

Newsletter, December 2020

Dear Friends

The year 2020 became a challenging year for everyone, and unfortunately, it seems like the first part of 2021 will be the same. People are working from home; travelling is minimized and social gatherings more or less banned. We are getting used to wear face masks and keeping distance. No hugs and kisses - and even less port tastings.

We know that our friends in the Port Business are having a difficult time. There has been no travelling to festivals and tastings around the world, less promotion-tours and finally fewer tourists in Gaia and in the Douro. We know that wine tourism is important for the producers and we sure hope that all the companies will survive this crisis. Online tastings and master classes have been offered. A fine solution and better than nothing, but it can never replace real life tastings and visits in the cellars and at the Quintas in the Douro.



Rabelo boats, Vila Nova de Gaia

The Vintage Port Club have been cancelling tastings too - latest our tasting of Bulas in November, with guests from the producer joining us in Odense. We will try to schedule the tasting sometime in the future, hopefully already next year. Despite the difficult times, we accomplished to offer five tastings in 2020: Vintage 1970, Winemakers Dinner with Pedro Poças Pintão, Colheita Triathlon, Back-to-Back Vintage 2016 & 2017 and Vintage 1980 & 2000.

You can read about the Vintage 1980 & 2000 tasting in this Newsletter supplemented by some notes on upcoming tastings. Planned tastings have unfortunately already been cancelled or postponed, but we hope to offer a few tastings later in the spring or before the summer vacation.

With this Newsletter we wish everyone in Portugal and elsewhere a Merry Christmas and hopefully a Happy New Year.

Vintage 1980 & 2000

It is always interesting to taste two different Vintage years head-to-head and make comparisons. Our tasting on the 21st of October was a celebration of the 40- and 20-years old Vintages from 1980 and 2000, respectively. Some central questions were: How have they developed? Are the Millennium Vintage ready to be enjoyed? Is it time to drink the last bottles of 1980?



Lineup for the tasting of Vintage 1980 & 2000, Odense 2020

In general, we found good quality, but a few bottles had some variations and faults. Unfortunately, that was the case with a couple of bottles of Graham's Vintage 1980, and Smith Woodhouse Vintage 2000 had some minor variations too.

After the tasting, participants gave points to the wines with the following results:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Smith Woodhouse 1980 (92,07) | 7. Taylor 1980 (89,64) |
| 2. Taylor 2000 (91,15) | 8. Warre 1980 (89,43) |
| 3. Graham's 2000 (90,92) | 9. Gould Campbell 1980 (89,15) |
| 4. Warre 2000 (90,43) | 10. Dow 2000 (88,56) |
| 5. Gould Campbell 2000 (90,38) | 11. Smith Woodhouse 2000 (86) |
| 6. Dow 1980 (90,05) | 12. Graham's 1980 (83,17) |

Next year

Our plans for the next half year included three tastings. Early in December the Danish Prime Minister announced that a ban on assemblies of more than 10 persons was prolonged until the end of February.

Therefor we had to cancel the first two tastings in the new year: a tasting in January of Vintage 1991 and our traditional Winemakers Dinner in February, this year with Churchills and with Johnny Graham and his wife Caroline as our honoured guests. We sure hope that it will be possible to find a new date for the WMD as soon as the circumstances will allow it.

The last tasting in the spring will focus on Late Bottled Vintage from the excellent year 2011. That tasting is planned to take place in April just after our general assembly. As mentioned, we hope it will be possible to squeeze in another tasting, but we have to await the situation during spring and early summer.

Confraria Vintage

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 crisis forced the Chancelaria of Confraria do Vinho do Porto to first postpone and secondly cancel the Annual Induction Ceremony and the Regatta of the Rabelo Boats. Instead, the Chancelaria decided to offer all the Confrades the possibility of purchasing the Confraria Vintages of this century.

The board decided to purchase some bottles dedicated to future tastings, so the Club bought three bottles of each of these Vintages: 2000, 2003, 2007 and 2011. We are looking forward to giving our members a unique opportunity to taste this special Vintage blend from all the producers.



Blending event of the Confraria Vintage

News from Portugal

In November, Symington Family Estates sadly announced that James Symington had died. James, who was born in 1934, served as the winemaker for several of Symington's brands and was leading the Company from 1990 to 1999. James is the father of Robert Symington. We hereby send our deepest condolences to the family.

One of the great women of Port and Douro wine, Sandra Tavares da Silva, appeared on a distinguished list of 24 talented female winemakers, which the well-known wine writer Jancis Robinson launched in Financial Times in November.



Sandra Tavares with some of her fine wines

Sandra, who was the only Portuguese on the list, started her career as a winemaker at Vale Dona Maria and was thus one of the "boys" in the Douro Boys.

Today, she concentrates on making wines at her parents' winery, Quinta de Chocapalha, in the Lisbon region and at her and her husband's own project, Wine & Soul. Their excellent Vintage Port, Pintas, was recently placed on a nice 3rd place (Vintage 2017) at our Back-to-Back tasting in September.

Sandra also visited our Club back in 2004 as our guest at one of the first Winemakers Dinners in the history of the Club.

Caves São João, which is based in the Bairrada wine region, celebrated their 100th anniversary this year. Among other things, they launched a Vintage Port in a special anniversary edition, marked '100 Anos de História' on the label. The Port is made by Dirk Niepoort himself, so we guess this special Vintage 2017, which is only made in 1.000 bottlings, will become a collector's item for the many fans of Niepoort.

Our homepage

You are always welcomed to visit our homepage. Here you will find a lot of Port related information, lists of declared Ports, facts on Port & Port production, news from the Club & board, countless photos from tastings, visits to Portugal, WMD's etc.

You will find it here: vintageport.dk.

Facebook

You are welcome as well to join our Facebook group with news, stories, discussions about Port and tasting notes.

A merry Christmas & a happy new Port year



Best regards,

The Board