typically numbered three or four and occasionally six bottles at a time. There was one flight of nine bottles that were shared blind (when Andy Velebil and David Spriggs came up for a three day weekend) and my Port loving FTLOP-neighbor Glenn Elliott joined us. Glenn also sat in on a bunch of other flights, eager to learn what it was like to blind taste cask samples.

I am copying this paragraph from the FTLOP Forum:

For me personally, I am far more concerned with being accurate and will do a 2nd round of blind tastings over the next 2 months (with another 3 dozen bottles) before publishing my own report. It might be published too late for buying 2007s early, but in all honesty, **I care more about being historically accurate**, which may be naive in some ways (as it decreases my own "importance" in the marketplace) but it is my mindset and always has been. I look back to all of my previous Vintage Port Forecast reports and honestly, I will stick to those scores and even drinking windows. There are VERY FEW I would change, even if I could!

For the original 34 samples, the majority had now been tasted seven to ten times. This process went on in the second half of June, all of July and August (except during a few brief hot days) and upon returning from Portugal in October; and finally, three last bottles in November (that are not part of the initial tasting notes) but are now in the new TNDB. Additionally, there were two bottles which I tried during my visit to Portugal which only received a "snapshot view" ... which I did include in my report ... but those are the only two examples, (clearly noted in the TNs) of Port not tasted blind.

Now some final thoughts about "the process" and you. Please note that my ratings are just that ... the opinion of one man. Whether readers agree or disagree with my assessment -- that is out of my control. I always strongly recommend consumers read as many reports and data points from as many different critics and trusted palates that they can find before making a "buying decision." Whenever feasible, taste the Ports for yourself before making up your mind. If that is just NOT possible ... use a critic whose palate you trust, try to learn how they go about their tasting process and make sure to be able to calibrate your palate against theirs. And last but truly not least: try to get a feel from the content within tasting notes, beyond the immediate score, because that should provide you with a much greater understanding of what a critic has in mind (or mouth as the case may be).



In all, sixty three bottles of 2007 Vintage Ports were evaluated. Here now, the tasting notes:

2007 VINTAGE PORT TASTING NOTES

2007 Andresen Vintage Port – Cask sample. This is a producer that I've never visited, but need to correct that oversight on one of our upcoming tours to Northern Portugal. A classy aromatic profile containing scents of anise and spearmint, sweet grenadine and boysenberry fruit with spicy white pepper to add greater character to the nose. Although easy to enjoy now with prominent blackberry and generous grenadine flavors delivering the one two punch, it has focused acidity and along with chewy, somewhat aggressive tannins this Andresen VP resonates balance. Elegant in the middle and long in the aftertaste, the spirit needs to calm down a bit. Otherwise, it is one fine young Port. The aging potential provides for a minimum of thirty years for 2007 Andresen; a name that hopefully will become better known in American Port circles. **92-94+ points 8/9/09**

2007 Barros Vintage Port – Cask sample. After the incredible showing of the “off vintage” 2005 Barros VP as a *just finished* bottle, (95 points, the highest score I gave for any 2005 VP) I had very high hopes for the 2007 too. How did expectations meet the results from blind tasting? This was the 32nd Vintage Port I tasted, the last of the 2nd grouping of 16. The nose was permeated by compelling aromas of raisins, Rainier cherries and red currants along with significant spirit. Over the next two days some Kirsch and prune crept into the mix. Actually, this was an impressively focused bouquet and a great start. On the palate, full and with fine grape purity, raisins, black cherry, leather and a hot streak that did not quit. Also the acidity was not enough to provide “cut” and the sweetness of the fruit seemed out of balance, if not over-the-top. The tannins were fine grained and round, after a massive tannic impression the first day (only). But it was the heat which drew away attention from the middle and marred the length of the finish and overall pleasure. Will it integrate with age? I believe “yes” but time will tell. Let this settle down for the first five years and then revisit, with aging potential between 18-24 years. I’ll reserve judgment beyond stating that the 2005 VP was a significantly more beautiful infant and the 2007 will require more patience while it integrates. **87-89+ points 5/14/09**



2007 Broadbent Vintage Port – Cask sample. This is the 5th declared vintage bottling for the Broadbent Port lineup, since the inaugural 1994 Vintage Port debuted in 1997. The classy bouquet is comprised of expressive fresh floral scents, blueberry and boysenberry notes, spicy black pepper, tar and finally an exotic herbal aroma with just a touch of youthful spirit that adds lift. It took until the third of four days for the spirituous nature to fully meld but until then it was prominent on the mid-palate and finish. With flavors of blackberry and blueberry, the medium-full bodied juice is balanced nicely by supple acidity and polished, well rounded tannins. This off-dry and harmonious Broadbent will cellar nicely for 20-25 years, but drink well throughout its life cycle. **89-91+ points 8/9/09**



2007 Burmester Vintage Port – Cask sample. The 2007 was tasted in Gaia over several days and began with an enormous tanky impression and high-toned spicity character on the nose in addition to red currants, prune and essence of grape. Damson plums, blackcurrant jam with a serious hot streak the first day, but things improved and it showed far less heat (still some present) on the second day. Enjoyable once past the spirit, the tannins are prevalent and ripe with a granular texture that appears upon swallowing. The aftertaste is solid but modest in length. This is a pleasant and mostly simple Vintage Port for mid-term consumption. Consume now or at peak from 2023-2029. **86-88+ points 5/14/09**

2007 Cálem Vintage Port – Cask sample. Another Port shipper from the Sogevinus stable, Cálem sports a new Port lodge in Vila Nova de Gaia. The 2007 started off “tanky” and lackluster, but evolved over a few days and gained some aromatic spicy notes, with a briary blueberry and plum nature, along with a lifted violet accent and a bit of alcohol as well. Infused

flavors of ripe, chewy plum and pomegranate juice are generously fruited and tend towards the sweeter side of the spectrum. Very approachable, smooth and rich, luxurious in the mouth from day one and adorned with vivacious acidity. A bit simple and although tasty, the finish seems a bit clipped too. Drink the Cálem young while you wait for your other 2007s to reach maturity; at best between 2018 and 2024. **87-89+ points 5/16/09**



2007 Churchill's Vintage Port – Cask sample. An exotic profile of plums, raisins, dried dates and spicy anise accentuated by an herbal essence. Medium-full body weight, chewy and dense yet easy in the mouth, really soft and silky. Vibrant purple fruits mostly boysenberry, cherry and black pepper with good acidity and a medium sweet entry leading

to a modest finish. Still a bit tightly wound in May, less so in August; it was considerably better in October -- non-blind -- and I can't ignore the profound improvement, especially the length of the finish. Unyielding and chalky tannins will allow this to show best at 28-34 years of age and drink well in the near term too. Quite an achievement by this young shipper. **92-94+ points 8/12/09**

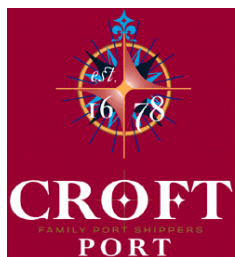
2007 Churchill's Quinta da Gricha Vintage Port – Cask sample. Brimming with a brooding complex earthy nose featuring fresh figs, grenadine then accented by black pepper and a hint of green. Medium-full bodied with a plush texture and mouthfilling, bright acidity. Off dry stylistically and easy to approach, with undeniable elegance; flavors of blackberry, cassis and chocolate and a slight stemmy character on the back end. Solid balance, a nicely nuanced mid-section and tannins initially subordinated by the fruit and showed up two days later, ripe and round to suggest fine aging potential. Will drink best at 20-26 years of age. A very enjoyable Vintage Port from Churchill's oldest Single Quinta that gets too little recognition. **91-93+ points 8/12/09**



