

## 2004 CASA SANTOS LIMA SOUSAO

**RATING:** 85 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2012

The 2004 Sousao is bright, with cherry notes around the edges, which are softened by oak. There is nice structure and a firm backbone that gives it a more serious demeanor. It is an elegant and pleasant, if not terribly complex wine, and a fair value. Drink 2007-2012.

This producer turns out a bevy of value-priced wines, both as single varietals and in somewhat unusual combinations (like Pinot Noir/Touriga Nacional). The owner says, "We look for complementary combinations, and in this particular case, by marrying the Pinot Noir with the Touriga Nacional, the velvet and smoothness of the Pinot softened the tannins of Touriga and on the other hand the Touriga Nacional contributed with a good structure, body and colour to the blend." Some seem rather eccentric, but the best of them have rather good structure for their price ranges and offer fair values, as the winery has a commendable desire to provide something more than inexpensive fruit bombs.

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2004 CASA SANTOS LIMA TOURIGA NACIONAL

**RATING:** 86 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2011

The 2004 Touriga Nacional is pleasant, a bit restrained in flavor, but well constructed for its price range, showing some backbone and firmness on the finish. It is one of the more successful single varietal wines in this lineup. It is moderate in depth, and not far from being ready to drink now. It develops some flavor on the finish with air, and is a fair value, with the capacity to hold in the cellar for a few years. Drink 2007-2011.

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—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2003 DONA MARIA RESERVA

**RATING:** 90 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2012

The 2003 Reserva is already coming around, and is quite approachable. It has an elegant mid-palate and refined tannins, along with some brightness and a suave, modern and graceful feel to it. A bit foursquare at first, it is certainly pleasing and persistent, with some charm and the ability to improve in the glass. This is 50% Alicante Bouschet, and the rest Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and Aragonès. Drink now-2012.

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2003 DONA MARIA TINTO

**RATING:** 80 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2009

The 2003 Tinto is simple and foursquare, with a somewhat bitter finish. After two corked bottles, the third seemed almost to have a spritz at first. Now, I didn't actually see bubbles; I'm describing an analogous sensation. That blew off. What was left was pleasant and simple, but not something I could quite come around to actually liking. It was on the bitter side on the finish, which was not terribly impressive in length or in purity of flavors. The depth is good for its price range, and it seems to have light tannins that provide some grip. Drink now-2009.

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2005 HERDADE DE MALHADINHA NOVA MONTE DA PECEGUINA

**RATING:** 87 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2014

The 2005 "Monte Da Peceguina" is 40% Aragones, 20% Alicante Bouschet, 15% Touriga Nacional, 15% Syrah and 10% Alfrocheiro. It was aged for six months in a combination of new American and French oak barrels. It is bright, but a little soft, with a slightly candied cherry nuance on the finish initially. It seemed to me that the Alicante Bouschet was very prominent early on. The wine did wake up with an hour's air and show a little better than its initial, simple performance. With air, the fruit component integrated a bit better, and I began to like its flavor profile more. It is reasonably tasty and attractive for short to mid-term drinking, but not particularly complex. Drink 2007-2014. There were 9,166 cases (of twelve) produced.

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2004 HERDADE DE MALHADINHA NOVA TINTO

**RATING:** 90 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2008-2016

The 2004 Tinto was aged for 14 months in French oak. It is a blend of 45% Aragones, 40% Alicante Bouschet, and 15% Cabernet Sauvignon. This arrived rather closed and needed decanting to show well. When it did, it proved itself to be a rather charming wine, with an elegant mid-palate. It is tasty and often lively, with a graceful, somewhat Burgundian feel. It has some oak-softened edges, and some grip on the finish. Aromatic and well constructed, it provides a little more intensity, focus and refinement than its younger sibling, the 2005 Monte Da Peceguina, but no more flavor. It did begin to grow on me with aeration. This is a wine to appreciate for its refinement rather than its intensity and depth. While it is not particularly complex, there are things to like here. Whether you think there is enough to like to justify its hefty price is up to you. The wine is more or less approachable now, but ideally could use a little time to settle down. There were 2,866 six-packs produced. Drink 2008-2016.

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2003 HERDADE DO ESPORAO RESERVA

**RATING:** 88 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2012

The 2003 Reserva, a blend of Trincadeira, Cabernet Sauvignon and Aragonez, is sweet, elegant and delicious. It shows relatively ripe tannins around the edges for some structure, but its most attractive feature is certainly the tasty fruit, although the fragrant bouquet might be a close second. The mid-palate is moderate in depth, but it gives the wine a rather charming, elegant feel, considering how persistent the flavors are. There are some relatively well balanced oak nuances, too, on this very modern-styled wine. The finish is quite respectable for its price point. Drink now-2012.

