

## Douro reds

Port makes the headlines, but table wines make up the majority of this vast Portuguese region's output. Demand for the reds in particular is rising, says Sarah Ahmed

THE DOURO IS the world's largest mountain vineyard (45,221 hectares under vine) and thanks to Port, Portugal's premier wine region. In the past 25 years, it's seen more change than in its entire history – most obviously, a huge growth in table wines, which now make up more than half the Douro's output.

It's curious that it took so long, given the iconic status of pioneering Douro red Barca Velha. Remember, though, that when this wine was first made (1952), electricity hadn't arrived in this remote region. Port, fortified with brandy spirit, coped without temperature control better than table wines.

Even if producers didn't balk at this challenge, laws gave Port shippers a monopoly over sales. It was only broken in 1986 when Portugal joined the European Union, and EU funds backed vital investment in equipment and vineyards. The more dynamic of the Douro's 35,000 growers were emboldened to make single-quinta wines independently.

### Spoiled for choice

Named after the river which runs through it, the Douro encompasses a 100km stretch of the Douro Valley split into three sub-regions. Described as 'nine months of winter, three months of hell,' its extreme continental climate means autumn temperatures can soar to 40°C.

From west to east, it's progressively warmer (rising from an average 18°C to 21°C) and much drier (the average annual rainfall plummeting from 900mm to 650mm). Wines become correspondingly richer, darker, spicier and fuller-bodied, scented with bergamot rather than rose.

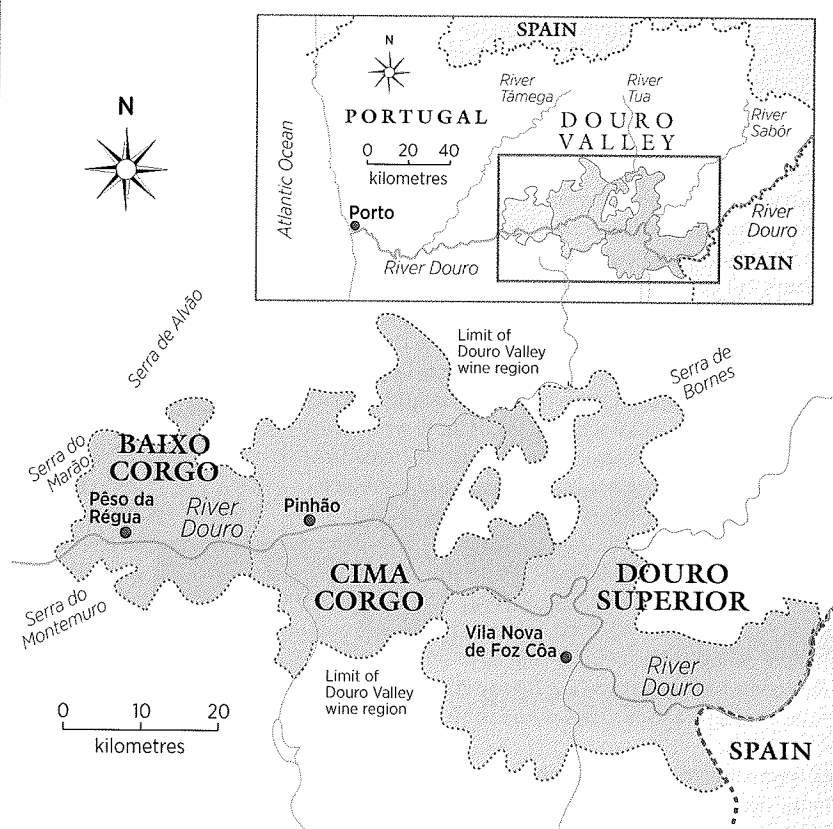
The westernmost Baixo Corgo and prized mid-section, the Cima Corgo, are almost uniformly steep, with schist soils. Towards the Spanish border, the Douro Superior's rolling landscape is less vertiginous, with more varied soils. It's even more complicated once you factor in the Douro's range of elevations (150m-900m above sea level) and aspects (including those of its offshoot valleys, such as the unusually cool Teja Valley). Niepoort's and Poeira's particularly elegant wines benefit from cooler, higher, north-facing sites dedicated to table wines, which also inform the freshness of a new breed of Douro Superior wines.

Winemakers are also spoiled for choice when it comes to grape variety – 68 for red wines alone. Drawing on Port tradition, and because older vineyards (40 years plus) are a mix of 20 or more grape varieties, most Douro wines are blends (varietal, sometimes sub-regional too).

Following 1980s research, younger vineyards tend to focus on five varieties. Touriga Nacional (tannin structure) and Touriga Franca (freshness) provide the Douro's signature perfume (rose, violet, bergamot) and delicious fruit. Tinta Roriz (Spain's Tempranillo) brings flesh and length. Spicy Tinto Cão and sturdy, sweet Tinta Barroca are usually minor blend components.

Old-vine field blends can show intensity, complexity and, because deeper rooted, better balance in hotter years. But younger single-block plantings allow each variety to be picked at optimal ripeness and, in top years, stand on their own merit – varietal wines are a small but growing trend, especially Touriga Nacional. Higher-yielding younger vines have also enabled the Douro to make wines at lower prices.

Reflecting trends and high-extract Port production methods as well as their extreme climate, Douro reds used



### Douro reds: vintages

**2010** Hot, dry and higher yielding than 2009, with mixed results. Best wines not yet out.

**2009** Hot, dry year. Powerful, muscular wines, the best, long-lived.

**2008** Good winter rain, unusually cool conditions; refined, spicy, fresh wines.

**2007** Good winter rain, mild autumn; floral, red fruited wines of great intensity and structure.

**2006** Hot, humid, wet autumn; patchy quality, mid-weight, forward wines. Drink to 2015.

**2005** Very hot, dry; powerful but balanced wines. Drink to 2020.

to be high in everything – ripe (often overripe) fruit, tannin and oak. Today, grapes are picked earlier and there's less gilding of the lily. The benefits of cooler ferments, gentler extraction and less oak is clear in years like 2007 and 2008, whose mild summers produced perfumed, elegant wines. In hotter vintages like 2009, weeding out overripe fruit on sorting tables led to brighter and better balanced wines.

*Sarah Ahmed is the Decanter World Wine Awards Regional Chair for Portugal*

### Douro reds: the facts

**Total plantings**  
45,221 hectares  
**Number of growers**  
34,576, with 632 of these owning more than 10ha and accounting for 35.33% of vineyards  
**Total production (2010)**  
130,807,262 litres, of which: 59,051,504 litres are Port; 40,505,560 are DOC table wines; 2,419,248 are VR Duriense table wines; 24,737,069 are basic table wines and 3,772,392 are Vinho Moscatel  
**Most planted varieties:**  
Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz, Touriga Nacional, Tinta Barroca, Tinta Amarela

## The results

While the results seem initially positive, especially for blends and recent vintages, our experts bemoaned the inconsistent quality and the number of overoaked and overextracted wines. Mark O'Halleron reports

It's more than nine years since we held a tasting looking at Douro reds. What progress has the region made?

With fewer than 100 wines sampled then, against 226 submitted for this tasting, production has boomed, if not exploded – although not necessarily for the better according to Beverley Blanning MW: 'I was surprised by how many wines there were – I don't think I've ever done a Douro tasting with this many wines. But overall I thought the standard was fairly disappointing. I get the impression that a lot of people have just jumped on the bandwagon.' This was a point supported by Sarah Ahmed, the Decanter World Wine Awards Regional Chair for Portugal, though she added the caveat that the Douro 'is a work in progress; very much a rough diamond'. Richard Mayson, DWWA Regional Chair for Port & Madeira, was similarly keen to highlight this issue: 'It's important to put these wines in a historical perspective because the Douro, demarcated in 1979 in terms of table wines, is actually a very new region, and it's only in the past decade that people have been taking these wines seriously.' Margaret Rand certainly noted a stylistic shift: 'Seldom at a *Decanter* tasting have I tasted through such a revolution in wine styles. If you look at the older vintages, even 2007, many were hugely dense, extracted and alcoholic – figgy, slightly raisiny wines that could come from anywhere. But there were some very nice 2009s that showed what the Douro can do.'

**So, from a quality viewpoint, where would you say the Douro stands now with its table wines?**

All over the place, it seems. 'My marks went from dire all the way to five stars,' confirmed Godfrey Spence. Chris Sherwood elaborated: 'There seems to be a lack of coherence in the region. As a merchant, it's quite hard to get consumers to try the Douro. It's fine when you work with a few importers who specialise in the region, as you know you can choose 20 to 40 top-quality wines from them which you will be enthusiastic about and therefore can more easily sell to consumers. But there is a sea of stuff that simply isn't good enough.' Ben Campbell-Johnston agreed, but offered a more positive slant: 'Yes, there was a huge variation in quality here, with standards ranging from quite poor to truly excellent. But if you looked at a similar range of red Douro table wines five years ago, I think you would have seen many more poor wines in the mix.'



*“It's only in the past decade that people have been taking these wines seriously”*

Richard Mayson

## The scores

226 wines tasted

4

★★★★★  
Decanter Award

33

★★★★★  
Highly recommended

128

★★★  
Recommended

45

★★  
Fair

12

★  
Poor

4

Faulty

37

£ Good value  
(under £15)

Let's look first at the positives. There are a lot of fans of Douro reds out there. Did this tasting show why?