2007 Cockburn Vintage Port – Cask sample. The first bottle I tried in May was definitely flawed. Fortunately another was available. I held onto it for four days as I realized I wouldn't have a back up to bring back with me to the USA. The blend came from 60% Touriga Franca grapes from Quinta dos Canais, 20% Tinta Roriz from Canais and 20% old vine field blends from Quinta das Amendoeiras (near Canais and owned by the Negreiros family that I recently did a review on their DOC wine). A compelling nose of Kirsch,

red wild berries and creosote/tar along with a black pepper and milk chocolate undertone that ended with a lift of aguardente. A nice mix of red and purple fruits with ripe/sweet entry and lots of acidity along with a drying finish. The tannins were deceptive, show up late and they were fine and round. I liked the aftertaste which was not only of impressive length but delivered suave milk chocolate flavors and a decadent texture too. An elegant Cockburn's that will provide early drinking pleasure and age nicely for up to 2 decades. **90-92+ points 5/14/09**

2007 Cockburn's Quinta dos Canais Vintage Port – Cask sample. As many of you are aware, Cockburn's is now part of the Symington Family Estates portfolio. Miguel Corte-Real made this Port using 50% Touriga Franca Grapes and 50% Touriga Nacional grapes from the famous Canais property. Using just two grapes can be limiting, but here it seems to have worked beautifully. The aromatics are profound, revealing a multifaceted bouquet of rose petal and violet fragrances along with spicy cinnamon, blackcurrants, and a backdrop of mint leaf and spirit. It was a pleasure to keep my nose in this glass of VP. The palate was equal to the task with concentrated flavors of raspberry liqueur and damson plum which melded beautifully in this medium-full bodied and smooth elixir. This is a complete Canais, with the solid structure providing excellent aging potential and a fruit filled finish, racy and long. Drink while young, during its teenage years or as far out as 2040. Cockburn's SQVP has the stuffing to go the distance. **92-94+ points 5/14/09**



2007 Croft Vintage Port – Cask sample. Three consecutive bottles tasted in Gaia (from two different casks) left me bewildered. I hand carried one more back with me and when that did not show any improvement, was sent another and I'll use **that one** for my note here. However, on two occasions with Kobrand's Robert Bower (USA importer) at a retail shop and at a restaurant, the Croft I tasted from finished bottles was a COMPLETELY different animal and light years better than what I've tasted – or -- six months has made the most pronounced difference one can imagine. Last week, I requested further finished bottle samples to evaluate over several days; concluded just prior to this report being launched. Again, the note you see is from my earlier tasting. If you are interested to see what the difference is, then I suggest that you **please do go to the new TNDB for a more current single blind impression (of Croft/Fonseca/Taylor) Vintage Ports**. No longer overtly "tanky" there are still some unique aromatics, with briary cranberry and dark cherry fragrance, along with grapefruit, kalamata ... then came the *green element*, which is more grounded in an herbal and stemmy presence. Not my cup of tea, er, Port but way better than any previous showing. Medium-full bodied, smooth and unctuous in the mouth, featuring dark red fruits and blackcurrant, with that green streak translating to the palate as well. I've not been this perplexed by any cask sample this decade (this my 5th full vintage analysis this decade alone, including 2000). After the awe inspiring 2003 Croft, I am quite surprised at the difference created by the cool weather of 2007. Fortunately, the "finished bottles" as exemplified in the new TN in the DB, provides a more rounded picture of this enigmatic Vintage Port. 6,800 cases produced (12 x 750s). **89-91+ points 7/20/09**

2007 Delaforce Vintage Port – Cask sample. A weird nose, "tanky" initially with prune, green herbal and stalky notes, stewed figs and a reductive quality. Exhibiting medium weight, round and mouth coating, while easy and approachable. Better in the mouth than the nose with lovely ripe plums, boysenberry and a dose of spirituous character early on that hopefully will integrate

with more time in the bottle. Medium to dry style from stem to stern. Tasted during four distinct sessions over a two day period this did not seem to get any better and stayed fairly static, except for the modest tannins that gained further grip. It will drink best, now through 2025. **84-86+ points 5/12/09**

2007 Duorum Vintage Port – Cask sample. João Portugal Ramos of Gestvinus fame, is best known for his wines from the Alentejo region of Portugal, in addition to other small wine regions like the Dão. But he wanted to spread his wings and buy property and have a presence with Port and Douro wine. So he chose a brilliant partner and in January 2007, José Maria Soares Franco, left Ferreira (owned by Sogrape) where he had been the head winemaker for 28 years. Having been responsible for many projects including Barca Velha and others like Quinta da Leda, Callabriga and several others in the Ferreirinha stable, this is the first Duorum Vintage Port. Given the class of this young Port it is truly hard to believe this is a debut effort for this team. Explosive notes of lavender and violets are penetrating on the proboscis and overlaid by an infusion of blueberry, and fig aromas. Due to the huge grippy fine grained tannins at the onset, this was a bit rough on the palate, but morphed nicely the following three days to provide a far more elegant impression and the tannins seemed to integrate seamlessly and rather quickly too. Fine racy flavors of fresh fig, ripe purple plums and a gentle sensation of spirit evolved. Lush and complex, this Port will drink well early on and provide its greatest pleasure between three and four decades out. Blind tasted by a panel of four over the course of a very long weekend, including eight other “top” Vintage Ports, with all panelists finding this as one of the better wines of the flight. **93-95+ points 7/20/09**



2007 Dow Vintage Port – (“Finished” bottle) Offering a spicy panoply of redcurrants, blueberry syrup, black pepper and cinnamon baked apple notes that evolved with every sniff. Brawny, fleshy black plum and ripe purple fruits are plush in the mouth, distinctly concentrated and somewhat sweeter than I typically find young Dow. There’s plenty of crisp acidity and the intricately layered mid-palate is laden with promise. Deceptively firm, ultra-smooth tannins take charge just before swallowing and the off-dry finish possesses stunning length. Bold flavored and delicious, this distinguished Dow is my favorite of the Symington’s 2007’s and there’s little doubt this will be drinking beautifully early in its life and through 2050+. The first bottle evaluated in mid-May was restrained, but three months in bottle has helped tremendously. 6,200 cases produced (12 x 750s). A stellar Vintage Port from this fine shipper. **95-97+ points 7/10/09**



2007 Ferreira Vintage Port – Cask sample. There’s a pronounced aromatic freshness, featuring multifaceted notes of ripe black plum, pomegranate, floral fragrances and mocha. Full-bodied with a luxurious consistency and more density than is typical for Ferreira;

this 2007 model is more elegant than complex at this stage. It delivers a medium sweet entry and fine flavors of dark cherry, purity of grape and cassis. The fine grained but intensely tannic finish exhibits the burly backbone of this impressive Port which offers a semi-dry medium length finish. I'd wait a few years to start drinking the Ferreira to allow the tannins to mellow, and it will reward patience for two to three decades. **90-92+ points 8/9/09**



2007 Fonseca Vintage Port – Cask sample. NOTE: The first bottle I had in Portugal was seriously flawed and it was replaced. I had the same issue with Croft, so although I had the opportunity to try these again, I also re-tasted TFP Ports three consecutive days prior to the newsletter being sent out. Those tasting notes are not reflected here, but can be found by searching in the brand new FTLOP TNDB. IMO,

those TNs present a precise and up to date picture of where these 3 VPs are at now!

I was still able to try cask samples in May (3x) and then again in June, the latter time as part of a 9 bottle blind flight of 2007s, three sessions over a 3-day weekend. This is a composite note of those six experiences. I very much enjoyed the swirling aromas of blueberry and figs, smoky tar, prunes and esteva. Medium-full bodied, silky smooth and approachable from the get go, with ample acidity and tannins that were soft, fine grained and medium-ripe. Fonseca '07 features a juicy, black cherry and boysenberry profile with accents of figs and a hint of cocoa, in a rather simple but tasty, elegant profile. I found the “reveal(s)” surprising as these bottles presented a soft wine of finesse and not the focused intensity I typically associate with Fonseca VPs, but easy drinking nonetheless. **Again, please do go to the new TNDB for a more current single blind impression (of Fonseca/Croft/Taylor).** 9,300 cases (12 x 750s) produced. This Fonseca can be enjoyed now or cellared through 2035. **92-94+ points 6/20/09**



