Port

**Vocab**

* **Quinta:** Portuguese word meaning “farm” which may also refer to the wine-producing estate or vineyard. Single-quinta ports are made from a single year and from a single estate in the Douro Valley.
* **Cockburn:** 
  + History: Founded 1815 by Robert Cockburn and George Wauchope. In 2nd half of 20th century, became brand leader in British market with Special Reserve Ruby (accounts for over ⅓ of all Port sold). Became part of Harvey’s of Bristol in 1962, and both were under Domencq Wine and Spirits until Beam Wine Estates acquired it in 2005. Symingtons bought it entirely in 2010. Excels at making large volume, reliable mass-market wines.
  + Viti: Backbone of Cockburn’s vintages: Quinta dos Canais (farm at lower end of Douro Superior), bought in 1942, with nearly ⅔ of vines over 25 yrs old. When bought, needed major renovations. 10% of wine produced is trodden by foot, mostly from small growers. No autovinifying (view is that it takes control away from winemaker). Remaining 90% produced by remontagem (mechanical pumping over).
  + Wines: Used to be known for great vintage ports, Symingtons working to rebuild this reputation. Weirded people out with their unusual vintage declaration choices: released lighter 1967 rather than 1966 against popular vote, for example.
* **Croft:** 
  + History: Port house with long history. Precursor Phayre and Bradley est 1678. First Croft from Lancastershire, England became partner in 1736, company known as Croft and Co from 1769. Majority shareholding eventually passed to Grand Metropolitan, later a part of Diageo. Expanded into Sherry business in early 1970s, and launched new style, Pale Cream, which became very successful. Diageo sold these Sherry bodegas to Gonzales Byass in 2001, and Port business is now owned by Fladgate Partnership.
    - Croft Pink: first rose Port
* **Ferreira:** 
  + History: Est in 1850s by Jose Ferreira. Sons took over after Jose was killed by Napoleonic troops, and their descendants made it what it is today, especially Dona Antonia Adelaide Ferreira, aka “Ferreirinha” (little Ferreira), the “grand dame” of the Port industry (kind of like Port’s Veuve Clicquot). She was widowed in her early 30s and sought to invest in the Douro, buying 2 dozen quintas in the Cima Corgo and Douro Superior. She was a cool lady, and it paid off. For example: In 1868, there was a large vintage and glut of wine left farmers with unsold stock. Ferreirinha bought their extra wine and put it in storage to help them. Then phylloxera arrived, and Ferreira has lots of wine to sell while other shippers had nothing.

The company was eventually bought by Sogrape in late 1980s, descendants still part of the company.

* + Viti: Still owns 3 superb farms: quintas do Porto and Caedo and da Leda (later near Spanish border). Were subjects of research and investment in 80s, as the company pioneered the vertical system of planting.
  + Wines: Good reputation for tawnies. Seem elegant when compared to others because house known for gentler extraction, but are ageworthy and lovely. 70% of production is ruby and tawny, 17% is white (high proportion). White made in 3 styles: dry, medium-sweet, and lagrima (very sweet).
  + Commercial: Largest brand in Portugal despite pries that are 15% higher than competition
* **Sandeman:** 
  + History: Port and Sherry house with super famous logo, black-cloaked Sandeman Don. Founded in London in 1790 by Scotsman George Sandeman, who started shipping sherry, then Port. Bought by Seagram in 1980, and quantity over quality became theme. In 1990, 7th generation George Sandeman moved to Oporto to manage company. In 2001, acquired by Sogrape, and Sandeman sherries made by Garvey since 2004.
* **Taylor Fladgate & Yeatman (Taylor’s):** 
  + History: Est 1692 by Job Bearsley, has changed name many times. Joseph Taylor, John Fladgate, and Morgan Yeatman all arrived in 19th century and contributed to current name. Current managing director is Alistair Robertson, a descendant of Yeatman family. His daughter and son-in-law also involved. Oldest British house that retained its independence. Actually bought Fonseca and Croft. Introduced cap plungers to the industry.
  + Viti: Quinta de Vargellas in Douro Superior. Used to have great reputation in 1800s, was bought by Taylor’s after phylloxera and Taylor’s invested in it heavily. Vines planted by Frank Yeatman and are pretty much still intact. Single quinta wines declared sometimes and are dope.

Quinta de Terra Feita in Pinhão Valley is other vineyard that’s basically a large hill.

