

Newsletter, December 2015

Dear friends,

Christmas is a time for enjoying a nice glass of port. Furthermore, it is a time for the never ending discussion of which type of Port will complement the traditional Danish Christmas dessert 'Risalamande' (a rice pudding with whipped cream, vanilla, and chopped almonds served cold with a cherry sauce). A nationwide agreement on this issue is still out of sight!

Nevertheless, it is certainly a lot easier to emphasize that first half of our club season has been outstanding, both in terms of quality and support from members. Two tastings were sold out rapidly, which probably will be the case in the coming year too, where the line of exciting Port tastings will continue.

With this newsletter we wish all our friends A Happy New Year. Let's, as tradition dictates, use the opportunity to take a look both at the past and the near future.

Vintage 1985

First tasting took place on the 21st of September with focus on 30 years old Ports from Vintage 1985. We presented approx. 25 % of the 46 houses, which officially declared a Vintage in 1985. The program included 11 houses:

Dow's, Noval, Fonseca, Taylor's, Burmester, Gould Campbell,
Infantado, Graham Smith Woodhouse, Calem & Ramos Pinto



The 11 Vintage 1985

Since the year is one of the very good vintages throughout the past 50 years, vintage 1985 is one of our old favourites, which we previously have tasted at three occasions. First time was in 1991 (Rozes was named the evening's best); second time was in 1997 (best wines were Graham's, Taylor's, Warre and Dow's); third time was in 2005 (best wines were Fonseca, Taylor's, Graham's, Gould Campbell and Warre's).

Thus, we put great anticipation into this officially fourth (and blind) tasting of Vintage 1985. The 32 participants assessed the wines using Robert Parker's scale and the four best scoring wines this evening were: No. 1 Fonseca (93 points) No. 2 Graham's (92 points), No. 3 Gould Campbell (90 points) and No. 4 Ramos Pinto (89 points). See all the results on our website.

João Nicolau de Almeida & Vintage 1983

On the 3rd of November, we were honoured by the visit of a great personality in the world of port, João Nicolau de Almeida from Ramos Pinto. In 2007 João Nicolau visited the club for the first time as our guest of honour at a great tasting and Wine Maker's Dinner.



João Nicolau as 'field schoolmaster' at Bom Retiro 2005

This time we focused on Vintage 1983, which was the first year that were harvested according to new methods in continuation of research on grape varieties and vinification, which João Nicolau initiated in the late '70s and early '80s.

The evening began with tapas at Cuckoo's Nest, followed by a tasting with double focus. First part focused on Vintage 1983 in four single grape editions: Tinta Barroca, Tinta Roriz, Tinta Franca & Touriga Nacional, of course tasted together with the final blend of Vintage 1983. Second part was a vertical tasting of Ramos Pinto & Ervamoira Vintage: 2002, 2000, 1994, 1982, 1970 & 1950.

We all had a very educating evening with an excellent teacher. Especially the comparison of four single grape varieties with the final blend was exciting. João Nicolau demonstrated his vast knowledge from nearly 40 years of experience at Ramos Pinto, where he has been involved in all stages of production.

Based on statements during and after the tasting, there was great enthusiasm for Ramos Pinto 1983, Ervamoira 1994 & Ramos Pinto 1970.



João Nicolau with our anniversary port (gift)

Old Tawny from Quinta do Mourao & Christmas Quiz

It has become a tradition that the last tasting of the year sets Tawny on the menu - as it is a tradition that we wish each other Merry Christmas and Happy New Year by competing in The Vintage Port Club Nasty Christmas Quiz. All in all 13 questions have to find correct answers, such as the precise number of Vintage declarations in 1995, the founder's names of the house Warre's, the exact strength of alcohol added in Port and other common Port knowledge!

On November 25th we tasted old Tawny and Colheita from São Leonardo also known as Quinta de Mourão. As something quite unique we tasted 10, 20, 30 & 40 Years Old Tawny together with their 'mother wines'.



