



PORT BIBLE

Edition Three

The Ambassador Edition

In honour of our Graham's Ambassador Award



The History of Port

England and Portugal have long been trading partners. In the 16th century England was routinely exchanging bacalhau (dried salt cod), wool and other goods for red wine from northern Portugal. Wars with France and embargoes on French goods in the 17th century increased the demand for red wines to replace the French claret.



As there had been a long affinity between England and Portugal, the search to source quality wines from Portugal began. However Portuguese red wine, known as Port (since it was shipped from the city of Oporto) had a rather uneven reputation, the wines were fairly harsh and prone to spoiling in transit. During the 17th century, winemakers or shippers began adding brandy to the casks of wine to address this issue. This proved successful. By the mid-18th century the wine trade flourished and the first governing body for the port trade was established by the Marques de Pombal. The Douro was the first protected and defined wine growing region in the world, when it was established as a demarcated region in 1756. Standards were set for the making of Port and the supply of aguardente (fortification brandy) was controlled. From then on, adding brandy to Douro wines shipped as Port was a given.

Traditionally all Port was shipped and often purchased by consumers in cask and bottles were only filled to bring the wine to the table. All the typical bottle shapes up to this time had large,

rounded bellies making them impossible to lay down and store for any length of time. As laying down was essential to keeping the corks moist, by the 1770's a new shape of bottle had evolved, a straight-sided cylindrical shape with a longer neck. It was now possible to age wine in bottle, not just cask.

By the end of the 18th century, development of the Douro Valley as a wine growing region prospered and by the mid-19th century, Port was firmly established as a quality wine. However Port production was seriously threatened by the influx of disease to the vines which entered Europe via imported American vines. Phylloxera reached the Douro in the 1870's, devastating vineyards and within a few years the vines simply withered and died. Eventually a solution was found: grafting European grape varieties onto American rootstocks, a practice which continues to this day.

The 20th Century began with four great classic Vintages (1900, 1904, 1908 and 1912) re-enforcing the status of Vintage Port as one of the world's great wines and also establishing the reputation of specific makers of great Vintage Ports. Its reputation of course led to imitation 'ports' being made outside of Portugal, however a new treaty prohibited the importing of Port to England unless accompanied by a certificate of authenticity from Portuguese authorities. This still remains in place today.



The post-war period was possibly the toughest for the Port trade, between the growing taste for spirits and cocktails, and the political situation in Portugal, this kept the country isolated from the modernisation and growth enjoyed elsewhere.

In 1974 regulations were introduced which mandated that bottling must take place in Portugal before being shipped. Despite some initial resistance both abroad and in Oporto, the trade quickly appreciated the quality control inherent in this arrangement and the opportunity to market the producers own brand more obviously. In the past, cask shipments were often bottled in the UK under the name of a shop, for example London's Berry Bros. & Rudd sold 'Berry's Own Selection 1970 Vintage Port' which was in fact shipped in cask as a Warre's wine.

The last quarter of the 20th century saw an extraordinary development in both the Douro and the Port trade. In the Douro, five hydro-electric dams were built on the river and access to the region by road considerably improved. This meant the end of transporting the port casks from the Douro wineries to the Lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia by



barco rabelo (flat bottomed boats which were sailed or rowed) in the 1960's and this was now done more efficiently and safely by road. The region also saw a shift in the distinction between growers and shippers; where before wines were made by the growers and then bought by the shippers who blended the finished wines, the balance shifted and shippers began buying grapes from growers to vinify themselves. Just as at the end of the 19th Century, there was a wave of shippers investing in Douro quintas (vineyards) and overseeing the whole production of Port themselves.

Now in the 21st Century, Port is enjoying a renaissance.

Where is Port From?

Port is one of the few wines in the world which is produced and aged in two different areas of the same country. Port is produced in the beautiful and rugged Douro Valley in North East Portugal but then aged in Vila Nova de Gaia in the city of Oporto.



In contrast to the city of Oporto, the Douro is protected from the Atlantic climate by the large mountain range, the Marão, rising 1,400 metres to the West of the valley, creating a Mediterranean micro-climate, with temperatures rising up to 35-40°C in the summer but dropping below freezing in the winter.

Few crops can withstand the extreme climate of the Douro Valley, however these conditions are ideal for making wines of great power and concentration. Each year vines face a struggle which most years they win, producing tight bunches of small, thick-skinned grapes, packed with flavour and ripened to perfection.

Olives, oranges, figs and almond trees compete with the vines for sparse nutrients from the stony schistus soil.

The Douro Valley is the largest area of mountain vineyard in the world, with vineyards planted from altitudes 80m to 550m above sea level.

For centuries the only way to plant vineyard on the steep slopes of the Douro Valley, was by building dry stone-wall terraces, many of which would hold just one row of vines. These remain a dramatic and beautiful feature of the Douro and have contributed to the valley being declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Today, even though new vineyards are made using mechanical means, most of the work still continues to be done by hand, particularly the pruning and picking.



