



EST. 1815

COCKBURN'S
VINTAGE PORT
2017





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QUINTA DOS CANAIS



2,500 cases · 8% of Cockburn's Total Vineyard Production

The linchpins of Cockburn's Vintage Ports have always been the vineyards at Quinta dos Canais and Touriga Nacional, a variety which almost disappeared from the Douro had it not been for research conducted by John Henry Smithes, the legendary Cockburn's viticulturalist and winemaker, during the 1930s. His findings rehabilitated this historically low-yielding variety, shunned by most growers for that reason, despite the high quality of the wines it produced. Although Cockburn's only acquired Quinta dos Canais in 1989, the property had been supplying Cockburn's for over a century, and under Smithes's influence its owners had gone against the flow, in typical Cockburn's fashion, and planted a high proportion of Canais with Touriga Nacional.





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After acquiring the property, Cockburn's planted more Touriga Nacional, benefitting from ongoing research work conducted by Smithe's successors in collaboration with the regional university, UTAD. Their revolutionary work in selecting the best Touriga Nacional clones made the Canais vineyard a beacon for the variety and Cockburn's provided the cuttings which enabled its renaissance across much of the Douro.

Under Symington family ownership since 2006, substantial vineyard investments have been made at Quinta dos Canais, reflected in the widely acclaimed Cockburn's 2011 and 2016, which were our debut Cockburn's Vintages. We took inspiration from Cockburn's famous early 20th century Vintage Ports, and our family believes that the exceptional 2017 Vintage Port represents another substantial leap forward in Cockburn's reemergence.





The growing cycle

2017 will be remembered as one of the hottest and driest years in the Douro. At Quinta dos Canais we had half the rainfall of an average year (just 246 mm) and temperatures broke several records during the spring. The summer was bone dry, just 6.2 mm recorded in June (monthly average: 24.3 mm), and not a single drop fell during July, August or September. It is quite extraordinary just how well-adapted our indigenous grape varieties are to the Douro's challenging conditions. Fortunately, summer temperatures provided some respite – they were slightly below the 30-year average. This was critically important; if the lack of rain had been combined with extreme temperatures, the outcome could have been very different.



QUINTA DO VALE COELHO

Because the very dry conditions were in place from the start of the growth cycle, the vines adjusted early, lowering their water intake and thus conserving the meagre water reserves for the months ahead. The dryness also checked excess plant vigour; smaller vine canopies meant the vines had less demand for water. The heat also helped check vine diseases, contributing to a very healthy crop.

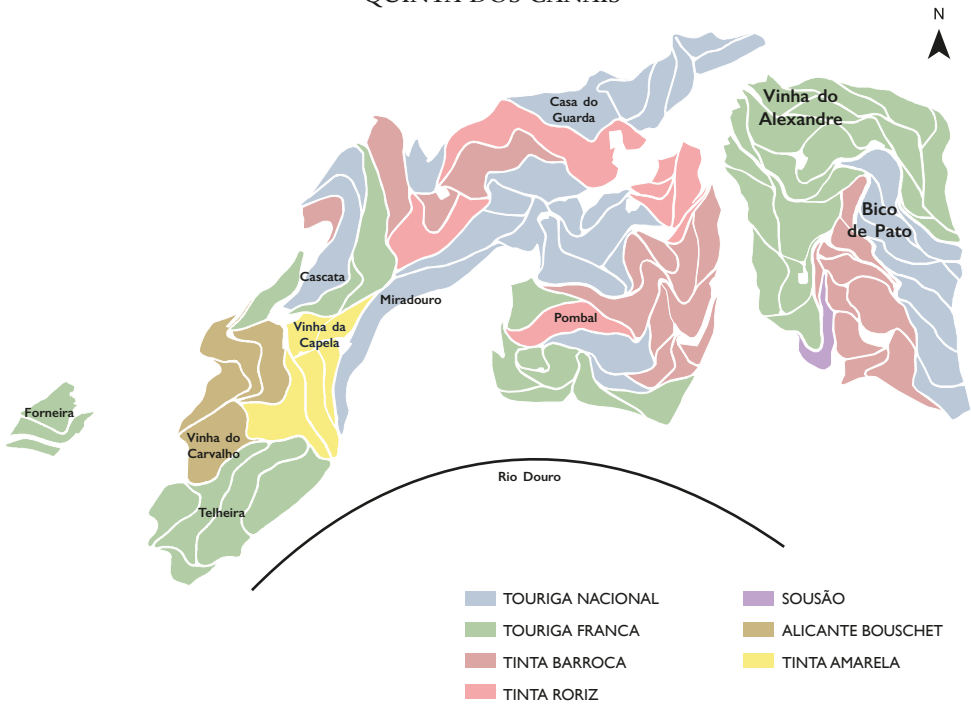
The harvest

In 2016, the start of the vintage was deferred several times and the finest grapes were only picked from the third week of September and into the first half of October. By contrast, in 2017, the prized Touriga Nacional parcels at Canais were picked during the first week of September, the harvest having started on August 28th — unprecedented at Canais and Vale Coelho. What was very encouraging was that graduations and phenolic development had kept pace with each other and, given that no rain was forecast,





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the decision to pick early was vindicated. Even the late-ripening Touriga Franca was picked as early as mid-September, achieving complete and balanced maturation. Temperatures dropped from September 10th which proved crucial in conserving the remarkable freshness displayed by this variety — in spite of the long dry summer. Charles Symington was buoyed by the outstanding quality delivered by the Touriga Franca, evident in the superb aromas coming out of our *lagares*.

Yields were incredibly low at both Canais and Vale Coelho, one-third below the ten-year average.





The wine

It is often the case in the Douro that years that test the vines to the limit are those that deliver the most memorable wines: 2017 is one of those years. The low yields resulted in very concentrated and well-structured wines of incredible intensity. The well-ripened fruit shines through, giving the wines stunning freshness and vitality. The 2017 Cockburn has the usual important Touriga Nacional component, but the proportion of Touriga Franca, given its excellent performance, was increased relative to the previous Cockburn's Vintage.

Tasting note

The Cockburn 2017 has resinous, forest floor aromas with bergamot notes mingling with rockrose scents. Fresh, mineral notes are evocative of eucalyptus and anise. The palate is intense with layers of blueberry and kirsch flavours underpinned by peppery tannins which provide Cockburn's signature grip. A very complete wine, complex and finely tuned that suggests impressive longevity.

Provenance and variety make-up

- Quinta dos Canais: 74%
- Quinta do Vale Coelho: 18%
- Quinta do Cachão do Arnozelo: 8%

- Touriga Nacional: 52% (800 g/vine)
- Touriga Franca: 30% (670 g/vine)
- Sousão: 10% (1.3 kg/vine)
- Alicante Bouschet: 8%

Wine Specification

- Alcohol by volume – 20% v/v (20°C)
- Total acidity – 4.57 (g/l)
- Baumé – 3.50
- Bottled during May 2019 with no filtration
- Winemakers: Charles Symington, Ricardo Carvalho