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The first parcel of a single hectare (2.5 acres) of Alvarinho grapes was born in Melgaço to João António Cerdeira, in 1974. Time went by and, today, the Alvarinho grape variety covers 25 acres and is now supervised by the children: Luís and Maria João Cerdeira. For more than 25 years, this brand has been present at the table, maintaining this Alvarinho's praiseworthy consistency and storing potential, vintage after vintage. As years ran by, several new products were made available to the customer. These wines are almost always seen as an experiment/innovation when first released onto the market, yet they shortly turn into great specimens. This happened with Primeiras Vinhas, and Reserva, which are both specimens that raise the Alvarinho variety to the levels of the best in Portugal.



Quinta de Soalheiro - Photo Provided by Quinta de Soalheiro | All Rights Reserved

In fact, these wines need and even enjoy a little ageing time in the bottle; for example, the Alvarinho Soalheiro is one I only like to open after it ages for two years inside the bottle. However, if we look at vintages such as the 2007, or even earlier vintages, they confirm that we can forget about the Alvarinho Soalheiro for a while and it won't be the slightest bit upset. Primeiras Vinhas and Reserva are on the same path, proving that the people at Adega do Soalheiro know how to educate a wine with such an intent.

The new facilities are where the creative process continues. New products echo from consumer to consumer and, for now, two new wines have just been released. The first, named **Terramater**, is made with the 2014 vintage, an Alvarinho of an earlier vintage with no filtration and prone to sediment, whose ageing is done mostly in chestnut casks (traditional in the Minho region). The hue is slightly heavier than the house's usual. There is something more closed-in about the notable aromatic precision we are used to in this producer in all his wines. It's dense, of good volume on the mouth and with a lot of elegance and freshness, a slight silky sensation. A strong mineral aftertaste in the background in a tasteful and refreshing sip. In my view, it is still very young and it will be quite interesting to study its evolution; that is if they made enough bottles for that.



Terramater Alvarinho 2014 - Photo by João Pedro de Carvalho | All Rights Reserved



Oppaco Vinhão e Alvarinho red 2013 - Photo by João Pedro de Carvalho | All Rights Reserved

The other novelty is the first *Soalheiro* red, called *Oppaco*, a 2013 vintage based on the Vinhão and Alvarinho varieties. Once again, the keyword is innovation, because this is the first wine of the region made from a mix of red and white grapes. As a result, the wine combines the rusticity of the Vinhão variety, which is tamed by the freshness and elegance that the Alvarinho variety exhibits in Luis Cerdeira's hands. A very refreshing blend altogether, clean and defined aromas, the rusticity is felt in a mix of very present fruit that reveals a very young and lively blend at the same time. Different and having a mind of its own, an original personality that requires food at an arm's reach, from Galo de Cabelo [cockle rice] to Rojões [pork cubes] à Moda do Minho [Minho-style].

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