Influential Australian winemaker David Baverstock has been the winemaker here for some years now.

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2004 LEMOS AND VAN ZELLER CV (CURRICULUM VITAE) (QUINTA VALE D MARIA)

**RATING:** 94 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2009-2019

The 2004 “CV” (the initials stand for “Curriculum Vitae”) (Quinta Vale D. Maria) is another blockbuster, full in the mouth, round, with a gorgeous, lingering finish. In its youth, it has a touch of oak and licorice noticeable. Its attack is subtle at first, and then it increases in intensity to the point where it is rather focused and penetrating. It is structured and remarkably flavorful, with lovely red berry notes on the finish. Yet, I think it is also better balanced than the 2003. It is equally delicious. To me, this looks like a big winner. It adds another layer or so of fruit to the regular “tinto.” There were approximately 416 cases made. Drink 2009-2019.

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2004 LEMOS AND VAN ZELLER TINTO (QUINTA VALE D MARIA)

**RATING:** 93 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2008-2016

The 2004 Tinto (Quinta Vale D. Maria) is delectable, with gorgeous fruit. It has structure, too, and with air its penetration and grip become obvious. It may not be quite as bold as its 2003 counterpart, but its balance is better. Make no mistake, however – the reason for this wine’s existence is to be seductive and sexy. The fruit opens nicely, a tasty cross between plums and strawberries. Although the 2003 shows better at the moment, this has a chance to equal and surpass with a couple of years in the cellar. Drink 2008-2016.

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2004 QUINTA DE CHOCAPALHA TINTO

**RATING:** 88 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2014

The 2004 Tinto is beautifully textured, and has great fruit, too, while being delicate in the mid-palate. It is intense, laced with tannins, but showing some finesse and the promise of coming into the balance in the near future. It is a blend of 30% Touriga Nacional, 60% Tinta Roriz, and the rest Alicante Bouchet and Cabernet Sauvignon. It needs a little time in the cellar to calm down. When it does, it should drink beautifully. 2,500 cases produced. Drink 2007-2014.

These wines are made by Sandra Tavares da Silva, also the co-winemaker at Pintas and Quinta do Vale D. Maria, for her family's estate in Estremadura, a region in Southern Portugal. This winemaker tends to produce them big and bold, and when they work, they are very, very good. When they don't work, I have had some questions about the balance of some of the wines.

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2004 QUINTA DE COVELA COLHEITA SELECCIONADA BRANCO

**RATING:** 89 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2009

The 2004 “Colheita Seleccionada Branco,” like its 2005 counterpart, shows fine balance and crispness. Although it saw some oak, which rounds it off just a little, the winery's touch with the oak is very light. The acid cuts through the roundness to make a very pleasing combination. Grape varieties include Avesso, Chardonnay and Viognier. The “Seleccionada” is supposed to be a somewhat more concentrated wine than the “Eschola,” but while this may hold a little better, I am hard pressed to say I liked it any better. Drink now-2009.

This producer actually color codes its capsules, an interesting and useful idea. Gold capsules indicate wine that saw some oak; silver capsules are unoaked. The producer also has an interesting habit of adding in some odd varieties where you'd least expect them, a little Gewurztraminer here, a little Merlot there. The owner, Nuno Araujo, is related to the Ramos Pintos family, and purchased the property from Ramos Pintos. The wines are elegant, and the whites are particularly appealing. With Minho reds, do not generally expect blockbusters. They can be cool, focused and refreshing, however. Many reminded me of Loire reds.

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2005 QUINTA DE COVELA ESCHOLA BRANCO

**RATING:** 90 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2009

The 2005 “Eschola Branco” is beautifully balanced, with delectable fruit, has a nice mouthfeel, and a bright lingering finish that delivers persistent flavors. There is a lot of attractive fruit in the mid-palate, but it manages to retain some crispness, too. This young, fruity wine is delicious now, and should be drunk on the young side over the next few years. It may hold, but I suspect that most of what makes this attractive will best be experienced young. It is unoaked, a blend of the Avesso grape, some Chardonnay and Gewurztraminer, among others, most of which are unlisted on the label. The Gewurz perhaps gives it a certain undefinable nuance that I found very appealing. My only hesitancy in scoring it this high is that I don't think it has much upside for improvement in the cellar, and it likely has no place to go. Still, it's awfully good as it stands. Drink now-2009.