2007 Gould Campbell Vintage Port – Cask sample. Gawky just six weeks earlier, this 2nd bottle has really come together. Floral fragrances, spicy scents along with blueberry and boysenberry jam, dark chocolate and high toned spirit showing which integrated a couple of days in. By day four this had put on significant weight and was a classy young VP with a sexy, silky texture, black fruited flavors and intensity on the mid-

palate. Harmonious once past the powerful and puckering tannins, this VP continued to improve each day, especially the tsunami of a finish which enveloped the palate. Although enjoyable now, it will cellar impeccably for several decades. This brilliant Gould Campbell is reminiscent of the fine 1997 version, at the very same stage. **92-94+ points 6/25/09**



2007 Graham Vintage Port – Cask sample. The bouquet offers great purity and intensity, with fresh flowers, cassis, licorice, baker's chocolate and a light dose of spirit which adds lift. Starting off as a medium-bodied Port, it gained heft over

several days. Rich and voluptuous, adorned by black cherry, cassis and black raspberry flavors with a complex mid-section. In the early goings the tannins were subordinate to the fruit and the finish was clipped, but in subsequent days the refined tannins became more prominent and the aftertaste, lingering and sublime. The '07 Graham's seemed slightly drier than usual but still medium-sweet overall. I liked it more ... the more I tasted it. The underlying tannins proved there's a long life ahead of this Port, 30+ years easily. 6,000 cases produced (12 x 750s). Another pearl in a long strand of fine Vintage Ports by Graham's. **93-95+ points 7/20/09**



2007 Kopke Vintage Port – Cask sample. In recent vintages I've noticed that Kopke has been steadily improving and their image for Vintage Port has been enhanced, no longer solely considered for their delectable wood-aged beauties. Beyond the ongoing investment by Sogevinus in Quinta São Luiz and other Quinta properties around the region, I have to believe that Sogevinus' Pedro Sá (Director of Enology) is having a positive influence on the qualitative improvement we taste today. The 2007 VP provides a fabulous nose of dried cherries, Kirsch and fresh violets with an overlay of mocha that adds extra depth of character. The palate presents sweet black cherry and grenadine flavors, soft and elegant, yet full in body weight. The 2007 is immediately approachable and velvety smooth in the mouth with deft balance. It is a bit four-square now, but in time I expect to see it improve in terms of complexity as it has the components in place and just needs time to meld. Enjoy at any stage of its life cycle, but this VP should reach peak circa 2022-2029. A solid entry from Kopke in 2007, established in 1638. **90-92+ points 5/16/09**

2007 Magalhães Vintage Port – Cask sample. From the Carlos Magalhães family comes this generous Vintage Port. I first evaluated their 2000 Vintage Port and have featured every subsequent vintage. The grapes come from the Roncão Valley and the estate of Quinta do Silval where Teresa Pinto, the talented Portmaker, is honing her craft. In past vintages she has used just two grapes with the majority comprising Touriga Nacional and also about 20-30% Touriga Franca. Extraordinary aromatics featuring an enchanting and spicy perfumed nose of cinnamon, sweet maple, boysenberry and tar notes with a dollop of leather for good measure. Although the flavor profile is very good, the textural pleasure derived from velvety smooth fruit and dense, non-aggressive tannins, make this so much fun to drink now. Moreover, there is plenty of underlying structure and the tannins here show great promise for future longevity. In fact, the Magalhães needs a few years in the cellar and will drink very well through 2040, with ease. A beautifully balanced and refined 2007 Vintage Port by this up and coming producer. **92-94+ points 7/4/09**



2007 Martinez Vintage Port – Cask sample. For those not aware of this old gem of a Shipper, they've made some pretty great Ports throughout history but have been bought and sold a

number of times in recent decades by the big beverage conglomerates. Owned today by the Symington Family Estates, (SFE) Martinez is poised for a makeover, finally owned by a company with long term vision. Fragrant fresh carnations, blackcurrant, spicy white pepper and a whiff of spirit bring a unique profile to the lineup. Although it gained body weight, it remained medium-full and featured flamboyant flavors dominated by unctuous cassis and including Raisinettes and ripe plum, with a supporting cast of clove, pepper and chocolate. This impressive mélange ratchets it up a notch with voluptuous textural pleasure, solid structural components and a finish that evokes applause. Drink it tomorrow as it is easy and generous, or through 2040, for this is a serious Vintage Port for cellaring. Two decades from now, in hindsight, the 2007 vintage may prove to be the pivotal point in Martinez' storied history! It's an inspiring Port that may portend the future of this shipper. 500 cases produced (12 x 750s). **92-94+ points 6/20/09**

2007 Niepoort Pisca Vintage Port – Cask sample. Pisca is not new, per se. Dirk's grandfather vinified grapes from this vineyard nearly 70 years ago, and the grapes have been part of the Niepoort Port wines ever since. In 2003, Dirk took control of the Pisca Vineyard and started the difficult task of renovating Pisca, although it is not officially registered as a Single Quinta. The small vineyard's insanely low yields needed lots of work. In a throwback to his grandfather's time, Niepoort has decided to make the 2007 Pisca by pushing the envelope and extending the VP's wood aging an extra six months or longer. The aging will take place in pipas (550-600 liter casks, not used for Vintage Port) rather than the norm, which is in a more reductive state when matured in large *toneis* or *balseiros* (huge oak casks) as his grandfather had done many years ago. The vineyard is healthier today with greater yields making for better balanced grapes. The 2007 Pisca offers generous aromas of plum, ripe raspberry, minerality and an earthy note of kalamata along with great purity of grape. There is a harmony to this Port and a richness which I liked very much, although admittedly, I found greater freshness in the regular Niepoort bottling. Here I found the tannins were more refined and round, yet still with innate grip. The palate is treated to waves of flavor and even blind, I noted that Port #40 seems like it was from the identical producer as #39 (later revealed to be Niepoort's regular bottling). This second bottle showed even better for the extra month it had to settle down. I enjoyed the density and harmony of the fruit, acidity and tannins. The finish was exceptional and overall balance, the trademark. The Pisca should age beautifully for three decades or more. A very fine inaugural vintage for this throwback. **93-95+ points 6/29/09**



2007 Niepoort Vintage Port – (Finished bottle) I often find that this decade's Niepoort Vintage Ports aligns very closely with what I enjoy most stylistically in a VP; nonetheless, with 49 foil wrapped bottles before me, I had no idea which was which. From the first sip and until bottle #39 was near empty, (not to mention a 2nd bottle hand carried back to the USA) everything about it appealed to my senses. The nose was crammed with dark berry fruits and earthy notes from smoky cedar and tobacco, to spicy white pepper, cinnamon stick and an herbal, pine

resin undertone. Like great Madeira, each whiff presented its own mélange of new scents. Fantastic as it was, I preferred the intricacy of the fresh and driven palate presence. Like the Portmaker himself, the 2007 Niepoort possesses many layers of character. This Port leads a procession of incongruent qualities: massive density and concentration of fruit yet sensual freshness on the palate and great harmony overall. Insanely tannic and grippy, yet voluptuous velvet textural pleasure in the mouth along with easy approachability. One of the most profound and longest finishes of any bottle I tasted during a week in Portugal, with 40-60 years of cellar worthiness ahead of it, yet I'd open a bottle to share with friends during or after dinner tonight. It's all there in a hedonistic brew, harmonious and complex. **96-98+ points 7/20/09**



2007 Offley Boa Vista Vintage Port – Cask sample. An intriguing scented bouquet of lavender, cherry and raspberry with undertones of cedar and herbs. Possessing medium-full body, voluptuous silken contours and pleasant harmony between the structure and fruit. The dense, ripe blackberry flavors and penetrating acidity is propped up by finely tuned, polished tannins and a lush and lingering aftertaste. Although I tasted this on four occasions over three days, it was beneficial to try this again in October during our visit to Offley (non-blind) and my score was a point higher than what I tasted in May; but confirmed my earlier impressions. It

will provide pleasure early in its life and reward patience, drinking best around 22-28 years of age. This is the finest young Offley offering in memory. **91-93+ points 5/12/09**

