



SINCE NEWSLETTER 2020
W I N E S
THE TASTE OF PORTUGAL

Welcome to our second number of Dr Grape's biweekly newsletter. Our aim is to compile wine related articles of interest, which will increase our readers knowledge and fondness of Portuguese Wines.

Included in this issue:

- A beginner's guide to Portuguese Wine – Beyond Port Wine
- Dr Grape's Suggestions from our portfolio

A beginner's guide to Portuguese Wine – Beyond Port Wine

When you think of wine Portugal doesn't always spring to mind but trust us, this country is a wine lover's paradise.

For a long time, Portugal flew under the radar of tourists, and so did its wine. By now, you've probably heard of Port wine, but what about Madeira wine or *Moscatel*? Are you confused? Don't be.

We've created this Beginner's Guide to Portuguese Wine, so you know all about the wine regions, the varieties and how to order like a local. Hint: We call it **vinho**.





The best part is that you don't have to spend a fortune to get a reasonable bottle of wine here (some can cost less than €5)!

So, whether you're browsing through the wine list at a restaurant or your local supermarket, we'll guide you through everything you need to know about Portuguese wine.

Are you new to Portuguese wine? If so, this Beginner's guide has everything you need to know about where to go and what to try!



How to order wine in Portugal

Whether you're a wine expert or looking to order a bottle of house wine at a restaurant, there are certain basics you should know. First, it's not uncommon for the Portuguese to order food before wine, so they can pair their *vinho* with their food. Then there are the different types of wine. Although many will be familiar with *branco* (white), *tinto* (red), *rosé* and *espumante* (sparkling), Portugal is also well known for its *vinho verde* (green wine), *Porto* (port wine), *vinho da madeira* (Madeira) and *moscatel* (sherry).

Much like the rest of the world, red tends to be favored in winter months when it is served just below room temperature. Similarly, red meat dishes are enjoyed with *vinho tinto* whilst light, summer dishes lend themselves to *vinho verde*, *branco* and *rosé*. Sparkling wine is often chosen as an aperitif when it is accompanied by light nibbles and starters. It is very common for the Portuguese to finish their meal with a dessert or fortified wine – usually washed down with a *bica* (espresso) – with port, Madeira and sherry among the favorites.



In summary:

1. **Get the wine list:** Depending on where you go, the list of wines might be on the food menu. However, most restaurants will have a separate wine list. If they don't give you one straight away, you can ask for it. In Portuguese, the wine list is *Carta dos Vinhos*. Some *tascas* will also have a *vinho da casa*, a cheap house wine which can be a hit or miss.
2. **Select your wine:** Whether you're in the mood for a red, a port, or a rosé, if you want to order like a local you need to know these words:
 - a. **White Wine** – *Vinho Branco*
 - b. **Red Wine** – *Vinho Tinto*
 - c. **Green Wine** – *Vinho Verde*
 - d. **Rosé Wine** – *Vinho Rosé*
 - e. **Port Wine** – *Vinho do Porto*
 - f. **Madeira Wine** – *Vinho da Madeira*
 - g. **Moscatel Wine** – *Vinho Moscatel* or *Moscatel*
 - h. **Sparkling Wine** – *Espumante*
3. **Pick your region:** Below you'll find a brief overview of each *região* (region). If you're still unsure what to go for, ask the waiter for a recommendation— *O que recomenda?* If it's white wine he'll probably ask you if you want *doce* (sweet), *meio-seco* (medium-dry) or *seco* (dry). For red, you can choose between *leve* (light), *médio* (medium), or *encorpado* (full-bodied).



4. **Bottle or Glass:** In most places, there's the option to choose between a garrafa (bottle) or a copo (glass). An average glass of wine in Lisbon costs around €3, and a bottle around €15. If you're with a friend, we recommend ordering a bottle to share.
5. **Enjoy and repeat:** You've got the wine, now relax and enjoy it! If you like it, make a note of it, so you know what to get in the future. But why stick to just one when there are so many good wines to try? Soon, you'll be an expert on Portuguese wine!



Other useful words

Ano de Colheita – year of harvest

Adega – a wine cellar, usually underground, it can also refer to a winery.

Cave – another word for wine cellar, mostly for aging wines like Port.

Quinta or Herdade – wine estates

Casta – grape variety

DOC – wine made in specific areas with permitted grapes and a maximum limit for production, usually of higher quality.



Vinho Regional – wine made in areas with less strict rules for the types of grapes and limits for production.