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—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2004 QUINTA DE COVELA ESCHOLA TINTO

**RATING:** 83 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2013

The 2004 “Eschola Tinto” showed what I took to be a reductive nose from the first bottle, and more power than the 2003. A second bottle showed less reductive aromas, but the wine still had a certain funk to it, and now it added a green, somewhat vegetal note, and some tartness after it aired out. I gave it enough air so that the tannins resolved, and the wine came into some semblance of balance, but I had a hard time warming up to this. The longer it was open, the less I liked it. Drink: 2007-2013.

This producer actually color codes its capsules, an interesting and useful idea. Gold capsules indicate wine that saw some oak; silver capsules are unoaked. The producer also has an interesting habit of adding in some odd varietals where you’d least expect them, a little Gewurztraminer here, a little Merlot there. The owner, Nuno Araujo, is related to the Ramos Pintos family, and purchased the property from Ramos Pintos. The wines are elegant, and the whites are particularly appealing. With Mimho reds, do not generally expect blockbuster. They can be cool, focused and refreshing, however. Many reminded me of Loire reds.

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2004 QUINTA DO CRASTO RESERVA OLD VINES

**RATING:** 94 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2009-2019

The 2004 “Reserva Old Vines” is an unfiltered field blend from 70-year-old vines, raised in a mixture of French and American oak barrels. Intense on the attack, with fine depth, this beautifully constructed wine projects flavor with focus. It has good concentration, and a lingering finish, with some grip provided by the tannins that sneak up on you. The longer it is open, the more apparent the structure becomes. When I was at Quinta do Crasto, tasting this bottling next to the \$125 “Ponte” also reviewed here, I said to co-owner Mignel Roquette that this was the sweet spot in the Crasto lineup – not quite as good as the Ponte, perhaps, but very distinguished, not too far off, and a way better value. He said he had just finished saying more or less the same thing in Portuguese to someone else. I suspect, though, that I liked this even more than he does. Let me go out on what I think is a very sturdy limb – this winery’s ageworthy, complex and concentrated Old Vines Reserve is, from year-to-year, simply one of the best and most consistent wines that you can get for reasonable money in the Douro. The 2004 is a very young wine, of course, rather tight and closed, going through multiple stages at the moment. It was fun watching it wake up and expand in the glass after four hours of decanting, which finally allowed the structure to show, and the wine to flesh out. This winery is not aiming to be a value...

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2003 QUINTA DO CRASTO TINTA RORIZ

**RATING:** 93 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2017

The 2003 Tinta Roriz is a mouthful, round, full and rich, with beautiful flavors on the finish. It has a fragrant, seductive nose, and red berry overtones. With air, the wine evolves beautifully, and the tannins emerge to provide some intensity and grip. This is probably my favorite single varietal bottling of those that I reviewed for this report, with impressive structure, and delicious fruit. With more air it became harmonious and rather sensual, although not terribly complex, and perhaps it thinned a bit faster than I would have expected. I t will mature fairly quickly. Still, the succulent fruit lingering on the finish makes this a big winner. If it develops as well as I hope in the cellar, it might even merit a score increase. Drink 2007-2017.

This old, historic estate, owned by the Roquette family, is on everyone’s short list for the designation “best dry wine producer in Portugal,” and with good reason. This is one of the estates that turbo-charged the dry red revolution in modern Portugal. As befits a standard bearer, they go from strength to strength and their wines are in high demand. Even their off-vintage wines are good, while their upper level “good vintage” wines are some of the most sought after in Portugal, and some of the most distinguished the country has to offer. The Roquettes’ exciting new joint venture with Jean-Michel Cazes (of Chateau Lynch Bages) is another feather...

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2005 QUINTA DO CRASTO TINTO

**RATING:** 87 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2012

The 2005 Tinto comes with a new label these days, just saying “Craсто,” instead of “Quinta do Craсто.” This is because it includes some new, nearby vineyard sources that are not all contained within Quinta do Craсто. It is a blend of Tinta Roriz, Tinta Barroca, Touriga Franca and Touriga Nacional, just bottled in July, 2006. This is, by a long margin, Quinta do Craсто’s simplest wine (at least until the debut of the Beaujolais-esque “Flor,” meant to attack the sub-\$10 market), rather basic, light, fruity and a bit foursquare. Whether due to the new vineyards or the vintage, or both, it seemed to me to be a notch or two below the overachieving 2003 Tinto. It is obviously young and grapy, and likely to be early maturing. With just hints of tannins around the edges, and perhaps a touch of bubblegum, too, that said, it is quite tasty and rather fragrant. If it has little depth and a modest finish, it just plain tastes good. Drink now-2012.

