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Awards edition

Decanter

WORLD WINE AWARDS



Portugal



'Alentejo has surely made Alicante Bouschet its own. Blended or flying solo, it brought marked structure and savoury complexity to Alentejo's mid-range and premium medal winners'

Sarah Ahmed, Regional Chair

BAGGING TROPHIES HAS become almost par for the course for Portugal's fortified Moscatels, and Douro and Alentejo reds. 'Almost' because, with 250-plus native varieties, Portugal retains the capacity to surprise and delight. Take this year's Trophy-winning white, a blend of Síria and Fonte Cal from Beira Interior; and Portugal's highest performing rosés at DWWA to date, two Silver medal winners. It's encouraging to see these lesser-known varieties perform so well when treated sympathetically. What's more, both offer that all too rare combination, bang for buck with interest – an area in which Portugal could excel since winemaking standards are improving countrywide.

What should we buy from here?

It's not native to Portugal, but Alentejo has surely made Alicante Bouschet its own. Blended or flying solo, this French Grenache/Petit Bouschet crossing brought marked structure and savoury complexity to Alentejo's mid-range and premium medal winners. As for Alentejo's entry-level reds, two Gold medals (the Syrah blend a repeat Trophy winner) attest that the best are world class. Though you might expect fortified Moscatel (southern France's Muscat) to flourish in Alentejo, it's the tempering influence of the Atlantic (in Setúbal) or altitude (in the Douro) which catapults Portugal's heady but exquisitely balanced Moscatels into a league of their own.

What should we leave on the shelf?

Less impressive were those entries where the stamp of winemaking stymied terroir or purity of varietal expression (a unique facet of Portuguese wines given the preponderance of native grapes). Keen to reward the restraint which puts the emphasis on drinkability and brings the Douro's and Dão's florality, fruit and minerality to the fore, the panel marked down a significant number of wines for being overripe, over-extracted or overoaked. The Douro seems especially quick to release reds that would benefit from more bottle-ageing to improve tannin integration.

What should we keep an eye on?

The Douro Superior. The least known of the Douro's sub-regions scooped both Douro Trophies and has seen a surge in plantings over the last decade. The shadier, north-facing bank of the Douro between



Portuguese DOC's

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| 1 Vinho Verde | 25 Graciosa |
| 2 Trás-os-Montes | 26 Biscoitos |
| 3 Porto and Douro | 27 Pico |
| 4 Távora-Varosa | 28 Madeira |
| 5 Bairrada | |
| 6 Lafões | |
| 7 Dão | |
| 8 Beira Interior | |
| 9 Encostas d'Aire | |
| 10 Obidos | |
| 11 Torres Vedras | |
| 12 Alenquer | |
| 13 Tejo | |
| 14 Arruda | |
| 15 Bucelas | |
| 16 Colares | |
| 17 Carcavelos | |
| 18 Palmela | |
| 19 Setúbal | |
| 20 Alentejo | |
| 21 Lagos | |
| 22 Portimão | |
| 23 Lagoa | |
| 24 Tavira | |



the river Côa and Spain (home to Casa Ferreirinha's Trophy winner, Quinta da Leda) is now lined with drip-irrigated vineyards that have a distinct advantage over the Cima Corgo and Baixo Corgo sub-regions, given the Douro's propensity to drought. Bairrada is also emerging from the shadows following a major shake-up (non-local and international grapes were permitted from 2003). Though its entries were few and varietally diverse, their common thread of structure, freshness and persistence impressed the panel.

For Sarah Ahmed's full profile and a list of the Portugal judges, see p6

Regional Trophies

WHITE UNDER £15

Beyra, Vermiosa, Altitude 700 Mt, Beira Interior 2012

(13%)

Fresh, fragrant and Riesling-like with grassy, fresh, citrus aromas and juicy star anise-edged fruit with floral notes. Tropical style with lychee, tangerine zest, acidity, and a quince and lemon finish.

