

Quinta da Pellada Naked Vine



Dão is quickly becoming the most sought-after region for Portuguese winemakers to venture into; according to many, it's one of the world's most perfect microclimates: mountains protect it from continental heat to the east and Douro's heat to north, and cool Atlantic breezes come inland to keep the overall temperatures more regulated, making for wines with bright acidity, ethereal aromatics, and compelling complexity. The region's granitic soils allow indigenous grapes to shine through in the wines, and provide firm, crunchy tannin against the bright fruit. Alvaro Castro has noted that "if God were to design a wine-growing region, what he would come up with would look a lot like the Dão."?

There is no modern Dão without one of the region's longtime legends, Alvaro Castro, whose estate encompasses two small properties (or "Quintas") known as Pellada and Saes. Alvaro makes wine here with his daughter Maria, carrying on a tradition of winemaking on this property that dates to the 16th century! Together, they have resisted the internationalization push of the '80s and '90s, instead doubling down on their slow-wine approach, using local varieties grown and crafted in the true Dão "field blend" style.???

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: This special cuvée "Naked Vine" is made from all 7 parcels in the Pellada property. The winery has only made this blend once before, in 2003.

RATING HISTORY: 2020 94JS; 2018 95WA, 91W&S

GRAPE: Old vine (75+ years) field blend of some 48 different varieties, with Touriga Nacional comprising 30% of the blend. The grapes come from all 7 parcels of the Pellada property. Planted to granite, sand and quartz at an average altitude of 500m (1,640 ft) above sea level.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Spontaneous fermentation with indigenous yeast in stainless steels tanks. Aged for 36 months in 400L used oak casks.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Quinta da Pellada is located in the northern part of the Dão, in Northern Central Portugal. The plots for this vineyard are planted to granite, with lines of sand and quartz at 500m (1640 ft) elevation. The Dão has a temperate continental climate, protected from the cold winds of the Atlantic by the Luso Mountains, from the warm winds of Extremadura to the west by the Serra da Estrela, and from the arid heat of the Douro by the Serra do Caramulo. Average temperature in the growing season is 57F (14C). Rainfall is 26 inches per annum, with no irrigation.

TASTING NOTES This is elegant and complex, with moderate tannins and lush texture. The finish is long and persistent, even while nothing is harsh or astringent. This is a beauty that is hard to resist. It will also age well, maybe better than indicated. - Mark Squires

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13%

UPC CODE: 5606686000256