Port is made from grape varieties which are indigenous to Portugal, given the nature of the climate and soil, the Portuguese grape varieties produce very low yields, as little as 0.9kg per vine. The main traditional grape varieties found in Ports are Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca, Tinta Barroca, Tinto Cao, Tinta Roriz.

How is Port Made?

By crushing the grapes, the fermentation process is underway (the process by which yeasts consume the natural sugars which produce alcohol) and the colour and flavour compounds are extracted from the skins of the grapes. This process takes about two days as the aim is to preserve a high level of natural sugars. The fermentation process is monitored closely and when the alcohol and sugar are at the desired levels, the wine is run out of the lagar and into a tank (separating the wine from the solid grape parts). The fermentation is then arrested by adding

aguardente – a pure grape spirit of 77% alcohol (a colourless spirit with no aroma nor flavour). Port is made.

The wines are kept in storage in the Douro over the first winter and in the spring are transported to the Port lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia, where they will be aged in large wooden casks. Early in the second year after the harvest, a decision is then taken regarding the way in which the Ports will be aged to produce different styles.



Wines of the Douro Valley

Originally famous for the production of Port, the Douro is increasingly becoming known for its high quality red and white wines. The region is capable of producing wines that can rival the very best in the world, and due to the unique terroir and grape varieties they have a highly distinctive character and style not to be found elsewhere.

Altano

The Symington Family were amongst the pioneers of modern Douro wines. The first step Symington Family Estates made into wine after the legalization of table wines was with Altano which they first released in 1999. 'Altano' is the Portuguese word for a thermal that birds of prey use to gain height.



Vesuvio

The Douro's most iconic estate, one of the wonders of the world that covers 326 hectares, 7 Hills, and 31 Valleys. This estate only produces Vintage Ports and two premium Douro D.O.C. wines. The first estate to be planted with single varietal parcels that still produce fruit today. There are also much older, mixed variety vineyards, over 100 years old, which contribute to the incredible complexity and structure of Quinta do Vesuvio wines.



Quinta do Vesuvio Still Wines

Two Douro still wines are produced from the Vesuvio estate, Quinta do Vesuvio and Pombal do Vesuvio. For the main estate wine, Quinta do Vesuvio, Touriga Nacional is one of the two most important grape varieties used. These vines are grown in the Quinta Nova vineyard located at 450 metres altitude, with a fine westerly aspect. This area of the estate was acquired for Vesuvio by Dona Antonia Ferreira in the mid-19th century. Little can she have imagined how valuable these high vineyards would be for the estate's red wines in the 21st century. Exquisite aromatic freshness with wild berries and a clear floral aroma, showing some hints of thyme and pine needle. In the palate is both silky and large, with exceptionally polished tannins and a remarkable freshness that enhances the cherry and black plum flavours, as well as hints of fine clover. The presence of oak is perfectly integrated, giving a precise shape to the simultaneously assertive and charming structure of the wine.

Pombal do Vesuvio comes from the terraced vineyards that surround the ancient dovecote, 'pombal' in Portuguese, situated at 200 meters in the heart of this beautiful and remote property. These vineyards are primarily planted with Touriga Nacional.

Aromas redolent of cassis, liquorice and brambly, blackberry fruit, as well as appealing dark chocolate notes. Vesuvio's signature thyme fragrance is also present. On the palate, the seductive, supple texture is sheer pleasure with delicious black fruit flavours, dark chocolate and a touch of mocha. Extraordinary freshness from the fine acidity underpins remarkable balance and impressive structure.



The Different Styles of Port

There are a variety of different styles of Port but there are two distinct features about the way the Port is aged, wood-aged or bottle-aged.

People often get confused about which Port needs to be decanted, which Ports are ready to be drunk and which Ports will improve with time in the bottle. Hopefully the following will explain in a bit more detail the different styles.

White Port

White Port is made from the white grape varieties. It ranges in style from intensely sweet through sweet, semi-dry and dry to extra-dry. Most White Ports are stored in stainless steel for no more than 18 months to accentuate their freshness but wood-aged versions can turn a golden colour and take on a faintly nutty character.

Graham's Blend No.5 White Port

Designed specifically for mixing with tonic and cocktails. This port is fresher and more aromatic than other white Ports. Medium-dry with fresh citrus tones and a touch of orange blossom.



Graham's Fine White Port

Gorgeous pale golden colour with fresh, crisp fruit and delicate almond flavours.



Rosé Port

This new style of port has been made by a new technique extracting fresh, fruity flavours and delivers a subtle and delicate pink colour. The result is wonderfully fresh, full of the rich fruit flavours of Port. The blend of red grapes are handled similarly to that of producing an elegant non-wooded white and using a vinification process that extracts a light amount of colour without the astringent tannins.

Croft Pink Port

Very Pleasant fruity flavours of cherry and raspberry. Fresh, smooth, light on the finish.