Campbell-Johnston, along with Joanna Locke MW, extolled the quality of the tannins: 'Fine, grainy, dry tannins. Dry in the same way as Nebbiolo but not as chunky. This means Douro wines are perfect with food – fatty food especially, with the dryness cutting through the fat.' The purity and lift of many wines was commented on by the panel; Dirceu Vianna Junior MW praising their 'lovely vibrancy', while Rand picked up on the specifics of the varieties: 'Tinta Franca offered ripe, attractive citrus notes, while Tinta Roriz is Tempranillo, so on its own you get stewed strawberries and not much else. Touriga Nacional is a lovely grape – quite flashy and perhaps too much on its own – the wines I liked best were probably those where it formed one third of the blend.' Indeed, it was the famous field blends of the Douro which enjoyed the most praise, with Blanning also revealing her favourite wines were those with a 'good chunk' of Touriga Nacional.

**And on the down side?**

Alluding to Rand's earlier point, there still seems to be some clumsy winemaking in terms of overextraction or overripe fruit. 'The big problem for me,' declared Ahmed, 'was too much extraction or too much oak. Don't try to overpolish that rough diamond – let the fruit fly, let that terroir show!' Mayson was in firm agreement: 'These heavy-handed, soupy wines where oak is seen as a panacea were a real problem. Many Douro winemakers clearly need a lighter hand on the tiller to craft wines with more elegance and finesse. Those were the wines that I gave my highest marks to.'

**There were also a high number of faulty bottles. Was there a common thread? [Second bottles were opened for many wines which showed faults in the first sample, and in four cases, both wines submitted were faulty.]**

Vianna Jr noted plenty of reduction, while Locke bemoaned volatile acidity, 'a fair bit' of Brettanomyces and found the amount of corked wines 'surprising'. She added: 'Producers outside of Portugal might say, "Oh, they send us all the rubbish corks" – but clearly Portugal is keeping quite a few poor corks for themselves too!' Blanning said this issue 'must be an embarrassment to the country'.



*“There was a huge variation in quality, with standards ranging from poor to truly excellent”*

Ben Campbell-Johnston

## The tasters

**Godfrey Spence** is a writer and author specialising in Portugal, and was a WSET senior lecturer for 16 years

**Nick Room** is a buyer at UK supermarket Waitrose, where his specialist areas include Portugal

**Sarah Ahmed** is the Decanter World Wine Awards Regional Chair for Portugal

**Dirceu Vianna Jr** MW is buying director for UK merchant Coe Vintners

**Ben Campbell-Johnston** is a freelance consultant, mainly for Portuguese and fortified wine producers



**Richard Mayson** is a writer and author specialising in Portugal. He owns Quinta do Centro in the Alentejo

**Margaret Rand** is a wine writer and judge, and general editor of *Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book*

**Chris Sherwood** is manager at London merchant Bottle Apostle

**Jo Locke** MW is a buyer at The Wine Society where her specialist areas include Portugal

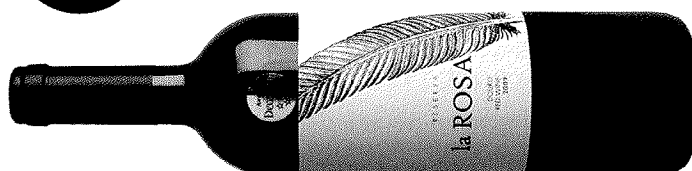
**Beverley Blanning** MW is a wine writer, author and competition judge

ENTRY CRITERIA: producers were invited to submit samples of their latest-release DOC Douro red table wines



## Decanter Award

18.5–20pts

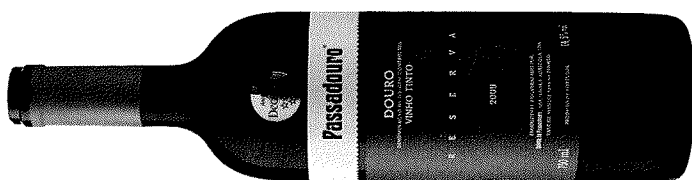


### Quinta de la Rosa, La Rosa Reserva 2009

19.17pts/20

£28.65–£34 AG Wines, Berry Bros & Rudd, The Good Wine Shop (Kew), Harrods, Slurp, Swig, WoodWinters

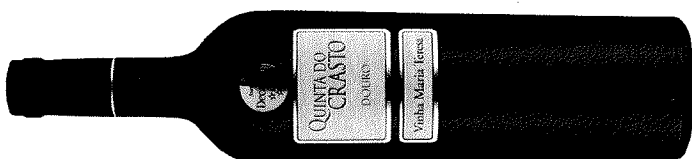
Concentrated, uplifting and intense nose of mocha, dark cherry, herb, raspberry, blackberry and violet. Powerful, mouthfilling fruit which is well defined and juicy. It shows real finesse underpinned by a sophisticated structure. A cooler Douro style. **Drink:** 2012–2018. **Alcohol:** 14%



### Quinta do Passadouro, Reserva 2009 18.67

£37.99 Richards Walford, Swig

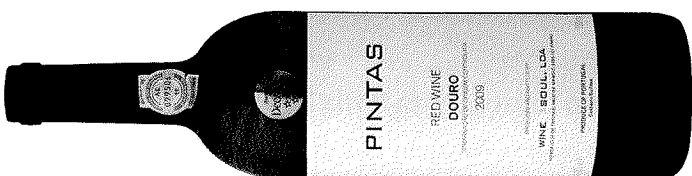
Classic Douro with a full nose of deep fruit, flowers, bread and vanilla. Lovely, balanced palate – a youthful blockbuster of a wine offering great acidity and tannin with well-integrated oak and a youthful sweetness. Elegant and poised. **Drink:** 2012–2019. **Aic:** 14.5%



### Quinta do Crasto, Vinha Maria Teresa 2009 18.63

£68.50 Adnams, Great Western Wine, Secret Cellar, Swig

Fine, aromatic nose of herb, mulberry and plum. A full red with chewy, dry tannins, seductive oak and lively acidity on the finish framing a creamy body and juicy sweetness. Fine and elegant. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Aic:** 15%



### Wine & Soul, Pintas 2009 18.5

£50 Corney & Barrow, Tanners

Faintly exotic nose. It has fine, linear, tightly knit fruit which is full, fleshy and very attractive, with a firm, tannic structure and fresh acidity on the finish. It's got everything it should have. **Drink:** 2012–2018. **Aic:** 14.5%

So it seems our readers should stick with the blends, from more recent vintages. Any more pointers?

'Know your producer' – that old adage usually attached to our Burgundy or Rhône tastings – seems ever-pertinent here as well. 'Or know your merchant and their importer,' said Sherwood, reaffirming that 'there are exceptional wines in the Douro; there's a lot of value and a lot of skill. But when you look at the industry as a whole, it is still really only a handful of producers who are making good-value, exceptional wines.' Crucially, Vianna Jr added, 'And remember: value doesn't need to be £4, it could be £15 or more.' Speaking for our expert panel, he concluded by saying: 'The region has definitely turned a corner, but I think there's still a long way to go before a consumer can reach for a bottle of Douro table wine with confidence and know what to expect.'



*“There's a way to go before consumers can reach for a Douro table wine with confidence”*

Dirceu Vianna Jr

# Decanter PANEL TASTING



**Highly recommended** 16.5–18.49pts



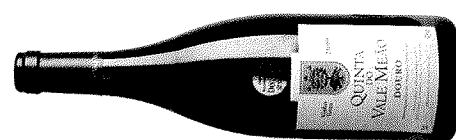
**Quinta dos Murças, Reserva 2008** 18.17

£24.50 Bat & Bottle, Charles Hawkins  
Discreet, restrained nose of fresh mulberry. A youthful, promising and fine palate with firm, drying tannins. Fresh and balanced with a long sappy flavour and fragrant spice. Needs time. For fans of big stuff. **Drink:** 2013–2020. **Alc:** N/A



**Andreza, Grande Reserva 2009** 18

N/A UK [www.winesandwinemakers.pt](http://www.winesandwinemakers.pt)  
Quite showy on the nose with notes of pepper, cassis, elegant oak, plum, mulberry and smoky bacon. Very full and concentrated with soft, supple tannins, a full and firm grip, and a long, concentrated finish. One for the long term. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 14%



**Quinta do Vale Meão 2009** 17.67

£60 Corks of Cotham, Handford  
Ripe, lively violet and cherry bouquet. Juicy, mouthfilling fruit, a savoury, smoky complexity and careful oak influence. It has nice concentration and is well poised. Approachable and engaging. **Drink:** 2012–2016. **Alc:** 14.5%



**Castelinho, Argentea 2009** 17.5

£14.20–£16.20 (2008) En Primeur, The Sampler  
Youthful aromas of strong cyprus resin, violet, meat and herbaceous notes. Very elegant, uplifting palate with smooth and giving fruit, freshness and balance. Has a lovely, long, menthol finish. **Drink:** 2012–2014. **Alc:** 13.5%



**Quinta do Crasto, Douro Reserva Old Vines 2009** 17.5

£22.95 Great Western Wine, Secret Cellar, Swig  
Lovely berry fruit, violet, beetroot, earth and a generous lick of oak on the nose. It promises and delivers a velvety texture and has a well-covered tannin structure. It has lovely depth of flavour and just a hint of savoury oak. Elegant and linear. **Drink:** 2012–2018. **Alc:** 14.5%



**Quinta da Fronteira, Reserva 2009** 17.42

N/A UK [www.quintadafronteira.com](http://www.quintadafronteira.com)  
Pronounced oak, briary fruit, compote, fig and sweet spice on the nose. Very good concentration of fruit with quite soft, big, chalky tannins and evident new wood on the palate. Ambitious, ripe and juicy wine made in an international style. **Drink:** 2013–2019. **Alc:** 14.5%



