

2012

Quinta do Vesuvio

VINTAGE PORT



TOTAL PRODUCTION IN 2012 WAS ONLY 750 CASES.

2012 was a dry year in the Douro, with widespread drought causing some alarm at times. With these challenging conditions Vesuvio's predominantly northerly aspect, its higher altitudes and its variety of microclimates were a distinct advantage, creating cooler temperatures, which aided the vines in ripening their fruit.

Quinta do Vesuvio is one of the Douro's most magnificent properties, located on the south side of the river in the Douro Superior. Historically, average annual rainfall at Vesuvio is only 450mm. Its vineyards are spread across the seven hills that surround the house and the adega, which are situated next to the river.

THE YEAR

In 2012, total precipitation was only 325mm. This is close to the viticultural limit in these un-irrigated vineyards: in fact many vines died during this season. This was largely due to the lack of winter rain, with hardly a drop falling between January and March. The spring was changeable with dramatic fluctuations of temperature and rainfall. The summer temperatures were a few degrees cooler at Vesuvio than on average, easing the affects of the vines' hydric stress.

Warm conditions in March sped up the vines' development. This was followed by cold weather and above average rainfall in April and May. This climatic irregularity led to a slightly late viticultural cycle. Bud-burst was a few days later than average, beginning in Vesuvio in the last week of March; while flowering only occurred during the last week of May.

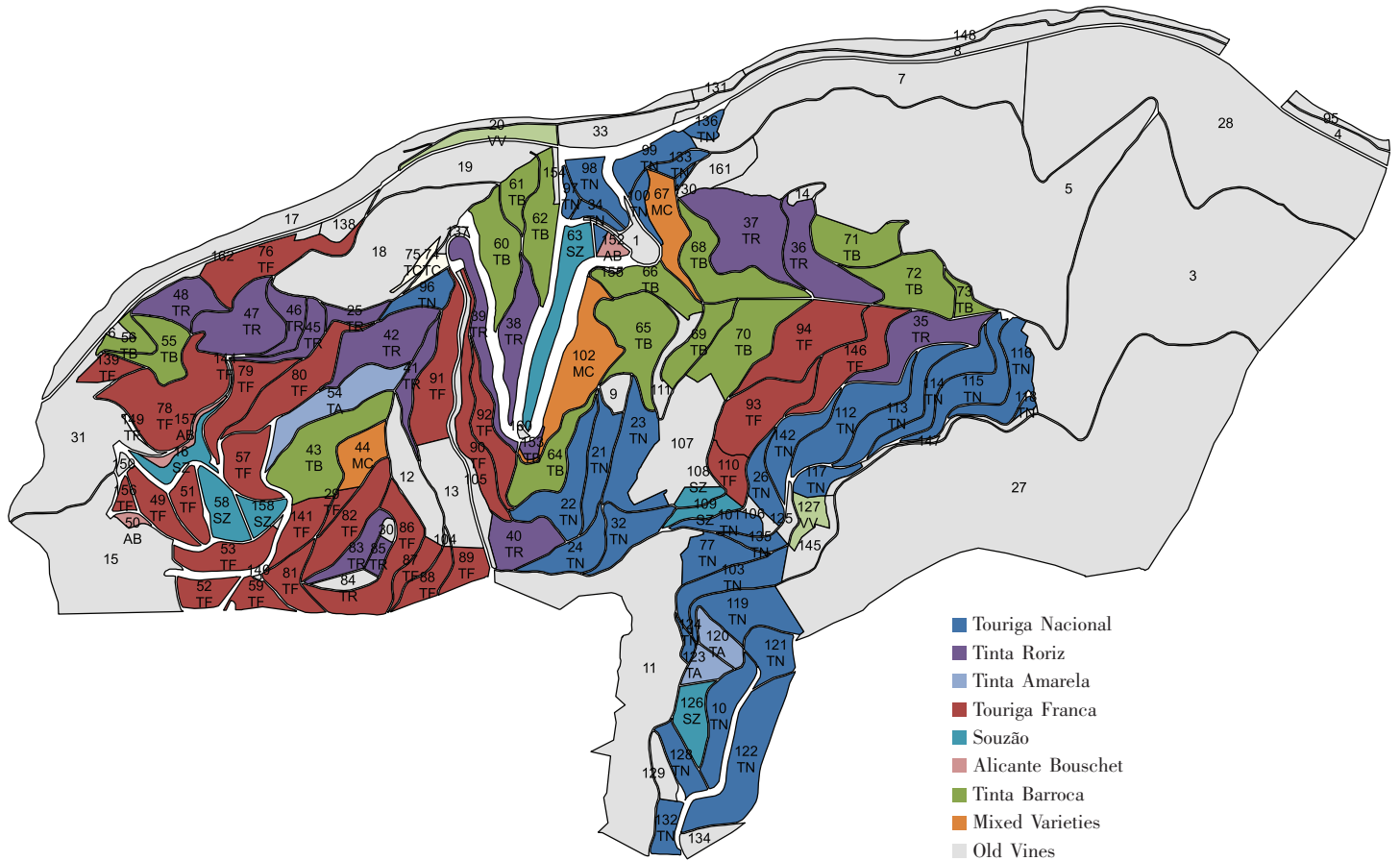
The later viticultural cycle and the damp conditions during the crucial months of April and May meant that fruit-set was noticeably reduced. This, in fact, turned out to be a blessing, as the low yields helped mitigate the stress the vines were under, allowing them to ripen their fruit completely.

