



QUINTA DE LA ROSA

2010 NEWSLETTER

The best news this year was that La Rosa's wine maker, Jorge Moreira, was recognised for all his talents and was awarded *Wine Maker of the Year* in Portugal. Well deserved...

Despite the continuing economic pressures (in Portugal especially) we have had a good year and sales have increased by over 10%.

Year in the vineyards: We had a particularly wet winter with 150mm of rainfall. This topped up the water levels and refilled our spring preparing us well for the hot, dry summer. The rain meant that a few dry stone walls in Vale do Inferno fell down. One is being rebuilt by the local authorities as it fell onto our vineyard from the road above. Not too much damage was done.

Fair weather conditions in the spring meant we had a reasonable flowering and setting so that yields were maintained. July and August were unbelievably dry with no rain. In Bandeiras where the vines are still young we were able to irrigate but even there the temperatures were so high that the vines in some parts of the vineyard suffered from stress and stopped photosynthesising.

We started picking a week later than 2009 with some white grape on 9th September. Sugar levels were quite low so we picked sporadically only where the grapes were mature and ripe enough. Like last year, it helped being a smaller producer with detailed knowledge of the vineyards. This year the cooler parts ripened earlier so we almost picked in reverse order - north facing slopes and higher altitude first. Being small, we were able to stop the picking half way through when Jorge declared that there were no more ripe grapes. We actually stopped for over a week in the middle of September whilst all our neighbours carried on picking. The gamble paid off as the grapes ripened by at least 1 Baumé and produced more complex and richer flavours than otherwise. In most part we were lucky with the weather and only had a couple of rainstorms. We only finished picking on 16th October - just over 20 days later than 2009 (a particularly early vintage).

Overall Jorge is pleased with the quality of the wines and ports he has made and has plenty of different lotes to blend. It is unlikely to be a great vintage year but we are happy with what we have made and have some good potential reserve quality wines.

Differentiation: We continue to focus on supplying special bottlings and labelling for customers. For the TATE MODERN we labelled 240 bottles of Vintage 2000 port to celebrate their 10 Year Anniversary. We have produced a range of ports under Greenacre's label in Ireland. Kolja Kleeberg blended up his second VAU Reserve wine (2008) for his Michelin starred restaurant. We continue to supply private label port for Berry Bros, Booths and Arkells.

The TONNIX story continues (remember it from last year? Mark Hix and Mitch Tonk's white wine label designed by Tracey Emin) and Mark and Mitch have rolled the label out to include a TONNIX

red and white wine. TONNIX olive oil and half bottles of LBV and white port will be launched in 2011.

The Waitrose In Partnership special blend Douro Valley Reserve 2008 has been unbelievably successful winning many accolades in the press and a Gold Medal at the International Wine Challenge. The wine sold out within less than nine months and we have been asked to double the 2009 blend.

New importers: We have been busy expanding our sales network and are thrilled to have started working with a couple of new importers in the USA - William Harrison in Virginia, Washington DC and the states nearby and Winewise in California. We have expanded our coverage in Canada as well and have sent orders to Kenaston Wine Market in Manitoba and to New Brunswick via Mer e Soleil. Finally we are selling into Spain through La Cava de Pyrene and are now even selling to the Ukraine through Royal Wine! Some changes in certain countries have been made - Ricardo Freitas from Barbeito has decided to focus on producing his delicious madeiras so distribution has moved to Americo's new company Bebe e Tapas. In Brazil we are now working with Ravin, with Great Time in Macau and Valade & Transandine in France (still with Claude Gilois consulting).

Recognition: Apart from Jorge's Wine Maker of the Year award, many of our wines have been well received by the press with such wines as La Rosa Reserve 07 getting 94 (Wine & Spirits) and 92 points (Spectator and Parker) and Passagem 07 receiving an incredible 95 pts (Wine & Spirits). Our website has these scores and more.

Visitors: We have had some fabulous chefs coming to visit La Rosa. Again this year Mark and Mitch came over for what is now I hope their 'traditional yearly' visit with John Hutton. Despite a lot of chat, they failed to catch any fish in the Douro river! Kevin, Mark's chef at Hix Soho, came to check La Rosa out together with Chris and Ronni Arnold. Ronni is the sommelier at Rick Steins. Chris and Jeff Galvin (Michelin star chef/owners from Windows and La Chapelle) visited with their sommelier Andrea - they left a mouth watering recipe in the visitors book. Stephen Spurrier bought a wine group for dinner. From Nuremburg Martin Koessler came with a private party of customers. Kathie and Alberto (Cava de Pyrene) visited us in the heat of the summer from Spain whilst Brian Greenwood and his team from Winewise froze at La Rosa in the spring.

Other News: Sophia as a film star? A beautifully photographed documentary about the timelessness of the Douro valley premiered on the big screen in Lisbon in May. Called *As Horas do Douro*, the film interviews a few families with long connections and history in the Douro. I appear in it with wrinkles and all. Anyone interested in seeing the film on DVD (with subtitles) let me know.

PRODER - EU project. After many years of waiting, we have had a project for EU funding of our winery approved. Some of the investment has already been made in Sabrosa, but the major part of the project will involve the long needed improvement of our lagares, armazem and adega at La Rosa. All going well we plan to start this work next November tied into making improvements to our tourism.