Ruby and Reserve Port

Ruby Ports are made of young, vibrant wines from different harvests. The wines are aged for an average of three years in large oak vats before they are fined, blended and bottled ready to drink. Full and fruity, Ruby Ports have robust, youthful aromas of red fruits, well-balanced and fresh on the palate. Reserve Ports have the same youthful characteristics and rich red colour as Ruby Ports, they are made in largely the same way but from superior quality grapes and gain slightly in complexity from four to seven years' wood-ageing before bottling.

Graham's Six Grapes Reserve

Deep red colour with a seductive rich perfume of ripe plums and cherries. Youthful, fruit forward style. On the palate, silky and smooth with a good structure and a long lingering finish.



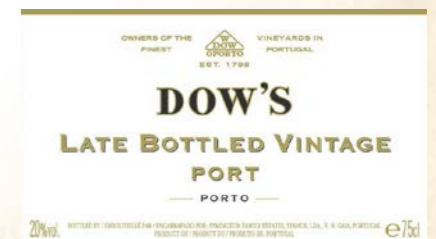
Late Bottled Vintage (LBV)

LBV Ports are made of wines from the best vineyards from a single good vintage (although not necessarily from a 'declared vintage' as with Vintage Port).

LBV is matured for four to six years in wood and is bottled when ready to drink. These wines have more depth and complexity than a Ruby or standard Tawny but are softer and more approachable than Vintage Port.

Dow's Late Bottled Vintage

Dark red ruby colour. Excellent peppery nose, full of jammy dark berry fruits and spicy notes. Full bodied with flavours of dark prunes and a very long, spicy, slightly dry finish with softness gained from wood ageing.



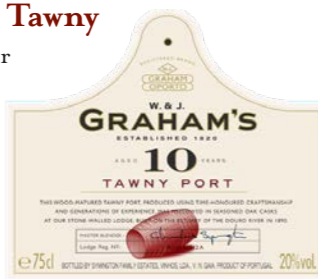
Tawny, Aged Tawny and Colheita Ports

Like Ruby Ports, Tawnies are made of young wines from a number of harvests, they too are aged for an average of three years in barrel before blending and bottling when they are ready to drink. As their name suggests, Tawny Ports tend to be somewhat lighter in colour, showing autumnal, amber shades and taste more of nuts and dried fruits in contrast to the robust fruit flavours of Ruby. Higher quality Aged Tawnies carry an indication of age on the label (10, 20, 30 or 40 Years Old). This relates to the average number of years they have spent maturing in barrels before they are finally bottled. The extra years of wood-ageing softens the colour of Aged Tawnies and give them greater complexity and their typical nut and raisin characteristics.

Colheita or Single Harvest Tawny Ports are perhaps most easily understood as Tawny Ports, but from a single harvest. They are aged in the barrel for at least seven years and the date of harvest and the date of bottling are given on the label. From this you can calculate how much wood-ageing the wine has received. These wines are usually best drunk within a year of the bottling date. Colheita Ports take on all the refined nutty, dried fruit flavours of Aged Tawnies but also express the unique characteristics of a single year. Colheita means 'harvest' or 'crop'.

Graham's 10 Year Old Tawny

A deep tawny and polished copper colour. Complex and nutty aromas combined with hints of honey and figs. Rich, mature fruit flavours beautifully mellowed with a luscious long finish.



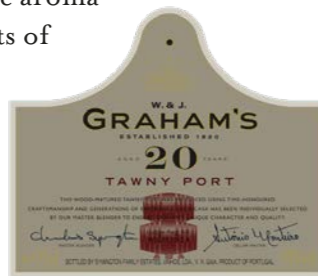
Graham's 1994 Single Harvest Tawny

A beautiful brown colour, with an intense aroma of rose petal, spice and toasted honey overlaid by balsamic & dried fig from aromas from more than 20 years of wood ageing. The flavour fills the whole palate with fresh blue and black berry, developing into a lingering, fresh and balanced finish.



Graham's 20 Year Old Tawny

A beautiful burnished golden colour. Excellent bouquet with a characteristic aroma of toasted almonds and hints of orange peel. Exquisitely mellowed by careful ageing. Rich, complex, softly sweet and smooth. Perfectly balanced with an elegant finish.



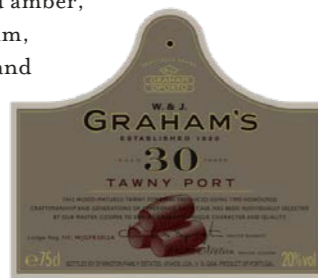
Graham's 1972 Single Harvest Tawny

A beautiful golden colour, with an intense ripe aroma of dried fruits and orange peel combined with cherry fruit and toasted aromas from more than 40 years of wood ageing, create tremendous complexity in this many layered wine. The flavour fills the whole palate with huge volume and power developing into an exceptionally long, fresh and honey-sweet finish



Graham's 30 Year Old Tawny

A pale and delicate orange-tinted amber, with hints of green at the outer rim, denoting great age. Magnificent and delicate at the same time. Honey and oriental spice fragrance. Matured and concentrated with honeyed fruit Gorgeously mellow with an extraordinary long finish.