The drought conditions returned in the summer. Soil humidity readings were the lowest since records began. At Vesuvio, however, despite some signs of hydric stress in the vines at times there were some significant signs of hope. The vines appeared remarkably green and healthy, with very few dry leaves around the fruiting zone. In response to the dry conditions the vines had developed very short shoots, few bunches of grapes and little foliage. This all contributed to aiding the vines' water retention.

Despite the very low soil humidity, therefore, the vines were able to ripen their small bunches of grapes perfectly, producing small quantities of concentrated and balanced wine. Vesuvio's many microclimates ensure that in any year the wines produced from this property achieve the requisite balance, complexity and elegance.



THE VINTAGE PORTS MADE AT VESUVIO ARE FOOT-TRODDEN IN THE QUINTA'S EIGHT MAGNIFICENT GRANITE LAGARES: AN UNBROKEN TRADITION DATING BACK TO 1827.



TASTING NOTE

The Quinta do Vesuvio 2012 Vintage Port is deep purple-black and inky in the glass, indicative of a voluptuous, blockbuster wine. It denotes opulence on the nose, with the richness and ripe blackberry aromas of the predominant Touriga Nacional. This is balanced with the distinctive minerality and floral fragrance of the Touriga Franca. It has good structure and smooth tannins. The Tinta Amarela gives the wine soft, velvety feel on the palate.

VARIETY COMPONENTS:

- Touriga Nacional – 60% (Blocks 98, 99, 100, 135)
- Touriga Franca – 25% (Blocks 79, 80)
- Tinta Amarela – 10% (Block 54)
- Sousão – 5% (Block 58)

BAUMÉ

3.8

WINE MAKERS

Charles Symington, Mário Natário

THE HARVEST

Picking began at Vesuvio on 12th September, some 10 days later than average. This was partly because the drought conditions had brought somewhat erratic ripening patterns. The low rainfall and consequent hydric stress meant maturation patterns were slow.

Yields were very low, with the average for the year at 0.91kg of grapes per vine, compared to the historic average of 1.29kg per vine. This represents a 30% reduction in total yield. This smaller crop improved the quality of the berries that did ripen and the harvest was therefore produced grapes of impressive concentration.

The picking began with the Touriga Nacional parcels next to the river and near the house in the Vale da Escola. These ripened earlier as a result of their lower altitude. These small parcels, numbers 98, 99, 100 and 135 make up 60% of the final 2012 Vesuvio Vintage Port. The wines made from the Nacional were very concentrated, lending excellent structure to the final blend, typical of this variety. Yields were very low, at only 780g per vine.

The harvest was paused as rain fell in the last quarter of September. Charles Symington, head winemaker at Vesuvio, decided to wait for the concentration and balance to return to the remaining grapes, in particular the Touriga Franca. This gamble paid off wonderfully, and the Franca was picked in the first week of October in absolutely ideal conditions from the west facing parcels, numbers 79 and 80, which produced yields of 960g per vine. In fact, the Douro has on some of lowest yields in the world.

The final wine includes 10% of the Tinta Amarela variety, from block 54, an old vineyard with over 40 year old vines, which consistently produces excellent wines that have smooth tannins, a dark chocolate aroma and are velvety in the mouth. Sousão, from block 58, with young vines planted in 2009, makes up the remaining 5% of the final wine.