This old, historic estate, owned by the Roquette family, is on everyone’s short list for the designation “best dry wine producer in Portugal,” and with good reason. This is one of the estates that turbo-charged the dry red revolution in modern Portugal. As befits a standard bearer, they go from strength to strength and their wines are in high demand. Even their off-vintage wines are good, while their upper level “good vintage” wines are some of the most sought after in...

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2003 QUINTA DO CRASTO TOURIGA NACIONAL

**RATING:** 89 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2015

The 2003 Touriga Nacional is a sweeter, more open and expansive wine than its 2004 counterpart, with a certain sweet ‘n’ sour feel. I liked the balance on the 2004 better, although it is a bit closed at the moment. The 2003 has very sweet fruit up front, nuanced with rhu barb and plum notes. It has tannins on the finish, which increase in intensity for awhile with air, but eventually become quite refined. There was initially a bit of funk on the nose, that followed through slightly to the palate, but this partly – although not entirely – blew off after a couple of hours. This seems to be maturing fairly quickly, but it is not quite ready to drink, although very approachable. This is well done, but it is probably my least favorite of the prestige bottlings in this lineup. Drink 2007-2015.

This old, historic estate, owned by the Roquette family, is on everyone’s short list for the designation “best dry wine producer in Portugal,” and with good reason. This is one of the estates that turbo-charged the dry red revolution in modern Portugal. As befits a standard bearer, they go from strength to strength and their wines are in high demand. Even their off-vintage wines are good, while their upper level “good vintage” wines are some of the most sought after in Portugal, and some of the most distinguished the country has to offer. The Roquettes’ exciting new joint venture with Jean-Michel Cazes...

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2004 QUINTA DO CRASTO TOURIGA NACIONAL

**RATING:** 92 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2008-2017

The 2004 Touriga Nacional is unfiltered and aged for eighteen months in new French oak. Young, grapy, and very dark purple, this wine is sweet, with notes of licorice around the edges, plus plums, herbs and oaky nuances. The texture is round and soft. It is elegant in mid-palate weight, with ripe tannins, giving it a suave, debonair feel. Add the fine flavors it projects, and it becomes a very charming, rather sexy wine, a pleasure to sip and drink. I did not find many single varietal Touriga Nacionais that I truly liked in my survey, but this was one of them. I liked it more as it aired out and acquired some welcome (and needed) character to go with its young fruit, although this still never struck me as particularly complex or profound. Drinking well the next day, still seeming young and primary, its hefty price tag is up to you. Drink 2008-2017.

This old, historic estate, owned by the Roquette family, is on everyone’s short list for the designation “best dry wine producer in Portugal,” and with good reason. This is one of the estates that turbo-charged the dry red revolution in modern Portugal. As befits a standard bearer, they go from strength to strength and their wines are in high demand. Even their off-vintage wines are good, while their upper level “good vintage” wines are some of the most sought after in Portugal, and some of the most distinguished...

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2004 QUINTA DO CRASTO VINHA DA PONTE

**RATING:** 95 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2010-2024

There were approximately 750 cases produced. The “Vinha da Ponte” is a field blend from a vineyard first planted in 1914 by the current owners’ grandfather. It has become one of Portugal’s priciest, best and most famous wines at this juncture. The 2004 “Vinha da Ponte” is unfiltered and was aged in French oak barriques for eighteen months. Fragrant and seductive, this is a wine you can have fun just smelling at the outset. Its nose is one of its best features and worth a couple of points right there. The tannins are relatively refined, but clearly there, providing grip on the lingering finish, and becoming more obvious as the wine airs out and wakes up. It has a lively, sunny feel to it, although some oak is obvious around the edges at the moment. The mid-palate is elegantly crafted, not particularly thick, but with significant aeration, it fleshes out, expands and becomes lush and more flavorful. This does not win first prize in any category – depth, intensity, power – but it is impeccably balanced, very flavorful, refined and a pleasure to drink. It projects a suave feel, and the purity of its bright, flavorful fruit is a wonderful thing. Utterly closed when I first opened it, showing pretty much nothing and requiring nearly four hours in a decanter, it finally began to expand in the glass and flesh out, showing more depth, flavor and intensity. The more it opened up, the more beautiful the fruit became. I look forward to great things...