**Douro Family Estates, Signature 2009** 17.4

N/A UK [www.dourofamilyestates.co.pt](http://www.dourofamilyestates.co.pt)  
Open, dark mulberry, blackberry and cassis aromas with floral perfume. Very firmly structured, it is full and enchanting with savoury, spicy notes and zesty acidity on the finish. **Drink:** 2012–2020. **Alc:** 14.5%



**Douro Family Estates, Quinta das Bajancas, Reserva 2009** 17.33

N/A UK [www.dourofamilyestates.co.pt](http://www.dourofamilyestates.co.pt)  
Elegant floral perfume with spicy plum, sweet oak and Porty notes. Very full style with massive concentration, full-bodied fruit and fine tannins. It has a concentrated finish and a ripe structure. **Drink:** 2012–2016. **Alc:** 13.5%



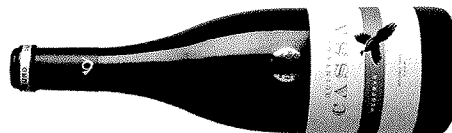
**Inquieto, Reserva 2008** 17.25

N/A UK [www.douroprime.com](http://www.douroprime.com)  
Dense aroma of young black cherry with a generous lick of oak. Attractive, sweet, juicy fruit is underpinned by a sophisticated structure. It has a concentrated creamy core and is very appealing. Accomplished modern style. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 14.5%



**Quinta do Crasto, Tinta Roriz 2009** 17.17

£38.95 Great Western Wine, Secret Cellar, Swig  
Very sweet strawberry, new oak and peppery, spicy, Douro fruit bouquet. Very good balance with well-handled tannins and attractively structured. It shows good Douro character. Well made. **Drink:** 2012–2016. **Alc:** 14%



**Vinhos Douro Superior, Quinta da Cassa, Reserva 2008** 17.17

N/A UK [www.vds.pt](http://www.vds.pt)  
Rustic, earthy and ripe floral fruit bouquet. It has personality and improves on acquaintance. Honest, bright and balanced wine with full plum and cherry flavours framed by ripe tannins. Finishes well. Quite elegant and pretty. **Drink:** 2012–2016. **Alc:** 14%

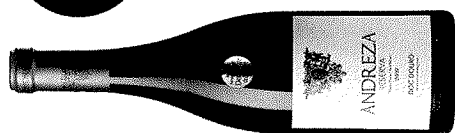


**Sobredos, Aneto, Grande Reserva 2009** 17.13

N/A UK [www.aneto.com.pt](http://www.aneto.com.pt)  
Fragrant, plump and charming, berry-scented fruit aroma. It has good concentration and a chunk of oak in there. Rich and dense but not hot; it has been softened by creamy new oak. Rich and fulfilling. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 14.5%



## Highly recommended (continued) 16.5-18.49pts

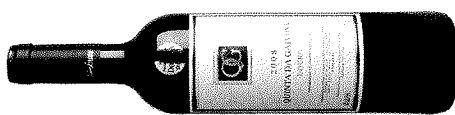


### Andreza, Reserva 2009 17

N/A UK [www.winesandwinemakers.pt](http://www.winesandwinemakers.pt)

Soft, sweet ripe fruit nose of dark fruit liqueur, chocolate and Christmas spice. A big wine with a massive structure. Accessible, creamy style flirting between fruit and oak. It has firm, dark, berry fruit on the finish and good balance.

**Drink:** 2012-2017. **Alc:** 14%



### Domingos Alves de Sousa, Quinta da Gaivosa 2008 17

£35 Atlantico UK

Seductive and elegant aromas of ripe raspberry, cherry, violet, lavender, herb and plums.

Excellent composure and feel to the palate with fine tannins and an uplifting, spicy, complex finish. It is a spicy, fleshy and opulent wine.

**Drink:** 2012-2020. **Alc:** 14.5%



### Domingos Alves de Sousa, Tapadinha TTT 2008 17

N/A UK [www.alvesdesousa.com](http://www.alvesdesousa.com)

Attractive and inviting, soft, spicy, floral and blue fruit aromas. A densely textured, mouthfilling red with big fruit, a velvety smooth texture and a lovely complex finish. Smooth, rich and supple. **Drink:** 2012-2016. **Alc:** 15%



### Quinta da Touriga-Chã, Puro 2008 17

£14.50 Flourish & Prosper

Rose, violet, spice and earthy aromas. Good grip and clarity on the palate and has a cool elegance to it. It has sweet fruit and richness of flavour with chewy, structured, assertive tannins. Needs time but has complexity. **Drink:** 2012-2017.

**Alc:** 14%

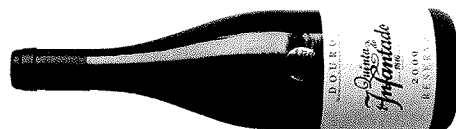


### Quinta da Fronteira, 2009 17

N/A UK [www.quintadafronteira.com](http://www.quintadafronteira.com)

Fragrant, graceful nose of black fruits, bright briary notes, dark cherry and herb. It has a seductive florality of rose and a lovely textured depth. The tannins are seamless and it is deliciously balanced. Needs time.

**Drink:** 2012-2017. **Alc:** 14%

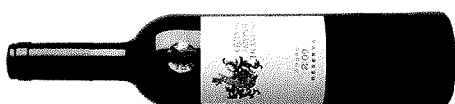


### Quinta do Infantado, Reserva 2009 17

£25.50-£28.99 Liberty Wines, Slurp

High-toned nose of smoky oak and mulberry. It has muscular tannins and penetrating flavours with a finely judged structure showing toast rather than sweetness from oak. Given a few years, this will be very good. **Drink:** 2013-2016.

**Alc:** N/A



### Quinta do Monte Travesso, Reserva 2009 17

N/A UK [www.quintadomontetravesso.com](http://www.quintadomontetravesso.com)

Dense, youthful and still vinous nose. Fragrant blue, black and plum fruit comes through on the palate which is nice and juicy. It has nice grip from its broad tannins and good depth. A very correct wine. **Drink:** 2012-2020. **Alc:** 14.5%

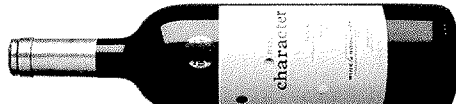


### Sobredos, Aneto 2009 17

N/A UK [www.aneto.com.pt](http://www.aneto.com.pt)

Lovely nose of fragrant, crunchy, creamy red and black fruit and violets. Tightly knit, silky palate with ripe, tarry, spicy and raisiny fruit. It has good integrity and elegant balance. Well structured, lovely wine. **Drink:** 2013-2018.

**Alc:** 14.5%



### Wine & Soul, Pintas Character 2009 17

£24 Corney & Barrow, Tanners

Bergamot, blackberry, cassis, cream and lavender perfume. Firm and structured with soft forest-fruit flavours. It has lovely balance and finesse on the palate with a beautiful finish.

**Drink:** 2012-2015. **Alc:** 14.5%



### Barão de Vilar, Zom Reserva 2008 16.9

N/A UK [www.baraodevilar.com](http://www.baraodevilar.com)

Dark, intense aromatics of black fruit, leather, spice, flowers and lots of toast. Succulent black cherry fruit with a cinnamon edge. The palate has a silky feel, lovely complexity and real fruit purity. Will improve. **Drink:** 2012-2017. **Alc:** 14%



### João Brito e Cunha, Quinta de S José Reserva 2009 16.88

N/A UK [www.quintasjose.com](http://www.quintasjose.com)

Dark, spicy fruit, chocolate and cherry bouquet. Smooth and fresh with good flavour, depth and richness. The tannins are broad and it has creamy, integrated oak leading to a smooth, richly textured palate. Has a lot of finesse.

**Drink:** 2012-2018. **Alc:** 14.5%



### Niepoort, Vertente 2009 16.83

£18-£19 Bat & Bottle, Corks of Cotham, Tanners, Uncorked

Ripe, oaky fruit which is plummy and full on the nose. Soft and rich initially, with ripe tannins rising in the mouth. Very well made with lovely balance. Texturally it is sleek and silky so even though it is concentrated, it feels light.

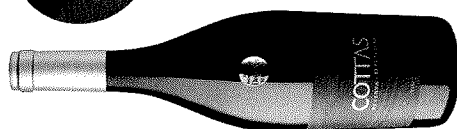
**Drink:** 2012-2017. **Alc:** 13.5%



# Decanter PANEL TASTING



## Highly recommended (continued) 16.5–18.49pts



### Quinta de Cottas, Reserva 2008

16.83

£18.99 Patriarche Wine Agencies

Brooding, elegant and lifted, spicy, peppery dark fruit bouquet. Ripe, rich and taut with lovely freshness, layers of flavour and a peppery edge. Very stylish, well-integrated red. Has a lifted violet and mineral finish. Very good.

**Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 14.5%



### Douro Family Estates, Quinta do Soque, Reserva 2008

16.67

N/A UK [www.dourofamilyestates.co.pt](http://www.dourofamilyestates.co.pt)

Lovely nose of tobacco and ripe, rich, spicy fruit. Classic in style with red and black berry fruit, good freshness and length. A linear style with a strong personality. Fine, elegant palate. A good, sound all-rounder. **Drink:** 2012–2016. **Alc:** 14%

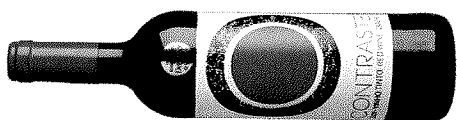


### Sainsbury's, Taste the Difference 2009

16.67

£7.99 Sainsbury's

Intense and ripe nose. It has juicy, extracted fruit, lively acidity and a fresh, clean finish. It shows youth and concentration with much more promise to come. It is wrapped in a youthful, purple robe. **Drink:** 2012–2016. **Alc:** 14.5%



### Conceito, Contraste 2009

16.63

£13–£14 No2 Pound St, Bat & Bottle, Bottle Apostle, Champion Wines, Marcl Wines, Reserve, Vineyard Wines (Ramsbottom)

Savoury leather, damson and berry fruit nose. Tight, fragrant palate with grippy tannins. It is focused, pure-fruited with an interesting sweet and savoury flavour mix. Elegant rather than full-throttle which is very Douro in style and rather good. **Drink:** 2012–2017. **Alc:** 13.5%



### Aliança, Quinta dos Quatro Ventos, Reserva 2007

16.5

£35 Boutinot, WoodWinters

Ripe, spicy berry and perfumed aromas. The palate is ageing gracefully and shows complexity offering dark fruit and earthy overtones. It has a rustic Porty style and mouthwatering tannins. Has a silky side to it.

