

NEWS FROM LA ROSA - 2017

We have seen another great year for the Douro and Portugal in general. Visitor numbers are still soaring especially from America and Canada. Many are returning home enthusiastic about the wines they have discovered. La Rosa wines are starting to sell well as they begin to develop a loyal following with a strong image of having the best quality/value.

Investments 2017 has been another year of exciting investments. *Beer* - My brother, Philip, son, Kit and Jorge Moreira made their first brew of IPA and lager with the help of Richard Naisby from Milton Brewery in Cambridge. It took about a year of many emails, meetings and frustrations...but we managed eventually! Mark, my other son, designed the label so it has really been a family affair. We have had some good initial interest so far with some of our importers buying some and taking up the challenge!

With fabulous views over the river, we have recently opened a restaurant on the property, *Cozinha da Clara*, in our grandmother's name. Claire's love of food was legendary as were her dinners at La Rosa around Nelson's table, a copy of which we still have in the dining room. Claire was famous for her hospitality and generosity. So far we have had fabulous feedback thanks to Pedro Cardoso, chef, and his excellent team.

We haven't forgotten about the wine & the vineyards...in November we started a 10 hectare rebuilding and replanting project of Cerejinha and Dona Clara vineyards. The north facing Cerejinha will be planted with white varieties.

Year in the vineyards: It was a dry, hot year for much of Europe and the same for Portugal. Forest fires ravaged the countryside as everything was dry as a tinderbox. Vintaging started the earliest in living memory on 17th August (the day of my parents 60th wedding anniversary) when we picked the white at Bandeiras in the Douro Superior moving onto some of the red soon after. Those vineyards that were low altitude and south facing suffered the most. Temperatures were at 40C+ and there were initial signs of water stress and some dehydration. There was no rain forecast - the last time it has rained was the last week of June. A week later temperatures dropped so Jorge decided stop picking Bandeiras for a week. The marginally fresher weather helped maturation giving the grapes better aromas and more complexity of flavour. We finished picking Bandeiras on 4th September when we would normally be starting!

At La Rosa we started picking the hotter parts of Vale do Inferno incredibly early as well - 21st August - leaving the rest for later on. Generally those vineyards that were able to cope with the dryness and heat were picked later. These tended to be those that had older vines, preferably Touriga Nacional, that were north facing in higher altitudes. The cooler spell also had a positive influence at La Rosa and the wines we made a little later were of excellent quality. Alcohol levels tended to be higher and acidities lower than normal. But there was very little evidence of over maturity and resulting jammy flavours.



It was a year when everything was ready to be picked at the same time - a logistical challenge and it meant that our two wineries were working hard all the time. The last of the grapes were picked from the Fausto vineyard, high up by Lamelas on Monday 18th September, 3 days before we started the vintage in 2016! Once again it was a harvest where Jorge had to be careful of what to pick when and being a smaller, more flexible producer paid off. A later vintage where the grape matures more slowly is always preferred, however we were surprisingly pleased with the overall quality of the wines both white and red.

Special bottlings: In celebration of Nick Arkell being Master of the Vintners we labelled a few bottles of 'Masters' Colheita (Vintage Tawny). Nick Room has always been incredibly supportive and Waitrose launched a Limited Edition special Tawny blend for Christmas in a wooden box for Christmas. It has been wonderful for our brand name.

Visitors/Sales: We have had a record breaking amount of clients and journalists visiting La Rosa - too many to mention everyone. We held two parties to launch the restaurant one for Portuguese journalists & the other for non Portuguese speakers! Roger Voss (Wine Enthusiast) was there together with Dan Jago (CEO, Berry Bros) making his first visit to Portugal, Lawrence Hoskins (George Hotel), Karsten & Ruth (Weingalerie), Mads Bendix (Vinslottet, Denmark), Axel Probst (Germany), Antonio Metz (Baur au Lac), Nick Room & a whole team from Wine Sellers in the USA.

Opposite Hill Challenge Jorge & Philip B led a smaller more relaxed team up the opposite hill. We ended with lunch at Cozinha da Clara, Alvaro on the guitar singing until we were thrown out at 8pm!

Other News: My parents celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary at La Rosa on 17th August in our new restaurant. Most of the close family managed to be there. I have been invited to join the Court of the Vintners Company which is a great honour. We held a fabulous fundraising dinner in the Hall in memory of my sister Juliet and raised over £70,000 for research into epilepsy & suicide.