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wines worth sharing

Quinta de La Rosa 'Vintage' Port 2012

Grape Varietals: Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca & Sousão blend.

Growing Region: Pinhão - Douro Valley, Portugal

Head Winemaker: Jorge Moreira

Quinta de la Rosa's reputation for excellent Port wines come from attention to detail from bud to bottle, combined with an ideal location and aspect of their vines situated in the heart of the Alto Douro on the banks of the River Douro near Pinhão. When you have a Port from Jorge, you can taste a harmony and a definite expression of their vineyards along with allowing their quality grapes express themselves in the Port. Jorge crafts well defined wines without too much extraction, tannins and use of oak.

They started picking late and slowly from the 16th September, along their steep, stone-terraced vineyards. Jorge and the team as per normal were very careful about what to hand-pick and consequently the grapes that came into the winery were in ideal condition. It rained on the 23rd and 25th September so they stopped picking for a week and resumed only when the effect of the rain had worked through the vines. The skins of the grapes were in great condition so little risk of rot. Yields in 2012 were down 40% on the two previous years, but Jorge was happy with the flavour profile.

As with all of their Port wines, the hand-picked grapes were trodden by foot in granite lagares for three to four days with temperature control. Jorge also works hard to sure that the grape spirit is well integrated into the finished parcels. The more complex notes of this 2012, were the result of being kept for 18 months in 25 pipe tonels (*550 litre oak barrels*) before being blended. This 2012 'Vintage' Port was estate bottled in July 2014.

This 2012 'Vintage' Port has concentrated, focused aromas, showcasing, dark cherries and well ripened black Doris plums along with small wild berries. Opening up early in its development, very generous on the nose with dark fruits combined with classic bitter chocolate notes. On the palate it is engaging and seductive, with good intensity and complexity all nicely balanced resulting in a harmonious and elegant wine. The dark fruits, bitter chocolate and liquor flavours are well-balanced with the silky tannins which are defined and well-integrated.

This 2012 Vintage Port is in an ideal phase for early enjoyment for those who like their 'Vintage' Ports young, generous and vibrant - but it will develop and mature well in the bottle for the next two decades. I spent time with Jorge last year, and he is very pleased with this 'Vintage' Port! As many of the 2012's have been underrated after the intense 2011's - but this has quality and early appeal, rare in quality 'Vintage' Ports.

This 2012 'Vintage' Port will age well for two-three decades, but it should be noted that it is a lighter style 'Vintage' Port that can be appreciated much younger than normal. Remember to decant this Port, as it has started to leave a deposit. Plus, this will increase after it has been in the bottle for a few years.

Treat yourself - this wine is definitely worth sharing.

This Quinta de La Rosa 'Vintage' Port 2012 has 20% Alc./vol and 100g/L of residual sugar. If opened this winter, I would encourage decanting of around 50-60 minutes and serve in an appropriate wine glass at 17-18°C.

Cellaring Potential:

Approachable with good decanting this season; though will appreciate and repay another 12-16 years, even up to 24 years. Once opened - enjoy within 48 hours.

Food Pairing Suggestions:

Perfect wine pairing with rich, dark chocolate desserts, steamed sticky-puddings, plus with strong, well-aged rich blue cheeses with crusty bread or crackers - *enjoy*.

A complex 'Vintage' Port, with a refined and approachable character.