**Drink:** 2012–2016. **Alc:** 15%



### Poeira 2009

16.5

£36 Berry Bros & Rudd, Hailsham Cellars, Handford

Very bright aromas of morello cherry, ripe plum and fine wood. Well structured with very expressive, lip-smacking fruit and fine character. Too young now but will be superb in a few years. Tannins are grainy and it has a nice length.

**Drink:** 2013–2017. **Alc:** 14%



### Quinta da Romaneira, Sino da Romaneira 2008

16.5

£17.99 Liberty Wines

Slightly rustic on the nose yet has nice focus and detail. Fine-grained tannins, pure fruit and some cooked strawberry flavours. It has a firm, pure, sweet-fruited finish of damson and cherry stone.

**Drink:** 2012–2016. **Alc:** N/A



### Quinta do Noval 2008

16.5

£32.99 Cambridge Wines, Genesis Wines

A forward and expressive bouquet of morello cherry, blackberry, meat, raisins and flowers. Full, muscular body with firm tannins. Very good concentration and creamy texture combined with a sophisticated structure.

**Drink:** 2012–2019. **Alc:** 14.5%



### Vinhos Douro Superior, Atalaya 2008

16.5

N/A UK [www.vds.pt](http://www.vds.pt)

Very youthful, juicy, simple plum, cassis, mulberry and minty aroma. Big, rich sweet palate which is full and firm. It is powerful and concentrated on the finish. Very good. Rustic and grippy in style. **Drink:** 2012–2014. **Alc:** 14%

## 3-STAR WINES Recommended

14.5–16.49pts

WINE	SCORE	TASTING NOTE	ALC	DRINK	PRICE	STOCKISTS
Quinta das Apegadas, Quinta Velha Grande Reserva 2008	16.38	Vivacious bouquet of dark fruit and violets. Rich, spicy, dense, oaky and raisined with chewy tannins drying the palate although acidity is in check. Traditional.	14.5%	2013–2016	N/A UK	<a href="http://www.apegadas.co.pt">www.apegadas.co.pt</a>
Caves Velhas, Almagrande, Touriga Nacional Reserva 2008	16.33	Leather, game and earth nose. Well made and balanced with fresh clean fruit and firm, dry tannins. Four-square but not without a certain amount of rustic charm.	14%	2012–2014	N/A UK	<a href="http://www.enoport.pt">www.enoport.pt</a>
François Lurton, Quinta do Malho 2008	16.33	Maturing nose with some dark fruit and spicy notes. Fine tannins and loads of dark, pure fruit on the palate enrobed in sweet oak. It has slight heat to the finish.	15%	2012–2015	£14.99	Grape Passions
Lavradores de Feitoria, Três Bagos Grande Escolha 2008	16.33	Closed nose with underlying ripeness. Firm, ripe, sweet fruit with good purity and freshness lingering on the finish. Good in a few years time; unreachable now.	14%	2015	£45	Flying Corkscrew
Lua Nova, Em Vinhas Velhas 2009	16.33	Aromas of blue and black fruit. It has smooth, round, rich herbal flavours with a touch of smokiness. Its juiciness is very attractive. Tight tannic grip on the finish.	14.5%	2012–2016	POA	Atlantico UK
Vinhos Douro Superior, Quinta da Cassa, Cassa 2009	16.33	Youthful dark berry, plum, chocolate and violet nose. A well-composed palate with a supple, silky feel and firm, grippy tannins leading to a dry, subdued finish.	13%	2012–2015	N/A UK	<a href="http://www.vds.pt">www.vds.pt</a>

## 3-STAR WINES Recommended (continued)

14.5–16.49pts

WINE	SCORE	TASTING NOTE	ALC	DRINK	PRICE	STOCKISTS
Vinhos Oscar Quevedo, Claudia's Quevedo 2009	16.33	Smoke, fruit, cedar and mulberry nose. Dry, dusty tannin with an open style of fruit. Broad with a slight smoky finish. Elegant.	13%	2012–2014	£19.99	Borough Wines
Domingos Alves de Sousa, Tapadinha Grande Reserva 2007	16.25	Lovely, rich, sexy style with sweet, silky ripe fruit, bordering on luscious. Rich and dark with sufficient structure and freshness. Succulent drinking now.	15%	2012–2016	N/A UK	www.alvesdesousa.com
Quinta da Basilla do Todão, Premium 2008	16.25	Discreet bouquet of blackberry, cherry, violet, spicy and smoke. Well-integrated oak, grippy tannins, good concentration and a long length. Velvety textured.	14.5%	2012–2016	N/A UK	www.quintadabasilla.com
Quinta da Rosa 2009	16.25	Elegant plum, cherry, raspberry and violet perfume. Round, soft and juicy with elegance and finesse. Grainy, rasping tannins and fresh acidity on the finish.	14.5%	2012–2014	£14.99	Berry Bros & Rudd, Bottle Apostie, Upton Wines
Castello d'Alba, Reserva 2009	16.17	Modern, sleek aromas of ripe, red bramble fruit and vanilla oak. Shows great potential with its structured, modern style. Classical and typically serious effort.	13.5%	2013–2017	N/A UK	www.vds.pt
Quinta Casa Amarela, Grande Reserva 2009	16.17	Ripe cherry and richly herbal, extracted nose. Concentrated style showing young expressive oak and fine, savoury high-toned fruit and brisk acidity. Long finish.	14.5%	2012–2013	N/A UK	www.quinta-casa-amarela.com
Quinta do Portal, Reserva 2009	16.17	Dark, heady aromas of Port and mocha notes. Concentrated, powerful black fruit combines with structured, firm tannins. Very attractive current drinking.	13.5%	2012–2013	£16.25	Duncan Murray Wines, Field & Fawcett, Hangingditch, Hercules Wines
Prats & Symington, Chyrseia 2009	16.13	Youthful fragrant nose of hedgerow and wildflower. Upfront with good fruit and ripe tannins. It has some sappy oak and a creamy texture. Long and seductive.	14.5%	2013–2022	£55	Fells, Tanners
Prats & Symington, Post Scriptum 2009	16.13	Sleek, perfumed nose. Dusty tannins. A solid, well-made wine offering lots of perfumed violet notes. Youthful, mid-weight style.	14.1%	2012–2017	£18	Fells, Tanners
Quinta do Grifo, Reserva 2008	16.13	Fine, ripe berry and pepper nose. Restrained, elegant and young with fine, light tannins and a pleasant purity to the finish. Well balanced and needs time.	13.5%	2012–2025	N/A UK	www.rozes.pt
Quinta do Passadouro, Passa 2009	16.13	Sweet, plump, fragrant nose of dark fruit. Fresh and minerally with sweet ripe raisin flavours, a rounded texture and good, firm tannins. Fresh and appetising.	14.5%	2012–2016	£11.49	Richards Walford, Swig, Tanners
Sogevinus Fine Wines, Casa Burmester, Touriga Nacional 2009	16.13	Tight, floral, clove and smoke aromas. Complex, bright and characterful with focus and detail. Silky and delicious fruit. Oak is present but should soften.	14%	2013–2018	N/A UK	www.sogevinus.com
Adriano Ramos Pinto, Duas Quintas Reserva 2009	16	Aromatic nose of smoke and raisined fruit with Port influences. Perfumed and well knit, densely fruited palate with fairly dry and firm tannins.	15%	2013–2020	£29	D Byrne & Co, Fortnum & Mason, Frank Stainton
GR Consultores, Crooked Vines 2007	16	Hot and stewed nose with some spicity notes. Dry, ripe and prune with tannic fruit. It has good concentration and a long finish. Intense and ageworthy.	15.5%	2013–2020	N/A UK	www.secretspotwines.com
Muxagat, Mux 2008	16	Restrained nose of damson, plum and pomegranate. Big bodied with a stylish structure and pleasant finish. Still tight, vibrant and youthful with juicy acidity.	13.5%	2012–2016	£15.95	Berry Bros & Rudd
Prats & Symington, Prazo Roriz 2009	16	Aromatic fruit and earth notes. Grippy, concentrated and earthy palate with focus and precision. Very good balance and firm, linear berry fruit.	14%	2012–2016	£10.70–£17.99	Fells, Tanners
Quinta Fafide, Colheita 2010	16	Lovely breadth of restrained blackberry aromas. Fresh, dark fruit, vibrant acidity, a very firm tannic character and light oak contributes to a long, dry finish.	13%	2012–2014	N/A UK	www.vds.pt
Real Companhia Velha, Delaforce, Touriga Nacional 2009	16	Lifted orange blossom, dark fruit, violets and dried herb nose. Structured and juicy with sleek blackberry and cherry fruit. Elegant, balanced and harmonious.	N/A	2012–2015	£12.45	Auriol Wines, Peter Green, Rodney Fletcher, Sheridan Coopers, Viader Wintners
Waitrose in Partnership with Quinta da Rosa, Reserve 2009	16	Fresh nose of mint, spicy orange peel, chocolate, pepper, blackberry and plum. Excellent concentration, structure and lots of character with a complex finish.	14.5%	2012–2014	£10.69	Waitrose
Sogevinus Fine Wines, Curva Reserva 2009	15.92	Intense berry fruit and attractive oak bouquet. Ripe and very open wine with fresh, brisk acidity and dry, dusty tannins. Impressive with excellent balance.	14.5%	2012–2016	N/A UK	www.sogevinus.com
Brites Aguiar, Bafarela, Grande Reserva 2009	15.88	Toasty and earthy nose. A more savoury proposition, with nice depth, spiciness, pepper and warmth. Tannins are grippy and it has solid, sweet ripe Douro fruit.	14.5%	2012–2013	N/A UK	www.britesaguiar.com
PV Wines, VT 2007	15.88	Intense plum, black fruit, raisin and oak bouquet. A succulent red underpinned by refined tannins and balancing acidity. Dry, savoury, full and fleshy wine.	14%	2012–2015	POA	Marta Wines
Quinta do Infantado 2009	15.88	Sweet aroma of crunchy fresh black fruit and gravel. Loose-knit, soft and ripe, silky palate with red fruit and chocolate flavours and a rustic texture.	N/A	2012–2016	£13.99	Liberty Wines
Van Zellers 2009	15.88	Open red fruit, spice, liquorice and black fruit nose. A well-defined palate with spicy, savoury black fruit and a tight sappy finish. Complete. Traditional in style.	14.5%	2013–2017	£9.95	D & F Portuguese Wines
Maragato, Reserva 2009	15.83	Violets, spicy orange peel, malt, herbs and savoury bouquet. Concentrated fruit and a firm, sophisticated structure. Rich and chocolatey with black pepper hints.	14.5%	2012–2017	N/A UK	+351 914 008 390
Quanta Terra, Terra a Terra 2008	15.83	Attractive chocolate fruit, smoky bacon and floral perfume. Verging on overripe with broad tannins and lift. Has some grip and freshness.	13.5%	2012–2015	N/A UK	+351 259 958 508
Quinta do Vallado, Reserva Field Blend 2009	15.83	Rustic nose of old wood, ripe plum, dark cherry and violet. Dry, juicy palate with lovely balance and texture. It has a soft, pleasant finish. Elegant.	14.5%	2012–2015	£26.77	Bibendum
Quinta do Vallado, Sousão 2009	15.83	Lifted aromas of dark fruit, leather, herb and pepper. Strong cassis flavours with crunchy acidity. Interesting, different, local style. Needs time.	14.5%	2013–2016	£18.79	Bibendum
Quinta Vale D Maria, 2009	15.83	Aromatic dark fruit, spice and floral elements. It has a light palate with fine tannins but little complexity; however, the balance is great. Soundly made.	15%	2012–2016	£20	Tanners
Caves Transmontanas, Vértice 2008	15.79	Lifted nose of cherry, raspberry and herbs. Sweet fruit palate which is fresh and ripe without being cloying. Rich and pure with supple tannins. Light style.	15%	2012–2015	N/A UK	+351 259 958 508
Adriano Ramos Pinto, Collection 2009	15.75	Dense, youthful nose of creamy oak, earth and chocolate. Tight, fresh palate which is young and sappy, though it is lacking some definition now.	14.5%	2012–2017	£20.50	Maisons Marques & Domaines
Quanta Terra, Grande Reserva 2009	15.75	Red violet and smoky perfume. A fresh, attractive palate of perfumed dark fruit, prominent oak and a big, broad finish. Very good if you like this upfront style.	14.5%	2013–2016	N/A UK	+351 259 958 508
Duorum, Reserva 2009	15.67	Restrained aromas of dark fruit, chocolate, sweet spice, oak and gingerbread. A beast which needs time. Good concentration of fruit and skillfully structured.	13.5%	2012–2017	£25	Tanners

