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# Decanter

## MOUTON ROTHSCHILD

THE NEW GENERATION



### PORTUGAL'S NATIVE REDS

Best buys from £8-£25

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Exciting whites, plus  
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# Portugal's native reds: best buys at £8-£25

As the quality revolution gathers pace, Portuguese winemakers are producing a varied range of reds from indigenous varieties, with top examples highlighting a revival of lighter styles. Sarah Ahmed reports

HOW THRILLING TO see the *Arenae Ramisco 2007* from *Adega Regional de Colares* top this two-day tasting of 137 UK-imported Portuguese reds in such an important price bracket. This near-extinct, ungrafted grape (*Ramisco*) from a near-extinct region (*Colares*, by the Atlantic coast to the west of Lisbon) showed terrific varietal and regional authenticity and complexity, winning a score of 95 points.

Together with the similarly rare *Vulcânico Red 2015* from the *Azores Wine Co* (joint second on 93), *Filipa Pato's Post-Quercus Baga 2015* (amphora-fermented and aged) from *Bairrada* (90) and *Aphros' Vinhão 2015* from *Vinho Verde* (89), it additionally reflects an exciting revival of lighter, fragrant, nuanced reds from coastal regions.

Consistently producing fuller-bodied, satisfying reds, where judicious oak adds spice and polished tannins, the Douro and Alentejo have been at the vanguard of Portugal's quality wine revolution. They easily fielded the most entries; a third from each (17 from the Douro, 11 from Alentejo) dominated the top 38. With more time for tannins to integrate, some Douro wines (especially from 2013) might warrant higher scores. Top wines did not forsake freshness. In Alentejo, *Alicante Bouschet* and

*Trincadeira* brought savoury complexity to temper fruit expression. Returning to the less extractive theme, we had a high score from an unoaked, amphora-fermented/aged red from *Herdade São Miguel* (who, strikingly, produced four of Alentejo's five top reds).

Scoring it 95 points, two tasters sighed over the Barolo-like savoury complexity and structure of *Vadio's Baga 2013* (£11.50), reinforcing the fact that this *Bairrada* grape can be a great buy. Neighbouring *Dão*, another classic region, disappointed. Only three of 20 entries demonstrated the elegance and structure we expected to find. As for those regions that have traditionally focused on bulk and value-driven wines, they were effortlessly outclassed. No wines from *Tejo*, *Lisboa* or *Península de Setúbal* made the cut.

With its diverse terroir, huge varietal range, tradition of blending and the odd, esoteric single varietal (*Ramisco*, *Baga*), Portugal is never boring. Quality, however, can be inconsistent, so it pays to do your homework on producers and vintages. Douro and Alentejo look like safe bets but, as *Colares*, *Azores* and other regions demonstrate, do not be afraid to venture further afield. Portugal is dusting down its vinous gems to great effect.

## The tasters



### Sarah Ahmed

is a wine writer, educator and DWWA Regional Chair for Portugal. She publishes *the winedetective.co.uk*



### Ieva Markaityte

is head sommelier at top Portuguese restaurant, *Taberna do Mercado*, in London



### Dirceu Vianna Junior MW

is the first Brazilian Master of Wine. He is a consultant, wine educator, judge and author



1 **Adega Regional de Colares, Arenae Ramisco, Colares**

2007 95

£19.50 (50cl) **Clark Foyster, The Wine Society**

**Sarah Ahmed** Long, fine and persistent, with great varietal typicity and a perfectly judged ripeness of fruit – terrific!

**Ieva Markaityte** Redcurrant, strawberry and beautiful leather tones on the nose, while the palate metes out such an elegance with soft, rounded tannins and sublime length.

**Dirceu Vianna Junior MW** Graceful and gently fragrant with aromas of dried roses, undergrowth, cedar and hints of exotic spices. Enticingly complex on the palate yet wonderfully fresh, leading to a long and persistent finish. A beautiful example, showing real finesse and typicity.