OSBORNE DESDE 1772

2007 Osborne Vintage Port – Cask sample. In my Port tasting experience, admittedly I have had very few data points from this Port shipper. I remember how well

the 2003 Vintage Port showed at a similar stage. The longer the bottle of 2007 was open or the Port sat in glass, the more focused and layered the nose appeared to become. Awesome aromatics of Rainier cherry, black licorice, cocoa powder and a not so subtle whiff of aguardente. Austere in the early goings, the flavors really emerged on the 2nd day to reveal fresh figs, smoky prunes and overtly sweet plums framed by powerful, puckering tannins and ample acidity. Big, bright and chewy, there is a youthful hot streak which I could not ignore, although by day four it integrated better, but was still obvious. Hopefully with a few years to meld, the heat won't stand out and I look forward to revisit this Osborne during the upcoming decade. It should drink well from teenage years through 2035. **92-94+ points 9/4/09**

2007 Pintas Vintage Port – Cask sample. Wine & Soul's charismatic husband/wife winemaking team have been making a splash with their fine table wines in recent years. The nose of this wine is similar to that of the Quinta do Passadouro in that it's noted for being "tanky" and high-toned, before the fruit elements are accounted for, with blueberry and black raspberry

aromas. The palate performs perfectly well, adorned by layers of black raspberry and juicy cherry fruit which is rich, ripe and ultra-smooth with a silken chocolate decadence of good length. In a later example of this Port it had improved rather dramatically during a sampling on our Harvest Tour, but that doesn't figure into this note or score. Best on the 3rd of 4 tastings, this showed nicely except for the nose which was still wound too tight from cask. A mid-term ager this will deliver the goods early on and through 2026. **88-90+ points 5/14/09**

2007 Poças' Quinta de Santa Barbara Vintage Port – Cask sample. What a wonderful surprise as the 2nd and 3rd day this opened to become an absolute joy ride of a Port. I love when this happens and it is the beauty of blind tasting, no possibility for label bias and discoveries like this unfold. More importantly, this is a perfect example of why “snapshot” views of Vintage Port don't work; as if I had only tasted this on day one, I'd have a very skewed – wrong impression. Possessing an expansive nose of complex divergent components of strawberry scents along with in-yer-face black pepper and accented by fennel, eucalyptus and esteva. In the mouth this delivered a myriad of sumptuous flavors from a rather ripe and brambly blackberry and dark cherry pie, some pure grape extract, loads of freshly cracked black pepper in a viscous and heavy weight of a Port with a delicious and enduring finish. If someone had told me this was Quinta do Vesuvio, I'd have believed them in a heartbeat. Dense, deftly balanced and stuffed in the mid-palate, the backbone of racy tannins is nothing short of massive. This is one to seek out and could be one of the finer bargains of the vintage. A thrilling young Single Quinta VP by Poças and now I will put Santa Barbara on my list of “must visit Quintas.” Fun to sip now for sure, however this will age beautifully for three to four decades. **93-95+ points 5/14/09**

2007 Poças Vintage Port – Cask sample. Talk about going out on a limb? Who is going to believe me without tasting this for themselves? I tasted this four times over three days and must say, it was something pretty special and my notes after day one, were very consistent. I'm not too surprised that it was “revealed” to be Poças as I have seen some very significant progress from this house over the past several years. Now I am champing at the bit to read what other critics have said about these two Pocas Vintage Ports; although not until AFTER my report is published. Exciting and sexy spicy nose with violets, anise, graham cracker, blueberry and tell tale black pepper which leaps from the glass. Gorgeously perfumed! The palate is every bit as good too, densely packed with purple and black fruit, along with that black pepper again and milk chocolate, both of which are part of the elongated and thrilling aftertaste. I must say there was a bit of spirit on the finish too. There's this palpable nervous tension in this VP which provides a clue that this may be even better in a few years. Massive tannins result in teeth coating-tongue torturing astringency which some may not like. It is certainly not for the meek, but there's plenty of fruit to sustain the core. Delivering complexity in spades ... already. Blind, I thought this would *reveal* as the Taylor Fladgate. The only issue which manifested is the youthful heat which stood out on the finish, costing an extra point from being added on. When the aguardente integrates better, there's no doubt this will be even more stunning. Grab the Poças, before others catch on! **95-97+ points 5/14/09**

2007 Quarles Harris Vintage Port – Cask sample. The least well-known book in the Symington’s library, and a rarely seen entry on collector’s shelves. Why is that? I would be guessing, but maybe because of how little is produced for the entire world. The 2007 version is a solidly vinified VP which is deserving of some attention, but there are only 1,000 cases (x 12 750s) for the whole world, and of course, it won’t all be released now. The story begins with a pretty perfumed nose of fresh carnations, mocha, boysenberry and cassis with a dollop of spirit character. Generous and scintillating, the second chapter reveals a mouthfilling, concentrated berry burst of boysenberry and sweet grenadine syrup flavors that wind up being swallowed along with some fresh mint, dark chocolate nuances and ... a bit of heat again. All of this is delivered in a compact package neatly wrapped in tannins that show refinement and power at the same time, along with bright acid. The ending is poignant and long with some elegant chocolate that lingers after the last page is turned. Drink early but those fortunate enough to find some would be well-advised to cellar this for 25 years. **92-94+ points 5/14/09**



2007 Quevedo Port Vintage Port – Cask sample. For those that do not ever visit the FTLOP Forum and rarely read their newsletters, the name Quevedo might still be new. For the rest of the Port loving world (especially in the EU) I believe that although not yet a household name, Quevedo, is certainly a name recognized by many. The 2007 Quevedo delivers fresh floral fragrances, Asian spice, blueberry, ripe blackberry and a fun mocha/espresso note with great intensity. This is the story of a fairly new family-owned and operated grower/producer making old-school style Vintage Port and hitting a triple in its first at bat in the big leagues. Claudia Quevedo is the very talented young wine and Port maker behind the scenes, while her globetrotting brother, social-(media)-butterfly Oscar, is the face of the winery making a big splash internationally this year. The dark flavors of cassis and blackberries are supported by laser focused acidity and wonderfully ripe and round tannins and the ultra-smooth velvet-like presence is something to behold. This is a power packed Port and exhibits a well-nuanced middle and a great long finish that leaves a lasting impression. The 2007 Quevedo marks a line in the sand, to say “we’ve arrived” and can make as good a Port as anybody. Drink now through 2040. A great effort by the new kids on the block. **93-95+ points 5/16/09**



2007 Quinta do Crasto Vintage Port – Cask sample. Tanky in the early goings in May, this settled down tremendously. The next bottle was just a tad better and had some time to mellow (after bringing it back from Portugal) after the Fair. Fresh cut flowers, smoky black fruits and tar along with boysenberry and plum notes. Dense, ripe and medium sweet on the palate with crisp acidity and refined, round tannins. Juicy and fresh, this is not a blockbuster but a well-

made Vintage Port that delivers, in a fruit forward style with a luscious, clean aftertaste. Very approachable and will drink well young and for the next twenty years. Tomas Roquette is the enologist responsible for Crasto's VP. **91-93+ points 10/19/09**

2007 Quinta Dona Matilde Vintage Port – Cask sample. A few years ago when Sogevinus purchased the Barros company from the renowned Portuguese family, this quinta was originally part of the sales agreement. Recently however, Manuel Angelo Barros, the Managing Director and his family made sure to repurchase ownership of their prized Quinta Dona Matilde property which maintains nearly 30 hectares of the 98 total, planted to grape. They used to sell their Port grapes to Taylor but with the 2007 vintage, they've produced their own Single Quinta Vintage Port and DOC Douro wine too. I am pleased to be able to provide you with a rare (English language) tasting note on this particular SQVP. Evaluated over the course of four days once the bottle had a chance to settle down. From the briary aromatic nose melds vibrant lavender, plums, brambly black fruits and a captivating herbal and esteva dynamic; adding character. This old-school seductive Port has its deep and full-bodied, earthy, Kirsch, boysenberry and licorice flavors framed by impeccably fine grained tannins that gain grip late. The multidimensional finish is as delicious as it is persistent. Another finely tuned debut offering in 2007, with the requisite structure to carry this the distance for 3+ decades. I look forward to trying many more vintages of Port from this Barros owned Single Quinta. **91-93+ points 9/4/09**