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## 2011 AWARDS





## 3-STAR WINES Recommended (continued)

14.5-16.49pts

WINE	SCORE	TASTING NOTE	ALC	DRINK	PRICE	STOCKISTS
Quinta da Sequeira 2009	15.67	Restrained cherry, pepper and animally bouquet. It is fragrant but light with a very, chewy, sticky tannin structure. It has a mild, appealing finish.	14.5%	2012-2013	POA	Ince Wines
Quinta do Portal, Touriga Nacional 2009	15.67	Youthful, pleasant, raspberry, cherry, blueberry and light spice aroma. Big fruit which is simple, fresh and attractive. Solid structure. Not big but very drinkable.	14.5%	2012-2016	£26.50	Duncan Murray Wines, Field & Fawcett, Hangingditch, Hercules Wines
Quinta dos Murças, Assobio 2009	15.67	Bright nose of oak, spice and ripe redcurrants. The palate has grippy, dry tannins, full-bodied, spicy, bramble fruit and fresh acidity on the finish. Shows potential.	13.5%	2012-2014	£12	Charles Hawkins
Symington Family Estates, Altano, Quinta do Ataíde Reserva 2008	15.67	Lovely aromatics. Meaty, rich palate with attractive fruit. Good depth and definition with structured tannins and mocha oak flavours.	14%	2012-2016	£13	Fells
Vinhos Borges, Lello 2009	15.67	Smoky bacon, earth and perfume nose. Bright, pretty and compelling. Savoury oak flavours are offset by firm, yet ripe berry fruit. Elegant on the finish.	13.5%	2012-2014	£6.99	Buckingham Schenk
Vinhos Borges, Borges 2008	15.67	Concentrated nose of soupy fruit. Perfectly nice with rich, dark fruit and lots of oak, nice balance and big, broad tannins. Well made without being ambitious.	14%	2012-2015	£9.99	Buckingham Schenk
Niepoort, Batuta 2009	15.63	Subtle richness of plum, cherry, raisins, dried fig, sweet spice and vanilla on the nose. A full, chewy palate with sappy oak, rich fruit and a dry, tannic finish.	13.5%	2012-2017	£64-£66	Bottle Apostle, Highbury Vintners, Tanners, Uncorked, The Wine Society
Quinta dos Poças, Grande Reserva 2009	15.63	Toasty, dense blue fruit nose. Good weight of fruit with mocha notes induced by oak. Has a touch of the New World. Needs time but will show well.	15.5%	2012-2015	N/A UK	www.pocas.pt
Sogevinus Fine Wines, Casa Burmester, Reserva 2009	15.63	A fresh, fruit-filled nose with clove, milk chocolate and allspice. Nice perfumed fruit with well-managed tannins. Characterful and fresh with a sense of place.	14%	2013-2020	£12.17 (2007)	Wine from Portugal
Barão de Vilar, Zom 2008	15.5	Very ripe, slightly floral, fruity bouquet. It has a mid-weight palate of some elegance. Good overall with some firm, dry tannins and fruit to match them.	14%	2012-2015	N/A UK	www.baraodevilar.com
Castello d'Alba, Unoaked Touriga Nacional 2010	15.5	Fragrant nose of spice and oak. Smooth and plump with excellent freshness and firm, sappy tannins to balance and a good toasty length. Gently perfumed.	13%	2012-2015	£8.95 (2009)	The Wine Society
Domingos Alves de Sousa, Quinta do Vale da Raposa, Touriga Nacional 2008	15.5	Soft, ripe morello cherry aroma. Sleek and supple with some spice but without complexity. Tannins are firm and ripe but is a bit dry and tannic on the finish.	14.5%	2012-2015	£40	Top Selection
Quinta da Sequeira, Grande Reserva 2007	15.5	Flashy oak and berry fruit aromas. A smooth, full-bodied wine with lovely fruit concentration. Heavyweight style which is satisfying and ambitious. Good length.	15%	2012-2018	£35	Ince Wines
Quinta do Couquinho, Reserva 2009	15.5	Deep, sweet aromas of chocolate, violet cream, morello cherry, ripe plum and flowers. Juicy fruit with fine tannins, good depth and mocha oak. Well executed.	14.5%	2012-2016	N/A UK	+351 214 139 022
Quinta do Crasto, Touriga Nacional 2009	15.5	Jammy, extracted fruit, cream, bergamot and oak aromas. A very full, rich, opulent palate which is generous and supple. A powerful, tarry wine.	14.5%	2012-2017	£38.95	Great Western Wine, Secret Cellar, Swig
Quinta do Pôpa, TR, Tinta Roriz 2008	15.5	Quite hot, spiritry nose. Big, flashy and simple - New World style; not very Douro. It has supple, plummy fruit and crisp acidity. Has noticeable alcohol on the finish.	14%	2012-2015	N/A UK	www.quintadopopa.com
Sogrape, Callabriga 2009	15.5	Lush red and black fruit, savoury and earthy aromas. Full and weighty, well-made wine, although simple. It has well-managed tannins and balanced oak spice.	13.5%	2012-2015	£13.99	Alexander Hadleigh, Amps, Babalake, Martinez, Troubador Wines
Symington Family Estates, Tuella 2008	15.5	Spice, coriander seed and raspberry bouquet. Fresh, crunchy berry fruit which is plump and soft. The tannins are gentle and the length is good. Attractive.	13%	2012-2016	£7.99	Majestic
V Leite de Faria, Animus 2009	15.5	Earth, prune and cassis aromas. Complete and balanced with a black fruit profile, significant tannins and crisp acidity. Atypical but reflective of the vintage.	13%	2012-2017	£7.50	Casa Leal
V Leite de Faria, Gloria Reserva 2008	15.5	Ripe, full and fruity palate with bright acidity, tannins and alcohol well tucked in. A pretty wine which is well made. It has a rustic finish with a hot, earthy feel.	13.5%	2012	POA	Casa Leal
Vinhos Douro Superior, Tuga 2010	15.5	Bright aromas of flowers, cherries and berries. Youthful style with a well-defined flavour, assertive chocolatey tannins and a hint of spice. The fruit is dry and juicy.	12.5%	2012-2015	£9	The Wine Society
Durham-Agrellos, Marka 2009	15.38	Gentle, cream, meat, spice and berry fruit bouquet. Fresh, vibrant and sappy flavours that are easy and attractive. Firm and defined with freshness and grip.	13.5%	2012-2018	N/A UK	www.durhamagrellos.pt
Niepoort, Redoma 2009	15.38	Elegant sappy, spicy ripe morello cherry and blackberry aromas. Soft, round and juicy fruit with drying tannins. Sweet fruit and a mineral brightness.	14%	2012-2015	£33-£35	D Byrne & Co, Duncan Murray, Harrogate Fine Wines, Lay & Wheeler, SH Jones, Tanners, Uncorked
Quinta da Rosa, Dourosa 2009	15.38	Oaky, earthy and floral perfume. Lovely freshness and delicious silky fruit with wonderful depth of flavour. Good but no real identity - could be from anywhere.	14%	2012-2014	£10.98	Berry Bros & Rudd, Raffle, Vagabond Wines, Whitebridge Wines
Quinta do Noval, Touriga Nacional 2009	15.38	Stewed fruit, meat, spice, oak and savoury leather bouquet. Tight, young, grippy, oaky style with fragrant fruit, freshness, balance and length. Ripe and full.	14%	2013-2017	N/A UK	www.axamillesimes.com
Terrus, Reserva 2008	15.38	Aromas of dark fruit, smoke, garrigue herb, earth and flowers. Correct, simple wine with a smooth texture and savoury characters. Good length.	14%	2012-2015	N/A UK	+351 254 969 067
Van Zellers, Curriculum Vitae 2009	15.38	Ripe oaky nose. The palate shows rich raisin fruit and lots and lots of oak. It is soft and fleshy initially with tannins rising in the mouth. Four-square and perfumed.	15.5%	2014-2018	£56.50	D & F Portuguese Wines
C da Silva, Dalva, Reserva 2009	15.33	Youthful, vibrant aromas of ripe dark fruit, herb and savoury notes. Ripe, juicy dark berry palate with a savoury note. Sophisticated but four-square structure.	13.5%	2013-2015	N/A UK	www.cdasilva.pt
Casa de Casal de Loivos, 2009	15.33	Subdued cherry, mulberry, cream and flowers on the nose. Good balance, fine, dry tannins and full-bodied fleshy fruit with a persistent finish.	14.5%	2012	£22	Tanners
Quinta da Basília do Todão, Colheita 2009	15.33	Sweet fruit, pepper, flowers and alcohol on the nose. Slightly coarse and rustic in style with stewed fruit, chocolatey tannins and a floral lift. Long, saline minerality.	15%	2012-2016	N/A UK	www.quintadabasilia.com
Quinta das Bandeiras, Passagem, The Crossing 2009	15.33	Open and soft aromas of mulberry and blackberry. Big and concentrated with a balance of fruit, oak, acidity and chunky tannins. Not complex but approachable.	14%	2012-2013	£21.50	Corks of Cotham, Upton Wines
Real Companhia Velha, Delaforce 2009	15.33	Rose, blackberry, cherry and pepper aroma. Svelte, succulent palate with a saline edge, fine-grained tannins and a superb structure. Easy-drinking wine.	N/A	2012-2014	£9.95	Auril Wines, CT Baker, Dickens Wine Emporium, Peter Green, Red Field
Carm, Grande Reserva 2007	15.25	Seductive, ripe dark fruit, light floral and sweet oak bouquet. Elegant with notes of fig, dried herb and red fruit. Full bodied and rich with fairly stern tannins.	14%	2012-2015	£26.67	Wine from Portugal

