

Week of 09-25-07

White Bag Clues: White Wine Stem

Grape -

Houston discovered this varietals name translates to “crossed” in its native tongue. This grape’s small yield produces wine with good body, acidity, finesse and elegant aroma and Andy says don’t forget the melon!

Some say this varietal can sometimes lack acid balance, but not this bottle.

It responds well to skin maceration and wood aging.

This bottle was 65% oak and the rest stainless fermented.

This is the dominant white wine grape of this particular region.

Region -

This wine growing region is centered around an old cathedral city.

Has a reputation for producing some of the country’s best reds.

The name of this region originates from a river in the high country.

Resembles Provence in beauty.

Since this country joined the European Economic Community, control has been taken from the local cooperatives that had a monopoly on winemaking. Such changes are allowing independent producers to become more involved, and those who use more modern winemaking techniques are producing fruitier, more youthful wines.

Producer -

They pioneered the idea of varietal bottling in their home country with their 1996 wines, and were probably responsible for the Touriga Nacional gold rush which followed.

They have 12 different plots totaling 40 hectares. They use all this land to produce a dizzying array of wines.

Your Best Guess???

Profile:

It has a lovely nutty, honeycomb and lightly charry oak quality, with a touch of caramel and mint humbug. On the palate the oak is pushed into the background by very ripe, pure apple fruit with plenty of bite and freshness. Deliciously tangy and long.

DAO

The Dao wine region, centered around the old cathedral city of Viseu in north central Portugal, has the reputation for producing some of the country's best red wines. Its name comes from a river in the high country not far south of the Douro and well inland from the sea. Its beautiful countryside resembles that of Provence, France, with pine woods alternating with sprawling vineyards over monster, steep-sided sand-dunes, eventually rolling down into the rocky bed of the river.

More than two-thirds of the wines produced in Dao's are red, made from any one, or a combination of, nine different grape varieties. Touriga Nacional, one of the principle Port wine grapes, is regarded as the best in the region and must account for at least twenty percent of any red wine. Encruzado is the dominant white grape variety, which is usually blended with others from the region.

White Wines - crisp, floral, fragrant

Primary White Wine Grapes - encruzado, assario branco, borrado das moscas

Red Wines - dry, hard, astringent/tannic

Primary Red Wine Grapes - touriga Nacional, bastardo, jaen, tinta pinheira, alfocheiro preto, tinta roriz

Quinta dos Roques (Portugal) Encruzado 2004

Encruzado is a specifically Dão variety, now becoming more popular across Portugal. Sixty-five per cent of this wine was fermented in oak, with battonage, and the rest was fermented in stainless steel. This variety takes the oak much better than a Malvasia I also tasted on a visit to the property: it has a lovely nutty, honeycomb and lightly charry oak quality, with a touch of caramel and mint humbug. On the palate the oak is pushed into the background by very ripe, pure apple fruit with plenty of bite and freshness. Deliciously tangy and long. Around 12,000 bottles.

Several vintages of Quinta dos Roques' white Dão certainly vindicated my initial enthusiasm for another local grape, Encruzado, which can make serious, dry, full bodied whites with every bit as much gravitas as fine white burgundy. The same property's varietal Touriga Nacional seemed just as good in 1996 as the 2005, and overall Quinta dos Roques' 1996s seemed to have lasted just a bit better than those from the other great Dão producer Quinta da Pellada.

[2004 / 05 Quinta dos Roques ENCRUZADO Branco Dao Portugal](#)

Description: Quinta dos Roques pioneered the idea of varietal bottling in Portugal with their 1996 wines, and were probably responsible for the Touriga Nacional gold rush which followed. Despite their fame, Roques remain a small producer, with many of their bottlings not exceeding 1000 cases. With 12 different plots totalling 40 hectares this is a dynamic and exciting estate, making a sometimes bewildering array of different wines. One of Portugal's iconic whites, from the best white varietal of the Dao region . A complex wine combining green lemons with oak and battonage notes while the balanced acidity and zesty citrus fruit develop on the palate into the enjoyable finish. (12 x 75 cl)