UK £9.99; BoA, CkO, Crk, DBy, Rsv, TVD

For full profile, see p210



RED UNDER £15

Tagus Creek, Shiraz-Trincadeira, Alentejano 2012 (13.5%)

Youthful style with a fleshy black fruit nose. Raspberry and blueberry with chocolate notes on a bright, fresh palate showing a depth of flavour uncommon for the price. Extremely good value!

UK £5.99; Asd, CDr, Tes

For full profile, see p211



RED DOURO UNDER £15

Castello d'Alba, Grande Reserva Vinhas Velhas, Douro 2011 (14.5%)

Lush, ripe plum and blackberry-tart nose with blackcurrants, vanilla and floral violet hints. Lovely, lively peppery notes and pure fruit quality on the palate, with red and black fruits and fine tannins. Persistent, rich and complex.

UK £14.99; Ryn

For full profile, see p212



RED DOURO OVER £15

Casa Ferreirinha, Quinta da Leda, Douro 2010 (14%)

Fine, intense nose of cassis, juicy dark fruit, red cherries and blackcurrants. Violets, soft spices, nutmeg and well-integrated cedary oak layered with very floral, black forest-floor fruit and chocolate. A big wine with a long, sophisticated finish.

UK £32; Him, VdP

For full profile, see p213



FORTIFIED WHITE OVER £15

Bacalhã, Moscatel de Setúbal 2000 (18%)

Lovely golden amber in colour. Spicy and sweet with a dried orange peel and golden-syrup bouquet, and a faint whiff of furniture polish. Rich, sleek palate of spices, raisins, hazelnuts and hints of Grand Marnier. A long and sumptuous finish.

UK £16.99; Vtc

For full profile, see p215



Gold red

Casa Agricola Alexandre Relvas, Montinho São Miguel, Alentejano 2012 (13.5%) A

Stunning for the price, this is juicy and floral with excellent grip, layered blueberry and cassis flavours and a nice touch of oak.

Tesco, Finest*, Douro 2011 (13%)

Fresh, delicious fruits and lovely spicy liquorice aromas. Well-balanced, elegant, silky texture with grip on mid-palate. Plenty of soft berry fruits. Great value. UK £7.49; Tes



Gold fortified white

Bacalhã, Moscatel Roxo, Setúbal 2001 (18.5%) C

Setúbal with an electric charge through it. Stunning aromas of peach and bergamot. Fabulous acidity complements the syrupy richness, giving a lifted complexity.

Casa Ermelinda Freitas, Superior, Moscatel de Setúbal 2003 (19%)

Biscuity with whiffs of mint tea on the nose. Seville-orange marmalade, clove and walnut flavours continue ➤

RETAIL PRICE BANDS: A - entry level, up to £7.99; B - mid-range, £8-£14.99; C - premium, £15-£29.99; D - super-premium, £30-£59.99; E - boutique/icon, £60+. Wines that were entered without a price band were judged as being over £15

to hold together into a long, dramatic finish. **UK £15 (500ml); AtL Secret Spot, Casco VII 40 Years, Moscatel do Douro NV (18%)** Edgy with a nose of apple brandy, clove and marmalade. Palate reveals zingy fruits above a lovely nutty resonance. Pretty and lively from start to finish. **UK £50 (500ml); Eup**

Silver white

Campolargo, Arinto 2011, Bairrada 2010 (13%) B

Nutty, fino Sherry nose with caramel apples. Very complex palate, notes of lemon rind and smoky minerality. Funky but fun.

Carmim, Regia Colheita Reserva, Alentejo 2011 (13.5%) B

Papaya and star fruit with fascinating smoky notes. A buttery texture gives excellent structure in this big, bold style. Excellent potential.

Caves Transmontanas, Vértice, Douro 2010 (13.5%) C

Rich and complex, balanced acidity, well integrated, good-quality oak with an enduring and enjoyable finish.