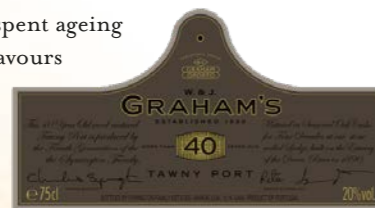
Graham's 1963 Single Harvest Tawny

An deep amber colour multi-layered wine with revealing notes of citrus, honeysuckle, black tea and fennel. The flavour is smooth as silk on the palate with hints of almonds and walnuts, fruitcake and a soft toffee tones from more than fifty years in oak casks. The finish is unctuous and long with an exquisite aftertaste.



Graham's 40 Year Old Tawny

Golden, amber colour with a pale green tinge at the rim. Extremely complex with a powerful fragrance achieved by time spent ageing in the barrel. An array of flavours from delicate, dried fruit and raisins to toasted toffee and chocolate with an outstanding aftertaste.



Bottle-Aged Ports

These wines spend only a short period of time maturing in large oak vats before they are bottled. Being unfiltered they are more robust and often fruitier than the wood-aged Ports, but they do require decanting to remove the sediment. Bottled-aged Ports, particularly Vintage Ports, will continue to improve in the bottle for many years, but once opened, they should be drunk within 3 or 4 days to be at their freshest (longer if a vacuum seal is used). Bottle-aged Ports always come in dark bottles with traditional, driven corks.

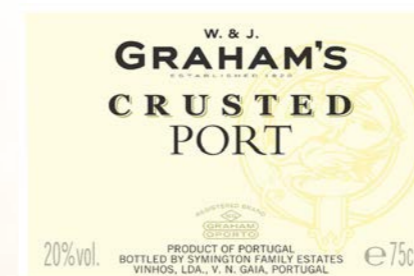


Crusted Port

So called because of the deposit or 'crust' that the wine throws in the bottle, Crusted Port is a twentieth century creation, designed to appeal to Vintage Port enthusiasts. Although the coveted word 'vintage' does not appear anywhere on the label it offers many of the qualities of a Vintage Port. Made from a blend of a number of years, Crusted Port is bottled young with no filtration and is matured in bottle for a minimum of three years before being offered for sale. Like Vintage Port, it continues to develop in the bottle.

Graham's Crusted

Dark Ruby colour. On the nose packed with aromas of red and black fruits such as cherries and blackberries combined to lifted floral hints. On the palate, full-bodied with excellent ripe fruit flavours balanced by a fresh acidity and velvety tannins leading to a long and lingering finish.



Bottle-Aged Late Bottle Vintage (LBV)

Bottle-Aged LBV Ports are a blend of wines from the best vineyards from a single very good vintage. They are bottled without being filtered giving it significantly greater intensity, complexity and concentration. Unlike standard LBV which is bottled ready to drink, the bottle-matured style is aged for a minimum of 3 years before being offered for sale and is designed to improve with further bottle ageing. These wines are generally made in good but undeclared years but are ready to drink earlier than Vintage Port, usually about four to six years after bottling. As bottle-matured LBVs are unfiltered some grape and flavour particles produce a sediment which needs to be decanted before serving.

Warre's Bottle-Aged LBV

Ruby colour with a garnet rim. Mature red and dark fruits on the nose such as red cherries and floral notes of elderflowers. The palate is elegant and luscious, full of finesse with a backbone of freshness and flavours of red cherries and floral notes.



Single Quinta Vintage Port

Like the great wines from the top wine estates, Quinta Vintage Port is made from the grapes of a single harvest and from an individual property (or Quinta in Portuguese). Quinta Vintage Ports are in fact produced and bottled in the same way as Vintage Ports – the finest wines from the best vineyards are aged in wood for two to three years then bottled unfiltered – but they are made in years which are not declared. Such is their quality that these are the very same wines used to make Vintage Port when a vintage year is declared.

Dow's Quinta do Bomfim

Acquired by George Warre for Dow's in 1896, the name of the property derived from Vale do Bomfim, 'the well-placed valley', as the area around the village of Pinhão was then known. In 1912, Andrew James Symington became a partner in Dow's and made Quinta do Bomfim his Douro family home.



One of the finest Douro estates, Quinta do Bomfim is sited in the heart of the Upper Douro Valley, ideally located in an area of transition between temperate and Mediterranean climates. Predominantly south-facing with ample solar exposure, the schist slopes are arranged in vineyard terraces which have yielded Dow's memorable Vintage Ports for over a century.

Quinta da Senhora de Ribeira

Senhora da Ribeira has been a fundamental component of Dow's Vintage Ports. A small chapel dedicated to the 'Lady of the River' (literally Senhora da Ribeira) has stood on the site for centuries and gave the quinta its name.