2007 Quinta Nova de Nossa Senhora do Carmo Vintage Port – Although this producer may not yet be a familiar name to many Port lovers, they've been bottling their own Vintage Port and LBV in the Cima Corgo, (also producing Ruby Reserve) since 1992. A respected name in DOC Douro wines within Portugal, the property dates back to 1764 and is replete with a lovely hotel. The 2007 may just be the year that puts this Single Quinta VP on the world's stage. It was the first Port in the 2nd grouping (of 16) that I encountered and I tasted this over a couple of days, three times and it continued to improve

exponentially during that time frame. The nose is classy and offered a spicy cinnamon scent, primary black cherry and a pure essence of grape. In the mouth it progressively gained weight and provided a lush smoothness and symmetry that was hitting on all cylinders. Tasty, soft and velvety grenadine and cassis flavor are immediately approachable. Restrained in the early rounds of evaluation, the tannins are refined and moderate in their grip and the finish was rather long. If there is any knock on this VP, it would be the lack of complexity, however, that is made up by the excellent purity of grape. Good luck finding these, with only 100 cs. (x 12) produced. The projected peak drinking window is from 2025-2032. **91-93+ points 5/14/09**

2007 Quinta do Noval Silval Vintage Port – Cask sample. What a brilliant way to start my morning, the first of four days evaluating these next three 2007s. A unique profile with scents of sour cherry, graham cracker, briary boysenberry. The next day added fresh cut geraniums and

white pepper to the aromatics. Pretty perfume all in all. Dense, concentrated and ripe primary cherry flavor is so luxuriously smooth, with a showy mid-palate featuring a peppery flair. Sweet, sumptuous and mouthfilling fruit with great purity, zesty acidity and powerful tannins, drying but not grippy. Sensuous aftertaste that keeps on going. I can't remember a better Silval bottling than this 2007. I can only imagine how great this would be if properly decanted. Revealed as Silval, this is going to provide extraordinary value for money given the quality and the ability to age for at least three decades. **93-95+ points 6/9/09**



2007 Quinta do Noval Vintage Port – Cask sample. Super extracted ink which absolutely epitomizes “blackstrap.” Upon pulling the cork on day 1, this already presented as a benchmark Port for the 2007 vintage. It stood out like Ali in his prime with the same pound for pound impact. The purity of the aromatics is sumptuous, with briary blackberry intertwined with sweet blueberry jam and fresh cut lavender, accentuated by

mocha. It represents the essence of Noval at its best: monumental in its sheer depth, muscular and concentrated, yet balanced by extraordinary acidity and tannins. It avoids jammy, remains fresh and unctuous throughout, with waves of ripe black and purple fruits. The tannins? Tame early on and then the lion awakens. Not astringent, just aggressive ... my tongue, cheeks and lips were literally left numb. A remarkably complex middle leads to a highly nuanced finish and it's the first time I've ever used the descriptor “peach” for a purple-plush-Port. I can't wait to see what this becomes down the road a couple or three decades when it will resemble a young teenager. In reality, young vintage Port does not get much better than this, and when it does, from my palate's preference point, it usually requires a hot vintage like 2003 to achieve that. *In a vintage packed with numerous standouts, the 2007 Quinta do Noval was the most complete Vintage Port of all.* The question begs asking, what would the 2007 Noval Nacional have been like? **97-99+ points 6/9/09**



2007 Quinta da Pacheca Vintage Port – Cask sample.

This was one of two bottles included in this report, which were not tasted blind, nor over several days. It was served by our host, the winemaker Maria Serpa Pimentel during our 2009 Fortification Tour. So you may take this tasting note with a grain of salt, as I only had this in my glass for ten minutes. It was nice to taste this at the end of a handful of the young Pacheca Ports and directly before the 2008 cask sample which was very primary. Anyway, the 2007 was a solid effort by Maria and although very young (obviously) the fresh floral fragrances of rose petal and lavender/violets and the remarkable combination of blueberries, was dazzling. Smooth and easy to drink, the tannins were a bit chalky and drying but lacked astringency. I can see this aging nicely for 12-18 years, but I'd like to spend time with this before making a more serious

prediction of the drinking window. Excellent purity of grape and a lovely long aftertaste. That's my "snapshot" and I'm sticking to it. **90-92+ points 5/4/09**

Quinta do Passadouro[®]

2007 Quinta do Passadouro Vintage Port – Cask sample. Situated in the Vale de Mendiz area outside of Pinhão, the 30 acres of old and new plantings make up this estate which at one time was co-owned by Dirk Niepoort who later sold his holdings. Tasted over four sessions, this cask sample was still so primary that the intense "tanky" high toned note was accompanied by light VA. It did blow off by the third day, but the "tanky" essence never did and exhibited a lifted herbal and violet fragrance, along with some rhubarb and redcurrants. As strange as it may sound, this reminded me more of a "lagar sample" and seemed like it may have been bottled within the past few days. Proffering a four-square and bright burst of Marion blackberry and ripe strawberry the fruit was sweet and had a distinctive but short lived finish of cocoa. The density and chewy nature of this Port was enjoyable and approachable in its delivery with good acidity and bright, medium-ripe tannins. Simple, easy to enjoy young or through mid-term cellaring, I look forward to following the evolution of this '07, from the talented winemaker Jorge Serodio Borges. Drink through 2027. **86-88+ points 5/14/09**

QUINTA DO PORTAL ENÓLOGOS DISTINTOS FINE WINEMAKERS

2007 Quinta do Portal Vintage Port – ("Finished Bottle") Another 2007 standout effort. From the 1999 vintage, when I first noted a big improvement in the quality of what Portal was achieving (back in 2002) with their VPs -- and then the 2000 and 2003 -- and now this infant; it is clear at least to me, that Quinta do Portal has in a rather short period of time, created a nice string of exceptional Vintage Ports. It wasn't too long ago, that most American Port lovers had no clue about this producer. I am very pleased that Portal is now considered not only mainstream, but has gained so many accolades internationally. And now for the tasting note: Earthy brooding undertones of pipe tobacco, tar, prune and sous bois emerge and over a four day period open to reveal expressive and fresher grenadine, black cherry, clove and mocha aromatics. A classic in the making with great intensity, boisterous fruit and precision. Richly concentrated, fleshy blackberry and cassis fruit shines here with an underlying sense of pepper in the mid-section. It has that "wow factor" with mouthfilling decadence enhanced by exacting acidity and a seamlessly woven tannin section, ripe, chewy and aggressive with light astringency to carry this for many decades. This is a stellar Port, close to the greatness of 2003, but more refined and less jammy. The delineated persistent aftertaste just might be the significant strength of the entire package. As to the aging potential of this Portal, it exceeds all but a handful of VPs from 2007, and I'd bet ... (but won't be around to pay up, if I am wrong) that this will exceed 40 years of phenomenal drinking and my money is on a half century. Nevertheless, it is a thrilling young Port that can be enjoyed now as well. **94-96+ points 7/10/09**



2007 Quinta da Romaneira Vintage Port – Cask sample. The wine division of AXA's Managing Director Christian Seely purchased the 400 hectare property in 2004 and took the 40

hectares that were in disrepair and slowly but surely has been renovating the vineyards and now there are currently 80 hectares planted, along with fixing up the four lagares and of course, there was an amazing hotel built on the property. Focused on this 2007 Vintage Port, I obtained a sample bottle and spent four days evaluating it. The tasting note that follows is from this sampling, but a brief mention -- just after the harvest concluded this year, I visited the Quinta and was fortunate to try this fine VP again to see how it had evolved (more in a moment). But first, back to the TN. Lively but dark fruit aromas of smoky prune and black cherries with a floral element of dried rose petal provided a wonderful bouquet. Rich, nearly full-bodied in weight, soft and ultimately approachable, this is a fruit driven Port with enough crisp acidity and prominent, yet resolved tannins that will provide the ability to age for up to two decades. Soft, macerated Morello cherry and smoky plums deliver sweet fruit flavors in a balanced and sensuous package, fleshy and with bold flavors. This doesn't seem to have the stuffing for the long haul; nonetheless, it is packed with delicious juice that's quite easy to enjoy right now. Back to our visit, (to Romaneira) -- when trying this VP six weeks ago, it had fleshed out nicely and was every bit as good as the bottle I spent four days with. It is very solid and provided another data point (and a consistent one). As the vineyards continue being redeveloped and gain some further vine age, this property is going to be one to keep an eye on. **92-94+ points 6/9/09**



