



FONSECA
PORTO

GUIMARAENS 2018 VINTAGE PORT

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Established in 1815, Fonseca belongs in the first rank of Vintage Port houses. It is regarded as one of the most stylistically consistent of the classic Vintage Port houses and its Ports have been made by five generations of the Guimaraens family since its foundation. This consistency derives not only from continuity of family involvement, and the knowledge and skill passed down from one generation to the next, but also a close link with the vineyard. The firm's three estates of Panascal, Cruzeiro and Santo António are the heart of the distinctive character of Fonseca's Vintage Ports.

Fonseca's respect for the vineyard and the unique environment of the Douro Valley expresses itself in the firm's leadership in the field of sustainable viticulture. In 2006 it became the first house to offer a Port made entirely from organically produced grapes. Fonseca is the only Port house with four 100 Point scoring wines. Perhaps more than any other Port producer, Fonseca has built a loyal community of Port enthusiasts who value its individuality and the inimitable character of its wines.

NOTES ON VITICULTURAL YEAR AND HARVEST

The character of the 2018 wines was influenced by an unusual and occasionally challenging viticultural year. This followed a very hot and dry 2017 and, by mid-January, 56% of Portugal, in particular the northeast, had been declared to be in severe drought. Fortunately, March was very wet and the heavy rainfall, totalling 223 mm at Pinhão, built up the reserves of ground water which would prove vital during the ripening season. Until the end of June, the weather remained cold and wet, causing mildew in some vineyards, and hailstorms on 28th May caused extensive damage to some properties in the Pinhão area. The vineyard cycle was about three weeks behind that of the previous year, with véraison only occurring in late July. The weather in July was dry and relatively mild but August saw the arrival of intensely hot weather with temperatures well over 40°C being recorded in the Douro Superior area in the first days of August. The heat allowed the cycle to catch up and, although the hot weather continued, the large amount of moisture in the soil resulted in an even and balanced ripening of the grapes. Harvesting began at Fonseca's Quinta do Panascal in the Távora Valley and on its Pinhão Valley properties, Cruzeiro and Santo António, in the week of 22nd September and was carried out in hot, dry conditions. The young wines were very deeply coloured and stood out for their fresh fruit character and excellent acidity.

TASTING NOTES

Impenetrable purple-black at the centre, with a narrow band of violet on the rim. The nose is dense and compact, with impressive depth and background. The fruit quality is superb, a luscious blend of black and red berry aromas which is the hallmark feature of Fonseca's vintage ports, mingled with notes of dark chocolate. Around this core of powerful, complex fruit is an aura of balsamic, minty scents. Although the nose is sensuous and seductive, there is an attractive firm edge, provided by graphite and a flinty minerality. The first impression on the palate is of silky smoothness but the tannins suddenly burst out on the finish with an assertive pungency and a wire of acidity runs through the wine to give it a lively freshness. There is an abundance of crisp, berry fruit flavour which carries into the long finish. This superb Guimaraens Vintage Port displays stamina and depth but is sufficiently supple and expressive for early drinking.

STORAGE

Vintage Port continues to improve for decades after bottling. The bottle should be kept lain down in a cool place, ideally at a temperature below 16°C.

HANDLING AND SERVING

Vintage Port forms a natural deposit in the bottle and should be decanted. Stand the bottle upright a few hours before decanting to allow the sediment to fall to the bottom of the bottle. With time, the cork may become fragile and opening the bottle requires careful treatment. We recommend the use of a Bi-blade corkscrew that will avoid breaking the natural cork, especially one that is older than ten years of age. Pour the wine in a slow, steady stream into a decanter, ensuring that only the clear wine is poured, leaving the sediment behind. Serve at 16°C to 18°C. Vintage Port is best drunk one to two days after opening.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS

Walnuts are an excellent accompaniment to Vintage Port, as are blue veined and other richly flavoured cheeses. So too are dried fruits such as apricots or figs. Alternatively, simply savour the rich and complex flavours of the wine on their own in a generously proportioned glass with good company.

PRESS COMMENTS

• **Richard Mayson, Decanter.com - 95 Points**

"Lovely, ripe expressive dark chocolate concentration on the nose, this really sings from the glass; dense and voluptuous on the palate, super-ripe and plummy with luscious texture backed by firm, gravelly tannins that extend to a broad, gripping finish. Glorious. This will be a keeper. Drinking Window 2030 - 2065"

• **James Molesworth, Wine Spectator, 94 Points**

"Warm, soft-edged and generally open, with a core of steeped plum, blackberry preserve and blueberry reduction flavors leading the way, backed by hints of ganache and licorice root on the finish that add a grippier feel. More bass than treble, but well-packed and should age well. Best from 2030 through 2045."

• **Jancis Robinson, Jancis Robinson.com, 17,5 Points**

"Blackish crimson. High toned and alluring on the nose. Quite a bit of structure and something suggestive of fireworks. This is the business for a vintage port! The sort of wine that would probably have qualified as a full-blooded Fonseca vintage port a few decades ago. Peppery and fiery and yet the tannins are subsumed under the fruit."

• **Neal Martin, Vinous.com, 17,5 Points**

"I admire the harmony of this Vintage Port. The firm structure only becomes apparent towards the finish. Wonderful length on the aftertaste, the mouth stained with Port for 60 seconds after. Excellent."

• **Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast, 94 Points**

"This is a beautiful, luscious wine. It has all the characteristics of a fine Vintage from this producer, with richness and opulence masking powerful tannins. Here, though, is a Port that will also develop relatively quickly."

• **Wine Align, 97 Points**

"This is a powerhouse port - full throttle, dense, packed with fruit and very firm. The nose is not soaring at the moment, but I love the rich blackberry jam and plum aromas with white chocolate, spice and herbs. Licorice also emerges on the palate."