Andrew James Symington and his family loved to walk in the ruggedly beautiful hill country around Senhora da Ribeira, having travelled upriver from Bomfim by train and boat, a tradition kept alive by his descendants.

Senhora da Ribeira is set in the remote, hot, dry Douro Superior and commands a magnificent position on the north bank, overlooking a broad sweep of the Douro River, directly opposite Quinta do Vesúvio.

Quinta dos Malvedos

The property took its name from the rapids in front of the house, known as 'os Malvedos'. The 160-hectare estate is particularly well-sited in a zone of transition from the Cima Corgo to the Douro Superior subregions of the Douro Valley, bringing together the best of both, it enjoys reasonable rainfall and abundant sunshine.



The vineyard is predominantly south-facing and the ample hours of sunlight provide even and complete grape ripening, resulting in very well-balanced wines. Malvedos still contains large areas of traditional vineyard laid out on terraces supported by dry-stone walls, built by hand in the 18th century. The Cardenhas and Port Arthur stone-terraced vineyards, in contrast to the other vineyards on the property, face north-east, east and west, giving the wines produced from those grapes a unique identity.

Quinta do Vesúvio Vintage Port

The Symington family acquired Quinta do Vesúvio in 1989 where they decided to maintain the traditional granite lagares in which the grapes are trodden by foot, a centuries-old wine making method that produces very high-quality Port, as shown by Vesúvio's outstanding Vintage Ports.



Quinta da Madalena

This small 5 hectare vineyard is located in the heart of the sheltered Rio Torto Valley. The shape of the vineyard is formed by the curve of the river. The property supplies Smith Woodhouse Ports, a specialist Port house run by Symington Family Estates.

Half of Quinta da Madalena is covered with plantings of old, mixed, very low-yielding vines. These bestow remarkable depth and complexity to the Smith Woodhouse Ports, in particular the Vintage and Late Bottled Vintage Ports.



Quinta da Cavadinha

Cavadinha, meaning 'well-tilled' is located in the Pinhão Valley, not far from where the Pinhão River flows into the Douro. The lower section of the vineyard, brushing the banks of the river has gentle gradients, contrasting with the steeply terraced vineyards further up the slope, which reach altitudes of up to 400 metres. The aspect of the vineyard is predominantly east-facing which – combined with the altitude – means Cavadinha has a cooler ripening cycle and is often the last of our quintas to be harvested.

A considerable proportion of Cavadinha is made up of old, mixed vineyards, some of which are over half a century old. Yields are rarely above 1kg/vine and these grapes provide superb complexity and structure to the wines.



Quinta de Roriz

Quinta de Roriz is one of the oldest and finest estates in the Douro and was one of the first Ports to be bottled and shipped under the name of the quinta itself, a practice which continued into the early years of the 20th century. After some years of collaboration with the van Zellers to produce Roriz wines, the quinta and brand were acquired outright by the Symingtons in 2009. Quinta de Roriz has become the home of the Prats & Symington Douro DOC wines, although Vintage Port under the name of Quinta de Roriz continues to be made in exceptional years.



Vintage Ports

These very special Ports are made only from the finest wines from the top estates in the Douro valley and only from harvests which are deemed so exceptional that a Vintage year is declared by the Port producers. They are the pinnacle of Port quality. Vintage Ports are bottled unfiltered after two to three years in wood and mature in bottle. Many will continue to mature in the bottle for 30 years or more. Vintage Ports begin life a deep purple-black colour but this softens with age as they gain in structure and complexity.

Gould Campbell 1985 Vintage Port

The nose is brimming with layers of ripe dark fruits, such as blackberry, plum and cherry, combined with notes of cigar box and hints of dark chocolate. The palate is full bodied, velvety and packed with lifted and fresh dark fruit flavours. Well balanced by a firm tannic structure which leads to a long and lingering finish.



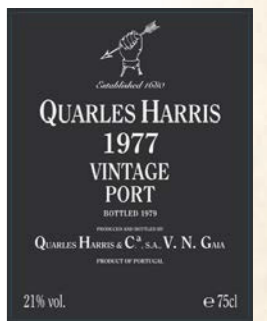
Graham's 1983 Vintage Port

Outstandingly powerful wine. Fine deep ruby colour, with a rich and intense nose of ripe red fruits, combined with concentrated floral aromas of violets and minty eucalyptus. On the palate showing a full-bodied structure, bold tannins and a long, intense fruit finish.



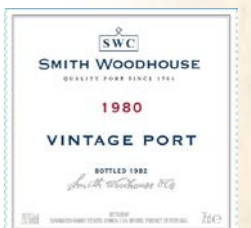
Quarles Harris 1977 Vintage Port

Rich garnet colour. Aromas of fresh cherry and nutty character. Magnificent bottle age bouquet, exceptionally firm in the mouth. Soft tannins with excellent structure and long finish.



