

GRAHAM'S 2003 VINTAGE PORT

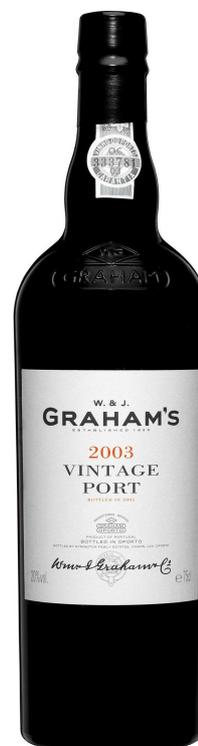


GRAHAM'S

Graham's wines come primarily from its own Quinta dos Malvedos, Quinta do Tua and Quinta das Lages in the Rio Torto. Two others, privately owned by a member of the Symington family, Quinta da Vila Velha and Quinta do Vale de Malhadas, also supply Graham with finest quality grapes. All five Quintas are among the best in the upper Douro valley. Graham's also buys grapes from selected farmers in the finest districts. Some of these farmers have been selling their grapes to Graham's for generations.

THE VITICULTURAL YEAR

The year was notable for its particularly hot summer interspersed by bouts of rain. In June, a spell of very hot weather caused many immature bunches to dry up altogether, with a useful thinning of the overall crop, which could otherwise have been quite large. Fortunately, with plentiful reserves of ground water there was no evidence of the vines suffering from any hydric stress. The high temperatures recorded in August that caused such problems with over-ripeness in other winegrowing areas of Europe were not unusual for the Douro, and in fact proved ideal for Port. The effect of the severe heat caused some vines to temporarily stop photosynthesising, pushing back the vintage starting date a little, but there was little evidence of raisining. Nevertheless, yields were quite low in many of the best areas of the Douro, limiting the supply of vintage port quality grapes. By the time vintage began at Malvedos on 15th September, there had been a little rain and most grapes were in perfect condition, with no evidence of any heat damage. What was remarkable at the Quinta this year was the ripeness of the Touriga Franca, which achieved an almost record 14.5 baumé. Of the other principal component vineyards, Vila Velha began also on the 15th, and Lages in the Rio Torto a week later on the 22nd.



Vintage Overview

The 2003 Vintage is one of really excellent quality. 2003 has the 'traditional style' of the 1997 Vintage in that the tannins are strong and structured but with the really attractive ripe fruit flavours of the 1994.

Contemporary Family Comments

"At Malvedos, a combination of robotic lagares and piston plungers were used to make the majority of the Quinta's production. A small amount was fermented in traditional lagares. With the grapes coming in without a great deal of juice, the lagares took quite a bit of work to extract colour and flavour from the skins, but the results were spectacular. The young lots were aromatic and full of colour, showing plenty of promise for the future."

Charles Symington, 12th December 2003

Tasting Notes

Deep opaque, blackish purple colour. Aromas of violets just fly out of the glass! In the mouth, endless layers of very ripe blackberry fruit coat the palate. Great depth of structure with sweet liquorice flavour combining with rich tannins, give this wine an outstanding complexity. Long persistent flavour. A classic Graham in the style of its famous predecessors.

Food pairing suggestion and serving

Graham's 2003 Vintage Port is a fabulous way to end a lunch or dinner. It pairs wonderfully with chocolate desserts, such as chocolate mousse, but it can also be enjoyed on its own, providing a memorable moment in the company of good friends.

Storage

Store the bottle horizontally in a dark place with constant temperature, ideally between 12°C and 15°C.

Decanting

Stand the bottle upright for a short while before you intend to decant (20 to 30 minutes at most). Pull the cork slowly and steadily and leave the bottle for a few minutes. Clean the neck of the bottle. Pour the wine into a clean and rinsed decanter. Once you have started pouring do not stop until you see the very first traces of sediment begin to appear out of the bottle. You may prefer to use a decanting funnel.

Wine Specifications

Alcohol: 20% vol (20°C)
Total acidity: 4.5 g/l tartaric acid
Baumé: 4.0

Reviews & Awards

94 Points out of 100

"Loads of tar and blackberry aromas follow through to a full-bodied palate, with medium sweetness, big, velvety tannins and a long finish. A big, juicy wine."

James Suckling, Wine Spectator, December 2005

96 Points out of 100

"This is a great Port, from a great brand. It is packed with solid, structured, rich and intense black fruit flavours. Its tannins show considerable aging potential. It is a big, ripe wine, balanced by a long, lingering dark aftertaste."

Roger Voss, Wine Enthusiast, November 15, 2005

Peter Symington, responsible with his son Charles for the vineyards and wine making, has been made 'Fortified Wine Maker of the Year' an extraordinary 6 times by the 'Wine Challenge'. Nobody else has won this important award more than once. In 2003, his son Charles won the same award.