



RAMOS PINTO HARVEST REPORT 2020

“2020: a wine year marked by precocity.”

Carlos Peixoto

THE YEAR

METEOROLOGICAL CONDITIONS

Although it only rained until May, rainfall overall was higher in 2020 than the previous year. There was a heat spike on 22 June, which caused significant loss in some grape varieties. The absence of water in the soil combined with the high temperatures experienced from July onwards caused a great fall in production. Maximum temperatures rose significantly, with averages recorded in July of nearly 39°C in the quintas belonging to Ramos Pinto.

VEGETATIVE CYCLE

Precocity was a characteristic of this wine year, in the budding, flowering and maturation of some white grapes. Budding began 15 days earlier than usual in February.

PRODUCTION

At Quinta de Ervamoira we expected a good year in terms of production, although lower than 2019 which was a record year; when forecasting production in June, the number of bunches was 15% greater. At Quinta do Bom Retiro we also hoped for greater production. Quinta dos Bons Ares was the exception, with a fall caused by spring frost. The severe dehydration of the bunches in mid-September caused falls in production of about 40%.



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HARVEST

QUINTA DE ERVAMOIRA

The harvest at Quinta da Ervamoira began on 6 August with white grapes being picked for Port wine. On 25 August we began harvesting the red grapes for Port and Douro wines, already with considerable alcohol and good acidity. The high temperatures speeded up the pace of the harvest. The heat did not let up until practically the end of the harvest: the equinoctial storms cooled the weather.

The differing resistance of the grape varieties to the extreme heat was quite interesting. Tinta Barroca, a variety with a thin, sensitive skin, maintained its good condition throughout most of the harvest, which was delayed so it could be picked at optimum maturation. Despite high sugar levels in many plots, Touriga Nacional also withstood the heat quite well. Touriga Francesa, normally one of the latest varieties, showed some dehydration which led to loss of yield. Tinto Cão, picked almost at the end of the harvest when there were virtually no leaves on the vines, was in perfect condition: small unbroken berries, with no raisins.

QUINTA DOS BONS ARES

The maturation of the grapes at Quinta dos Bons Ares was balanced. The harvest of the white grapes began with Sauvignon Blanc on 27 August, presenting a relatively high sugar content but aromatically very rich and elegant. This was followed by the harvest of Viosinho and ended with Rabigato, also more aromatic but with the usual freshness that it expresses in this quinta.

The red grape harvest began on 17 September with Touriga Nacional, a little earlier than usual. The grapes were healthy and aromatic with mature tannins.



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QUINTA DO BOM RETIRO

The harvest occurred between 3 and 22 September, with one break on the 19th because of equinoctial rainfall. This quinta suffered considerably with the excessively hot weather and once again Touriga Francesa was the grape variety most affected. The Rio and Alhais old vines withstood the hot days because of their more developed root systems, as did all other vines on the higher levels, where the weather was cooler because of the altitude.

VINHA DA URTIGA

The Cima-Corgo sub-region suffered considerably during the summer months of 2020. This extraordinary vineyard, about 100 years old, has about 60 grape varieties on pre-phylloxera terraces that are cultivated biodynamically. On 18 August most of the grapes were already quite ripe, with mature tannins, great aroma and yet still very fresh. Their maturation was observed on a day to day basis. On 28 and 29 August all bunches which were not perfect were removed. 31 August was “D” day for the harvest: the grapes were brought to the winery in small boxes, calling to mind the best examples of still life painting without the slightest imperfection.



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“A mild and damp start to the year, followed by an extremely hot, dry late spring and summer, contributing to intense maturation, with high concentrations of sugar, mature, silky tannins that are surprisingly fresh.”

PORT WINE

WHITE PORT WINES

The wines are generous, soft and balanced. Most of these white wines will be aged, given their great ageing potential.

RED PORT WINES

The wines present an exceptional black colour, fruity and with a high concentration of incredibly soft tannins. Touriga Nacional from Quinta da Ervamoira, and in particular from the Arqueologia and Grandão plots, produced strongly coloured wines with an aroma that is almost exotic and which is customary in the wines from these plots. Touriga Francesa presented very high alcohol potential, even for Port; the body and tannins were less mature but with interesting freshness. Sousão was very fresh, essential this year to balance the maturation with Touriga Nacional. But the most surprising grape varieties this year were undoubtedly Tinta Barroca and the extraordinary Tinto Cão. Tinta Barroca, a variety with a thin skin that is sensitive to the heat, kept its body and freshness until the end of the harvest. Tinto Cão is without a doubt the grape variety to be focused on, considering this scenario of climate change! At the end of September the vines had practically no leaves but were laden with bunches in excellent condition.



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“The heat affected the quantity but repaid us with aroma and concentration.”

João Luís Baptista

DOURO WINE

WHITE DOURO WINES

Despite the hot dry weather occurring from the end of June, the white grapes behaved exceptionally well. The harvest began in early August with Viosinho at Quinta de Ervamoira. Although sensitive to excessive heat, this grape variety was picked at the right moment, revealing considerable aroma and preserving its freshness. Rabigato, the principal grape variety of Ramos Pinto wines, once again proved how perfectly it has adapted to the Douro Superior, its grapes in perfect condition throughout maturation. The aroma and flavour of the fruit were extraordinary, from the lowest to the highest levels. Other varieties such as Arinto and Folgazão showed excellent balance between aroma and acidity.

The 2020 white wines are of very high quality, very aromatic, with great volume and a very balanced freshness.

RED DOURO WINES

The harvest was more complicated with the red grape varieties. The abundance of water following a good winter and then several very hot days caused the sugar levels in the grapes to rise rapidly; hence the importance of waiting patiently for the desired level of phenolic maturation. When this moment arrived at Quinta de Ervamoira, the harvest began quickly, as the Touriga Nacional grapes were rushed to the winery, followed by Touriga Francesa with no break between them as in other years. Reference should also be made to Touriga Nacional and Touriga Francesa at Quinta dos Bons Ares which showed very balanced maturation and this year had amazing balance between aroma and freshness. The 2020 red wines have unusual aromatic concentration and depth, with silky tannins and unexpected freshness, giving them great balance.



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CONCLUSION

Despite the hot dry conditions, we consider the white wines to be of extremely high quality, very aromatic, with great volume and very balanced freshness. As far as the red wines are concerned, while our hopes at the start of the harvest were not very high, yet our confidence grew daily as the musts fermented and produced extremely concentrated, potent wines, both aromatic and with good balance.

Although the quantity of wine in 2020 was less than the previous year the quality was exceptional.



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