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CLASSIC WINE LIBRARY

Port and the Douro

Richard Mayson

FULLY REVISED AND UPDATED

QUINTA DO VENTOZELLO

Quinta do Ventozello - Sociedade Agrícola e Comercial, SA, Ervadosa do Douro,
5130-135 São João de Pesqueira, Tel: 351 254 732 167, Fax: 351 254 731
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More than a few eyebrows were raised when a Spanish shellfish company, Proinsa, bought this A-grade property in 1999. With over 600 hectares (1,480 acres) of land, Ventozello is one of the largest estates in the area but, having been privately owned and never linked with any of the major shippers, the wines were relatively unknown outside the locality. The Spanish management is doing all it can, including an investment of five million Euros in the vineyard and winery, to raise the profile of Ventozello. The vineyard is expanding up the hillside, taking it from ninety-five hectares (235 acres) when Proinsa bought the property in 1999 to a maximum of 250–300 hectares (618–740 acres) by 2010. The existing granite *lagares* have already been halved in size with a view to making more concentrated vintage port and a new winery with a production capacity of 4.5 million litres is under construction. So far, no expense has been spared.

Ventozello is already producing a full range of ports: reserva, LBV, ten- and twenty-year-old tawnies (from old stocks matured on the *quinta*) and vintage. The 1999 vintage is quite soft, perhaps a little hollow, and early maturing, but 2000 and 2001 are big, bold wines with sumptuous fruit. The Spanish are well on the way to making Ventozello one of the great names in the Douro.

Quinta de Ventozello also produces a range of Douro wine (*see p.356*)

tel: 351 254 752 167, fax: 351 254 751 166
Bought by Proinsa, a Spanish shellfish company, in 1999, Quinta do Ventozello is well on the way to becoming a leading producer of port (see p.314) and Douro wines. Quinta do Ventozello is a soft, ripe, supple red bottled after spending around four months in American oak. Ventozello

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Reserva, which includes a proportion of *vinha velha* (grapes from old vines), has more concentration but is similarly suave and approachable, having spent twelve months in oak. From the same stable, Cister da Ribeira is a simple, easy-going and relatively inexpensive Douro red.