

# COCKBURN'S VINTAGE PORT 2017

## 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.

## THE YEAR

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. 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. 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, 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.

Cockburn's has always questioned the so-called 'rules' for making port. Founded in 1815 by the Scottish brothers Robert and John Cockburn, they were guided by their conviction that "the quality of the wine – that is the first thing to be looked to" – and we've done our own things ever since.

## INFORMATION

Winemaker: Charles Symington, Ricardo Carvalho  
Blend: Touriga Nacional: 52% (800 g/vine)  
Touriga Franca: 30% (670 g/vine) Sousão: 10% (1.3 kg/vine) Alicante Bouschet: 8%  
Provenance: Quinta dos Canais: 74% Quinta do Vale Coelho: 18% Quinta do Cachão do Arnozelo: 8%  
Alcohol: 20 %  
Acidity: 4.57 g/L (tartaric acid)  
Baume: 3,50 °  
Year of Bottling: 2019

## TASTING NOTES

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.

## DECANT

Yes