**Drink** 2017-2030 **Alcohol** 13%

2 **Azores Wine Company, Vulcânico, Azores**

2015 93

£21-£25 **Bob Wines, Dorset Wine Co, Grape & Grain, Le Vignoble, Prohibition Wines, Red Squirrel, Vagabond, Wolseley Wine Loft**

Perfumed and vivacious, with complex aromas of leather, cedar and pencil shavings leading to a deliciously light and elegant palate, with savoury complexity and lively, refreshing acidity. Saborinho at its best. **Drink** 2017-2025 **Alc** 12.5%

3 **Herdade de São Miguel, Escolha dos Enólogos, Alentejano 2015**

93 £20 **Raymond Reynolds**

An archetypal Alentejo red, with dark, juicy fruit jumping out of the glass. Generous, glossy and fruit-forward, therein lying the pleasure – powerful and opulent but not at all heavy. **Drink** 2017-2024 **Alc** 14.5%



4 **Wine & Soul, Manoella, Douro**

2014 92 £16.95 **Corney & Barrow**

A herbal-tinged, red cherry nose unfurls onto an elegant, silky-soft yet sophisticated palate with herbal and liquorice-toned dark fruit mobilised by refined tannins and crisp, refreshing acidity. **Drink** 2017-2023 **Alc** 14.5%

5 **Casa Ferreirinha, Callabriga, Douro**

2014 91 £16.05-£17.99 **Exel Wines, Liberty Wines**

Youthful, uplifting and expressive, with a beautifully spicy nose of blackberry and cassis leading to a polished, svelte yet wonderfully concentrated palate underpinned by a zesty freshness. Lots still to come. **Drink** 2017-2025 **Alc** 13.5% ➤



Azores Wine Company  
Pico - Azores - Portugal  
azoreswinecompany.com

Decanter  
HIGHLY  
RECOMMENDED  
93  
POINTS

UK Agent  
Red Squirrel Wines  
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## QUINTA DO ATAÍDE

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RECOMMENDED  
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POINTS

Since the 1990's the Symingtons have been part of a new generation of winemakers producing exciting new wines from the low yielding grape varieties of the Douro.



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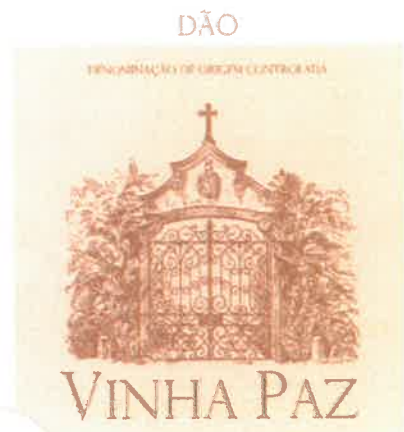


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Decanter  
HIGHLY  
RECOMMENDED  
90  
POINTS

Colheita 2015

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6 Casca Wines, Cabo da Roca Reserva, Bairrada 2015 91

£17.50 Portugalia Wines

Youthful yet approachable, with a restrained nose of smoky dark fruit welcoming a satisfying purity of fruit in the mouth, raised up by fine but firm tannins and a pretty floral lift on the finish. **Drink** 2017-2026 **Alc** 13%

7 Herdade de São Miguel, Art.Terra Amphora, Alentejano 2016 91

£13.50-£18 Chester Beer & Wine, Drinkmonger, Reserve Wines, Roberts & Speight, The Solent Cellar

On the nose, graceful notes of blackberries, fruit cake and violets, while lovely juicy, fleshy and smooth fruit is underpinned by a beautiful freshness on the palate. **Drink** 2017-2023 **Alc** 13.5%

8 Herdade de São Miguel, Alicante Bouschet, Alentejano 2015 91

£20 Raymond Reynolds

Highly expressive and fruit-driven, with dark plummy fruit accompanying notes of pine, dried herbs and sweet spice. Impressive, forward and juicy. **Drink** 2017-2026 **Alc** 15%



9 Herdade de São Miguel, Trincadeira, Alentejano 2014 91

£20 Raymond Reynolds

Enticing, complex nose of dark fruit enhanced by notes of wild herbs and chocolate, followed by a ripe and juicy palate flaunting intensity and freshness. Rich yet wonderfully harmonious. **Drink** 2017-2024 **Alc** 13.5%

10 Prats & Symington, Prazo de Roriz, Douro 2015 91

£11.95-£15 Fells, Harrods, Tanners, Taurus Wines, The Wine Society

Young yet focused, with a vanillin oak character on the nose and palate adorning blackberry and dark cherry fruit, underpinned by firm yet fine-grained tannins and a zesty freshness. **Drink** 2017-2024 **Alc** 14%

11 Quinta do Passadouro, Douro 2014 91

£11.63-£13.95 Carruthers & Kent, Fields Morris & Verdin, The Wine Society

Lifted, energetic and persistent, with herbal and chocolate-laden dark fruit aromas ceding to a seductive and classy palate with a well-defined, elegant structure and zesty acidity. **Drink** 2017-2025 **Alc** 13.5% ➤

