



GRAHAM'S 2011 VINTAGE PORT



QUINTA DOS MALVEDOS

PRODUCTION: 8,000 CASES

In the last twelve years, Graham's has declared just three years as Vintage Ports; the 2000, the 2003 and the 2007. Now the Symington family has decided to declare the 2011 as a Graham's Vintage Port in view of the outstanding quality of this year.

The 2011 Port is remarkably good but selection has been rigorous and only 8,000 cases will be bottled, a figure substantially lower than for many years. Of this, 7,000 cases will be of 12/75cl.



QUINTA DO TUA

The key factors that predominate in the great Port years in the Douro have always been good winter rains and the weather pattern immediately prior to and during the harvest. In the last quarter of 2010, 358 mm of rain fell, significantly above the average of 248mm. This winter rain is vital to sustain the vines through the long and hot Douro summers, as the schist rock of the Douro is excellent at retaining the water deep in the subsoil. The early winter of 2011 gave good average rains. However April and May 2011 were warm (3° C above average) and this, combined with some rainfall, led to the development of oidium and mildew, especially for the farmers who were less careful.

Budburst, flowering and veraison were all early and the harvest was widely predicted to start well before the traditional dates. But maturation studies showed that although Baumés were advanced, the phenolic ripeness was not. The tannins in the pips and stalks were clearly green because May, June and July had been extremely dry, with virtually no rainfall at all. The vines were finding it very difficult to ripen the tannins in these conditions.

On Sunday 21st August the Douro vineyards were given a wonderful gift, and good rain fell for several hours from about 7pm. On the 1st and 2nd September another storm blew in from the Atlantic over the Serra do Marão and deposited rain across the Douro. This welcome water is rare at this time of the year in the Douro, but immediately softened the grape skins and diluted the sugars. Within a few days of sunny weather, the Baumés were rising again and the tannins were ripening. There then followed simply perfect harvesting weather for the next five weeks. The scene had been set for a classic Vintage. The Touriga Franca, a late ripening variety, performed particularly well, always the sign of fine and prolonged harvest weather.



Charles Symington and his Symington cousins have carefully selected the very best wines from the five Graham's Quintas to make the 2011 Vintage Port. It is this ability to select wines from five great vineyards, situated in very different locations and microclimates of this remarkable valley, which defines the quality of Graham's 2011 Vintage Port.

Quinta dos Malvedos is the leading wine in this Graham's Vintage Port, as it has been since 1890, giving floral characteristics of eucalyptus and mint, with soft violet overtones. On the taste, Malvedos gives cassis, mulberry and blackberries, all at perfect ripeness, balanced by well-structured tannins. The Malvedos wines are always rich and very ripe, the result of its predominantly south-facing aspect. Quinta do Tua, with its very old terraced vines that face west, gives tremendous concentration, texture and flavours of black cherries. Two kilometres downriver, Quinta da Vila Velha also faces west and brings intense purple-black wines with notes of esteva (rockrose) and violets and flavours of black chocolate. Since the early 20th century, the great Rio Torto vineyard called Quinta das Lages has been used to make Graham's Vintage Ports. Lages brings elegant complexity, concentration and fine violet aromas to the Graham's '11. Finally, the family has chosen some wines from the very low-yielding and north-facing Quinta do Vale de Malhadas in the Douro Superior to give sinewy tannins and some fine coffee flavours. The Malhadas wines, the family believes, will contribute to the longevity of the Graham's 2011, with their firm tannins and concentrated flavours.

The Graham's 2011 Vintage Port has been made from these five Graham's Quintas. All grapes were picked by hand and fermented in lagares (treading tanks). The total production in 2011 of the five Quintas was 1,454 pipes (799,700 lts) of Port. Charles Symington and his cousins have selected just 131 pipes (72,000 lts), i.e. 8,000 cases, after months of exhaustive tastings, to bottle as Graham's 2011 Vintage Port. The Graham's 2011 Vintage Port is from the very best wines made at these different Quintas, and represents just 9% of the entire production of the five Graham's vineyards.

Tasting Note: the Graham's 2011 Vintage Port is a profound and complex wine of incredible intensity. Purple-black to the rim, this wine gives fine aromas of blue violets, black China tea and ripe red fruit. On the palate, it offers an initial taste of powerful and vigorous fruit, merging into flavours of bitter black chocolate and fine acidity with balanced and mature, but not dry, tannins.



QUINTA DAS LAGES



QUINTA DOS MALVEDOS AND QUINTA DO TUA

The final flavour is clean and perfectly defined. This wine will age well, evolving into a finely balanced and elegant wine in the decades to come.

Graham's 2011 Vintage Port components:

- Quinta dos Malvedos: 35%
- Quinta do Tua: 16%
- Quinta das Lages: 12%
- Quinta da Vila Velha: 18%
- Quinta do Vale de Malhadas: 19%

Grape variety percentages:

- Touriga Nacional: 40%
- Touriga Franca: 31%
- Very old mixed vines: 23%
- Sousão: 6%

Wine Specification:

- Alcohol by volume: 20% v/v (20°C)
- Total acidity: 4.20 (g/l)
- Baumé: 3.80
- Bottled during April / May 2013 with no filtration or fining
- Winemakers: Charles Symington and Henry Shotton