



SYMINGTON

Family Estates

2021 VINTAGE PORT

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The 2021 growth cycle and harvest were one of the coolest in recent years, with moderate conditions encouraging slower, gradual maturations with balanced ripening. The remarkably cool nights through the harvest contributed to wines with excellent acidity and very good colour.

While reviewing the wines produced from the finest vineyards across our Douro estates in 2021, we were simply astonished by the three-hectare stone terraces at Graham's Quinta dos Malvedos. These low-yielding vines delivered wines with a deep inky purple colour, pin sharp acidity, and wonderfully fresh scented tropical aromas – characteristic of these unique terraces.

We have taken the very rare decision to bottle the wine from these magnificent vineyards as The Stone Terraces 2021 Vintage Port and release the wine in 2023. This is just the fifth time that our family have made this micro-terroir Vintage Port – following 2011, 2015, 2016 and 2017.

We only produce this Vintage Port when these vineyards deliver wines of incomparable elegance and complexity. Given that the stone terraces are comprised of just a limited number of vines, the quality does not always align with the pattern of classic Vintage Port years – as was our assessment for 2021. We felt that the best expression of the year came from our five principal estates (Malvedos, Bomfim, Senhora da Ribeira, Cavadinha, Canais) which we will bottle as Quinta Vintage Port – and we have decided to release a small quantity of Bomfim in 2023.

GRAHAM'S 2021 THE STONE TERRACES VINTAGE PORT



Left to right: Vinha dos Cardenhos (North-facing) | Port Arthur (East-facing) | Port Arthur (West-facing)

At Graham's principal estate – Quinta dos Malvedos – there are just under three hectares of hand-built stone terraces that date from the late 18th century. Meticulously reconstructed after being abandoned in the aftermath of phylloxera, these stone terraces were designed to produce ports of exceptional concentration and power, using viticultural techniques that have barely changed for hundreds of years.

While Malvedos is predominantly south-facing, the stone terraces are comprised of two vineyards with cooler aspects – the 'Port Arthur' vineyard has an east and west-facing plot, while the 'Vinha dos Cardenhos' faces north. The schist walls of the stone terraces have a remarkable ability to store the sun's daytime heat through the night, which creates gradual and homogenous grape ripening. This effect – together with their orientations – are why these vineyards have long been prized for delivering wines with such a distinct profile.



The stone terraces are predominantly planted with mature Touriga Nacional with a few younger plantings of Touriga Franca, Sousão and Alicante Bouschet. In 2021, the grapes from these vines were picked at the same time from September 18th and co-fermented together to enhance complexity, structure, and freshness. The cooler growth cycle and the rainfall at the beginning and middle of the harvest contributed to above-average yields – with the Touriga Nacional producing just over 1kg per vine (10-year average: 880 grams per vine) – delivering wines of extraordinary elegance.

The Stone Terraces 2021 Vintage Port has incredibly fresh and lifted aromas with the hallmark tropical fruit character. The wine is concentrated whilst being supremely refined with polished tannins and taut acidity combining to deliver sublime elegance and balance. This is another extraordinary edition of The Stone Terraces Vintage Port which delights the senses now and will age beautifully for decades.

The Stone Terrace's 2021 Vintage Port is a special bottling of only 4,800 75cl bottles and 280 tappit hens (225cl) – this represents just 2% of the total production at Quinta dos Malvedos in 2021.

DOW'S QUINTA DO BOMFIM 2021 VINTAGE PORT

Dow's Quinta do Bomfim 2021 Vintage Port is produced from the best performing plots of vineyards at the property. The quinta recorded almost double the average monthly rainfall in the harvest, which our winemaking teams carefully navigated to deliver expressive wines in good quantities – with the Touriga Nacional (1,2kg per vine) and Touriga Franca (930 grams per vine) producing above-average yields.

With expressive aromas of blackcurrant and a lovely fragrance of rockrose, this Vintage Port is typically Bomfim. It is substantial, powerful, and dense with formidable structure. After reviewing the wine, we have decided to release a small quantity en primeur in 2023 – with the remaining stock held back for ageing in our cellars for future release.

Limited 2023 En Primeur Release: 960 bottles (75cl) and 300 magnums (1,5l).

We have decided to bottle Dow's Quinta da Senhora da Ribeira, Graham's Quinta dos Malvedos, Warre's Quinta da Cavadinha, and Cockburn's Quinta dos Canais 2021 Vintage Ports which will age in our cellars for future release.

We will not bottle Vintage Port from Quinta do Vesúvio because the winery was closed in 2021 due to Covid-19 restrictions. This was the second year (following 2020) since the winery was built in 1827 that no grapes were foot-trodden. Staying true to this tradition, we have decided not to produce a Vesúvio Vintage Port.

2021 SUMMARY

2021 was a clear reminder that while the Douro is undoubtedly being shaped by the impacts of climate change, the weather continues to be unpredictable. Experience and knowledge of our vineyards help us to plan our harvest by picking the fruit at the optimum moment – but unexpected changes in the weather forecast continue to drive us to make daily adjustments.

Following a succession of very hot and dry years in the Douro, the 2021 growth cycle and harvest were some of the coolest in recent years. The region experienced an unusually cool summer with none of the heat waves that have become common. Moderate conditions in 2021 encouraged slower, gradual maturations with balanced ripening, while the harvest was defined by three key periods of rain.

2021 HARVEST

We started harvesting the Sousão on the 30th of August, which produced some stunning wines. This was followed shortly afterwards by the Alicante Bouschet.

We experienced heavy rainfall on the 1st and 2nd September – with as much as 40mm in the Douro Superior. This was largely beneficial, and we slowed the pace of picking from the outset of the harvest to allow the vines to make best use of the rain.

On the 13th and 14th of September, unsettled conditions returned with further rain, ranging from 20mm in our Cima Corgo quintas to just over 30mm in the Douro Superior. After pausing picking for a few days, we started harvesting the Touriga Nacional on the 18th. We were particularly pleased with this decision as the grapes came into the winery at an ideal 13° and 14° baumé.

As predicted, we started picking the Touriga Franca (usually a late ripening variety) at the same time as the Touriga Nacional at some of our estates, including Graham's Quinta dos Malvedos. This proved to be one of the key decisions as it meant we harvested our finest parcels of Touriga Franca before the month's third bout of rain at the end of September.

The agility of our viticultural and winemaking teams meant we still managed to harvest our best performing parcels at the optimum moments. Our yields (Kg/vine) across our quintas were 3.7% above the 10-year average.

ASSESSMENT & DECISION

In 2021, the various plots of vineyards within each of our principal estates delivered small volumes of elegant and balanced wines – particularly our quintas in the Cima Corgo sub-region of the Douro. We believe these wines could not have been enhanced by blending across each of our port houses' quintas to produce a classic Vintage Port. We have therefore decided to combine the best performing components within each of our estates and bottle five Quinta Vintage Ports and do a rare bottling of Graham's The Stone Terraces.