2007 Quinta de Roriz Vintage Port – Cask sample. Now back in the hands of the Symington's in what may be the final volley between them and the Van Zeller family regarding this property. The 2007 leads off with compelling aromas of earthy black raspberry, anise, smoky prune, tar and tapenade. Quite an exotic elixir and I

could have kept my nose buried in the glass and probably would have come up with another half dozen descriptors. I love when that happens. The Roriz is dangerously delicious and a Port of finesse, with distinctive depth in the mid-palate and great promise for developing complexity. The components seem to fit together like a jigsaw puzzle, with flavors of red raspberry and ripe, spicy pomegranate and a massive infusion of chocolate covered raisins on the lingering and voluptuous finish. I must add that the aftertaste is excellent but slightly marred by youthful heat and hopefully it will integrate down the road which would allow the score to migrate towards the higher end of the range. Best consumed circa 2032. **91-93+ points 5/16/09**



2007 Quinta de la Rosa Vintage Port – Cask sample. Jorge Moreira has been making wine at Quinta de la Rosa since the 2002 vintage for the Bergqvist family who have been owners since 1906. For over a century before that, the same family sold Port under the brand name Feuerheerd. 2007 shows some evolved cranberry and rhubarb nuances with an odd

stewed fruit profile which only became more intense several days later and lots of heat initially with a touch of volatile acidity. I only had one sample to try, so I cannot say whether or not this is a representative bottle, but the palate was a bit better than the nose. Medium-full bodied and a Port showing transparency of its terroir, the extreme heat was readily apparent on the palate

as well and it was initially very hard to get past. The mostly red berry fruit was soft and tasty and the tannins provided some good grip. Sweet fruit and a nice long finish show that the underlying material is sound, and this is a more elegant style of Port. I would like to revisit this in 2010 with another bottle, to ascertain if this was just an anomaly. As is, it is difficult putting a drinking window to this Port but I had written down 14-20 years. Pushed to provide a score, I'd have to say a generous: **83-85+ points 9/4/09**

2007 Quinta de Valle Longo Vintage Port – Cask sample. Having first reviewed this SQVP with their 2003 VP, a smallish property which is part of the Vista Alegre group, this is just the 2nd time they've vinified a Port during a generally declared vintage year. The Valle Longo vines average approximately 20-22 years of age and all grapes are food trodden in lagares. A fine Vintage Port, the nose exhibits fragrant huckleberry, black plums along with vanilla extract and mocha notes. I enjoyed the palate quite a bit as it provided velvety smooth textural pleasure and the fruit was in synch, offering up layers of cherry, chocolate and raisin flavors that were approachable and refined. Lots of crisp acidity and round, ripe tannins to provide the age worthiness. I don't believe Valle Longo is available in the USA at this time. Drink early on or through 2032. **90-92+ points 7/4/09**

2007 Quinta do Tedo Sevedra Vintage Port – Cask sample. I first encountered Sevedra's Vintage Port with the 2003 vintage and that same year visited the Tedo property for the very first time (2005). Early on there were some reductive notes present, but by the third day they had blown off fully and left blackberry, red licorice, black olive tapenade and a bay leaf aroma. I preferred the palate here and it provided a sweet and pleasing profile featuring blueberry and boysenberry fruit, some leather and a drying finish with a bittersweet aftertaste. The tannins were round and polished while the texture of the Port was a bit coarse and medium-full in weight. A mid-term ager, drink early or through 2024. **87-89+ points 5/16/09**



2007 Quinta do Tedo Vintage Port – Cask sample. owned by Vincent and Kay Bouchard, this property has come a long way in a hurry. The quality started out very nicely in the early days. Port and Douro winemaker, Jorge Alves is a very talented man and passionate about making both DOC wines and Port from this exceptional property, which rests atop the confluence of the Tedo and Douro rivers, just below Niepoort's Quinta da Nápoles. Jorge has pretty stunning terroir to work with, and continues to raise the bar at Tedo. The 2007 delivers heady aromas of Kirsch, strawberry licorice, tar, blackberry compote and a dollop of heat. The palate is framed by ripe, sweet and savory black plums, milk chocolate and sophisticated acidity in a medium-full style. Tannins appear to be soft, fully resolved and chalky and will allow the Tedo VP to drink well through 2025. A solid but straight forward Vintage Port, mostly for early consumption. **89-91+ points 5/16/09**



2007 Quinta do Vale Dona Maria Vintage Port – Cask sample. Sandra Tavares da Silva continues her brilliant work with Port and Douro wine guru, Cristiano van Zeller at Vale d. Maria. This Port was still so primary and “tanky” at the time when samples arrived, it seemed as if it had been bottled just hours prior to my tasting, when in fact it was probably a couple of days earlier. Offering lifted floral notes and boysenberry, along with fresh and spicy cinnamon and mocha, with distinct tobacco leaf aromas. Medium-full bodied and jam packed with dense, mouthfilling blackcurrant and dark cherry flavors. The potential is there for several decades of longevity, based on the ripe and round tannins that provide the requisite backbone to the lush fruit and acidity. The finish is long but intensely spirity/hot and that is my only concern for this otherwise delectable young Port. IF the heat integrates, and I am not certain that it will, the Vale d Maria will turn out to be a lovely 2007. Best to leave it rest



for 3-5 years, and then enjoy it through 2030. **91-93+ points 5/16/09**



2007 Quinta do Vale Meão Vintage Port – Cask sample. From the property that is still associated in consumer’s minds, with the legend that Barca Velha comes this brilliant youngster. When I tasted my way through the first bottle in mid-May this was showing very well and I was pleased to have another bottle to try back at home, once it settled down a month later. Expansive and sublime earthy perfume and fresh berry laden aromas soar out of the glass as this is not your

ordinary young Vintage Port. It’s loaded with herbs and spices, anise/licorice and tobacco along with the brooding dark berry scents that sex it up. As enormous as this VP is, and make no mistake about it: the concentration here is of epic proportions for a 2007 (akin to the finest in 2003) ... there is precision that delivers that rare combination of power and elegance which I only occasionally find in Vintage Ports. I’ll skip over the list of flavors and focus on the exactitude and balance, with near perfect harmony between the massive waves of fruit, the core of seductive acidity and the iron-spined tannic structure. Along with Niepoort, Meão is tied for 2nd place near the pinnacle of the entire 2007 pyramid. An admirable achievement and kudos to the Olazabal family. **96-98+ points 6/20/09**

2007 Quinta do Ventozelo Vintage Port – Cask sample. The nose showed spirituous and tanky initially, with ripe red berries, redcurrant and chocolate aromas. A tad lighter than medium weight with a smooth and elegant texture. Well woven layers of spicy blackcurrant and cassis with underpinnings of bitter chocolate on the finish supported by a luscious core of acidity. The fruit overshadowed the soft and refined tannins, growing more forceful in later rounds and appearing mostly on the seductive long-lasting finish. Will age nicely for 18-25 years. **88-90+ points 5/12/09**



2007 Quinta do Vesuvio Vintage Port – Cask sample. Touriga Nacional (55%) and Touriga Franca (45%) grapes ... yes, just two grapes encapsulate enticing bright fragrant violets, smoky prune, licorice and white pepper notes. At the outset a medium-bodied Vesuvio, which put on weight over several days and delivered purple-velvet-like smoothness and a lively mid-palate. Sporting full-throttle flavors of uber-ripe plum and boysenberry

fruit, laden with lush dark chocolate on the aftertaste. The tannins are subverted to the fruit early on, balanced by just enough acidity to carry the fruit-forward sweetness, evolving a couple of days later into a long and luscious powerful tannic finish. The hallmark balance, typical of this Single Quinta property with impeccable pedigree is in full evidence; albeit seemingly slightly less densely concentrated than any other generally declared Vesuvio between 1994 and 2003 (at this early point in time). Nonetheless, this Port will age beautifully for the next thirty something years. 2,000 cases produced (12 x 750) or about 5-6% of Vesuvio's total grape production. A stylish and hedonistic Vesuvio. **93-95+ points 8/9/09**