Trust your taste

What should you be looking for in a good wine? This is largely a matter of personal taste. You need to find out, for example, about the structure, if the grapes are local or not, the vineyards, how old they are and the most important thing is how big the company is. If the company is small, it's usually a good indicator of how rustic and rare the type of wine is – great for wine enthusiasts seeking an exclusive label. To find out the type of wine you like, you have to decide if you like sweet tannins, acid tannins, if you like wine with structure or without structure, aged or not, dry, acidity, etc. There is no perfect wine for everybody, there is a perfect wine for you.





Portuguese 14 Wine Regions

The first step to becoming an expert in Portuguese wine is to get familiar with the regions. Only then you can know the difference between a Douro, a Dão and an Alentejo wine. So, let's give you a quick overview starting from the North to the South. More detail on [Wine Regions | Dr Grape](#).

Each region in Portugal caters to a different taste and herein lies the key to understanding Portuguese wine. Normally, the best wines are made from small producers and smaller companies. The type of grape varieties used are native to Portugal and not commonly grown elsewhere. Thanks to hot summers (temperatures can soar above 40C) and a dry harvest, the grapes grow thick skins, creating unique characteristics and resulting in distinctive and potent wines. Robust fruit flavors, silky tannins, alluring spiciness, pure minerality and impressive structure are all present in Portuguese wines.





1. Vinho Verde

Stretching from Minho to the Douro, Vinho Verde is both a wine region and a type of wine. But what is Vinho Verde? While it translates to green wine, it means young wine. That's because the bottles are released within 3-6 months after harvest and drunk almost immediately. Most Vinho Verde is actually white wine, but it can also be red or rosé. It's the region that makes it a Vinho Verde. A glass of green wine is a summer staple for us Portuguese, and it's the perfect match for a seafood meal.

Best Vinho Verde Wineries: Quinta da Aveleda, Quinta do Ameal and Palácio da Brejoeira (and of course our very own wines from [Vercoope – Adegas Cooperativas da Região do Vinho Verde – Portugal](#)).



2. Trás-os-Montes

Not many tourists venture out to this remote corner of Portugal, let alone experience its wine. The high altitudes and the extreme climate is what sets Trás-os-Montes apart from other Portuguese wine regions. The most common wine from this region is Transmontano, a full-bodied red with high alcohol levels. They also produce Vinho dos Mortos (Wine of the Dead), a type of wine that was buried by locals during the French Invasion, so it wouldn't get stolen. That's how much we love our wine! Today there are still a few farmers who keep this tradition alive.

Best Trás-os-Montes Wineries: Quinta das Corriças and Quinta De Arcossó





3. Douro and Porto

Search for a Portuguese wine region, and you'll probably come across the Douro Valley. It's one of the oldest wine regions in the world! Its vineyards are scattered across steep hills providing breathtaking views over the Douro river. The region is most famous for the Vinho do Porto, aka, port wine, a sweet drink often served with dessert. Here at Devour Lisbon, we love Pêras Bêbedas, delicious poached pears soaked in Vinho do Porto.

Best Douro and Porto Wineries: Quinta da Pacheca, Quinta da Romaneira, and Lavradores de Feitoria.

Best Port Wine Cellars: Caves Ferreira, Real Companhia Velha, and Taylor's.

Insider's tip: One of the best ways to explore the Douro region is to take the historical steam train which runs between June and October.



4. Távora-Varosa

Are you a champagne fan? If so, Távora-Varosa is the place for you! This region offers grapes with high acidity which are perfect for sparkling wine. It's here you'll find most plantings of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in Portugal, two grapes from the Champagne region in France.

Best Távora-Varosa Wineries: Caves da Murganheira





5. Dão and Lafões

Tucked between high mountains, the region of Dão offers some of the best Portuguese red wines. Lafões, on the other hand, produces more acidic wines, similar to the Vinho Verde region. To learn more about the wines of Dão, we suggest visiting the Solar do Vinho do Dão in Viseu.

Best Dão and Lafões Wineries: Casa de Santar and Casa da Passarella.



6. Bairrada

Bairrada is a small region of Portugal located near the Atlantic. It's famous for its delicious suckling pig (leitão à Bairrada), and for its red wines. The white grapes from this region are mostly used to produce sparkling wine.

Best Bairrada Wineries: Quinta das Bágeiras and Quinta dos Abibes





7. Beira Interior

Beira Interior is home to Serra da Estrela, one of Portugal's highest mountains. It's where most locals go to see snow in the winter! When it comes to wine regions, Beira Interior is still the underdog, but we encourage you to try their wines, especially the red and the rosé.