DFJ Vinhos, Coreto Branco, Lisboa 2012 (12.5%)

An intriguing floral nose, and a brisk acidity to keep the tropical fruit on the palate from becoming too stodgy. **UK £7.99; ELL**

DFJ Vinhos, Storks Landing, Lisboa 2012 (12.5%)

Good value here with stone fruit and a hint of butteriness. Off-dry finish, yet clean and crisp. **UK £7.99; Tes**

Esporão, Duas Castas, Alentejo 2012 (14%)

A nuttiness balances the mandarin and

lemon grass. Fruit persists from start to finish. Excellent Portuguese take on Semillon/Sauvignon. **UK £10.99; B&J, Cmb, Coe, GGr**

Herdade do Esporão, Verdelho, Alentejo 2012 (13.5%)

Fresh-cut apple, aromatic citrus and pear drop nose. A hint of residual sugar gives weight against a zingy acidity. **UK £8.95-£11.99; B&J, Coe, GGr, WSo**

Herdade do Peso, Vinha do Monte, Alentejano 2012 (12.6%)

A meld of citrus, guava, mango and tinned pears. Lovely perfumed nose in a straightforward and modern style. **UK £8.49; VdP**

Marks & Spencer, Alvarinho, Vinho Verde 2012 (12.5%)

Pleasant, fresh aromas with fragrant apple and pear notes. Lovely stone fruit flavours. Clean and long finish. Expressive. **UK £10.99; M&S**

São Domingos, Vinho Branco, Bairrada 2012 (13.5%)

Lively and aromatic, hints of peach that follow through on a fresh, bright palate. Mineral edge. **UK £6.40; PgL**

Solar de Cambres, Casa de Cambres Reserva, Douro 2012 (13%) A

Fine oak integration with ripe peach, nectarine and lemons. Superb acidity and an interesting texture. Bright and elegant with depth.

Silver rosé

Adega de Borba, Alentejo 2012 (12.5%) B

Intensely aromatic, creamy red cherry and strawberry flavours. Exciting, zingy freshness with persistent minerality and length.

Quinta da Raza, Dom Diogo Padeiro, Vinho Verde 2012 (12%)

Showing hints of spice with bright, fresh strawberry and raspberry. Some weight but still crisp and clean finish.

Silver red

Adega de Borba, Montes Claros Garrafeira, Alentejo 2009 (14.5%) C

Aromas of spicy, ripe cherries, vanilla, toast and coffee. Lovely sweet, intense fruits, balanced by the right amount of tannins. Long, fresh finish.

Adega de Borba, Senses Syrah, Alentejano 2011 (14%) B

Strawberries and red berries. Peppery and cool with nice density. Has fruit, acidity and oak to last and improve.

Adega Mayor, 9, Alentejano 2008 (14.5%)

Sweet cherries, cocoa, figs and raisins on nose. Great fruit core with fresh acidity. Harmonious. **UK £80; AtL**

António Lopes Ribeiro, Bela-Luz, Douro 2011 (14%) B

Cassis, minty and floral nose. Crunchy, vibrant fruits, ripe plums, blackberry, balanced well with fresh acidity and smooth tannins. Lovely.

Ataide Semedo, Reserva Touriga Nacional - Baga, Bairrada 2011 (13.5%) B

Young Baga noticeable on the nose. Lovely summer red fruits, a nicely integrated palate. Juicy and clean with mineral notes.

Campolargo, Caida Bordaleza, Bairrada 2008 (14.5%) C

Lead pencil and cassis nose. Red cherry and chocolate flavours in a juicy, sappy palate. Interesting and atypical for the region.

Casa Ermelinda Freitas, Alicante Bouschet, Peninsula de Setúbal 2010 (14%) B

Developed, savoury nose, with lively, energetic palate. Wild berry core, smoky, cedary highlights. Ripe, fine tannins give a polished finish.

Casa Ermelinda Freitas, Valoroso, Peninsula de Setúbal 2011 (15%) B

Explosive blackcurrant, cassis and vanilla nose. Very dense and very young, already showing some charm. Nice eucalyptus note on the end.