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2003 QUINTA DO CRASTO VINHA MARIA TERESA

**RATING:** 96 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2009-2023

The 2003 “Vinha Maria Teresa” is the latest version of this special bottling. The fruit here is a little closed on opening, but with air it goes from closed to simply stunning and utterly delicious. It is sweet and fragrant, chock full of beautiful fruit and full bodied. The succulent fruit has a certain raspberry note turning to black cherry in the background. The tannins keep emerging with aeration, demonstrating this wine’s age-worthy nature and providing considerable grip on the finish. As it wakes up, it becomes rather piercing, penetrating and pointed in the mid-palate, then the fruit begins to expand and the flavors become ever more exuberant. The deft hand with the tannins provides support and firmness without being overbearing. This was simply beautiful on Day 1, and it was vibrant the next day as well, although it took a long while to soften even then and become more harmonious. There were times early on when it seemed a bit disjointed and a little heady, but this ultimately resolved beautifully, so well, in fact, that it might just be the pick of the litter. Although I think that this will cellar well, I’d hate to lose that gloriously sweet fruit with age. I’d suggest drinking some early and holding some, but given the small production levels, most people won’t get much of this. Take comfort in knowing that no decision will be really wrong. It could use a couple of years to pull together. Drink...

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2004 QUINTA DO VALE MEAO MEANDRO DO VALE MEAO

**RATING:** 89 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2012

The 2004 “Meandro do Vale Meao” (Quinta do Vale Meao) is the second wine of the Quinta, a blend of major varieties, including Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz (30% each) and dollops of Tinta Barroca and Tinta Amarela. It is approachable at first and very flavorful, with fine focus. Tannins pop up on the finish with fifteen minutes of air. It is beautifully balanced. In its own right, it is a nice presentation, with acceptable structure for its price range and reasonable depth. However, it is a little on the foursquare side and a bit short, although like its big brother, the regular Tinto, its fruit is delicious. After its initial wake-up, the longer it airs out, the less impressive it is. It is a pretty fair value for the price. Drink 2007-2012.

Francisco Olazabal, the former president of Ferreira, owns and runs Quinta do Vale Meao with his sons, one of whom (Francisco) is the winemaker. (Francisco, Jr. is also the winemaker at the well regarded Quinta do Vallado, separately listed.) This winery is another in the Douro’s new wave, and another example of how the Douro mingles tradition with something completely new. This historic estate was founded in 1887 by Olazabal’s great-great-grandmother. The Ferreira house, of course, became Portugal’s iconic dry red wine producer. Here, the tenth vintage has not yet been...

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2004 QUINTA DO VALE MEAO TINTO

**RATING:** 93 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2015

The 2004 Tinto (Quinta do Vale Meao) is what other estates would call a reserve wine, in essence, a selection of their best lots. It is a blend of Touriga Nacional (60%), Touriga Franca (20%), Tinta Roriz (15%) and Tinta Barroca (5%). It is a more refined, elegant wine than the Meandro, but most importantly, far more flavorful, with some of the most charming, delectable fruit you can possibly find. The fruit is simply delicious, red berry nuanced, sweet and wonderful. The gorgeous flavors and the lively, bright presentation add a dimension that the “Meandro” cannot come close to matching. The wine is not particularly intense, and tannins are fairly controlled, but there is a backbone and it has a certain, elegant, Burgundian feel to it. Still, this is not, in my view, the best structured wine, nor the most complex, and it will likely not be the best cellar candidate, legitimate issues for a wine in this price range. However, the fruit is so tasty – dare I use the technical term “scrumptious?” – that it is simply hard to resist. This charming, graceful wine is one of the wines in this report that I most wanted to keep drinking. That counts. Drink 2007-2015.

Francisco Olazabal, the former president of Ferreira, owns and runs Quinta do Vale Meao with his sons, one of whom (Francisco) is the winemaker. (Francisco, Jr. is also...

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2003 QUINTA DO VALLADO RESERVA

**RATING:** 92 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2008-2018

The 2003 Reserva, principally a blend of Touriga Nacional, Tinta Roriz, Tinta Amarela, Touriga Franca and Sousao, opens beautifully, with a touch of game, and seductive texture. It was easily my favorite of the wines reviewed here. It has a carefully constructed mid-weight, mid-palate that matches its structure. It has plenty of tannins for aging ability, but is not overbearing or unduly astringent. Precise, flavorful and intense, it shows some brightness and a little sweetness on the finish, too. I'm not quite sure I liked it quite as much after extended aeration, and I will be interested to see if it cellars as well as I think it will, but this has a lot of good things going on with it. Drink 2008-2018.