Best Beira Interior Wineries: Quinta dos Termos, Quinta do Cardo and Adega Castelo Rodrigo

Beira Interior is still the underdog of Portuguese wines, but it's worth trying the reds and the rosés from this region. Sortelha is one of the many small towns located in Beira Interior, and is considered world heritage by UNESCO.



8. Tejo

If you order the house wine at a Lisbon restaurant, odds are you've tried Tejo wine. Previously known as Ribatejo, this region produces large quantities of wine which supply most restaurants in the capital. Wines from this region are among the most affordable in Portugal. The white wines tend to be very fruity with tropical aromas, and the reds have soft tannins.

Best Tejo Wineries: Quinta da Alorna and Quinta da Lagoalva





9. Lisbon Region

As a wine region, Lisbon offers a variety of wines, ranging from light whites to liqueur wines. Some of the best wines from this region come from Alenquer, Bucelas, Colares, and Carcavelos. You might have heard of Carcavelos for its beaches, but did you know this seaside town makes a delicious fortified wine? It doesn't produce as much as it used to, but if you spot it on a menu we recommend giving it a go!

Best Lisbon Wineries: Adega Regional de Colares, Adega do Casal da Manteiga and Quinta das Carrafouchas.



10. Setúbal Peninsula

There are many reasons to visit Setúbal. The friendly dolphins, the Natural Park of Arrábida, and the stunning beaches of Sesimbra, but for wine lovers, it's the Moscatel. Primarily made from Muscat grapes, Moscatel is sweet and fruity, making it the perfect drink to end a meal.

Best Setúbal Wineries: José Maria da Fonseca, Bacalhôa Vinhos de Portugal and Quinta de Alcube.

Moscatel is one of the best Portuguese wines produced in the region of Setúbal. You can taste Moscatel at the José Maria da Fonseca Museum in Setúbal. Photo credit: Pedro Ribeiro Simões





11. Alentejo

Cork trees, vines, and olive groves make up the landscape of Alentejo. Alentejo wines are up there with the Douro as one of the best Portuguese wines. The reds are full-bodied and fruity, while the whites tend to be mild and slightly acidic. Whichever you go for, it's hard to go wrong with an Alentejo wine.

Best Alentejo Wineries: Herdade do Esporão, Herdade dos Grous, and Adega Mayor (And of course our very own [Figueirinha – Family Property](#))

If you're looking for the best Portuguese wine, you must head to Alentejo and visit the vineyards. Some of the best wine in Portugal comes from the vineyards of Alentejo.



12. Algarve

If you're like most tourists, your first visit to Portugal was probably to the Algarve. And we don't blame you! The constant sunshine and the white sandy beaches attract thousands here every year, including locals. Winemaking took the back seat for a while, but recently there's been an effort to revitalize it. Algarve wines are smooth and fruity, and with the weather being quite warm, the reds are usually better than the whites.

Best Algarve Wineries: Quinta dos Vales, Monte da Casteleja and Adega do Cantor.

Looking for the best Portuguese wine in the Algarve? We suggest booking a wine tasting at Quinta dos Vales.

You can book wine tastings in the Algarve at Quinta dos Vales.





13. Madeira & Azores

The last two wine regions of Portugal. You'll find some of Portugal's most incredible landscapes in these two archipelagos. We love the subtropical weather of Madeira and the crater lakes of Azores. As for the wine, it's hard to take sides, since they produce very different things. Madeira wine is considered one of the best fortified wines in the world, and it can last for centuries. Shakespeare even mentions it in his play, Henry IV!

The Azores has nine islands, but only three of them focus on wine production: Pico, Graciosa, and Terceira. The region is known for Vinho de Cheiro, a sweet fragrant wine with low alcohol levels, which is also used in traditional dishes from the Azores, like the Polvo Guisado (octopus stew).

Best Madeira Wineries: Blandy's Wine Lodge and Vinhos Barbeito.

Best Azores Wineries: Quinta da Jardinete and Cooperativa Vitivinicola Da Ilha Do Pico

Looking for the best Portuguese wine? If you enjoy fortified wines, you must try Madeira wine, one of the best fortified wines in the world!

Blandy's Wine Lodge in Funchal is one of the best places to experience Madeira wine.



Now that you know a little more about Portuguese wine, you probably want to try some for yourself. (We can't blame you—it's pretty great.) Our solution: open your desktop and browse to our special offerings at [Shop Now | Dr Grape](#).