* + Wines: Wines consistently higher in price than others. Premium quality, particularly the vintage ports. Power, strength, and elegance.
    - Vintage: consistently long-lived.
    - LBVs: great quality, too, and are done in a modern style (bottled after 6 years in cask after stabilizing and filtering, so no decanting)
    - First Estate: less widely available ruby. Name refers to Casa dos Alambiques, Taylor’s 1st property in the Douro, which was first to be owned by any British shipper. Estate still supplies Taylor’s, but now Frist Estate doesn’t come entirely from those vineyards.
    - Tawnies: Rich and fruity, rather than nutty.
* **Fladgate Partnership**
  + Est 2001 when Taylor Fonseca Vinhos bought Croft and Delaforce (now sold) from Diageo. Remains family-owned by descendents of Yeatman family. In 2014: 631 ha of properties in Douro with 1.4 million vines.
  + Acquired Fonseca in 1948 and maintain firm’s excellence in vintage ports. Fonseca’s best-known port is Bin 27 (ruby reserve).
  + Acquired Croft in 2001, including 109 ha Quinta da Roeda, that provides backbone to vintage blends.
  + Contributions: introduced cap plungers
* **Symington (Family Estates):** 
  + History: Dominant family of Port shippers. Founder: James Symington, married anglo-Portuguese Beatriz Leitao de Carvalhosa Atkinson (ancestors in port since 17th century). Originally joined Warre and Co, became a partner. Symingtons ran production and vineyards while Wares ran sales and marketing in London. Warres sold remaining shares to Symingtons in 1961. Instrumental in reviving interest in single-quinta ports in late 1980s. In 1988, Blandy family offered Symingtons partnership in Madeira business, acquired controlling interest in Madeira Wine Company until 2011 when Blandy regained control.
  + Owns: W and J Graham (acq. 1970), Warre (acq. 1961), Dow, Quinta de Vesuvio (acq. 1989), Smith Woodhouse, and Cockburn (acq. 2006).
  + Contributions: introduced robotic lagares
* **Sogrape**: Est 1942 by Fernando van Zeller Guedes. Came up with Mateus Rose. Owns 830 acres of vineyards in Portugal. Owns Sandeman
* **Lodges:** Term used by British shippers of Port and Madeira for a building where wine is stored and matured, esp in Vila Nova de Gaia in Oporto and Funchal in Madeira.
* **Vila Nova de Gaia:** Suburb on opposite side of Douro estuary from Oporto. Traditional aging site of port. Home to many lodges. Shippers age, taste, blend, and bottle port here. Until 1986, law required all exported port to be shipped from within defined Gaia city limits. Now, port can be shipped anywhere from within demarcated Douro region so that export markets do not neglect small shippers, quintas, and co-ops.
* **Schist:** a metamorphic rock with a planar aspect due to a parallel alignment of minerals. Planes in schist are often vertical--ideal for vine roots to penetrate and for rainwater to drip through. Ideal for dry Douro region.
* **Terraces:** created when a hillside is formed into horizontal steps. Makes it easier to plant on slopes. In Douro, very experimental. Expensive to create, so justified for better vineyard sites.
  + Solcalcos: Old walled terraces. The presence of a wall is defining quality. Some have 1-2 rows on a flat surface, some have up to 10 rows on a slightly sloping surface. No mechanization possible
  + Patamares: Introduced in 1970s after phylloxera. No retaining walls and typically 2 rows per terrace. Each terrace accessible via small tractor, limited mechanization possible.
  + Vinhos ao Alto: Un-terraced vineyard, rows planted up the slope. Only suitable on less steep slopes. Limited mechanization possible.
* **Touriga Nacional:** Red grape. Low yielding (gives about 2.6 lbs of grapes per vine on average), high color and tannin. Concentrated flavors and good structure. Blackcurrant notes. Considered the finest grape but occupies a tiny percentage of vineyard area because it’s a bitch to grow.
* **Touriga Franca:** High color and tannin variety. Higher yielding than Nacional with excellent aromatic quality. Needs warmer sites to ripen fully. Most widely planted of the top 5. Has floral, rose petal notes.
* **Tinta Barroca:** Red grape. High must weights and levels of color, tannin, and acidity. Richest in anthocyanins, so prized for color. Early-ripening and prefers cooler (north-facing) sites. Can achieve very high sugar content and has cherry/mulberry flavor.
* **Tinta Roriz (Tempranillo):** Something of a lightweight by Douro standards. Can add finesse to blends and tannic structure and herbaceous, spicy notes. Does better in richer soils and average temperatures.
* **Tinta Cao:** Very rare and low yielding (least-planted) but high in extract and valued by some shippers. Less than 10.5 oz per vine! Good aging potential...can be austere in youth and develop finesse with age.
* **Lagares:** a low-sided stone trough where grapes are trodden and fermented. Most now replaced with traditional fermentation vats; Douro is an exception. In late 1990s, robotic lagares introduced by Symington family and are still important in making high-quality Port.
* **Autovinification:** method of vinification designed to extract maximum color from red grapes. Developed in Algeria in 1960s, was known as Ducellier system. Process involves an automatic pumping over and is a self-perpetuating process induced by build up of pressure. No external power source needed. Beneficial because it replaced traditional extraction method of foot treading in lagares after a shortage of labor in 1960s. Plus, power supply in wineries was too erratic to support modern pumps and presses.