View from the Christmas tasting 2015

It meant four flights, where the 10 YO Tawny was tasted with Colheita 1994, the 20 YO Tawny with Colheita 1984, the 30 YO Tawny with Colheita 1972 & finally the 40 YO Tawny with Colheita 1948. But that wasn't unique enough, so we closed the evening by tasting Miguel Braga's 50 & 60 YO Tawny.

Football & Port Wine

Members of the Board visited Porto in October to support our national football team in their struggle to participate in the European Championships - unfortunately without much success. The match took place in Braga, and The Vintage Port Club was helping

140 sponsors from Odense Sport & Event having a good experience in Porto with an introduction to the delights of port wine.



Gustavo Devesas, Per Stenaa & Alvaro van Zeller, Braga 2015

The program included lunch at Yeatman, dinner at Vinum and great tastings at Burmester and Graham's. We also invited a few of our good friends in Porto to the match; although they were placed in the middle of the Danish camp. But Gustavo Devesas, Dominic Symington and Alvaro van Zeller were still among friends.

In addition of being tour guides we had the pleasure of visiting Carlo Flores dos Santos and Alvaro at the lodge of Andresen for a lovely and interesting tasting, Factory House for lunch and tour with Dominic and a tasting at Sogevinus with Tania Oliveira and finally a meeting with Sonia Figueira, discussing the upcoming Winemakers Dinner (see below).



Per Stenaa, Carlos Flores & Alvaro van Zeller, 2015

Future events & tastings

The next six months offers four tastings, which nicely illustrates the breadth, depth and quality level of our tastings. First, we'll have a prestige tasting of Vintage 1966, which has long been overshadowed by the 1963 Vintage, maybe undeserved. Next in line is the Winemakers Dinner, which this year focuses on the world's oldest port wine house Kopke.

In March follows a new version of our popular 'Triathlon-tasting' (4 houses in three vintages or vice versa). This tasting will have special focus on Single Quinta Vintage, which - maybe, maybe not - is on the way to move from a position as a kind of 'second wine' to be made in years when there is no officially declared Vintage, to be of a kind of terroir based Quinta bottling. Finally, we end the season with the AGM and tasting of the young Vintage 2009.

Vintage 1966

It's 50 years ago that Vintage 1966 was harvested. The year has been a bit overlooked compared to the three years older Vintage 1963, but it has also gained a reputation of being at least as good as Vintage 1963. Is it really? We'll try to assess this during our first tasting in January.

The following row of 10 Vintage 1966 is scheduled for this prestigious tasting: Dow, Delaforce, Fonseca, Taylor, Graham's, Noval, Sandeman, Warre, Croft & a surprise.



Row of Vintage 1966 tasted 2013

Winemaker Dinner with Kopke

This year Winemakers Dinner takes place on Friday the 5th of February 2016 and is dedicated to Sogevinus with their very popular brand in Denmark, Kopke, which is considered the world's oldest port wine house. Our Portuguese guests will be the International Business Manager at Sogevinus Fine Wines, Sonia Figueira and the company's winemaker Carla Tiago.



Sonia Figueira, visit at Kopke 2015

The event will be held in the charming rooms at the Odd Fellow Palace, where the culinary will be served by Restaurant Palæet. Before dinner there will be a distinctly Tawny tasting with no less than five white port wine and a portion Colheitas.



Sogevinus morning tasting with winemaker Carla Tiago, June 2014

This year's harvest

This year's harvest will be another super year with a broad declaration, as predicted by João Nicolau de Almeida from Ramos Pinto, when he visited us early November. He compared the vintage to 2011, but said that 2015 would have more ripe tannins meaning that the wines might be less robust and more harmonious.

David Guimarães from Fladgate compared to vintage 2011: "In both years there was hot and dry spring and summer, but the winter was ahead more rainy in 2011," he told the magazine Decanter.

The same positive feedback sounds from other of our friends in Portugal. Oscar Quevedo speaks of "perfect maturation" while Quinta do Vallado expects to make "outstanding" wines. Charles Symington tells in the Graham's blog about "an exceptional year" with potentially fine wines.

On behalf of the Board

A Happy New Year to all