12 Torre do Frade, Reserva, Alentejano 2007

91  
£25 Casa Leal

This is 10 years old yet still fresh and fragrant, showing a beautiful savoury complexity, with aromas of leafy tobacco and mint unfolding onto a silky textured, plummy, chocolate-toned palate. At its peak now. **Drink** 2017-2019 **Alc** 14%

13 Alves de Sousa, Caldas Reserva Touriga Nacional, Douro 2013 90

£19 Corks of Cotham, Salusbury Wine Store, Top Selection

Expressive and vibrant, displaying intense aromas and flavours of blackberry jam, mocha and sweet spice. Refined and elegant on the palate, yet concentrated, with an invigorating freshness. **Drink** 2018-2024 **Alc** 14%

14 Alves de Sousa, Gaivosa Primeiros Anos, Douro 2013 90

£20 Shepard Market Wine House, Top Selection

Dark forest fruit, blackberry compote and violet scents on the nose, which are mirrored on the palate. Forward, expressive and generous, with long-lingering, silky fruit and assertive tannins. **Drink** 2017-2023 **Alc** 14%



15 António Canto Moniz, Vinha Paz Colheita, Dão 2015 90

£15.99 South Downs Cellars, The Portuguese Fine Wine Co, The Vineking  
Floral, sweet, forest fruit on both the nose and palate, with oak lightly worn, while notes of fruit, spice and a lick of graphite are refreshed by finely poised acidity. Lovely typicity and elegance here. **Drink** 2019-2025 **Alc** 13.5%

16 Caminhos Cruzados, Titular, Alfrocheiro, Dão 2014 90

£16 Wine Walker  
A textbook, modern example of Dão with smooth and seductive dark fruit partnered by earthy notes and an animal complexity, all underpinned by well-judged oak and sublimely soft, integrated tannins. **Drink** 2017-2022 **Alc** 14%

17 Casa Ferreirinha, Papa Figos, Douro 2015 90

£8.95-£11.99 Banstead Vintners, Exel Wines, Liberty Wines, The Wine Society  
Lifted and lively, with overt and juicy dark fruit that's framed by firm, sophisticated tannins and a lovely underlying freshness - crunchy and persistent with a real sense of harmony; nicely done. **Drink** 2017-2021 **Alc** 13% >



# A new age of discovery

Portugal is steeped in wine culture. Vines have flourished in this long, slim country's hospitable climates for at least four thousand years.

And, since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, on the Atlantic archipelagos of Madeira and the Azores, which the Portuguese settled during the Age of Discovery.

Planted from head to toe – from Vinho Verde to the Algarve - Portugal is renowned for world class wines with an unmistakable thumbprint. Born of an enviable diversity of terroir and native grape varieties, Portuguese wines offer a unique kaleidoscope of flavours, textures and aromas.

After all, this Atlantic-facing country is home to Europe's western-most vineyards (on the sand dunes of Colares) and the world's largest mountain vineyard (the Douro, whose rock-hewn terraces rise to over 800m above sea level). Portugal is a land of dramatic contrast. From breezy, temperate coastal regions and islands, expect fresh, aromatic wines with a salty tang of the sea; whites excel, while fashionable classics Baga from the Bairrada region and Ramisco from Colares give

Pinot Noir a run for its money. With a continental climate, the interior produces fuller-bodied, masterfully balanced, gastronomic wines. Here, Portugal's rugged mountain slopes produce structured, age-worthy red wines and Ports or, from the higher reaches, firm, mineral whites. In the sunny south, where the mountains give way to more fertile rolling hills, then plains, wines are smooth and generous.

Exciting points of difference abound, reflecting this rich diversity of climate, topography and soils (which include granite, schist, limestone, clay, sand, quartz and volcanic basalt). Above all, Portugal is distinguished by a glittering array of native grapes – the jewels in her crown. The country has over 250 native varieties - a higher density per kilometre than either Spain, France or Italy. Well-versed in the centuries-old mastery of the art of blending, Portuguese winemakers skilfully orchestrate this exceptional range of flavour dimensions to craft wines of great personality, balance and finesse.

Since the 1980s, field trials have identified innovative single varietal wines

which sing of site - new strings to Portugal's bow. The first wave included Encruzado in Dão and, most famously, Touriga Nacional in the Douro and Dão. Since then, other grapes have been singled out for attention, such as Loureiro, now Avesso in the Vinho Verde sub-regions of Lima and Baião, Sousão and Rufete in the Douro and Alicante Bouschet in Alentejo. Long hidden gems are surfacing too, like Tinta Grossa in Alentejo, Samarrinho in the Douro and Jampal in Lisboa.

