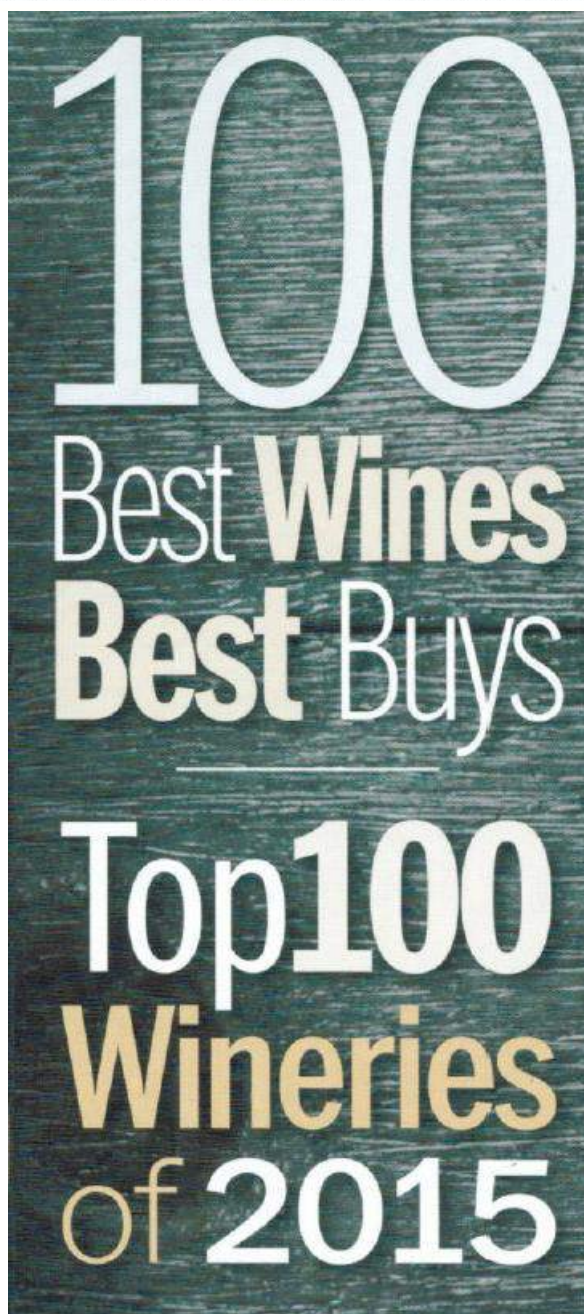


Vinho Soalheiro reconhecido mundialmente

Soalheiro wine globally recognized

Wine & Spirits



Portugal Vinho Verde

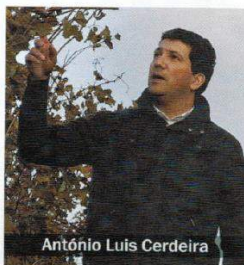
Soalheiro

António Luis Cerdeira runs the enology department at the Vinho Verde Commission in Porto. Maria João Cerdeira is a veterinarian. How, then, does this brother-and-sister team consistently grow and produce some of the most profound and long-lived white wines of Portugal?

A Sunny Place: The Cerdeiras are based in Melgaço, between the granite slopes of the coastal mountains and the Minho River to the north. Maria João farms the vines her father, João António Cerdeira, planted in 1974, under organics, and works sustainably with her growers; Luis presses the grapes and lets the must decant for 48 hours before allowing fermentation to begin (without added yeast). He does not allow malolactic fermentation, tending the wine on the lees to build its richness and aging potential. Their alvarinhos exemplify the concentrated, firmly structured style of pale white wines championed by the Portuguese—a totally different style than the Spanish albariños grown across the river.

Power and Elegance: The moderate summer of 2014 produced a classic vintage of Soalheiro, sustaining the freshness in the grapes even as the granite soils of Melgaço built their intensity of flavor. The Cerdeira's wines need plenty of air to show their depths of fruit, this vintage taking its time before flavors of peach meet the mineral acidity and the floral notes of jasmine. This is the definition of elegant alvarinho, a contrast to the more powerful 2013, from a hot summer with nights that remained cool enough to deliver a brawny, intense white, more tropical in its fruit.

The Atlantic Amplified: Luis Cerdeira has been experimenting with a new organic wine, Terramater, which he allows to undergo partial malolactic fermentation in chestnut barrels, then bottles unfiltered. He also makes a Reserva, selecting a small portion of the fruit from his family's vines to ferment and age in French oak, both new and used casks. His 2013 Reserva takes the power of the vintage to another level, with unforgivingly chalky austerity that slowly yields to floral scents and white currant flavors. Cellar this for five years, then open it with grilled langoustines for a taste of the Atlantic coast. —J.G.



Winemaker: António Luis Cerdeira
Viticulturist: Maria João Cerdeira
Owner: The Cerdeira family
Founded: 1974
Acres owned: 25, with 100 acres farmed in partnerships
Cases produced: 16,600
Estate grown: 25%
Importer: Wine In-Motion USA, Union, NJ
Website: soalheiro.com

TOP-SCORING WINES

- 94 '14 Vinho Verde Alvarinho \$20 (8/15)
- 93 '13 Vinho Verde Reserva Alvarinho \$36 (8/15)
- 90 '13 Vinho Verde Primeiras Vinhas Alvarinho \$28 (8/15)