Castelinho, Premium, Douro 2008 (14%) C

Minty and intense berries. Impressive tannins with a full mouth of plums and cloves. Very long and pleasant finish.

Caves do Solar de São Domingos, Colheita, Dão 2009 (13.5%)

Clean, pure cherry and redcurrant abundant on the nose and following on to the palate. Enjoyable and extremely good value. **UK £7; PgL**

Comenda, Grande Reserva, Alentejano 2008 (15%) C

Aromas of violets and orange blossom. Meat, tomatoes and dried herbs beneath blackcurrants. Sinewy tannins with some minerality to finish.

Cortes de Cima, Homenagem a Hans Christian Andersen, Alentejano 2010 (14%)

Great nose with smokiness and spiciness. Lots of ripe berry fruit. Lovely full mouth; very pleasant with long length.

Cortes de Cima, Touriga Nacional, Alentejano 2008 (14%)

Liquorice, aniseed and ripe red berries with a chocolatey character and a lovely balance of tannins and acidity. Sophisticated.

Donzel, Reserva Tinto, Douro 2007 (14%) B

Meaty, plummy, gamey nose with herbal hints. Attractive, intense palate supported by ripe fruits and silky tannins. Long finish.

Fiuza & Bright, 3 Castas, Tejo 2012 (13%) C

Classy, fresh wine. Strawberries and raspberries are ripe with lovely perfume, but maintain a lightness uncommon in Portuguese reds.

Herdade das Servas, Colheita Seleccionada, Alentejano 2010 (14.5%) C

Fragrant eucalyptus with herbal/garrigue notes. Complex, intense and lively cassis and raspberry. Has developed some interesting spicy notes and delicate tannins.

Herdade do Esporão, Quatro Castas, Alentejano 2011 (14.5%)

Intense nose of juicy black cherry and cinnamon. Flavours of strawberry, cocoa and black pepper with a well-structured body. **UK £13.99; B&J, Coe**

Herdade do Rocim, Grande Rocim Reserva, Alentejo 2009 (15.5%) A

Warm vanilla edge surrounding blackcurrant and blackberries. Tight and compact with tannins only just beginning to loosen.

Herdade dos Lagos, Vale de Camelos Reserva, Alentejano 2010 (13.5%) C

Intensely floral Earl Grey nose. Flavour

REGIONAL TROPHY: WHITE UNDER £15

Beyra, Vermiosa, Altitude 700 Mt, Beira Interior 2012

SPLIT BETWEEN COASTAL and mountainous regions, northern Portugal's white wines are among the country's freshest and most mineral. Surrounded by the Estrela, Marófa and Malcata mountains and sat 400m-700m above sea level, Beira Interior DOC is well placed to lure Riesling lovers off the beaten track – especially with its heritage of old-vine native grapes (Síria and Fonte Cal) and the rugged granite and schist quartz-streaked soils to which they are so well adapted.

Two years ago, this combination tempted winemaker Rui Madeira (pictured) to return to the region where he had spent his school holidays, and acquire the winery in the village of Vermiosa where he worked his first harvest in 1987. Madeira makes three blends of Síria and Fonte Cal, but considers this exuberantly



aromatic cuvée 'a "clássico", as it is the most unoaked, pure style I can get from the area'.

The grapes were hand harvested over three weeks from the last week of September, from vineyards at an average altitude of 700m. Cool nights slowed the ripening process, resulting in intense flavour and racy acidity. Adding 'personality and bone' to the fruitier Síria, the old native Fonte Cal in this blend sits well with Madeira's belief that in Portugal 'we need to adapt to international consumers, but never lose our identity'. **Sarah Ahmed**

aromas. Generous palate with ripe juicy fruits and freshness. Good finish.

Santa Vitória, Touriga Nacional, Alentejano 2009 (14%) **C**

Violets and eucalyptus on the nose. Intense Touriga character with cocoa, red berries and floral hints. Long finish with some minerality.

