



## LAUNCH SHEET

# QUINTA DO VESUVIO 2015 VINTAGE PORT



The Symington family is pleased to announce the release of a Vintage Port from its magnificent Quinta do Vesuvio estate in the remote upper reaches of the Douro Valley. This is a limited bottling of just 1,001 cases: 11,400 bottles (75cl), 288 Magnums and 9 Double Magnums.

2015 was Charles Symington's 20<sup>th</sup> vintage at Quinta do Vesuvio, having joined the family company in 1995. In his first vintage in the Douro he accompanied his father Peter, gaining first-hand knowledge of the winemaking in traditional granite *lagares*, which is maintained to this day at the Quinta, one of the handful of properties in the Douro Valley to do so. During the 2015 vintage, the usual 50 strong *roga*, (team of pickers and treaders) worked the *lagares* to produce this outstanding Vintage Port, which reflects Charles's profound knowledge of this legendary Douro vineyard.

Quinta do Vesuvio is located in the Douro Superior, the demarcated region's hottest and driest sub-region with just 470 mm average annual rainfall. The property's sheer size (326 hectares) and mountainous terrain result in varied aspects, predominantly north and northwest, as it occupies a south bank position along the Douro River. The vineyards are laid out along varying altitudes, ranging from 110 metres up to almost 500 metres above sea level. These two variables are important features of the property's terroir; combined they shield the vineyard from excessive heat.

These characteristics were important during the growing season in 2015, which was simultaneously the hottest and driest of the previous 36 years. It was the hottest month of June recorded in half a century. However, the Douro Superior was better placed than other areas of the Douro insofar as — unusually — the region benefited from more rain than the Cima Corgo and Baixo Corgo. This rainfall came when it was most needed during the month of May, just as temperatures began to soar. At Vesuvio, 27 mm of rain was recorded on just one day, the 4<sup>th</sup> of May — the average for the whole month there is 38.4 mm. Thus,



Vesuvio and other neighbouring Douro Superior properties were better placed to withstand the drought, which persisted during the remainder of the spring and throughout the summer.

Although maturation studies during August showed the crop in very good condition, with the Touriga Franca giving signs of much potential, phenolic ripeness was not keeping pace with sugar readings and rain was desperately needed. Charles decided to start the vintage slowly from the 8<sup>th</sup> September, with the younger, more vulnerable vines, and preserving the Touriga Nacional and late-ripening Touriga Franca, which make up, respectively, 29% and 35% of the Vesuvio vineyard. Patience was rewarded when abundant rain fell on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of September, coming down steadily allowing the soil to usefully absorb the welcome water. Weather conditions then continued favourable; the wind that followed rapidly dried the grapes and the skies stayed clear for the rest of the harvest – a more propitious scenario could not have been hoped for.

With the rain the Touriga Nacional was transformed and was picked in fantastic condition from the 21<sup>st</sup>, the skins having softened and the grapes achieving full, balanced ripening. Charles commented that the rain and how we used it to our advantage was the turning point of the vintage. The perfect dry and sunny conditions that continued into early October were made-to-order for the later ripening Touriga Franca – which had shown great promise throughout – to ripen fully and deliver outstanding quality.

#### **THE WINE:**

The Touriga Nacional was harvested mainly from the quinta's *Quinta Nova* and *Raposa* vineyards, planted at altitudes between 350 and 470 metres, predominantly north and northwest facing.

The very attractive bergamot and *esteva* (rockrose) aromas combined with spicy notes, so typical of Touriga Nacional, are very apparent in this wine due to the combination of the North-facing aspect and the altitude, both of which favour cooler temperatures and lend these wines incredible freshness and perfect levels of acidity.

Conversely Touriga Franca is a variety that flourishes with heat and at Vesuvio is planted at relatively lower altitudes. In 2015 the finest Franca was harvested from the *Vale da Teja* vineyards, predominantly northwest facing and planted between 150 and 200 metres, some lying near the river. This Touriga Franca produced some of the finest examples of this variety, making beautifully floral wines with velvety ripe tannins.

The combination of these two varieties was complemented by a small quantity of Sousão, drawn from a more granitic area of the Quinta, which brings acidity and minerality to the blend, beautifully balancing this powerful and structured Quinta do Vesuvio Vintage Port.

#### **Grape Variety Percentages:**

- Touriga Nacional: 60%.
- Touriga Franca: 30%.
- Sousão: 10%



**Winemakers:**

Charles Symington and Bernardo Nápoles

*“Expectations were high and these were confirmed (...) This water [rainfall of the 15th] was excellent to refresh the vines and hydrate the plants (...) As the vintage progressed, it became apparent with the picking of the Touriga Nacional and Sousão parcels just how beneficial that one day’s rain had been. Towards the end of the vintage the Touriga Franca also showed fantastic structure, with generous colour and aromas.”*

Bernardo Nápoles, Quinta do Vesuvio, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015

**Analysis:**

- Alcohol by volume v/v (20° C): 20%.
- Total Acidity g/l tartaric acid: 4.8.
- Baumé: 3.9.
- Bottling during May 2017 with no filtration or fining.

**Tasting notes** (from cask samples, Symington tasting room, March 2017)

A powerhouse of a wine with fresh, dark fruit aromas, rounded off with some lovely *esteva* (rockrose) and violets fragrance. Taught and muscular in the mouth with good grip from the schist tannins. Long and intense with superb structure.