This historic estate is another good example of how new Douro winemaking is while still being old. Its history dates back to the 18th century, but its first dry wine was produced in 1997. Winemaker Francisco Olazabal is also the winemaker at the well regarded Quinta do Vale Meao.

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2004 S A SOGRAPE VINHOS QUINTA DA LEDA (CASA FERREIRINHA)

**RATING:** 90 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2008-2017

The 2004 Quinta da Leda (Casa Ferreira) is showing oak and young, primary fruit, with relatively controlled tannins. It is beautifully balanced, refined and pleasing. The sweet, increasingly pointed fruit pokes through with aeration and for once I can say the fruit obliterated the oak. As it emerged, it seemed so sweet at times as to almost be called candied, but it quickly integrated into a more balanced and smooth presentation. This seems refined, with adequate structure and good flavor. When its parts integrate, it should be a pretty wine. It should be approachable fairly early. Drink 2008-2017.

Sogrape is Portugal's 800 pound gorilla, a huge company that has holdings throughout the country, from Mateos to Barca Velha, Portugal's equivalent of Penfold's Grange. The crown jewel for dry wines is the Casa Ferreira line, acquired when Sogrape bought Ferreira, probably the Douro's most historic estate for dry, red wine, and the creator of Barca Velha. Although Sogrape maintained Casa Ferreira with its own labeling, new releases (albeit in small print) include Sogrape's name on the label, and I actually had a cork from a wine in the Ferreira lineup which just said “Sogrape.” Thus, I have chosen to list the Casa Ferreira line of wines here rather than separately. Additionally, note that all of the...

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2003 WINE AND SOUL PINTAS

**RATING:** 92 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2014

Jorge Serodio Borges, one of the hottest young winemakers in the Douro, used to work with Dirk Niepoort. He now makes Pintas in tandem with his winemaker wife, Sandra Tavares da Silva. The small growers of the Douro often seem connected in so many ways that I began to think of it as a Six Degrees of Separation game. Sandra is also the winemaker at Quinta do Vale D. Maria, another highly regarded estate. Pintas is relatively new. Jorge and Sandra bought an old vines vineyard, 70 years in age. Their philosophy here is to pick early to avoid jamminess. They are also very concerned with producing wines with refined, ripe tannins, something the Douro could use a little more of. Jorge, in fact, told me that it was his most important issue. My second taste of the 2003 Pintas was a far more complete experience than the quickie I had in Portugal. This is a field blend containing 30 varietals. That may not, to the typical international buyer signal a sophisticated table wine, but this wine, one of the modern faces of the Douro, in fact seems very sophisticated, not merely flashy. Oh, it has flash. It has delectably sweet fruit, an almost sappy mid-palate. It is saved from being a fruit bomb, though, by its refinement. The mid-palate is of medium weight, often seeming rather elegant, able to coat your mouth, but not thick, and the tannins are very ripe. So many producers make wine with rather ferocious tannins — here, there is...

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)

## 2001 S A SOGRAPE VINHOS VINHA GRANDE (CASA FERREIRINHA)

**RATING:** 86 POINTS

**DRINK:** 2007-2010

The 2001 “Vinha Grande” (Casa Ferreira) is not particularly intense. This presents some moderately sweet fruit, surrounded by a little structure. It needs some air time to come into balance, but after that, it seems fully ready, well balanced, and rather easygoing. I note no secondary nuances on this wine, but I still think it should be drunk young as I don't see it having the structure to improve in the cellar. It is slightly bigger than the Esteva, but still a bit simple and foursquare. This is styled rather like the much pricier 1999 Callabriga reviewed here. It doesn't have the depth, of course, but there is a family resemblance. Drink now-2010.

Sogrape is Portugal's 800 pound gorilla, a huge company that has holdings throughout the country, from Mateus to Barca Velha, Portugal's equivalent of Penfold's Grange. The crown jewel for dry wines is the Casa Ferreira line, acquired when Sogrape bought Ferreira, probably the Douro's most historic estate for dry, red wine, and the creator of Barca Velha. Although Sogrape maintained Casa Ferreira with its own labeling, new releases (albeit in small print) include Sogrape's name on the label, and I actually had a cork from a wine in the Ferreira lineup which just said “Sogrape.” Thus, I have chosen to list the Casa Ferreira line of wines here rather than...

—MARK SQUIRES (FEB 2007)