Originally, autovinification units were built from concrete and lined with resin-painted concrete. Modern ones made from stainless steel and are refrigerated to prevent must from overheating.

* **Douro Bake:** Traditional expression for the character imparted to wines that are matured in the hot, dry climate of the Douro Valley (rather than the cooler, damper Vila Nova de Gaia). Wines matured in the hot Douro seem to mature faster, losing color, browning, and developing baked fruit and caramel flavors. Sometimes poor hygiene is actually the culprit. Some shippers are successful at aging wines here.
* **Instituto dos Vinhos do Douro e Porto (IVDP):** Formed in 2004 by number of different bodies which oversaw different aspects of the trade separately. Interprofessional body for Port and unfortified Douro wines. Government-run, employs inspectors to check the movement of stock. Ensures that shippers don’t sell more than ⅓ of their stock in one year. Can analyze/taste port samples before issuing guarantee seal.
* **Beneficio**: Portuguese term used to describe the amount of grapes that can be used in Port production. The IVDP decides each year how much Port can be made, basing its decision on the quality of the vintage and current stock levels. The right to send grapes for Port production (beneficio) is divided between different graded vineyard sites (graded A-F), with the A vineyards getting the greatest allocation and the F getting the least (Vineyards classified from A to F with A being the best. Classification doesn’t appear on label, but used as basis for the beneficio. 12 different criteria on which vineyards are judged:
  + Soil: type of soil; rockiness; productivity; steepness.
  + Climate: location; altitude; protection; exposure.
  + Cultural conditions: varieties; vine training; age of the vineyard; vine density
    - A – more than 1200 points
    - B – from 1001 to 1200
    - C – from 801 to 1000
    - D – from 601 to 800
    - E – from 401 to 600
    - F – from 201 to 400

Grapes with a beneficio command the highest price at market (about 4x that of non-port grapes). Remaining grapes used for distillation or light wines.