2007 Quinta do Vesuvio's Capela Vintage Port – Cask sample. The historic chapel at Vesuvio provides the name for the introduction of this new Port (chapel = *capela* in Portuguese). From individually chosen and well triaged bunches of Touriga Nacional (40%), Souzão (30%) and Touriga Franca grapes (30%); the Souzão coming from a small parcel with just over 1,000 vines, planted in the late 1990's. This inaugural vintage was tread in a ½ lagar, in which a wall was temporarily installed to reduce the overall capacity; along with allowing 30% run-off of the just crushed juice from the lagar, furthering concentration. Spicy scents of dark briary plum, dominant black pepper and earthy Asian spices on the nose. Intensely concentrated juice with lots of glycerin and all the raw materials in synch, bolstered by bracing acidity. It is a pleasure to roll around in the mouth, as the Capela elicits flavors of grenadine, blackcurrants and black pepper ending in a moderately long grapy and berry filled aftertaste. It improved considerably from day one to the next and especially on the third day tasted, with greater intensity, density and verve. It did not yet provide much in the way of complexity and I look forward to tracking it's evolution over time. A limited edition VP with only 250 cases bottled. An exciting debut effort by Capela! **92-94+ points 7/20/09**

2007 Ramos-Pinto's Quinta de Ervamoira Vintage Port – Cask sample. Here's an example of a Vintage Port which just never evolved over the several days it was open. Tanky at the offset, that quality never dissipated or integrated over the three days this was open. Aromatics of stewed fruits, and a green profile of pine needles, Eucalyptus and an unpleasant vegetal note. The palate also showed some unusual sweet tropical characteristics. Full-bodied and smooth in the mouth with plenty of zippy acidity, there was a weird vitamin pill flavor along with prune, raisin and pineapple. Seemingly structurally sound although the tannins were astringent, quite ripe overall and with a distinctly short clipped finish, this was not one of the better

Ervamoira's Vintage Ports I've tried. I look forward to tasting this again to see if it improves when it has more time and significantly settles down. **82-84+ points 5/16/09**

2007 Ramos-Pinto Vintage Port – Cask sample. Considerably better than their SQVP, but the aromatics are weird here too. Dominant “tanky” scents and pungent mint comes to the fore along with high-toned lilac and anise. By day three, there evolved a more pronounced fruit driven nose, in the form of an earthy black cherry note, bright boysenberry along with anise and a kalamata olive accent. Certainly unique, even for some of the green aromas that seem to be a part of the 2007 vintage. The palate actually has some very tasty and concentrated fruit which shows a full-bodied style, although on the red-purple, tart/earthy realm with pomegranate, cranberry and prune flavors. Rich, smooth and with good acidity and ripe, chalky tannins that arrive late, this is a well-balanced Port; a bit quirky but it is pleasant overall. Drink from 2015-2022. **86-88+ points 5/16/09**



2007 Real Companhia Velha Vintage Port – Cask sample. Like its sibling, (Royal Oporto is part of Real Companhia Velha) the nose here also shows some green notes with a stalky and herbal character as well. But there's also freshness, with bright grenadine notes and black cherry along with some young grapy character and milk chocolate accents. The RCV continued to put on significant weight from a fairly light-bodied beginning and morphed into a rather big and meaty Vintage Port. Lovely flavors of Damson plum and redcurrant along with mint and a prominent, powerful dark chocolate finish of good length. The acidity was adequate and ripe, but non-aggressive tannins were refined and well-integrated overall. 2007 RCV will drink nicely young or will potentially cellar for 22-28 years. **89-91+ points 5/12/09**

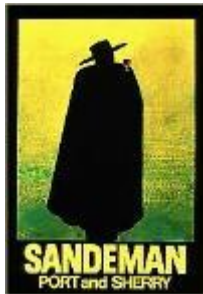


2007 Rozès Vintage Port – Cask sample. The exotic essence of sweet raspberry preserves and floral elements with an earthy dried prune accent make for a classy sniff. After several days this morphed nicely and offered a ripe, full-bodied, nicely nuanced and balanced Vintage Port. It has a core of sweet boysenberry and vivacious dark cherry flavors and plenty of chewy tannins to make this cellar worthy. The purity of fruit is worth mentioning and a medium finish that is very enjoyable too. Due to the prominent and grippy tannins, I would wait until this had a few years to integrate. That's not a bad thing! Drink between 2015-2032. A very well made Rozès Vintage Port. **90-92+ points 5/12/09**

2007 Porto Rocha Vintage Port Cask sample. – Dark magenta color with full opacity. Extraordinary aromatic intensity with dark fragrances of prune followed by tar, marionberry, and

an intricate menthol-herbal note. Medium-full bodied, yet initially it makes a massive impact with concentrated ripe fruit, impressively balanced with ample acidity and laced with cassis, wild berry and hints of baking chocolate. Easy to approach and it drinks beautifully now, with a seamless silky presence and a well delineated mid-section. The layered nuances will continue to gain more depth as this 2007 evolves over the next two to three decades. It possesses ripe tannins that are grippy but not astringent and then segue towards an explosive finish of 30+ seconds. Evaluated over four days, this is the singular best Rocha Vintage Port I've ever tasted, and one of the standout surprises from the 2007 crop! **94-96+ points 7/4/09**

2007 Royal Oporto Vintage Port – Cask sample. This had the oddest nose of any of the 16 VPs I encountered during round 1 (four sessions). Faint whiffs of dried rose petal and rhubarb with a medicinal and green vegetal note that was rather unpleasant, and an undertone that was a bit more, well, enjoyable ... mint/herbal and cocoa. As strange as it sounds, it did not really evolve at all and was static throughout my sessions. Fortunately it drank considerably better than it smelled. Red currant, rhubarb and ripe plum flavors are sweet and nicely developed in a straight forward style. Structurally sound with enough crisp acidity to cut the sweetness and the dusty tannins were ripe and refined. A bit simple overall, but the very tasty and long finish along with the chocolate laden aftertaste were very good. This will provide good value for mid-term drinking pleasure up through 2022. **85-87+ points 5/12/09**



2007 Sandeman Vintage Port – Cask sample. This was the 20th overall 2007 Port I tasted. From my first sip to my last (a few days later) this was absolutely wonderful juice. A 2nd bottle was evaluated for 4 days (blind of course) and provided consistent notes. Aromas of fresh plums, tar, pine resin, herbs and brambly blackberry. Packed, pure, powerful, ripe plum and blackberry fruit are smooth and sumptuous, a really sexy Port not only densely concentrated but with remarkable balance throughout and already showing lots of complexity. The tannins are massive, drying yet non-astringent and the acidity is spot on. The length of the aftertaste had me talking to myself and shaking my head in disbelief (and I had no idea which this was). Sandeman's VP is one of the three greatest surprises of the '07 crop, and immediately won a spot in my **Top 10** standouts of the entire vintage. At the conclusion of one of my days of tasting, David Guimaraens stopped by as we were on our way to having dinner and I said, "You really have to try this one and tell me what you think." After sipping, spitting and some contemplation, he nodded his head in approval and mentioned in his understated manner, "That is very good." Try a bottle whilst young or bury it in the cellar for at least 20 years or through mid-century. Portmaker Luis Sottomayor deserves major kudos for this outstanding achievement, producing the finest Sandeman since 1963! **95-97+ points 6/25/09**



2007 San Leonardo Vintage Port – Cask sample. This was one of two bottles included in this report, which were not tasted blind, nor over several days. In fact, I wasn't even sitting down. I had this particular sample while visiting with Miguel Braga at his **Quinta do Mourão**, our last visit during the 2009 Port Harvest Tour. So you may take this tasting note with a grain of salt, as I only had this in my glass for ten minutes and then went back for another small pour. Miguel's father brought the property in 1972 and their 2000 Vintage Port was their very first. Most people know of San Leonardo aka: S. Leonardo because of the renowned 30 Year Old Tawny Port. This 2007 Vintage Port was quite solid. The nose delivered blackcurrant and plum notes with a spicy anise and peppery impression. Medium-bodied, full flavored, elegant and with excellent balance and rather soft tannins, this should age nicely. That's my "snapshot" and I'm sticking to it. **91-93+ points 10/10/09**

