

Quinta da Pellada Tinto



Dão is quickly becoming the most sought-after region for Portuguese winemakers to venture into; according to many, it's one of the world's most perfect microclimates: mountains protect it from continental heat to the east and Douro's heat to north, and cool Atlantic breezes come inland to keep the overall temperatures more regulated, making for wines with bright acidity, ethereal aromatics, and compelling complexity. The DO's granitic soils allow indigenous grapes to shine through in the wines, and provide firm, crunchy tannin against the bright fruit. Alvaro Castro has noted that "if God were to design a wine-growing region, what he would come up with would look a lot like the Dão."

There is no modern Dão without one of the region's longtime legends, Alvaro Castro, whose estate encompasses two small properties (or "quintas") known as Pellada and Saes. Alvaro makes wine here with his daughter Maria, carrying on a tradition of winemaking on this property that dates to the 16th century! Together, they have resisted the internationalization push of the '80s and '90s, instead doubling down on their slow-wine approach, using local varieties grown and crafted in the true Dão "field blend" style.

Quinta da Pellada Tinto is one of the calling cards of Alvaro and Maria Castro's estate in Dão. The vines average 70 years or more, grown in traditional field blend style: some 40 different varieties, mainly Alvarelhao, Tinta Pinheira, Touriga Nacional, Jaen and Tinta Amarela. Minimal intervention with pristine raw materials is the hallmark of this age-worthy red.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: Only the best parcels from Pellada go into this wine; both are adjacent to the 16th-century house, where enormous boulders of granite studded with quartz are found scattered across the property. This wine is a showstopper that any lover of the world's greats will cherish, and a great window into the historic style of Dão winemaking.

RATING HISTORY: 2018 94 WA; 2017 94 WE; 2016 95 WE, 95 WA; 2015 96 WA, 94 WE

GRAPE: Old vine field blend of some 40 different varieties, mainly Alvarelhao, Tinta Pinheira, Touriga Nacional, Jaen and Tinta Amarela. Average vine age of 75 years. Planted to granite, sand and quartz at an average altitude of 500m (1,640 ft) above sea level.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: The fresh red fruit and delicate aromatics of the Quinta de Pellada Tinto pair very well with roast poultry and game. Mushrooms and other umami-laden dishes are also fine pairs.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: The grapes are macerated for 10 days in cold temperatures to maximize its elegant aromas. It then experiences spontaneous, native yeast cofermentation in stainless vats, after which it is aged for 26 months in 5th and 6th use large format French oak barrels. Fined and filtered before bottling. This is a vegan wine.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Quinta da Pellada is located in the northern part of the Dão, in Northern Central Portugal. The plots for this vineyard are planted to granite, with lines of sand and quartz at 500m (1640 ft) elevation. The Dão has a temperate continental climate, protected from the cold winds of the Atlantic by the Luso Mountains, from the warm winds of Extremadura to the west by the Serra da Estrela, and from the arid heat of the Douro by the Serra do Caramulo. Average temperature in the growing season is 57F (14C). Rainfall is 26 inches per annum, with no irrigation.

TASTING NOTES Bright ruby-garnet. On the nose, powerful aromatics that gain explosivity with some air. Sour cherry, raspberry, cranberry, flint, truffle and violets mingle on the nose. On the palate, this is an elegant, finessed wine with restraint to its power and structure. Built to age, this is tightly wound in its youth with mouthwatering acidity but a beautiful purity to the core of red fruit and minerals. Finishes long, with impeccable balance.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13.0%

UPC CODE: 5606686001239