* + Advantages: No wine glut. Spreads wealth evenly between many.
  + Disadvantages: No quality control built into the system. Some shippers not able to use all of their top-graded fruit. Consequently, shippers will buy the beneficio rights so they can use the grapes. Impediment to free trade or reasonable? High price of port grapes means that the product itself is more expensive
* **Location**:
  + Inland in Upper Douro, Portugal
  + Important bases in coastal Oporto and Vila Nova de Gaia
* **Climate**:
  + Oporto: Moderate maritime, high rainfall
  + Upper Douro: Warm-hot continental with variable rainfall levels. Summers drier and hotter further inland (rainshadow effect)
* **Soils/Topography:** 
  + Schist.
  + Normally thin and infertile with poor water retention. Vine roots draw on water from subsoil
  + Vineyards shielded from Atlantic influence by Serra do Marao range
  + 3 Subregions: :
    - Baixa Corgo (most westerly)
      * Coolest and wettest of zones
      * Very steep slopes (terraced)
      * Produces lightest wines suitable for inexpensive tawny and ruby ports
    - Cima Corgo (heart of demarcated port region, centered around Pinhao)
      * Steep slopes (terraced)
      * Rainfall lower here, a little warmer
      * Source of high-quality tawny, LBV, and vintage ports
    - Douro Superior
      * Flatter than other 2
      * Most arid with highest temps
      * ‘Still relatively undeveloped due to impossibility of navigating upriver past rapids of Cachao de Valeira
* **Grapes**:
  + W: Gouveio (Godello), Malvasia Fina, Viosinho
  + R: Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz, Tinta Barroca, Tinta Cão (others include Sousão, Tinta Amarela, and Mourisco)
* **Viticulture**:
  + In hot years, photosynthesis can stop
  + Irrigation now permitted, necessary for younger vines
  + Weed eradication vital (no competing with water resource)
  + Pests=wild boars
  + Pruning:
    - Traditional: guyot
    - Now all spur-pruned and VSP-trained
  + Harvest: from Aug (Douro Superior) to October
  + Classification (SEE BENEFICIO)
    - Vineyards classified from A to F with A being the best. Classification doesn’t appear on label, but used as basis for the benefico.
      * A – more than 1200 points
      * B – from 1001 to 1200
      * C – from 801 to 1000
      * D – from 601 to 800
      * E – from 401 to 600
      * F – from 201 to 400
    - 12 different criteria on which vineyards are judged
      * Soil: type of soil; rockiness; productivity; steepness.
      * Climate: location; altitude; protection; exposure.
      * Cultural conditions: varieties; vine training; age of the vineyard; vine density
* **Winemaking**
  + Red Port
    - Acidification nearly always necessary
    - Extraction key: all color and tannin has to be extracted in a matter of 2-3 days. Typical red wine methods not extractive enough
      * Foot treading=traditional. Now rare due to labor necessity
      * Autovinifiers, piston plungers, robotic lagares now common
    - Fermentation starts (ambient yeasts)
    - When sugars about halfway fermented, 77% abv spirit used for fortification to 19-20%. This spirit was traditionally distilled in Extremadura, Portugal, but is now imported from distillate made from EU’s wine lake
    - Sweetness levels depend on house style (120-220 g/l RS)
  + White Port
    - Older styles: very extractive, warm fermented and with oxidative color and aroma characteristics
    - Modern styles: little to no skin contact, temperature-controlled fermentation with cultured yeast. Most sold unaged but some rare aged examples exist (Kopke)
    - Most have residual sugar (super sweet style called lagrima). Drier style called leve seco (light dry) with lighter alcohol of 16-17%.
* **Maturation/Aging**
  + Takes place in lodges in Vila Nova de Gaia or increasingly in Upper Douro (air-conditioned warehouses)
  + Pipes (550 L barrels) used for tawny styles where more oxidative conditions necessary
  + Large oak barrels or stainless steel tanks used for ruby styles where more primary fruit needed
* **Styles**
  + Ruby
    - Ruby Reserve: designates a higher-quality version of Ruby Port, formerly called “Vintage Character” Port. Made by blending a variety of vintages, with an average age of 5-7 years. Still fruit-forward Ports, but have more complexity and structure than a Ruby Port due to the extra time in cask. A few examples: Fonseca's Bin 27, Sandeman's Founder's Reserve, Graham's Six Grapes, Quinta do Noval LB, Quinta do Portal Cellar Reserve
    - LBV: “Late Bottled Vintage.” Vintage ruby port kept in barrel for 4-6 years, then bottled. Once bottled, LBV should be ready to drink, not several years down the road. LBV that is true to its name should have some of the character of a vintage—balanced fruit and tannin from a single year and good depth of flavor. Allowing bottling between the fourth and sixth year gives Port producers flexibility, but is also at the root of the stylistic confusion. LBVs are approved for release in the fourth year by the IVDP. But it stands to reason (and taste buds) that an LBV bottled in the fourth year is going to taste very different from an LBV bottled in the sixth year. Some are traditionally unfiltered, others are (the latter does not have the intensity and depth of an unfiltered LBV). This style was actually created by Quinta do Noval in 1958, when it released its 1954 LBV.
    - Crusted: Crusted is a rare, traditional style of Port wine. A blend of full-bodied vintages that spend four years aging in large wooden vats, the wines are then bottled with no filtration and then cellared for three years before being released for sale. As the name indicates, it will form a 'crust' or sediment in the bottle and should be decanted before being served. Sometimes called “poor man’s vintage port.”
    - Vintage: Made only from the best grapes of a single vintage, and only in years that have been “declared” vintage-worthy, which usually happens just a few times a decade. Sees only two years of aging at the winery before each producer decides on its own whether to declare a vintage. Because the wines are so young upon release, they are usually tucked away in cellars for many years until they mellow and mature into their potential.
    - Single Quinta Vintage: Wines that originate from a single estate, unlike the standard bottlings of the port wine houses which can be sourced from a number of quintas. Single quinta bottlings are used in two ways by producers. Most of the large port wine houses have a single quinta bottling which is only produced in some years when the regular vintage port of the house is not declared. In those years, wine from their best quinta is still bottled under a vintage designation, rather than being used for simpler port qualities.[
  + Tawny
    - Tawny Reserve: A blended wine that has spent about seven years in wood and is often excellent value compared to wines bottled with an indication of age.
    - 10, 20, 30, or 40-yr: average age of port wine found in the bottle. Matured in wood, rancio style.
    - Colheita: The wine must be from a single year, aged for a minimum of seven years in wood before bottling. In practice, many are aged for considerably longer, and so a colheita can vary greatly in style – from a mid-deep, relatively youthful, berry fruit-driven wine, to the softest and most venerable of tawnies.
  + White
    - Reserve
  + Rose: Pioneered by Croft and adopted, not without controversy, by most shippers. Made by cooling fermenting grape must, which has had minimal skin contact. Serve over ice or use as a mixer.
* **Commercial/Econ:** 
  + Total # of grape growers in Douro is now 34,000. 111,000 acres under vine
  + Development of Douro Superior resulted in dramatic reduction in price of grapes
  + Market for port altered since WWII
    - French consumption overtook British consumption in 1960s
    - In 1990s, US became important vintage port market