2007 Smith Woodhouse Vintage Port – Cask sample. Very "tanky" back in May, this settled down to provide rose petal and grenadine aromatics, with an earthy undertone of esteva and tobacco leaf. Delivering a head turning, crushed berry blast of black raspberry, fleshy black plums and a touch of youthful heat in a medium sweet Port profile, ending in an impressively long and opulent finish. This 2007 Vintage Port is complemented by a decadently smooth and viscous mouthfeel, well-integrated tangy acidity and chewy tannins delivering plenty of grip. Drink now (well decanted) or through 2032. 3,000 cases produced (12 x 750s). A very fine offering by the oft overlooked Smith Woodhouse. **92-94+ points 6/25/09**

2007 Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas Vinha Velha Vintage Port – Cask sample. This is the old vine version of Taylor's Vargellas which has only been vinified four times until now: 1995, 1997, 2000 and 2004. This is special terroir, with serious vestiges of old vines. I've had all four of the earlier releases and they've been nothing short of remarkable, even the "off vintage" 2004. This cask sample (in Gaia) was initially quite "tanky" with high toned notes of violet, sweet grape and by the third day the nose calmed down. I had another bottle which I hand-carried back, providing time for this one to settle down for several weeks and it was then inserted into a blind flight of 9 bottles over a four day period but only tasted three times (skipping day three). Noticeably lighter in color than all others in the flight, and the only one without full opacity. An explosive nose revealed sweet plum and cassis at the outset; anise and mocha emerged the second day which added an extra dimension. The off-dry fruit exhibited lip-smacking purity and intensity of grape, with prune, black berry and black licorice flavors but a lot of heat resided in the mid-section and finish, and even on day four it had not yet integrated. The dark berry filled finish intertwined with bittersweet chocolate, which was decadent but medium in length, unusual for this bottling. Additionally, one of the hallmarks of Vinha Velha has always been powerful and grippy tannins, but here I felt the tannins were polished, soft and lacked the iron fist grip. This will age very nicely for up to three decades. More elegant stylistically than what I'm accustomed

to from VVVVP and a very tasty number indeed. These are sold by the bottle or in 3-bottle cases. Total production was 3,600 bottles (750 ml only). **92-94+ points 7/20/09**



2007 Taylor Fladgate Vintage Port – Cask sample. In mid-May, I spent a few days with one bottle in a flight of sixteen, which was so filled with “tanky” qualities, it was hard to get past. Some impressions became clear a few days in.

Fortunately, I had a 2nd bottle to bring back to the USA and was able to lay it down for a month to rest before including it in a blind lineup with eight other 2007s. This note is from the second bottle. Still a bit “tanky” the first day with some air getting in the bottle -- “tanky” was not apparent the second day. Exuding a dark and brooding nose of blackcurrants, prune, fresh violets, tar, espresso and a powerful whiff of aguardente. This changed over the next three days and I also noted toffee and Sultana raisins and the spirit nature mostly blew off. On the palate, it gained some weight but it had started out full-bodied. A mix of red, purple and black fruits with black cherry, boysenberry, black plum flavors and tar which combined for a complex cuvée that is all about elegance, not overpowering the palate. This improved each time I tasted it and showed best on the very last day. Rich, ripe and viscous, but only medium-sweet with a drying and delicious finish; the acidity is prominent and the tannins are chewy and round, but lack Taylor’s typicity at this stage (not that I mind!). There’s less grip and more easy approachability than any young Taylor I’ve had before. Stylistically the 2007 harvest has brought a uniquely balanced Port that speaks more of finesse than power. I hate to bet against any Taylor VP’s longevity, but I see this aging for around 28-36 years. **Please do go to the new TNDB for a more current single blind impression (of Taylor/Croft/Fonseca).** 10,000 cases produced (12 x 750s). **93-95+ points 7/20/09**

2007 Vallegre Vista Alegre Vintage Port – (Finished Bottle) Sultry spicy scents of fennel, mint and vanilla are accompanied by fresh boysenberry and tar aromas. Chunky, medium-full weight but ultimately smooth and voluptuous in the mouth, with lithe acidity and age worthy dense tannins. The mid-palate shows prominent alcohol which is concerning and detracts from this being scored in the next higher tier. Presenting pretty and primary fruit flavors of ripe blueberry and dark cherry along with a peppery edginess. If the heat eventually integrates, it will allow this to age beautifully, as the rest of the components are perfectly in synch and the finish is lingering and precise, with silky milk chocolate flavors. Vallegre’s top gun should be at its best in 28-35 years. **92-94+ points 7/10/09**

2007 Weise & Krohn’s Quinta do Retiro Novo Vintage Port – Cask sample. If this does not sound familiar, it is a Quinta belonging to Weise & Krohn (typically known by Port lovers as Krohn). It is located near Quinta Bom Retiro in the Rio Torto Valley. The property encompasses 26 hectares of which 15 is planted to vineyard and they produce about 70-80 pipes per year

from their own grapes. DOC Douro wine is also produced here. I've never tried a Vintage Port from this SQ property before May 2009. What a pleasure it was to discover this VP which I had a few weeks earlier when visiting with the owner of Krohn. This note is from my blind tasting at the conclusion of my Port seclusion with the 2007 lineup. Fresh and fragrant carnations perfume, with scintillating scents of marionberry, spice and vibrant raspberry aromas. Over several days this morphed from a primary grape flavored drink to a more pronounced and layered Port consisting of cassis, boysenberry and ultra-smooth and concentrated blackberries. The purity is what captured my attention, along with the complexity in the mid-palate and extraordinary finish. I know that the guests on the Fortification Tour were smitten by this particular cask sample. It is obvious why they fell in lust; there's a lot to enjoy here. Propped up by profoundly age worthy and dense tannins, the aftertaste is nothing short of extraordinary. I had to smile when the foil came off this bottle. This Krohn SQVP is one to seek out and cellar for at least three decades. Fabulous juice! **93-95+ points 5/16/09**



2007 Wiese & Krohn Vintage Port – Cask sample. Having visited W&K earlier in May and enjoying this Port along with numerous others; I was pleased to come across this again a week or two later while evaluating samples in Gaia. Sassy scents of bright red berry fruit with marionberry at the fore, but also some vibrant ripe plums and a hint of mint. Soft, generous and it drinks as well now as it will in future decades, although further complexity will certainly change it. Nonetheless, this was concentrated and sublime, well-balanced and refreshing in its youthful charms. It's one of the rare examples where the Single Quinta VP outshone the regular bottling in 2007. Either way,

Krohn is now making exciting young Vintage Ports in addition to their inimitable style of wood-aged Colheitas. **90-92+ points 5/16/09**



2007 Warre Vintage Port – (“Finished” Bottle) An evocative mélange of sweet-scented wild flowers, Rainier cherry, cocoa and cool eucalyptus pack a punch to the nose. A tale of two Ports: one side is soft and exudes feminine stylishness and immediate approachability, while the other is endowed with power and massively concentrated fruit. Rich and chewy, showcasing a sweet entry with black cherry, ripe plum and

blackcurrant flavors, enhanced by an exemplary level of acidity. The persistent finish is a showstopper while the impressively firm grippy tannins show up in time for the curtain call, allowing this 2007 VP to age effortlessly for three decades minimum, and possibly five. But there's no reason to wait as it shows lots of charm now, too. 6,500 cases produced (12 x 750s). Simply put, this is the best Warre's Vintage Port I've ever had, at this early stage of its evolution. **94-96+ points 7/20/09**

ROY'S TOP 10 LIST
OF 2007 VINTAGE PORTS

1ST	QUINTA DO NOVAL	97-99+ POINTS
2ND	NIEPOORT	96-98+ POINTS
3RD	QUINTA DO VALE MEÃO	96-98+ POINTS
4TH	DOW	95-97+ POINTS
5TH	SANDEMAN	95-97+ POINTS
6TH	POÇAS	95-97+ POINTS
7TH	QUINTA DO PORTAL	94-96+ POINTS
8TH	WARRE	94-96+ POINTS
9TH	ROCHA	94-96+ POINTS
10TH	GRAHAM	94-96+ POINTS