## 3-STAR WINES Recommended (continued)

14.5–16.49pts

WINE	SCORE	TASTING NOTE	ALC	DRINK	PRICE	STOCKISTS
Durham-Agrellos, Reserva 2008	15.25	Black cherry, dark red fruit and intense violet perfume. Well-balanced palate with exuberant ripe fruit and a savoury character. It has a firm, punchy finish.	14%	2012–2016	N/A UK	www.durhamagrellos.pt
Quinta do Vale Meão, Meandro do Vale Meão 2009	15.25	Simple, scented fruit with a rich spiciness and a floral touch. Firm grippy tannins and a savoury finish. Slightly low acidity for long-term keeping, but good now.	14%	2012–2013	£18	Corks of Cotham, Handford
Carm, Reserva 2009	15.17	Plum, coffee, mocha, vanilla, high oak and floral bouquet. Juicy fruit with assertive floral notes surrounded by chocolatey oak tannins. Good individuality.	14%	2012–2018	£11 (2008)	Wine from Portugal
Castello d'Alba, 2010	15.17	Lush, sweet aromatic nose of wild garrigue, flowers, cherry, currant and ripe plum. Well-defined and concentrated fruit with supple, chocolatey tannins.	13%	2012–2016	N/A UK	www.vds.pt
Caves Messias, Dados, Reserva 2008	15.17	Earthy, savoury nose. Full, sweet and solidly structured fruit with loads of tannin. Appetising and would work well with food. Fresh, balanced and well made.	14%	2012–2015	N/A UK	www.cavesmessias.pt
Domingos Alves de Sousa, Reserva Pessôal 2005	15.17	Rustic but in a nice way – an old-fashioned Douro nose. Supple, earthy and leathery with peppery, spicy fruit. Not without charm though it has a hot finish.	14.5%	2012–2015	£40	Top Selection
Pocas, Poças Reserva 2008	15.17	Earth, shoe polish, leather, wood and a cooked nose. A mocha palate with chewy oak but lots of dark fruit underneath. Chunky and extracted, sumptuous wine.	14%	2012–2016	POA	House of Townend
Quinta do Cachão, Grande Escolha 2007	15.17	Ripe, overt, dark and dense fruit nose. Overripe and concentrated palate with a dry, tannic feel. A tad too alcoholic but it works.	14.5%	2012–2013	N/A UK	www.cavesmessias.pt
Quinta do Crasto, Crasto 2009	15.17	Darkly fruity, herbal and wild on the nose. It is fresh and fruity with good balancing acidity and excellent precision to the fruit. Composed and unassuming.	14.5%	2012–2015	£15.25–£16.50	Great Western Wine, Secret Cellar, Slurp, Swig
Quinta do Portal, Colheita 2009	15.17	Lifted nose of flowers, liquorice, dense berry fruit and spice. Lush, ripe palate with soft tannins, berried chocolate fruit and attractive spicy length.	13.5%	2012–2015	£11.90	Barrica Wines, Duncan Murray Wines, Field & Fawcett, Flagship Wines, Hangingditch Wines, Last Drop Wines, Thorold Wines, Vesuvio
Symington Family Estates, Altano 2009	15.17	Smoke, fruit and an animal note on the nose. It has fresh acidity and lovely fruit behind but the gamey character dominates. Lacks roundness of fruit.	13.3%	2012–2013	£6.75–£8	Fells, Tanners, The Wine Society
Vinhos Douro Superior, Quinta da Cassa 2009	15.17	Lively jammy fruit, mild spice and minerals – an old fashioned on the nose. A racy palate: young tannins and structure showing promise with soft fruit flavours.	13.5%	2013–2016	N/A UK	www.vds.pt
Quinta Casa Amarela, 2010	15.13	Fresh, berry fruit nose. Palate has mid-weight of savoury, slightly iodine fruit. Attractive, fairly tannic, slightly rustic. Good balance and detail.	14%	2012–2014	N/A UK	www.quinta-casa-amarela.com
Quinta do Portal, Touriga Franca 2009	15.13	Interesting nose of herb, orange zest and fruit compote. Firm and defined palate offering good purity of fruit. Full and smooth-textured. Well made and attractive.	13.5%	2012	£26.50	Charles Hawkins
Symington Family Estates, Altano, Organically Farmed Vineyard 2010	15.13	Spice, Christmas cake, plum, garrigue and smoke nose. Attractive, juicy fruit with a firm sappy length. Rustic but supple, vigorous wine with well-tamed tannins.	13%	2012–2013	£10	Fells, Tanners
Wine & Soul, Quinta da Manolla VV 2009	15.08	Impressive, typical nose of brooding dark fruit, spice, cherry and sweet spice. Dry with good concentration and an austere palate framed by sawdust tannins.	14.5%	2012–2015	POA	Corney & Barrow
Adriano Ramos Pinto, Duas Quintas 2009	15	Morello cherry, pepper, brambly fruit and liquorice nose. Concentrated fruit, round tannins, balanced acidity but a bit green on the finish. Easy and pleasant.	14%	2012	£11	Widely available via UK agent, Maisons Marques & Domaines
Casa Ferreirinha, Quinta da Leda 2007	15	Black fruit and mint bouquet. Attractive sweet fruit which is dark and dense. It tastes of dried figs. Well balanced and mid-weight, there is some elegance here.	14%	2012–2014	£29.99	Berkmann Wine Cellars, Swig
Churchill Estates, Touriga Nacional 2009	15	Beetroot, minerals, stone and balsamic bouquet. Round, ripe, simple palate with lively, linear flavours and good purity. An all purpose red which is on the lean side.	14.5%	2012–2014	£20	Tanners
Conceito 2009	15	Berry fruit, vanilla, oak, balsamic and dark chocolate nose. An opulent, rich palate with tannins and oak holding back the fruit. Complete if not special.	15%	2012–2016	£33–£35	No2 Pound St, Bottle Apostle, Champion Wines, Marcl Wines, Reserve, Vineyard Wines (Ramsbottom)
DFJ Vinhos, Vega 2007	15	Cooked, baked fruit, plum, new wood and floral fragrance. A figgy palate which is overripe and overlaid by creamy new oak and has soft, chewy tannins.	13%	2012–2017	£7.99	The Wine Reserve (Cobham)
Duorum, Colheita 2010	15	Ripe berry, cream, green oak and perfumed fruit nose. Full, fruity, juicy and gluggable with a touch of Brett and a sweetly fruity finish. Simple but long.	13.5%	2012–2013	£10.95–£12	Tanners, The Wine Society
Duorum, Tons de Duorum 2010	15	Fresh gamey notes and perfumed black fruit nose. It has fresh acidity, a ripe red fruit palate and a fragrant finish. A lightly dilute style that is nice but not complex.	13.5%	2012	£7.50–£10	Duncan Murray, Halifax Wines, Inn Express (Warwick), Real Wine Co (Slough), Tanners, Totnes Wines, The Wine Society
João Brito e Cunha, Quinta de S José 2009	15	Stewed and fresh fruit aromas. It has plenty of grip and character with a creamy texture and soft finish. A modern style which is pleasant if not challenging.	13.5%	2012–2016	N/A UK	www.quintajose.com
Quinta da Touriga-Chã 2008	15	Sleek nose of strawberry, rich fruitcake and rustic notes. Full-bodied and firmly structured with a big, chewy, meaty character. Very good if it's not too expensive.	14%	2012–2017	£25	Flourish & Prosper
Niepoort, Robustus 2007	15	Oak and ripe berry fruit bouquet. Soft and fleshy with well defined fruit character. It has firm tannins and fruit lingers with oak on the finish. Chewy style.	13.5%	2012–2013	£80–£85	Fortnum & Mason, Handford, Tanners
Poeira, Pó de Poeira 2009	15	Stewed dark fruit, minerals and vegetal bouquet. An elegant, mineral sluiced palate shows well defined red and black fruit. Simple and correctly made, if rustic.	14.5%	2012–2015	£20.50	Berry Bros & Rudd
Quinta do Passadouro 2009	15	Inviting nose of flowers, ripe dark fruit, sweet spice and oak. A stewed, chocolatey palate with fine tannins and hints of orange blossom. Quite dry on the finish.	14.5%	2012–2017	£21.99	Richards Walford, Swig, Tanners
Quinta do Portal, Tinta Roriz 2009	15	Sour cherry, violet and citrus nose. The fruit is a little green now and the finish is rather lean. The palate is a bit of a jumble but it has decent acidity. A little rustic.	14%	2013–2015	£26.50	Duncan Murray, Field & Fawcett, Hangingditch, Hercules Wines
Sogrape, Callabriga Reserva 2007	15	A rustic, farmyardy nose. Rich, dark and raisined with good texture, complexity and flavoursome fruit. Concentrated, rustic and chunky with a persistent finish.	14%	2012	£19.99	Alexander Hadleigh
Paul Reynolds, Quinta de Macedos 2005	14.88	Spicy aroma with rich, raisined dark fruit. Dense, rich and opulent with some oxidation. Good mouthfeel yet tannins are rough and it is a bit dried out.	14.5%	2012–2015	£34	Handford, Peake Wine Associates
Niepoort, Drink Me 2009	14.83	Fresh berry and plum fruit on the nose. Simple, juicy and fresh with sweet, soft round fruit, sufficient acidity and supple tannins. Good early-drinking style.	13.5%	2012–2013	£11–£12	No2 Pound St, Corks of Cotham, Lea & Sandeman, Selfridges, Woodwinters, Worth Bros
Niepoort, Charme 2009	14.83	Oaky nose and palate with some red fruit. Rather solid and ripe with good Portuguese typicity. Quite pleasant and round with edgy tannins on the finish.	14%	2012–2016	£70–£75	Barrica, Corks of Cotham, Fortnum & Mason, Handford, Highbury Vintners, Theatre of Wine