Just as near extinct grapes like Jampal are enjoying a renaissance, so too are ancient viticultural and winemaking techniques, such as the use of currais (Azorean dry-stoned walled vineyards) and fermenting and ageing red and white wines on skins in talha (clay amphora). Truly the New World of the Old World, Portugal offers wine lovers unparalleled choice, from wines rooted in tradition with rusticity, warmth and charm to slick, modern, sophisticated wines with great international appeal. An exciting synthesis of the two, which honours tradition without being afraid of innovation, heralds an exciting new 'Age of Discovery' for Portuguese wines and for you.

wines of  
portugal   
a world of difference

18 Filipa Pato,  
Post Quercus  
Baga, Beiras

2015 90

£16 (50cl) Clark Foyster

Fragrant and inviting, with aromas of dark fruit, cedar and dried leaves on the nose.

On the palate it shows an attractive savoury character underpinned with lively freshness and a persistent finish.

**Drink** 2017-2024 **Alc** 11%

19 M Chapoutier,  
Pinteivera,  
Douro 2012 90

£22 Hedonism, Mentzendorff

Intense, generous aromas and flavours of herbal, spice and violet-tinged blackberry and dark cherry fruit, boasting well integrated tannins and alcohol. Ageing gracefully and with plenty left to give.

**Drink** 2017-2024 **Alc** 14.5%

20 Niepoort,  
Vertente,  
Douro 2014

90

£15.84-£20 Corks of Cotham, Drinkmonger, Georges Barbier, Highbury Vintners, Tanners, Raymond Reynolds

Enticing, complex aromas of dark fruit and wild herbs dominate the nose. Unforced yet persistent in the mouth with alluring plummy fruit, lively acidity and tamed yet firm tannins. Vinous and elegant. **Drink** 2017-2021 **Alc** 12.5%



21 Quinta da  
Romaneira,  
Touriga  
Nacional, Douro 2014 90

£22.50 Lea & Sandeman

An effusive nose of dark fruit embellished by scents of wild herbs, violet and sweet spice. This is followed by a generous palate with lovely concentration of fruit alongside nutty oak and sleek tannins.

**Drink** 2017-2025 **Alc** 13.5%

22 Quinta do  
Correio, Dão  
2014 90

£10 Felin Fach Griffin, Prohibition Wines, Raymond Reynolds, SH Jones

Gentle, elegant and easy to drink, dishing up bergamot, thyme and dark chocolate nuances against a core of beautifully juicy and peppery dark fruit. True-to-type and terroir-driven. **Drink** 2017-2025 **Alc** 13%

23 Quinta do  
Mouro, Vinha  
do Mouro,  
Alentejano 2012 90

£12.95-£14 Clifton Cellars, D Byrne & Co, Drinkmonger, Raymond Reynolds, Ten Acre Wines

Mellow and harmonious, offering a wonderfully mature and complex mouthful of brambly fruit enriched by piercing notes of mint-chocolate, tobacco and dried leaves. Drinking well now.

**Drink** 2017-2022 **Alc** 14% >



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## PORTUGAL

**24** Sociedade Agricola D Diniz, Monte da Ravasqueira Touriga Franca, Alentejano 2013 90

£25 ABS Wine Agencies, Alexander Wines, Ex-Cellar  
A still very fresh and vivid expression of Touriga Franca. Dark fruit, black olive, roses, chocolate and sweet spice, bolstered by sinewy tannins. **Drink** 2018-2024 **Alc** 13.5%

**25** Symington, Quinta do Ataíde, Douro 2014 90

£10.50-£15 Davy's, Fells, Houltts, Hennings, Mill Hill Wines, Penistone Court Wine Cellars, Sidmouth Wines, The Wine Society  
Impactful nose of forest fruit, dark chocolate and mocha, with ravishingly juicy fruit on the palate underpinned by a racy freshness to fuel an alluringly persistent finish. **Drink** 2017-2025 **Alc** 14%

**26** Symington, Altano Organic, Douro 2015 90

£9.50-£15 Davy's, Fells, Rodney Densem, Swift Wines, Tanners, The Wine Society, Waitrose  
Fans out with intense aromas of plums, dark cherries, blackberries and bergamot. Voluptuous and opulent in the mouth with dense dark fruit, a firm backbone and zesty acidity. Will reward cellaring. **Drink** 2019-2024 **Alc** 14%

