

Quinta de Saes Reserva Estágio Prolongado



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.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: This is a true "bunch selection" reserve wine, with manual harvest happening in several stages throughout the end of the growing season to ensure perfect phenolic ripeness and maturation. These are the oldest vines of the Quinta de Saes estate, yielding profound concentration paired with ethereal elegance.

RATING HISTORY: 2022 93WA; 2019 92WA; 2018 92WE, 91W&S; 2017 92 WA; 2015 90 WA; 2013 92+VFTC

GRAPE: 70% Red blend, 15% Touriga Nacional, 15% Alfocheiro. Sustainably grown vines planted in 1990. Tended in granite, clay and sandy soil at 500 m (1,640 ft) elevation.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: Quinta de Saes Tinto Reserva Estágio Prolongado has gorgeous, food-friendly acidity and fresh red fruit that pairs very well with roast game, particularly duck or goose. Mushrooms and other umami-laden dishes are also fine pairs.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: This wine is macerated for 10 days, cold soak, to maximize aromatic extraction. Wild yeast fermentation in stainless fermentation vats, then aged for 18-24 months in 2nd and 3rd use large format French oak. Fined and filtered, then racked to bottle for an additional 6 months prior to release.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Quinta de Saes is located in the northern part of the Dão, in Northern Central Portugal. The plots for this vineyard are planted to granite 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 Sierra 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, sour cherry, rose petal, black pepper and wet stone leap from the glass in impressive fashion on the palate, juicy and bright, with graceful integration of red cherry, raspberry and cranberry fruit intermixed with spicy black pepper. Finishes long, with beautiful fresh acidity and a consistent beam of minerality through the finish.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13

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