

Quinta da Pellada Carrocel



Dão is quickly becoming the most sought-after region for Portuguese winemakers to venture into; according to many, it's one of the world's most perfect microclimates: mountains protect it from continental heat to the east and Douro's heat to north, and cool Atlantic breezes come inland to keep the overall temperatures more regulated, making for wines with bright acidity, ethereal aromatics, and compelling complexity. The DO's granitic soils allow indigenous grapes to shine through in the wines, and provide firm, crunchy tannin against the bright fruit. Alvaro Castro has noted that "if God were to design a wine-growing region, what he would come up with would look a lot like the Dão."??

There is no modern Dão without one of the region's longtime legends, Alvaro Castro, whose estate encompasses two small properties (or "quintas") known as Pellada and Saes. Alvaro makes wine here with his daughter Maria, carrying on a tradition of winemaking on this property that dates to the 16th century! Together, they have resisted the internationalization push of the '80s and '90s, instead doubling down on their slow-wine approach, using local varieties grown and crafted in the Dão "field blend" style.???

Quinta da Pellada Carrocel turns that approach on its head a bit, and tasting a bottle is a unique opportunity to experience the playful side of Alvaro and Maria's winemaking. Carrocel skips the field blend approach, instead showing off how Pellada's granite-and-quartz terroir and ideal microclimate engage one of Portugal's most prominent and widely-planted grapes, Touriga Nacional—but this bottling is made from at least 5 ancient clones of Touriga Nacional that are grown in one single plot at Pellada. Carrocel is produced only in the best years.??

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: Most Pellada and Saes wines are field blends, but Carrocel is produced exclusively from one small parcel that grows 5 ancient clones of Touriga Nacional.

RATING HISTORY: 2020 95WA; 2018 97 WA; 2012 93+WA; 2011 95WA

GRAPE: 100% Touriga Nacional. Sustainably grown, planted in 1950 in granite soils with lines of sand, clay, and quartz, at 500m (1,640 ft) elevation. This is a 0.5-hectare, single-parcel wine in Quinta da Pellada.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: The grapes were carefully selected by hand. They were fermented in stainless steel tanks with 12 days. The aging takes place in used, 400L French oak barrels for 24 months. This is a vegan wine.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Grapes come from a single-parcel vineyards located within Quinta da Pellada. The estate is part of the Serra da Estrela region of Dão, in central Portugal. The soils here are mostly granite with lines of clay and sand.

TASTING NOTES This is a rich, opulent red wine with great aromatic intensity. It is exuberant, with soft balsamic notes, vanilla and spices nuances, presenting wild red fruit aromas and very elegant acidity and structure.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 13.0%

UPC CODE: 5606686000805