Portuguese Grape Varieties

In Portugal, the grape varieties range is easily above the 250 native varieties, most of which are territorially linked to Portugal for hundreds of years of natural selection. Here's a list of the Portuguese Grape Varieties and their characteristics.



The Portuguese winemaking heritage is strongly rooted in the country's identity from North to South. All the wine countries inherited a whole different universe of native grape varieties, some countries then decide to reduce that spectrum and even import international varieties to make their wines easy to be categorized and to fit into the consumer's mass taste and demand. In Portugal, the grape varieties range is easily above the 250 native varieties, most of which are territorially linked to Portugal for hundreds of years of natural selection.

The internationally renowned Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet, Merlot, Pinot Noir, and even the (nowadays) widely used Syrah, are recent additions to Portuguese winemaking. Did you know that in the USA about 82% of the wine comes from less than 10 grape varieties? And why is that? Well, the obvious reason is globalization. People tend to feel more comfortable buying familiar and simple wines rather than those made out of obscure varieties. This global uniformization, makes wines simple to taste and understand, and ultimately that means more sales.

In Portugal, the majority of the wines produced are still based on the native grape varieties like:

- **Antão Vaz** - Well suited to the warm and sunny climate on the great plains of the Alentejo, it is reliable and productive, consistent in its ripening. The bunches are big and not too tightly packed, the grapes large, with tough skins. As a rule it produces firm, full-bodied, well-structured wines. Made as a single variety, it has lively aromas, with hints of ripe tropical fruits, tangerine peel and something mineral, along with good structure and body. If picked early, it gives wines with vibrant aroma and crisp acidity. Left to ripen longer, it can reach high levels of alcohol, making it a good candidate for barrel maturation. It is often blended



with Roupeiro and Arinto, which contribute refreshing acidity. Dr Grape's Antão Vaz Wines: [Shop Now | Dr Grape](#)

- **Aragonez** - In recent years it has spread rapidly throughout the Dão, Ribatejo/Tejo and Lisboa regions. It can make rich, lively red wines that combine elegance and robustness, copious berry fruit and spicy flavour. It's an early variety (that's what "Tempranillo" means in Spanish). The vines are very vigorous and productive and adapt well to different climates and soils, although it prefers hot, dry climates on sandy or clay-limestone soils. It tends to be blended with other varieties, typically Touriga Nacional and Touriga Franca, and also with Trincadeira and Alicante Bouschet in the Alentejo. Dr. Grape's Aragonez Wines: [Shop Now | Dr Grape](#)
- **Arinto** - It produces vibrant wines with lively acidity, refreshing and with a strong mineral character, with a high aging potential. The firm acidity is the main calling card of the Arinto caste, guaranteeing it the adjective of "improving" caste in many Portuguese regions. In Bucelas the grape variety reaches its zenith, it is in the Alentejo and Tejo that its assistance is more fruitful, due to the contribution of acidity which is so indispensable and difficult to obtain. It presents medium-sized bunches, compact and with small berries. It is a relatively discrete caste, without any particular aspirations of exuberance, favouring notes of green apple, lime and lemon. It is frequently used in the production of blended wines and also sparkling wines. Dr. Grape's Arinto Wines: [Shop Now | Dr Grape](#)
- **Azal** - This variety is cultivated particularly in inland areas where it ripens well and reaches its level of quality when planted in dry and well exposed soils in the sub-regions of Amarante, Basto, Baião and Sousa. It produces wines with a pale citrus yellow color to the most intense citrus quince. Fruity aroma (lime, lemon sometimes grapefruit and green apple). Fruity green lemon flavor with citrus and mineral notes. It presents excellent freshness. Preserves the fresh and citrus character, becoming more elegant and harmonious over time. Dr. Grape's Azal Wines: [Shop Now | Dr Grape](#)
- **Espadeiro** - Just across the Spanish border to the north, Espadeiro is also used in Rias Baixas, in both blended and varietal red wines. These tend to be light-bodied and are best consumed in their youth. Vinho Verde's rosé wines have the same spritzly character as the far more prominent white wines that are made under the title in northern Portugal. This is due to the retention of carbon dioxide in the winemaking process, and has become a key feature of Vinho Verde wines. There are a number of sub-varieties of Espadeiro, such as Espadeiro Tinto and Espadeiro Mole. In southern Portugal, the name Espadeiro refers to a completely different grape variety – Tinta Amarela (Trincadeira). Dr. Grape's Espadeiro Wines: [Shop Now | Dr Grape](#)
- **Loureiro** - "Loureiro" means "laurel" or "bay" and the aroma of Loureiro wines is said to resemble that of laurel flowers, also orange blossom, acacia and lime blossom, overlaying appley, peachy fruit. Loureiro wines usually have refreshing, well-balanced acidity. Loureiro is much in evidence nowadays bottled as a single variety, but traditionally it was more often blended with Arinto (Pedernã) and Alvarinho, or with Trajadura. It is a very vigorous, high-yielding variety that has only recently been recognised as "noble". The bunches are elongated and relatively compact, bearing medium-sized, yellowish-greenish grapes. Dr. Grape's Loureiro Wines: [Shop Now | Dr Grape](#)
- **Touriga Nacional** - Though Northern in origin, it has spread right across the country - you will find it down south in the Algarve and the Alentejo, out west in the Ribatejo/Tejo and Setúbal regions, successfully competing with the local Baga grape in Bairrada, and way out mid-Atlantic in the Azores. Touriga Nacional is a thick-skinned grape, and those skins are rich in