*Poças Reserva  
Douro 2008*

### Poças Junior

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www.pocas.pt

Importers in the UK  
Cachet Wine  
www.cachetwine.co.uk  
Harvey & Son (Lewes)  
www.harveys.org.uk



### QUINTA DOS MURÇAS

COVELINHAS - DOURO

RESERVA 2008

DOURO

### ESPORAO S.A

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Fax: +351 213 019 968  
Email: comercial@esporao.com

www.murcas.com



2009 VERTENTE  
DOURO  
DENOMINAÇÃO DE ORIGEM  
CONTROLADA

NIEPOORT, PORTUGAL

TINTO

ENCARRAFADO EM 2011  
PRODUZIDO E ENCARRAFADO  
POR Niepoort (VINHOS) S.A.  
4400 V.N. GAIA, FUNDADA EM 1842  
PRODUTO DE PORTUGAL

13,5%VOL  
750ML e



*Niepoort*

SINCE 1842



NIEPOORT (VINHOS) S.A.  
RUA CÂNDIDO DOS REIS 670  
4400 - 071 V.N. GAIA - PORTUGAL  
T + 351 223 777 770  
F + 351 223 320 209

WWW.NIEPOORT-VINHOS.COM  
INFO@NIEPOORT-VINHOS.COM



2009 CHARME  
DOURO  
DENOMINAÇÃO DE ORIGEM  
CONTROLADA

NIEPOORT, PORTUGAL

TINTO

ENCARRAFADO EM 2011  
PRODUZIDO E ENCARRAFADO  
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## 3-STAR WINES Recommended (continued)

WINE	SCORE	TASTING NOTE	14.5–16.49pts			
			ALC	DRINK	PRICE	STOCKISTS
Quinta da Romaneira, Reserva 2008	14.83	Perfumed, meaty nose. A smooth palate with sweet, almost jammy fruit. Fresh, bright and lively if a little simple. Tannins are perky but not overly prominent.	14%	2012–2014	£49.99	Liberty Wines
Quinta Nova, Quinta Nova (unoaked) 2010	14.83	Simple nose of spice, ripe berry, plum and black cherry with a distinct note of citrus peel. Structured, attractive texture and secondary notes developing.	13%	2012–2015	£12–£15	Inn Express, Totnes Wines
Quinta Nova, Pomares 2009	14.83	Savoury bouquet. Fresh, simple palate which is elegant rather than powerful. It has good character at the expense of precision. On the lean side.	13.5%	2012–2016	£10–£12	Andrew Darwin Wines, Inn Express, Jascots, Marks & Spencer, Totnes Wines
Carm, SO <sub>2</sub> Free 2010	14.75	Lifted, floral, meat and wood on the nose. Good balance, firm, peppery, spicy fruit and alcohol is well tucked in but there is still something raw about it.	14.5%	2012	£19.17 (2009)	Wine from Portugal
Quinta do Portal, Grande Reserva 2007	14.75	Spicy black fruit and cocoa aromas. Velvety tannins surround some chocolate orange flavours. Decent concentration and richness with low-ish acidity.	14%	2012–2016	£28	Duncan Murray Wines, Field & Fawcett, Hangingditch, Hercules Wines
Durham-Agrellos, Marka Touriga Nacional 2009	14.67	Berry, orange blossom, cherry and violet perfume. Well-made wine with a classy structure and a ripe, full palate. Attractive soft fruit character and a floral finish.	14%	2012–2013	N/A UK	www.durhamagrellos.pt
Muxagat, Tinta Barroca 2010	14.67	Dark fruit, floral and almost Beaujolais Nouveau aromas. Plenty of juicy, red fruit, good complexity and depth with some astringent tannins. Will improve.	13%	2012–2015	N/A UK	www.muxagat.pt
Quinta do Cotto, 2009	14.67	Floral perfume, sweat and leather on the nose. Nicely perfumed wine without a lot of flesh, but it is well balanced and juicy. Simple but has character.	13%	2012–2015	£10.49	Touchstone Wines
Quinta do Crasto 2009	14.67	Juicy black cherry and plum aromas and a touch of green stalkiness. It shows good depth but has very dry tannins on the finish.	14.5%	2012–2013	£8.50–£11.95	Great Western Wine, Secret Cellar, Slurp, Swig, The Wine Society
Quinta do Vesuvio, Pombal de Vesuvio 2009	14.67	Violets, dried dark fruit, berry and plum nose. Thick, figgy style with attractive fruit, round tannins and a good finish. Soft and easy, if hammered with oak.	14%	2012–2013	£17–£22	Fells, Tanners
Quinta do Côa, 2008	14.63	Porty, violet, savoury and medicinal notes on the nose. A grippy, savoury wine with a rustic style; fruit has begun to fade but it remains sound and food-friendly.	13.5%	2012–2014	£14.99	Green & Blue
Casa Ferreirinha, Esteva 2010	14.5	Simple nose of dried red fruit and spice. Soft, fine-grained tannins surround restrained, minerally fruit. Nice weight but the fruit is mildly baked on the finish.	13%	2012	£8.99	Clissold Wine Merchants, Theatre of Wine
Caves Vale do Rodo, Cabeça de Burro, Reserva 2009	14.5	Nose of bread and red fruit. Fresh, balanced style with a bit of grip, warm black and red fruit and strong grippy tannins. Long, linear and well judged.	14%	2012–2013	£10.50 (2008)	Wine from Portugal
Lavradores de Feitoria, Quinta da Costa 2008	14.5	Oaky, dense black fruit bouquet. Oak palate with nice weight of fruit and firm, tannic structure. Unforgiving and austere now but should soften.	14%	2013–2017	£30	Duncan Murray
Paul Reynolds, Lagar de Macedos 2003	14.5	Mature and demure on the nose with tobacco and cigar box notes. Big, dry, overripe and tannic; brutish in style. Standing up well but tails off at the finish.	14.5%	2012–2013	£28	Handford, Peake Wine Associates
PV Wines, Quinta do Sagrado 2007	14.5	Rich but not overripe with floral perfume and savoury new oak. Soft, round and weighty with depth and structure. Simple, dense and perfectly good of its type.	14%	2012–2013	POA	Marta Vines
Quinta da Fronteira, Grande Escolha 2009	14.5	Oak-dominated nose. Fragrant, plump fruit palate with spicy tannins, lots of oak and grape tannins. It has a dry, sappy finish. A successful wine in its own terms.	15%	2013–2015	N/A UK	www.quintadafronteira.com
Quinta de Ventozelo, QV 2008	14.5	Meat, flowers and savoury nose. Still fresh fruit on the lush palate with dry and bony tannins. Rich and spicy with a good length. Woody finish.	13.5%	2012–2017	£8.99	Chester Beer and Wine, John Scott & Miller, Vinea
Quinta do Grifo, Grande Reserva 2008	14.5	Dark berry and spicy coriander aroma. Ripe but present tannins, dense, dark berry and cherry fruit but oak smothers it. Puckering finish from the high acidity.	14%	2012–2016	N/A UK	www.rozes.pt
Quinta do Pôpa, Vinhas Velhas 2008	14.5	Rich aromas of cake. Satisfying palate of substance and interest. Flavours are multi-faceted. Good crunchy structure, but too much tannin on the finish.	14.5%	2012–2015	N/A UK	www.quintadopopa.com
Samuel Magalhaes e Silva, Quinta da Prelada 2009	14.5	Wild and soupy on the nose with a touch of Brett. Extracted, coarse style. It does feel fresh and has good concentration, however, and fair tannic grip.	14.5%	2012–2019	N/A UK	www.douro4u.com
Tesco, Finest Douro 2010	14.5	Stewed fruit, cherry and some reduction on the nose. A peppery, lively edge to red and black fruit with a rustic, firm structure. Simple with nice freshness.	13.5%	2012–2015	£7.29	Tesco
Vinhas da Ciderma, Grande Reserva 2007	14.5	Soft cherry and stewed fruit nose. Sweet, smooth and fragrant yet a developed palate that lacks a middle. Simple style which is well made, balanced and correct.	14.5%	2012–2014	N/A UK	www.vinhasdaciderma.com