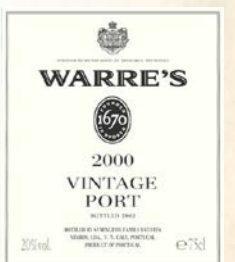
Smith Woodhouse 1980 Vintage Port

Intense and concentrated with figs and warm spices, liquorice and dark chocolate.



Warre's 2000 Vintage Port

Dark ruby colour. On the nose, excellent floral aromas of violets and mint combined with layer upon layer of ripe blackberry fruit. On the palate great freshness and elegance with vibrant fruit flavours and velvety tannins lead to a long and persistent finish.



Cockburn's 1970

1970 was an outstanding vintage with ripe fruit flavours and concentrated tannins, great balance and structure. Certainly one of the absolute finest Vintage Ports of the 50 years up to 1970. Now mature, it is probably one of the finest glasses of port that you will ever taste. Cockburn's Vintage Ports are known for their full body and characteristically floral aromas. This is a very elegant and refined port, with lovely chocolate and spicy notes alongside sweet cherry fruits and medicinal scents. Very complex and with a great length.



Dow's 1997 Vintage Port

1997 was the last year of the century in which most producers declared a vintage and has given rise to some well structured wines which have just about reached maturity now. Dow's 1997 is made slightly drier than some in the classic Dow tradition, which due to its superb structure is evolving into a classic vintage. It has a dark opaque purple colour, with a typically spicy nose and intense underlying aromas of blackberries and blackcurrants. On the palate there's plenty of weight and structure with a wealth of dense black fruit flavours wrapped up in a ripe and smooth tannic cloak.



The Families behind Port

There is a natural affinity between wine and family. Long-term vision and commitment through many generations are essential for the success of a family wine company. A newly planted vineyard takes time to produce great wines and often requires a lifetime's work to yield best results.

One of the oldest families still in the Port trade and the only principal Port Company owned by one family is the Symington family. Of Scottish, English and Portuguese descent, they have been Port producers for five generations since 1882, although their family's involvement in Port dates back fourteen generations to 1652 through their great-grandmother Beatrice de Carvalhosa Atkinson, whose ancestors were among Port's pioneers.

The family has 2,071 hectares of land in the Douro Valley across 27 individual estates. These properties, have just over 1,000 hectares of vine, which amount to the most significant vineyard holding in the region.

Symington Family Estates is an entirely family-owned and managed company and is one of the leading quality Port producers, responsible for the making of approximately 32% of all premium Port categories. Five of the family, Paul, Johnny, Rupert, Dominic and Charles work together maintaining the vineyards and making the wines for four historic Port houses: Graham's, Cockburn's, Dow's and Warre's. The family also own Quinta do Vesuvio, one of Portugal's greatest wine estates. Paul's son Robert and daughter Charlotte have both joined the business at head office in Porto; Dominic's son Anthony and Rupert's sister Clare also work with the family in the UK.

The Symingtons conduct extensive research into Douro viticulture and wine-making at their experimental vineyards at Quinta da Cavadinha in the Pinhão Valley, at Quinta do Bomfim in the main Douro Valley and at their 'Vine Library' at Quinta do Ataíde in the Vilariça Valley. The family have also been amongst the pioneers in the development of Douro DOC wines, producing Chryseia, Post Scriptum and Prazo de Roriz with the Prats family of Bordeaux, as well as other Symington Douro wines



from Quinta do Vesúvio, Quinta do Ataíde and the Altano range.

The family are the only Douro producer to have made a Port in the 21st century that merited a perfect 100 points from Wine Spectator; Dow's 2007 Vintage Port. The family's dedication to the wines of the Douro was further recognized when Wine Spectator ranked Dow's 2011 Vintage Port as the N° 1 Wine of the Year in 2014. Another wine, made in partnership with Bruno Prats, Chryseia Douro DOC 2011, was classified as N° 3 Wine of the Year in the same year. This international recognition was an important step for the wines of the Douro and has significantly increased its reputation worldwide.

The family commitment to the Douro and its wines is stronger than ever after fourteen generations and 350 years, an unparalleled family tradition. The family's considerable contribution to the wines of the Douro Valley was recognized in 2012 when Decanter Magazine named Paul Symington as 'Decanter Man of The Year', the first time a producer from Portugal was granted this prestigious accolade. During the 1980s and 1990s, Paul's cousin Peter was awarded the Fortified Winemaker of The Year title a record six times at the prestigious International Wine Challenge. His son and successor Charles has also been awarded this accolade once.

Port as an Aperitif

In the UK we mainly consider Port as an after dinner drink but the versatility of White, Pink and Tawny Ports served chilled and even as a mixed drink, make the perfect aperitif.

Pair with almonds, cured meats or olives, this is a wonderful way to start any meal.

Try White Port with Tonic, fresh lime and mint for an enjoyably long, refreshing drink.

Port Pairing

We hope by going through this Bible, you have seen how adaptable Port can be and how many different styles there are to be enjoyed. This is also true of just how many food pairings are a match made in heaven with Port.

