

Maçanita Sousão



Joana Maçanita is a dynamo. Her energy, intense focus and passion for every facet of life are infectious—and nowhere is this more apparent than in the wines she makes. Her dedication to her craft is eclipsed only by her talent, and her project in the Douro Valley is a perfect showcase for her full-speed-ahead, accept-no-substitutes style. Working with her brother Antonio, Joana sources from old vineyards spread across the three subzones of the Douro Valley. In search of freshness and minerality above all else, Joana uses classic Douro grape varieties, sourced from plots planted at high altitudes. The wines that result are balanced, elegant, and a transparent expression of true Douro terroir.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: Maçanita's "é Sousão ou será Vinhão" is, as usually is the case with wines from these smart, irreverent siblings, a wine intended to provoke as many questions as it answers. Sousão in the Douro is genetically identical to Vinhão in the adjacent Vinho Verde region but tends to make very different wine in the two regions. This wine firmly straddles the two styles, and poses the question of is it Sousão or is it Vinhão? Red fleshed and very high acid, this grape is in and of itself a bit of a conundrum. Either way, these two have fashioned a gorgeous expression of this undersung variety.

RATING HISTORY: 2019 95WA, 91WE; 2017 93 WA; 2016 90 WA

GRAPE: 100% Sousão. Vines planted in 1992 to schist soils at an average altitude of 100m (330 ft).

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: The bright acidity, low alcohol and low tannin profile of this wine belie its deep opacity. The acidity in this wine is well suited for richer meat dishes like roast pork, braised chicken or stewed beef.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Hand harvested. All bunches are inspected for quality on a sorting table before they are gently crushed and racked by gravity into cement lagar, for fully ambient yeast fermentation. Following a maceration period of 25 days with light foot pigeage, the wine is racked by gravity into new French oak for 18 months.

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Single vineyard tended in schist soil at 100m (330) elevation in Cima Corgo, Douro. This vineyard was planted in 1992. Average temperature during the growing season is 68 degrees F (20 C), with 400mm of rainfall per year. This is a subregion that experiences extreme highs and lows from a temperature standpoint, with some of the greatest day-night temperature delta in Portugal. As such the fruit experiences extended hangtime.

TASTING NOTES Opaque violet. On the nose, an intriguing aromatic combination of red and black fruit, with purple flowers and schist minerality laid over the abundant fruit. On the palate, mouthwateringly bright acidity that is tempered and framed by the wood – there's almost no overt indication that the wine has been aged in new oak. Juicy, mouth filling, and lifted, with punchy black and red berry fruit laid over with peppery spicy notes. Finishes long, with a quality that quickly demands another taste.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 12.5%

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