### 2-STAR WINES Fair 12.5–14.49

■ Quinta do Pôpa, Homenagem 2008 (14.38)  
 ■ Inquieto, Touriga Nacional 2008 (14.33) ■ Quinta do Vallado, Vallado 2009 (14.33) ■ PV Wines, Mutante 2007 (14.17) ■ Quinta Casa Amarela, Reserva 2008 (14.17) ■ Quinta das Apegadas, Quinta Velha Reserva 2008 (14.17) ■ Donzel, Colheita 2007 (14.13) ■ Maria Adelaide Melo e Trigo, Encostas do Gavião 2009 (14) ■ Quinta do Couquinho, Colheita 2009 (14) ■ Quinta do Têdo, Grande Reserva Saverda 2007 (14) ■ Quinta do Vallado, Touriga Nacional 2009 (14) ■ Vinhos Borges, Quinta Soalheira 2008 (14) ■ Quinta do Judeu, 2008 (13.88) ■ Quinta da Pedra Alta, Reserva Pessoal 2008 (13.83) ■ Vinhos Oscar Quevedo, Oscar's 2009 (13.75) ■ François Lurton, Quinta Beira 2009 (13.67) ■ Quinta da Romaneira, 2008 (13.67) ■ Quinta do Roriz, Prazo de Roriz Vinho Tinto 2008 (13.67) ■ Quinta do Vesuvio, Quinta do Vesuvio 2009 (13.67) ■ Caves Velhas, Topázio 2009 (13.63) ■ Frederico Meireles, Grambeira 2008 (13.5) ■ Pocas, Vale de Cavalos 2008 (13.5) ■ PV Wines, Sagrado 2008 (13.5) ■ Quinta de Ventozelo, Vinzelo 2009 (13.5) ■ Quinta de Ventozelo, Touriga Nacional 2008 (13.38) ■ Quinta de Cottas,

Cottas Tinto 2009 2009 (13.33) ■ Quinta Fafide, Reserva 2008 (13.33) ■ Carm, Maria de Lourdes 2008 (13.17) ■ Castello d'Alba, Vinhas Velhas, Grande Reserva 2009 (13.17) ■ Quinta das Apegadas, Apegadas Quinta Velha 2008 (13.17) ■ Aliança, Quinta dos Quatro Ventos 2008 (13) ■ Barão de Vilar, Passa Pequena 2009 (13) ■ Caves Vale do Rodo, Reccua 2009 (13) ■ François Lurton, Barco Negro Reserva 2008 (13) ■ Lavradores de Feitoria, Meruge 2008 (13) ■ Quinta da Rosa Vinhos SA, Vale da Clara 2009 (13) ■ Quinta do Têdo, 2008 (12.83) ■ Biomanz, Manz 2009 (12.67) ■ Lavradores de Feitoria 2009 (12.67) ■ Parras Vinhos, Rio Real 2010 (12.67) ■ Quinta do Pêgo, Grande Reserva 2008 (12.63) ■ Casa Menêres, Romeu 2009 (12.5) ■ Donzel, Reserva 2005 (12.5) ■ Quinta da Pacheca, Vinha da Rita 2009 (12.5) ■ Quinta de Ventozelo, Reserva 2008 (12.5)

### 1-STAR WINES Poor 10.5–12.49pts

■ Quinta da Fronteira, Selecção do Enólogo 2008 (12.33) ■ Quinta do Couquinho, Poyares 2009 (12.33) ■ Lavradores de Feitoria, Três Bagos 2008 (12.17) ■ Alta Pontuação 2008 (12.13) ■ Quinta da Pedra Alta,

Touriga Nacional 2007 (12) ■ Quinta de la Rosa, La Rosa 2008 (12) ■ Quinta de Ventozelo, 2007 (12) ■ Quinta Nova, Grainha 2009 (12) ■ Quinta do Zimbro, Calcos do Tanha 2007 (11.75) ■ Quinta da Pacheca, Touriga Nacional, Grande Reserva 2009 (11.63) ■ Pocas, Coroa d'Ouro 2008 (11.33) ■ Jose Maria de Fonseca, Domini 2009 (11)

### FAULTY WINES

■ Samuel Magalhaes e Silva, Douro 2009 (reduced)  
 ■ Quinta do Silva, Special Sensations, Grande Reserva 2008 (oxidised) ■ Churchill Estates, 2009 (corked)  
 ■ Quinta do Cachão, Reserva 2009 (corked)

For full UK stockist details, see p99

**Next month's panel tastings:**  
 Argentinian Malbec &  
 Chilean Sauvignon Blanc

## Expert summary: Sarah Ahmed

A successful tasting for the Cima Corgo sub-region and those producers who, particularly in the hot, ripe 2009 vintage, achieved elegance from the powerful fruit



**Sarah Ahmed** is the Decanter World Wine Awards Regional Chair for Portugal. She was the Portuguese Annual Wine Awards Wine Writer of the Year in 2009

IMMEDIATELY STRIKING IS the high proportion of wines (73%) which achieved three stars or more. Lower-priced, bigger-production wines also impressed, notably Sainsbury's Taste the Difference own-label (£7.99; 16.67/20pts) as well as relative newcomers: Conceito, João Brito e Cunha, Sobredos, Quinta do Noval (all four stars).

The fact that all the Awards and most four-star wines hailed from the hot, dry 2009 vintage tells a story. It was a great year for Port, but more challenging for table wines. Recently, winemakers have paid more attention to balance and the panel rewarded their efforts to avoid overripeness and harness the Douro's exuberant fruit. Vintage isn't all that the five-star wines have in common. They're a ringing endorsement for the Cima Corgo sub-region and foot-trodden, old-vine field blends made from 20 or more traditional Douro varieties. It makes sense: the Cima Corgo is home to most leading estates and, in hot years like 2009, deep-rooted old vines cope better with water stress.

What's more, the Awards are all flagship, single-estate reds from among the region's most seasoned producers. Quinta de la Rosa and Crasto are pioneers of Douro table wine. Star performer Jorge Serôdio Borges, who made two five-stars and a four-star wine (Passadouro and Wine & Soul's pair), previously worked for another – Niepoort.

Reassuringly, four stars for Wine & Soul and Crasto's cheaper reds (including the Crasto-made Sainsbury's wine) show that great Douro wines from the best in the business are becoming more affordable. Accessible too, for these wines need not to be kept for year to show at their best.

Wines from cooler, higher, north-facing sites, especially Niepoort's Charme, Batuta and Redoma (all three stars), also Poeira (16.5pts), might have been expected to score better. Perhaps these elegant wines were just outgunned by the flamboyance and power of other 2009s. At any rate, both winemakers scored higher ratings with the more fruit overt Niepoort Vertente (16.83pts) and Quinta de la Rosa Reserva (our top scorer, made by Poeira's Jorge Moreira).

With the exception of Quinta do Crasto's Tinta Roriz (17.17pts), single-varietal wines also failed to shine, proving that the Douro's strength – blends – should not be ignored.

*“Winemakers have paid more attention to balance and the panel rewarded their efforts to avoid overripeness”*

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