There are two things we look for when exploring Port partners; put simply pairings work well with either a contrast or similarity in flavours. Perfectly complementing the characteristics of the Port as well as its pairing.

Here are some of our favourite pairings:

Cheese

This is the obvious pairing for Port and traditionally you probably think of Vintage Port with Stilton, which is delicious but explore all the different Port styles with all the cheese on offer.

Puddings

A good pudding and a glass of Port is a fantastic way to end a meal. Puddings with spices such as cinnamon work really well, try Apple Crumble with a chilled glass of Tawny Port, or Creamy puddings made with delicate flavours like Vanilla such as Burnt Custard is another perfect match.

Chocolate

Port is one of the very few wines that work well with chocolate. Particularly 65-75% chocolate. Dark Chocolate Ganache with Six Grapes or Orange Chocolate with Tawny Ports is a wonderful combination.

Meat

Port with savoury foods is unexpectedly exciting. A delicious chicken liver pate with a glass of chilled Tawny Port is a wonderful combination. Perfectly cooked Duck or Venison with a glass of LBV is fantastic, or Pork Belly with Tawny Port – the sweetness and saltiness really pairs well.

Port House Profiles

Each Port House has its own extraordinary individual characteristics which are world renowned. To achieve this, it is important that each Port House has its own dedicated wineries in the Douro as well as specific winemaking teams. The significant investment in equipment and management at each of these small specialist wineries is vital to maintain the highest quality and distinctive style that each Port House builds its reputation on.

Cockburn's

Cockburn's was founded in 1815 by Scotsman, Robert Cockburn and celebrated its 200th anniversary in 2015. Over the course of the 19th Century, three more families joined the firm and were instrumental in building Cockburn's reputation: the Smithes, Teages and Cobbs. By the early 20th century Cockburn's Vintage Ports were among the most highly regarded.

The firm has a tradition of pioneering viticulture; Cockburn's were the first to plant experimental vineyards in the 1930's and led to the creation of an entirely new category of Port – Reserve Port – in the 1960's which quickly became fundamental to the success of Port and of the Douro region over subsequent decades. In the 1970's Cockburn's was instrumental in saving the Touriga Nacional grape variety from near extinction.

The company was returned to family ownership, having been part of a giant multi-national corporation for 44 years, when the Symington family acquired it in 2010.

Cockburn's Ports are full bodied with floral characteristics and estava (rock rose) aromas, with fresh acidity and a particularly long and dry finish.

Graham's

Graham's was founded in 1820 by Scottish brothers, William and John Graham in Oporto, Portugal with the intention of specialising in the production of the finest Port wines. Over the course of the 19th Century their Ports achieved an extraordinary reputation for consistent quality.

In 1882 Andrew James Symington came to Porto to join the firm of W&J Graham's, though on the general trading side. After a few years he left the firm and became involved with the Port trade through Dow's & Warre respectively. In 1970 AJ Symington's grandsons purchased W&J Graham's, ensuring the future of this renowned Port producer. For almost two hundred years W&J Graham's has been an independent family business with a reputation for producing the finest Port wines.

Graham's Ports stand out for their intense, opulent, sweet style. With great concentration of rich fruit and floral aromas and flavours with the backbone of tannins to ensure a long life in bottle. Graham's Vintage Ports are considered outstanding for their consistent quality and long life.

Dow's

The firm behind Dow's began in 1798 as Silva & Cosens, when a Portuguese merchant, Bruno da Silva, set up a business in London to import wines from his native country. Bruno thrived in London, the wines developed a strong reputation and the business continued down through the generations. In 1868, George Acheson Warre (of another long-established Port trade family) joined the firm, taking responsibility for the wine making in Portugal.

In 1877 Silva & Cosens merged with Dow's & Co, another Port company. As this firm also had a strong reputation for the quality of its Ports, particularly its Vintage Ports, it was decided to adopt Dow's as a brand name for the wines produced by Silver & Cosens.

In 1912 George Acheson Warre decided to return to England and invited Andrew James Symington to manage the Portuguese end of the Dow's business – the Douro vineyards as well as the Lodge and stocks in Vila Nova de Gaia. Members of the Symington and Warre families continued to work together at Dow's until 1961, when the Symingtons became sole owners of Dow's.

Dow's Ports have a distinctive quality and style: superbly concentrated wines that are scented with violet and mint aromas. Intense and tannic when young, maturing into a superlative racy elegance with age. Dow's is renowned for its attractive and distinctively drier finish as compared with other Port brands.

Gould Campbell

The firm was founded in 1797 by Garret Gould, who left his native Ireland for Portugal and established a trading company with offices in both Lisbon and Porto. After the Peninsular war, the firm went into partnership with the prestigious banking and mercantile family of James Campbell & Co and the Port shipper has been known as Gould Campbell ever since.

Gould Campbell Vintage Ports tend towards a very full bodied, rich style.