São Domingos, Reserva, Beiras 2010 (13.5%)

Enjoyable cherry tomato hints on the nose. Fresh and fleshy black fruits and plums with an intense finish. **UK £7; PgL**

São Miguel, Escolha dos Enólogos, Alentejano 2011 (14%)

A slightly underripe green note complements the rich red berries and vanilla and cocoa notes from oak.

Charming and poised. **UK £14.99; Ryn**

Tapada das Gaeiras, Gaeiras Colheita Seleccionada, Lisboa 2011 (13%) **B**

Violets, Earl Grey and orange blossom around a redcurrant and raspberry base. Very good now, better in a year.

Terrenus, Vinhas Velhas Reserva, Alentejano 2009 (14.5%)

Spicy with savoury notes on the nose. Fruit is robust, sweet and defined. Tannins still powdery and can develop more. Drink now, but promises more.

UK £29.90; WSo

Terrus, Reserva, Douro 2008 (14%) **C**

Clean and exciting nose of nutmeg, cigar box, black pepper and pencil notes. Love the spiciness. Classic!

Tiago Cabaço, Blog, Alentejano 2010 (14.5%) **C**

Violet and black cherries on spicy nose. Fresh, fruity, mouthwatering palate, balanced nicely with powdery tannins. Long finish. Beautiful.

Vértice, Grande Reserva, Douro 2009 (14%) **C**

Dark berries, cocoa and vanilla aromas. Lovely freshness, layered combination of fruit, oak and mineral components on the palate. Long.

Vista, TR Tinta Roriz, Beiras 2011 (13.5%) **A**

Fresh, lifted rich plum fruit. Cinnamon notes and gentle tannins with lovely minerality. Delicious, moreish and great value.



Silver fortified white

Adega de Favaílos, Moscatel, Douro (17%) **B**

Orange blossom, barley sugar and crème caramel. Flavours of cooked apples and pears yet maintains freshness. Quite simple but done well.

Adega de Favaílos, Moscatel 10 Anos, Douro (17%) **C**

Lovely balance of aged notes and freshness on the nose. Honey, raisins, nuts and Christmas pudding on the palate yet has stunning freshness.

Adega de Favaílos, Moscatel Colheita, Douro 1980 (17.5%) **D**

Intense old cognac nose with nutty, spicy tones and a mineral finish. Good structure allows complexity to shine from start to finish.

Adega de Favaílos, Moscatel Reserva, Douro 2007 (17%) **B**

Hints of caramelised oranges that flow through on to the palate.

Chestnuts, ginger, almonds and cinnamon. Tasty and juicy.

Bacalhã, Moscatel de Setúbal Colheita, Setúbal 2009 (17.5%) **B**

Slight toffee and caramel sweetness with tangy citrus notes. Floral and orange palate with a long length.

Sivipa, Moscatel Setúbal, Península de Setúbal 2011 (17%) **B**

Orange blossom and roses on the nose. A delicious and fresh style. Marmalade and apricot jam in a glass.



Bronze white

Adega Cooperativa de Vale de Cambra, Branco, Vinho Verde 2012 (12.5%) **A**

Lovely perfumed aromas. Good, rounded palate with exotic peach fruits and clean acidity. Friendly, juicy.

Adega de Favaílos, Douro 2012 (13%) **A**

A crisp gooseberry plays well with

Muscat aromas. Subdued ginger spice notes, fresh finish.

Adega de Pegões, Arinto-Chardonnay, Península de Setúbal 2011 (13%) **B**

Rich lime with peach and pear flavour. A creamy vanilla note on the finish.

Adega de Pegões, Colheita Seleccionada, Península de Setúbal 2012 (13%) **A**

Interesting peach nose with tobacco and honey. Follows on to the palate.

Adega de Vila Real, Colheita, Douro 2012 (12%) **A**

Green apple, pear, a touch of tropical fruit. Fresh acidity and a clean finish.