color and tannins, giving excellent structure and ageing capacity. But it also has wonderful, intense flavors, at the same time floral and fruity - ripe blackcurrants, raspberries - with complex hints also of herbs and liquorice. Yields are never high. The Dão and Douro regions both claim to be the origin of this fine grape, and the rest of the winemaking world is beginning to wake up to its quality. Dr. Grape's Touriga Nacional Wines: [Shop Now | Dr Grape](#)

- **Trajadura** - This makes it a great candidate for blending in this cool, moist part of the country, where excessive acidity and low alcohol can be a problem even with vines trained in an efficient, modern way. Trajadura is a fairly aromatic variety, with gentle flavours of peach, apricot, apple and ripe pear and a pleasant touch of orange blossom. It is used in popular blends with Alvarinho, and with Loureiro and Arinto. Trajadura has a very long vegetative cycle, buds breaking early, grapes ripening late. The bunches are yellowish-green, tightly packed and medium sized. Yields are very generous. Dr. Grape's Trajadura Wines: [Shop Now | Dr Grape](#)
- **Verdelho** - Verdelho came to fame on Portugal's islands - Madeira and the Azores - as a base wine for fortified wines. From there it made its way to Australia, where it makes rich, aromatic dry whites. On Madeira it has traditionally been responsible for the tangy, off-dry style of (fortified) Madeira wine. The base wines have high acidity, and can be aromatic. Before the vine-munching phylloxera bug reached Madeira in the late 19th century, Verdelho vines accounted for two-thirds of Madeira's vineyards. Nowadays very little remains, growing mostly on high ground along the north coast of the island. Bunches of tiny yellowish-green grapes are small and compact. Dr. Grape's Verdelho Wines: [Shop Now | Dr Grape](#)

Learn More about Portuguese Grape Varieties:

[GrapeVarieties | Dr Grape](#)

Sources:

[A Beginner's Guide to Portuguese Wine – Devour Tours](#)

[A Beginner's Guide to Portuguese Wine \(theculturetrip.com\)](#)

[A List of Portuguese Grape Varieties \(winetourismportugal.com\)](#)

[Portuguese Wines | Dr Grape Ltd](#)



Dr Grape
Taste of Portugal

Dr Grape's Suggestions from our portfolio

Fonte Mouro Reserva Red



Rated "Top 2% of wines in The World" by Vivino users, so you know this is a special wine.

Inspired by the legend of Fonte Mouro, we produced this wine with characteristics such as concentration, freshness, intensity and complexity, normally obtained in sloping vineyards and temperate climates; they contrast with the very warm and dry weather of the plains of Beja, where it's produced.

It presents an intense ruby color, aroma of black fruit and some spicy notes, soft tannins and good acidity that allows it to have a great longevity.

Alcohol Content 15% vol.

Buy this wine from Dr Grape:

[Fonte Mouro Reserva Red | Dr Grape](#)



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Intuição White



Our best seller Wine in our Webstore.

Let your Intuition (Intuição) take you travelling through the young, fresh and fruity flavour of this wine, while you inspire yourself in each expression present on our label, painted by the team of the Figueirinha Estate.

It presents citric color and aroma of tropical fruits. In the mouth it is light and fresh.

Accompanies fish and shellfish dishes at the ideal temperature of 11°C to 12°C.

Alcohol Content 12.5% vol.

But this wine from Dr Grape:

[Intuição white | Dr Grape](#)