

Um mergulho profundo no Vinho Verde Alvarinho

A deep Dive into Vinho Verde Alvarinho

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Alvarinho is a special grape within Vinho Verde that is growing in importance with both discerning wine drinkers and the winemakers themselves. The sub-region of Monção e Melgaço is the original home of this grape in Portugal. Wines made here are allowed to carry the designation “Vinho Verde Alvarinho”, which was established to protect this association with the grape and sub-region.

As a result of the potential of this variety and the enthusiasm about it from a new generation of winemakers, there has been a large investment in new vineyards and new vineyard planting systems. Since the 2015 vintage the region has started a six year transition period to allow all the wineries of Vinho Verde region to produce and label Vinho Verde Alvarinho, even outside the sub-region of Monção e Melgaço. In other words, look for even more of the innovative and top quality Alvarinho wines from the Vinho Verde region in the future. Next we have Luís Cerdeira, the owner and winemaker at one of the most respected producers of Alvarinho in the region, **Soalheiro**, talking about the 2016 vintage:

“ Melgaço, the most northern region of Portugal, is protected by the surrounding mountains that allow a perfect marriage between rainfall, temperature and the number of hours of sunshine needed for the better maturation of the Alvarinho grapes. The rainfall in winter was low and less than average. In January, the rainfall increased and was very heavy, with an average ambient temperature that was also higher than usual. Overall, the winter was hot, which led to a slightly early budburst with regular flushing. The spring was rainy and cold, basically in the months of March, April and May, which resulted in irregularity and delay in the vegetative cycle. Flowering took place around two weeks late, which reduced setting, allowing for better distribution of production over each vine, with the resulting increase in quality. From June onwards, the rainfall reduced drastically and average temperatures rose. The months of July and August were hot and very dry, with high average temperatures and practically no rainfall. September followed this trend, contributing to an early harvest, starting in its first week, showing a clear recovery from the delay observed in spring. This climate characteristic during ripening is frequently associated with the microclimate of Monção and Melgaço, where hot days alternate with cold nights, allowing for the maintenance of a fresh and fruity aromas with an acidity that is present but moderate, just the way we like it for the Soalheiro.

