

Tasting Notes
August 2022 Pick-up
Wines of Portugal



Welcome to your August 2022 Smart Wine Club pickup. The theme this quarter is wines of Portugal, always a great option for hot summer weather. Since there are some very reasonably-priced wines available from Portugal, it allows this shipment to be an exciting combination of fun and inexpensive wines combined with a couple of real show-stoppers! So, keep track of these notes when picking out a wine for your next meal. In addition to your regular tote of 6 mixed wines, you'll also receive a bonus white port, perfect for a before-dinner aperitif!

- **2021 Casa de Vila Verde Branco “Mosaico”, DOC Vinho Verde** – This is a classic Vinho Verde with a bright citrine color and made of a field blend of the typical white grape varieties of this DOC region. Lightly spritzy, refreshing and fruity, with nicely balanced acidity. In my opinion, Vinho Verdes are the perfect hot weather wine. Enjoy it well-chilled before the summer ends. Reg retail: \$10 Smart price: \$9

Pairing: Always great with salty appetizers, fresh salads, and seafood. Here is a fun Mexican-inspired tapas idea that would pair nicely: Grill a couple halved peaches or nectarines and chop them up. Make a salsa by combining them with cilantro, jalapeño, a little minced shallot, a squeeze of lime, and some olive oil and salt. Spoon your topping on toasted crostini or even tortilla chips, then garnish with cotija and avocado.

- **2019 Quinta da Fonte Souto Branco, DOC Alentejo** – This is a very interesting white, a blend of 75% Arinto (Portugal’s finest white grape) and 25% Verdelho (known as Verdejo in Spain). The fermentation process is unique and geared towards creating complex flavors. Fermentation begins in regular stainless steel vats, but once it starts, 60% of the crushed fruit (must) is transferred to very large French oak barrels. It is then left in contact with the lees (residual yeasts) and stirred often in a process called bâtonnage. This encourages extraction of compounds into the wine that add complexity and structure to the finished product. You'll enjoy aromas of honeysuckle, vanilla, toast, and a hint of grapefruit with flavors of tea, plum and white pepper. It is ready to drink now but could be aged up to 3 years. Reg retail: \$28 Smart price: \$25

Pairing: This wine will pair well with many seafood and white meat dishes. The toastiness and complexity allow it to stand up to grilled dishes, and the great acidity means it will pair well with creamy or buttery sauces. I also think this would be quite lovely with paella.

- **2020 Ponte da Barca Rosé “Este”, DOC Vinho Verde** – Another classic Vinho Verde but this time, pink! This one is fun, slightly sparkly, bright pink in color. It features the classic fruitiness and acidity but leaning more towards berry flavors of raspberry, gooseberry and strawberry. Reg retail: \$10 Smart price: \$9

Pairing: Invite a couple of friends, assemble your favorite charcuterie board, and enjoy on a hot day. I think the pink versions of Vinho Verde pair especially well with salami.

- **2018 Quinta do Porrais Douro Tinto** – This red blend from the classic Douro region is a mix of native Portuguese grapes Sousão, Tinta Barroca and Touriga Nacional. This is a great bottle of wine for a great value! Well-structured with ripe tannins and lots of bold black plum and blackberry fruit. Reg retail: \$13 Smart price: \$11

Pairing: This is the perfect wine to enjoy with your summer BBQ of grilled burgers, sausages, or steaks. Also pairs well with nutty aged cheeses such as parmesan, cheddar, or gouda.

- **2020 Silk & Spice Red Blend** – Many of you know Carl Meisel, the original owner of the store. This is one of his “house reds” and he recommended I try it for a wine club shipment as it has been a big hit at his neighborhood wine afternoons. This is a blend of classic Portuguese grapes Touriga Nacional, Baga, and Alicante Bouchet plus some Syrah for spice. Ruby-colored with intense ripe fruit bouquet combined with vanilla, pepper, and mocha. It is full-bodied with soft tannins – an easy drinker. Reg retail: \$16 Smart price: \$14

Pairing: This wine would be delicious with roasted lamb, pork ribs (it will pair well with BBQ sauce which can be tricky), or a spicy Indian curry.

- **2018 Quinta da Côte Tinta Reserva “Princesa”, DOC Douro** – This is a lovely estate-grown reserve blend of all native Portuguese red grapes. The estate had long been a “Quinta” or grower of grapes specifically to be sold to the large port wine makers, and the property consists of about 60 acres of extremely old native vines growing on traditional steeply terraced plots. However, in 2012 a French winemaker, impressed with the quality of the vines, purchased the property and updated all the buildings and equipment, allowing for the production of fine wines on the estate. On the nose you’ll discover lovely blackberry, blackcurrant, and spice aromas, with a long and elegant finish on the palate. This could certainly be aged for 10-15 years if you wish, but it is lovely now. Reg retail: \$36 Smart price: \$32

Pairing: If you’d like to try your hand at some Portuguese cooking, this slowly cooked rich beef stew would be a delicious pairing with this wine. Just make sure you DON’T use this wine to make the stew – it’s too nice! <https://leitesculinaria.com/7654/recipes-portuguese-stewed-beef-cacoila.html>

- **Burmester Extra-Dry White Port (NV)** – This white port is nice and dry, with aromas of melon, citrus and tropical fruit. Once opened, it will store up to 4 months refrigerated. So - here’s the simple and stylish Portuguese apéritif you can make with your bottle of white port: Go to the store and get some tasty tonic water such as Fevertree or Q. Mix yourself up two parts tonic to one part port. (I’ll let you decide how big of a drink you need depending on your day.) Serve on the rocks in whatever glass makes you happy. Garnish with something fun – you can use citrus slices, cucumber sticks, mint leaves, olives. White port can also be enjoyed simply on the rocks with the same garnishes, if you don’t care for tonic. Sit back, relax, and enjoy your drink before dinner – pretend you’re at a café in the Algarve enjoying an ocean view! Reg retail: \$18 Smart price: \$16

Pairing: It’s an apéritif, so you want salt – chips, nuts, olives.