Adega de Vila Real, Reserva, Douro 2012 (13%) **A**

Ripe apricot with coconut notes. Slightly waxy but clean acidity.

Almond, spice on the finish.

Adega Mayor, Reserva do Comendador, Alentejano 2011 (13%)

Lime and tropical fruit base. Oak ageing gives chewiness, with great acidity and mineral notes. **UK £19; Atl**

Agro Batoréu, Terra Silvestre, Do Tejo 2012 (12.5%) **B**

Clean, crisp, fruity and attractive. Some minerality and residual sugar. Pineapple and lemon finish.

Aveleda, Alvarinho, Minho 2012 (12.5%) **B**

Very aromatic with peach and golden apples. Floral hints more expressive on the palate.

Bacalhã, JP Azeitão White, Península de Setúbal 2012 (13%)

Aromatic lychee, gentle fruit and healthy acidity. Clean, with a pleasant finish. **UK £7.49; CBC, F&P, Lan**

Bacalhã Vinhos de Portugal, Quinta dos Loidos, Lisboa 2011 (12.5%) **B**

Vibrant with some honeyed tones. Fresh acidity with peach and apricot notes. Slight warmth at the end.

Beyra, Reserva, Beira Interior 2012 (12.5%) **B**

Good oak integration with lemon-lime fruits, a touch of pepper on the end.

Carm, Maria Lourdes, Douro 2011 (13%)

Overtly powerful oak, but tempered by equally powerful acidity and stone fruit flavours. **UK £31.25; DPW**

Casa do Arrabalde, Casa do Arrabalde, Minho 2012 (12.5%) **B**

Pungent melon and peach with green apple notes. Slightly nutty character behind fruit on the palate.

Casa Ermelinda Freitas, Dona Ermelinda, Palmela 2012 (13.5%) **B**

Very perfumed with oak on the nose. Citrus and peach flavours yet a bit warm.

Casa Ermelinda Freitas, Sauvignon Blanc-Verdelho, Península de Setúbal 2011 (13.5%) **B**

Herb and lime base with a touch of waxiness. Light oak adds a creamy vanilla finish.

Casa Ermelinda Freitas, Terras Do Pó Castas Chardonnay-Viognier, Península de Setúbal 2011 (13.5%) **B**

Honeysuckle with a creamy lime core. Rich, long, persistent finish.

Casa Ferreirinha, Vinha Grande, Douro 2011 (13.5%)

Complex nose, and a concentrated body of lemon and stone fruit lifted



REGIONAL TROPHY: RED DOURO UNDER £15

Castello d'Alba, Grande Reserva Vinhas Velhas, Douro 2011

WINEMAKER RUI MADEIRA scooped two DWWA Trophies this year. It is hard to think of two more contrasting wines than this concentrated, full-bodied Douro red from Port country and Beyra Vermiosa Altitude 700 Mt 2012 (see p209). Yet there are common threads: both are sourced from native grape varieties, old vines and mountainous terrain.

What's more, like the Beyra, this wine's freshness, fruit purity and perfume are marked even though it comes from Douro Superior (the Douro's driest, hottest sub-

region) and was made in 2011, a hot year highly rated for vintage Port. How so? Madeira, who grew up in this part of the Douro and co-founded Vinhos Douro Superior (VDS) in 1999 explains, 'with a good selection of vineyards, even in the hottest vintages we can get a lot of fruit and purity; for freshness, we play with grape varieties, altitude, solar exposure and terraces'. This is why VDS owns 37ha of vineyards and sources grapes from another 200ha: 'I'm always looking for north-facing vineyards that allow you to get higher acid content as well as less raisined grapes'.

As for the lead varieties, Madeira adds 'Touriga Franca gives rock rose character, as well as elegant and sweet tannins; Touriga Nacional supplies fresh notes – bergamot, basil – as well as black fruit; while Sousão adds acidity and power'. **SA**