

TOTAL PRODUCTION LIMITED TO



650 CASES (OR 7,800 BOTTLES)

VESUVIO VINTAGE PORTS ARE FOOT-TRODDEN IN THE QUINTA'S EIGHT MAGNIFICENT GRANITE LAGARES
THIS UNBROKEN TRADITION DATES BACK TO 1827



Following three consecutive years of drought, the winter of 2009-2010 resembled a deluge at times, with well above-average rainfall and exceptionally cold conditions (snow fell a record 6 times in the Douro). At Vesuvio, the mean annual rainfall (400mm) was almost doubled in 2010 to 750mm and, as elsewhere in the Douro, this was very welcome as the depleted water tables were amply replenished. There were winter days in the vineyard when all that could be heard from every quarter was the sound of running water. The cold, wet conditions delayed bud-burst by ten days but the very warm spring brought excellent conditions for flowering and fruit-set, setting the scene for an abundant year.

The wet winter was to prove immensely beneficial, due to the summer extremes that were about to unfold; July and August were not only hotter than usual, but also exceptionally dry - in fact not a single drop of rain fell over this period.

Temperatures for these two months were 2°C above average, the hottest registered since our records began. Contrary to what might be expected, this heat did not bring about earlier ripening; the very high temperatures and absence of rain led to reduced photosynthesis, which slowed down the building up of sugars, thus delaying maturation. All this contributed to a late viticultural cycle, delaying by one week the vintage, which only started at Vesuvio on the 13th of September.

Picking started with the Tinta Barroca, a variety whose yields were 12% below average in 2010, in sharp contrast to all the others, which registered noticeable increases. The Barroca ripened perfectly (with sugar readings at 14.5° Baumé) benefitting from the higher humidity levels in the soils. The performance of the late-ripening Touriga Franca was lacklustre, having difficulty ripening such a large crop. Conversely, the Touriga Nacional (28% of the Vesuvio vineyard), widely regarded as the Douro's finest varietal, ripened best and its excellent quality more than made up for the shortcomings of some of the others. Picking of the Nacional was held back by Charles Symington and his team, in order to allow it to achieve complete ripeness and this proved a good call, as shown by the very high quality of the Nacional musts: 'well balanced with good colour, producing wines with very elegant aromas' - in Charles's own words.

The Quinta do Vesuvio 2010 Vintage Port is made from a combination of the star performers of the vintage: the Tinta Barroca (25%) and the Touriga Nacional (75%). The Barroca was chosen from the 1981 'abelhas' (bees) vineyard, so-called because of the neighbouring beehives, whilst the Nacional



was selectively harvested from a section of the lower-lying 'Escola' (school) vineyards, located close to the house, as well as from older Touriga Nacional vines, planted in 1976. The average age of the vines, which contributed grapes for the Quinta do Vesuvio 2010 Vintage Port is 26 years.

Tasting Note: freshly fragrant and floral on the nose, with notes of blackcurrant and liquorice as well as hints of bergamot and some suggestion of dark chocolate. Very substantial in the mouth, reverberating with delicious flavours of blackberries and black cherries; taught and muscular, full and powerful, with potent peppery tannins and good acidity underscoring a very fine structure and balance.

Winemakers: Charles Symington and Mário Natário.

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