



## QUINTA VALE D. MARIA

### THE VITICULTURE YEAR OF 2015

The viticulture year of 2014/2015 was characterized for being an atypical year in terms of climate, with a dry and cold winter and with a Spring and Summer abnormally hot and dry.

In particular the reduced precipitation throughout most of the vegetative cycle and high temperatures registered between June and July should be highlighted, by its impact on the vine and the grape maturation. This weather pattern caused an advance of the vegetative cycle of about 1 to 2 weeks, on average.

In terms of the vines health, cryptogammic disease (oidium and mildew) and insect plagues did not have any significant impact.

In all and comparing with the previous decade's data, we can consider that 2015 was the year in which all the production appeared in better health conditions.

The maturation was very variable all along the region, taking into account the vineyard location and/or the water availability.

In vineyards less exposed to stress or with increased water availability, there was an earlier maturation (about 1 to 2 weeks) and harvest started in late August/early September.

In lower altitude or more exposed to heat vineyards, maturation occurred more slowly, forcing growers to wait for better alcohol and phenolic levels. However, the occurrence of a very important rainfall between the 15<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> of September, accompanied by lower temperatures, had a very positive impact both in production and in quality, allowing a maturation that has evolved gradually to perfection until the end of September/beginning of October.

At Quinta Vale D. Maria we pick our grapes for Port at the very end of the harvest. The picking of the Douro Doc parcels started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September while the picking of the parcels we always destine for our Ports happened between the 26<sup>th</sup> of September and the very first days of October. All this happened after the middle of the month rainfall and in perfect sunshine and dry weather. These grapes had the chance to mature perfectly (and slightly over-mature, as we like them for our Ports) and release all their potential to make a classic Vintage Port.

The blending of the main fermentations for Quinta Vale D. Maria 2015 Vintage Port took place in February 2017.