

# Another vintage year for Portugal at the IWC

Portuguese wines have once again punched far above their weight at this year's IWC, with an impressive haul of medals handed out by the judges at the world's largest wine competition.

In total, 442 of the 581 Portuguese wines entered picked up either a medal or a commendation, including 36 gold medals, 112 silver and 146 bronze.

The gold medal tally is particularly impressive, putting Portugal in third place for the second year running, behind only France and Australia, both of whom are

considerably larger producers who entered many more wines in this year's challenge.

The 2009 results are only the latest instalment in a long run of success for Portugal at the IWC. In total, the country has won 190 gold, 495 silver and 849 bronze medals in the past five years, plus a number of regional trophies and champion trophies – the challenge's top prizes.

The winners of this year's IWC trophies will be announced in July, with the champion trophies announced at the IWC dinner in September.



## Where to try Portuguese wines this month

- 4-6 June: Royal Cornwall County Show [royalcornwallshow.org.uk](http://royalcornwallshow.org.uk)
- 11-13 June: South of England Show [seas.org.uk](http://seas.org.uk)
- 19-21 June: Three Counties Malvern [threecounties.co.uk](http://threecounties.co.uk)
- 23-24 June: Cheshire County Show [cheshirecountyshow.org.uk](http://cheshirecountyshow.org.uk)
- 25-28 June: Royal Highland Show [royalhighlandshow.org](http://royalhighlandshow.org)

## Morrisons to push Portugal at consumer shows

Morrisons has become the latest retailer to team up with ViniPortugal to promote Portuguese wines this year.

The UK's number four retailer will be showing off wines from its award-winning Portuguese range at a number of consumer shows across the country.

Among the wines available for thousands of consumers to taste will be Terra Franca Vinho Tinto, Tagus Creek Trincadeira Shiraz,

Point West Touriga Nacional, Terra Franca Vinho Branco, Gazela Vinho Verde, Tagus Creek Portuguese White and Pink Elephant.

The activity kicked off with the Royal Bath & West Show in Somerset at the end of May, and will continue through the Royal Highland Show, the Bristol Wine & Food Show, the Malvern Autumn Flower Show and the BBC Good Food Show in Birmingham in November.

## The importer's view



**Nick Oakley, managing director, Oakley Wine Agencies**

"Portugal is definitely catching on right now, throughout the trade, whether it's in supermarkets, independents or mail order. I know that it's the perennial 'next big thing' but what's happened recently is that the UK Importers' Association has been working with ViniPortugal, which is a commercially oriented body, and we've really begun to knock things into shape.

"There are also a lot of new players. I've been 'Mr Portugal' for some time, and for a while it felt like it was just me, but now they're all at it! In fact there are some 70 companies importing Portuguese wines in the UK now and the ViniPortugal UK office has a complete list – so there is no longer an excuse for only listing a couple of wines!

"I think the independent trade is a particularly strong area and potentially even stronger. A recent survey in OLN showed that we were one of the top three countries that independents saw as an area for growth. And as a business, we are concentrating more and more on this area, and we've been doing something that I think is quite a step forward. We used to only sell ex-cellar, but now we're offering 20-case deals, in bond, to independents, because your average small merchant can't afford to take on a whole pallet. It means they're getting very close to ex-cellar prices but without the inventory costs [of importing a pallet].

**Two to try:**  
**Terra de Lobos red & white, Ribatejo** (£5.99)

"These wines from Casal Branco are doing really well for us at the moment. They're both blends with a little bit of a French variety blended in with the indigenous Portuguese. In the white, the little bit of Sauvignon Blanc gives a lovely kick to the Fernao Pires. In the red, the Cabernet Sauvignon adds to the Castela."

**Marquês de Borba, red & white, Alentejo 2008** (£7.99, white; £8.99 red)

"These blends of traditional Portuguese varieties from João Portugal Ramos are one of the biggest-selling brands in Portugal and they are benchmark modern Portuguese wines."

## Region in focus: Dão

If you want to understand the quality revolution that has transformed Portuguese wine in the past decade or so, the Dão region is as good a place to start as anywhere.

Tucked away amid the mountains of north central Portugal, this sub-region of the Beiras has long been identified as a potentially great red wine region, thanks to its superb climate (hot, dry summers, cool, wet winters) its relatively high altitude vineyards and its wealth of indigenous grape varieties.

For much of the 20th century its development was held back by wine laws that handed all the power, and the bulk of production, to the winemakers of the local co-ops, not all of whom were up to the task. During the 1990s, however, those laws were rolled back and

privately owned enterprises of various sizes have begun to make good on the region's great potential.

The elegant, and beautifully fresh reds (around 80% of production here) have led the way, generally as blends of Touriga Nacional with, among others,



Tinta Roriz (aka Tempranillo) Jaen and Alfrocheiro Preto. But refreshing whites are also making headway, particularly those made from the Encruzado variety.

**Two to try:**  
**Dão Sul Quinta do Cabriz, Dão 2006** (£7.50, Clark Foyster Wines)  
Affordable modern red Dão from the pan-Portuguese (not to mention Brazilian) Dão Sul operation. Aged for six months in French oak, this is juicy and smooth, but with lovely lifted acidity.

**Quinta de Saes Pape, Dão 2003** (£26.50, Laymont & Shaw)  
Very serious Touriga Nacional from one of the region's best producers, this is structured, powerful, but not in the least heavy, with a complex, lingering finish.

## Where to buy Portuguese wines

**Are you a stockist of Portuguese wines? If you are, then ViniPortugal is looking for your help to build a database of where to buy all Portuguese wines in the UK as part of its drive to improve its website.**

**For more information, please contact: ViniPortugal UK Office: [viniportugal@jkmktg.co.uk](mailto:viniportugal@jkmktg.co.uk) or 01829 720130. ViniPortugal Lisbon Office: [sonia.fernandes@viniportugal.pt](mailto:sonia.fernandes@viniportugal.pt)**