



Harvest Report 2020

‘Aquele em que as uvas se isolaram’

‘The one where the grapes were self-isolating’



General conditions and harvest dates

2020 saw an earlier than usual harvest, with picking at the estate starting on the 21st August and finishing on the 20th September. By comparison in 2019, we didn't start until the 30th August and completed on the 3rd October. At the Pedra Alta estate, the 2020 vintage has been characterised by perfectly healthy grapes from good yields, with consistently good acidity across all the vineyards on our site. Picking dates have been crucial in obtaining such quality of grapes.

2020 will be a particularly strong table wine year for the estate, with 2020 acidity levels higher than 2019. Thanks to our high altitude and João's in-depth knowledge of the different sites, combined with the work already done earlier in the growing season, we were brave enough to make decision to go early. In terms of overall benchmarking quality of the 2020 harvest against previous harvests, we are looking at 2009, João's first harvest at Pedra Alta.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, strict social distancing and other measures were put in place with pickers working in bubbles in the vineyards and in the winery, throughout the harvest period. We had better availability of local pickers with good experience of the region and the vineyards, resulting in optimum vineyard management practices. The traditional crushing in Lagars was able to go ahead, organising the work via family bubbles.

Weather

Weather conditions were similar to 2017 (2020 saw a hot summer like 2017). Winter rain in early 2020 set the season up to be able to handle the high temperatures of the ripening period, contributing to higher acidity in the 2020 wines and allowing us to start the picking earlier than usual.

Yields

We trusted in the quality of the fruit and the work that was already done in the growing season, with careful, timely intervention to achieve the right balance; neither micro-managed nor minimal input. This is where Joao's insight and knowledge of the land comes into play – it's very much an intuitive approach - demonstrated by the fact we had balanced yields across all the varieties. 2019 saw good yields across the region, yet in 2020, Douro

yields have generally been down (around -30%), while we continued to achieve consistently good yields – averaging 5 tonnes / ha. We achieve this consistency through our sustainable approach to viticulture and careful vineyard management.

Grape quality

It is potentially a vintage port year but also from our site, it is a particularly good table wine year. For our unfortified wines, the reds show a beautiful vibrancy, fresh and without any jamminess. Even in such a warm year, the whites have the flavour we are looking for with pithy, zesty character combined with linear acidity and structure, This year we introduced a new grape, Donzelinho Branco, an indigenous white variety that we grafted last year. This is the first vintage and adds a new element to the portfolio – it is a variety that brings flavour and delicate acidity. João is also particularly happy with the Touriga Nacional from our highest plantings, cementing its place as one of the best sites on the property.

Summary

The first three vintages under the new ownership: 2018 (a more classical year); 2019 (a cooler vintage); and 2020 (a hot vintage), have all been very different vintages. Thanks to the dedication, hard work and knowledge of João, Nuno and Paolo, we have been able to produce consistently good wines that show the vintage variation, alongside the underlying thread of Quinta da Pedra Alta characteristics - good acidity, balance and freshness, with vibrant fruit quality - reflecting our 'Contemporary Douro' approach and setting us up well for the future.

Prepared by Quinta da Pedra Alta's winemaking team: João Pires and Matt Gant. October 2020



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Quinta da Pedra Alta
Soutelinho-Favaios
5070-272 Alijó
Portugal
www.gpa.pt