**27** Vadio, Bairrada 2013 90

£11.50 Casa Leal, The Wine Society  
Elegant and seductive, with fine-grained tannins propelling a delightful purity of fruit and a sensational savoury complexity, with touches of tobacco and mint. Lively and convincing. **Drink** 2018-2026 **Alc** 13%



**28** Aphros, Vinhão, Vinho Verde 2015 89

£14.10-£15.99 Buon Vino, Exel Wines, Les Caves de Pyrene, Salthouse Bottles  
Youthful and vibrant with an enticing purity of succulent, floral-toned red fruit – convincing yet not overly serious, with real refreshment value. **Drink** 2017-2024 **Alc** 11.5%

**29** Casa Ferreirinha, Vinha Grande, Douro 2015 89

£12.99 Liberty Wines  
Restrained bouquet of dark fruit garnished by violet, dried herbs and sweet spice. The tightly knit palate offers concentrated and persistent black cherry fruit. **Drink** 2017-2025 **Alc** 13.5%

**30** Esporão, Quinta dos Murças Reserva, Cima-Corgo, Douro 2012 89

£22.36-£23.99 Cambridge Wine Merchants, Matthew Clark  
Fragrant, inviting aromas of blackberries, pine and dried leaves. Lovely purity of fruit on the palate, with a silky texture. **Drink** 2017-2022 **Alc** 14.5% >

*'The Douro and Alentejo have been at the vanguard of Portugal's quality wine revolution'*

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### 31 **Esporão, Trincadeira, Alentejo 2016 89**

£11.99 **Barwell & Jones,  
Corkage Wine, The Vintry**

A pure, fresh, medium-bodied style, overt and fruit-forward, with no sign of oak. Attractive and easy-going, with a satisfying varietal typicity. **Drink 2017-2021 Alc 14%**

### 32 **José Maria da Fonseca, Ripança, Alentejano 2016 89**

£10 **Moreno Wines**

Savoury and characterful, with gratifyingly soft and free-flowing brambly fruit encased within a harmonious structure, leading to a finely tapered finish. **Drink 2017-2025 Alc 13%**



### 33 **Niepoort, Drink Me, Douro 2015 89**

£10-£14 **Bottle Apostle,**

**Butler's Wine Cellar, Drinkmonger,  
Field & Fawcett, Georges Barbier,  
Raymond Reynolds, Vinoteca,  
Woodwinters**

An unshowy example that displays real finesse yet also an excellent concentration of cranberry fruit and spicy oak. **Drink 2018-2025 Alc 13%**

### 34 **Quinta do Passadouro, Touriga Nacional, Douro 2014 89**

£19.16 **Carruthers & Kent, Fields  
Morris & Verdin, Woodwinters**

Flashy and modern in style, with intense oaky notes engraving dark fruit, cedar and liquorice characters, supplemented by firm tannins. To be cellared a while longer. **Drink 2019-2024 Alc 13.5%**

## PORTUGAL

### 35 Quinta do Sagrado, Reserva, Douro 2012 89

£18.49 Carruthers & Kent, Marta Vine

Dark-fruited aromas are intensified by violet, tea and dark chocolate traits, leading to a rich and powerful palate with a firm tannic edge; needs some time to soften. **Drink** 2019-2025 **Alc** 15%

### 36 Terra d'Alter, Reserva, Alentejano 2014 89

£14 Ake & Humphris, Butler's Wine Cellar, Connolly's, Delibo, Denby Dale Wines, Grapesmith, Hedley Wright, Jaded Palates, Lea & Sandeman, Luso Wines, Vin Neuf, Wined Up Here

Elegant oaky aromas, with juicy dark fruit, spice and undergrowth. Harmonious palate with a zesty freshness ferrying onto a pleasing finish. **Drink** 2017-2018 **Alc** 15%

35

36

37

38



### 37 Terra d'Alter, Alicante Bouschet, Alentejano 2014 89

£10.50 Auriol Wines, Connolly's, Delibo, DVine Cellars, George Hill, Haslemere Wine Cellar, Lea & Sandeman

Initially timid, slowly revealing notes of dark forest fruit, black tea and exotic spices. Powerful flavour with grippy tannins. **Drink** 2017-2024 **Alc** 14.5%

### 38 Vadio, Grande, Bairrada 2012 89

£24 Casa Leal  
Discreet floral aromas, with bottle-aged characters on the palate partnering attractive brambly fruit. Tannins are firm but sophisticated; will repay some more patience. **Drink** 2018-2024 **Alc** 13%

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