



Cristiano van Zeller is the 14th generation of a family continuously working in the Douro region since 1620, producing and selling Port and Douro Wines. While finishing his Porto University studies to become a civil engineer, he started his wine working life at the family company Quinta do Noval. He later became CEO and President of the company just before the harvest of 1982 and maintained the responsibility until the family decided to sell and sold the company to AXA in 1993. He also had responsibilities as a member of the board, later as Vice-President and in 1990/1991 as President of the Port Wine Shippers Association.

He left Quinta do Noval at the end of 1993 and started immediately, at the beginning of 1994, completely new wine projects in the Douro, first with Quinta do Crasto (1994-2000), then with Quinta do Vallado (1997-2007) and finally his own project, having bought with his wife Joana, in 1996, her family property Quinta Vale D. Maria. This was the time of the start of a small “revolution” in the Douro: the emergence of Douro still wines.

In 1997 he created, together with Javier Hidalgo, of Hidalgo La Gitana Sherry Co., Spain, the first single-vineyard sherry in history, the Pastrana Manzanilla Pasada and in 2007 he also created and is currently co-owner and shareholder of Hacienda Terra d’Uro, in Toro, Spain, producing Toro DO wines.

Cristiano is a founding member of the Confraria do Vinho do Porto (1982) and of the group Douro Boys, the most innovative and dynamic group of producers in Portugal, based in the Douro (Quinta Vale D. Maria /Van Zellers & Co., Niepoort, Quinta do Crasto, Quinta do Vallado and Quinta Vale Meão).

In 2007 he got back Van Zellers & Co., the original family company founded in 1780, which had been sold together with Quinta do Noval back in 1993, and re-built the company, from the ground, since then.

In 2017 Quinta Vale D. Maria merged with Aveleda, SA, owned by his cousins, the Guedes family. He then became a member of the board and a shareholder in the family group. Van Zellers & Co. is still owned by him.

Cristiano is currently chairing the Federation of the Douro Farmers.

Wines to be tasted:



QUINTA VALE D. MARIA DOURO DOC RED 2016

A very concentrated Quinta Vale D. Maria Douro Red, structured, intense and great freshness. Violet and dark red colour, with mature dark red fruit, black cherries, plums and spice, clearly showing the traditional raspberry flavours of all Quinta Vale D. Maria Douro Reds. Velvety tannins and a lingering fruit, make this wine fine and elegant.

VALE D. MARIA 20 YEARS OLD TAWNY PORT

Vale D. Maria 20 Year Old Tawny Port is concentrated, exciting and fresh. Very well balanced this Port makes a delicious dessert wine pairing with: Sweet desserts, cakes, milk chocolate, walnuts, nuts, crème brûlée, Roquefort and as a digestive. Like all Old Tawny Ports, which aged in wood all their lives, Vale D. Maria 20 Year Old Tawny Port can be enjoyed for some weeks after opening, if kept in good storage conditions.



QUINTA VALE D. MARIA VINTAGE PORTO 2016

Quinta Vale D. Maria 2016 Vintage Port presents a very deep violet and red colour. The traditional Quinta Vale D. Maria aromas of cherries, raspberries, blackberries, wild flowers such as rock rose, and dark chocolate are intense and full of layers. The 2016 Vintage is very concentrated, with a lot of fruit on the palate, rounded tannins and great volume. This is a Vintage of great ageing, just like a classic Vintage Port.

Where to buy:

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