



GRAHAM'S ♦ DOW'S ♦ WARRE'S

SYMINGTON FAMILY ESTATES

The Symington Family offer Quinta do Vesúvio 2008 and a Dow's Quinta da Senhora de Ribeira 2008 Vintage Ports

It is rare in the Douro to have two excellent years that follow each other. This happened in 2007 and 2008. There was even some talk in late 2008 that some producers might opt for declaring the 08's rather than the 07's. It became clear as our tastings progressed that the 2007's had the clear edge in our view, but this shows how good the 08's are.

We have therefore decided to bottle 2008 wines from Graham's Quinta dos Malvedos, and from Dow's Quinta do Bomfim, but these wines will not be offered for sale now and will be bottled and cellared. Both will only be released when they have had several years of bottle-age.

We have also decided to bottle 600 cases of Quinta do Vesuvio and 300 cases of Dow's Quinta da Senhora da Ribeira and these wines will be offered for sale now and will be available for tasting at the LWTF 18th to 20th May.

The 2008 Year

Although it rained more than in 2007 and 2006, this was another dry year in the Douro, with just 542 mm (average 751 mm). April was unseasonably wet and caused quite severe 'desavinho' (coulure). But rather like in 2007, we then had a mild summer with August temperatures a full degree centigrade below the average. This resulted in late and gentle ripening. Rain on the 4th and 6th September followed by good weather performed a small miracle in the vineyard.

Late picking was important in 2008, the vines needed time to mature and they really enjoyed the early September rain. We only finished picking at Senhora da Ribeira on the 13th October and at Vesuvio on the 15th. One of our wine makers wrote 'without a doubt this serene autumn saved the harvest'.



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Quinta de Vesuvio 2008

This was a year for Touriga Nacional at Vesuvio, it only yielded 0,86 kgs per vine, but it gave a superb 13.6 Baumé. Three riverside plots of this variety were used (those just behind the orange orchard) and they make up 70% of the wine. We used Touriga Franca (20%) from the higher Teja valley vineyard on the Quinta. Finally Barroca from plot 60, just below the tractor shed, adds structure and body to the wine. All were 100% trodden in the stone lagares at Vesuvio.

The 2008 Vesuvio has a brilliant dark purple colour with profound and lifted aromas of violets, it has tremendous mid-palate weight and luscious complexity, a firm grip and fine acidity with the characteristic velvet like finish of all wines from this great property.

Dow's Quinta da Senhora de Ribeira

Once again the beautiful 'Lady of the River' produced stunning wines. The selection was as rigorous as we have ever made at this Quinta, much of which was originally planted by our great-grandfather between 1912 and 1925. We are literally harvesting what our forefathers planted.

We are bottling just 300 cases of this lovely wine. We have used Touriga Nacional from the high vineyard called 'Vinha Grande' by the big old water tank, and this has contributed 40% of the wine. We have then used Touriga Franca from plots 19 and 36 on the lower vineyard by the house (a further 40%). The final 20% comes from the ancient vineyard of mixed plantings (0.46 kgs per vine) to the left of the dust road into the Quinta.

The 2008 Senhora da Ribeira has brilliant flavours of spice and bitter chocolate, with the classic Dow's slightly drier finish. This wine is tight and austere at the moment, like all great Dow's Vintage Ports, but the underlying richness and complexity is clearly evident and will emerge as the wine ages. This is a real collectors wine for those who truly love great Vintage Port.

The Symington family

Portugal, 27 April 2010