Quarles Harris

Founded in 1680 by Thomas Dawson, Quarles Harris is amongst the oldest Port shippers still in existence, and their shipment of 98 casks of Port in 1689 is the oldest recorded shipment by a firm still standing today.

In the late 18th century they had a solid reputation as a family shipper of fine quality Port. The firm continued to trade right through the 19th and 20th Century and still remains in family hands today.

Quarles Harris' flavour profile is a firm and slightly dry style.

Quinta de Roriz

Quinta de Roriz acquired by Antonio Bernard Ferreira, a well-known Port grower and businessman. Ferreira began a programme of building and landscaping on an unprecedented scale including repairing and creating new terraces, bringing approximately 100 hectares under vine (of the 325 hectare property). The property was passed into the hands of Antonio's redoubtable daughter in law, Dona Antonia Adelaide Ferreira. She oversaw the building of the grand estate house and chapel, and used Quinta do Vesuvio as her principal residence. It was Dona Antonia who bottled and sold the Vesuvio wines under their own name – which was an extraordinary practice in the 19th century.

In 1989 the Symington family acquired the property with the intention of restoring the quinta and its wines to their former glory, following the devastation of phylloxera in the 1870's. The house and adega (winery) were restored and a huge planting program undertaken which extended vineyards to 136 hectares. The decision was made to retain the tradition of treading by foot and to make only Vintage Port, to this day, no other Port styles are made at Quinta do Vesuvio.

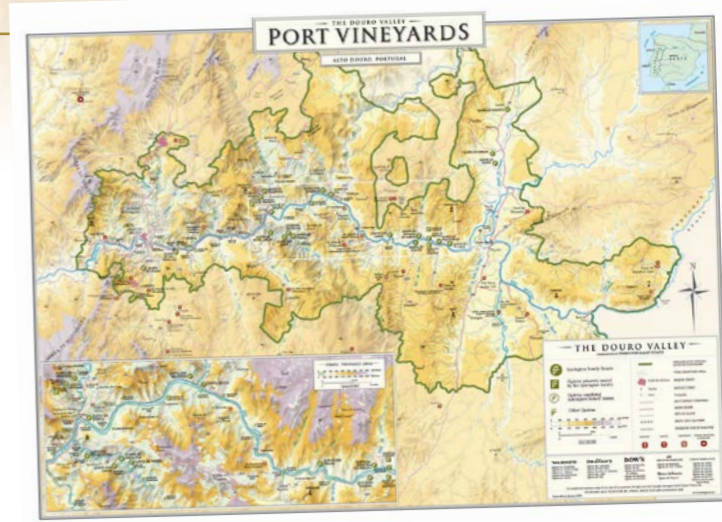
Quinta do Vesuvio Vintage Ports are very concentrated, powerful wines, showing ripe fruit flavours such as blueberry and blackcurrant.

Smith Woodhouse

Christopher Smith, Member of the British Parliament and Lord Mayor of London, founded a small company to ship Port from the Douro in 1784. The Woodhouse brothers joined in the early 19th Century and the name Smith Woodhouse was established.

By the end of the 19th Century their Ports enjoyed a strong reputation, however like so many shippers, Smith Woodhouse fell on hard times in the aftermath of the Second World War and the brand was sold to a London based wine importer, whilst the wines were shipped by W&J Graham's.

Smith Woodhouse Ports have outstanding length and structure as well as being drier than most. Its Vintage Ports show a characteristic opulent rich style, balanced by firm, hard tannins. Ageing gives these wines an unmatched elegance.



Warre's

The firm now known as Warre & Co existed as early as 1670, founded by William Warre whose trading operations included the shipping of woollen goods from his native Somerset to the East Indies and Brazil. Wool was also the basic trade with Northern Portugal, in exchange for olive oil, fruit and wine and so William Warre was trading actively through Porto. Subsequently, William Warre's trading interests took him to India, and it was his grandson (also William Warre), who ultimately settled in Porto in 1729 and became a partner in the firm of Clark & Thornton which focussed on the trading of wine from the Douro.

The descendants of William Warre remained in Porto for two centuries, longer than any other English family of that era and members of the family were well known for civic and military achievements as well as their influence within the Port trade.

In 1905 Andrew James Symington joined Warre & Co as a partner and in 1912 formed a partnership with George Acheson Warre (then with Dow's) to jointly manage the Douro vineyards for both Warre's and Dow's. The Warre family subsequently returned to England, where they managed sales from the London office and ultimately the Symington family took full ownership of the firm in the 1960's. Warre's Ports combine elegance, length and balance whilst still retaining the underlying rich opulence of great Vintage Port. Warre's Vintage Ports are among some of the greatest ever made.

Please note that these Ports are produced in limited quantities, especially the Vintage Ports. Therefore in our cellars, we only hold a small allocation of each Vintage. We will always have a selection of Vintages to offer but the Vintage year may vary depending on our allocations.

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