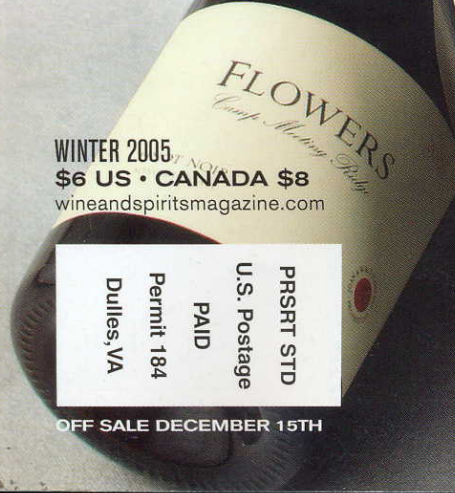


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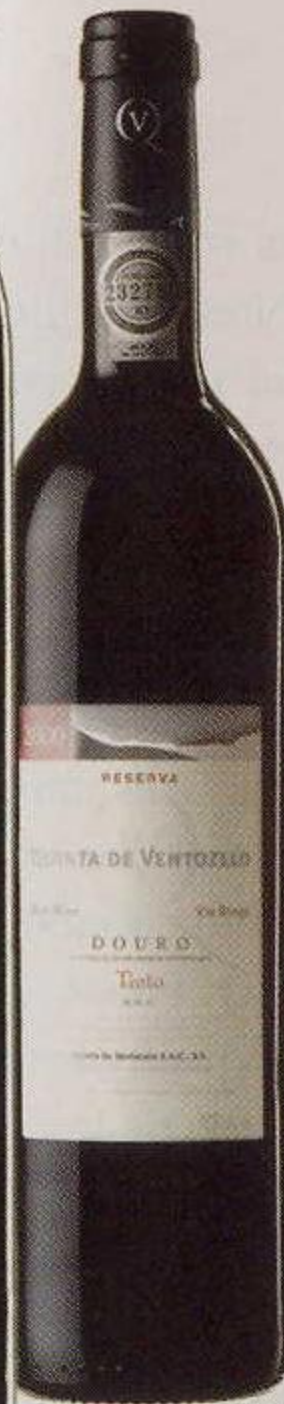
THE EXCELLENCE OF THE DOURO VALLEY

QUINTA DE VENTOZELO



PORT AND DOURO WINES

DOC TINTA
RORIZ 2001
W&S
score: 92



DOC RED
WINE 2000
W&S
score: 93

DOC
RESERVA 2000
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Wine & Spirits 2005 winery of the year

INTERNATIONAL

wineries of the year

W&S tasting panels considered more than 5,000 newly released imported wines over the past 12 months. We profile the top performers from these tastings as our *International Wineries of the Year*. To compile this year's list, we looked at both the highest scores of individual wines as well as the percentage of wines recommended. Because we limit our selection to wineries with three or more recommendations, look to our list of the *100 Best Wines of the Year* to find many great producers who release only one or two proprietary wines a year.

We focus on regional character during our tasting process, and our international list is a reflection of the producers who consistently make great wines that are expressive of their particular regions. In the profiles that follow, W&S editors Joshua Greene, Tara Q. Thomas, Patricio Tapia, Peter Liem, Nicole Drummer and Wolfgang M. Weber provide their personal insight into what makes these wineries great. A list of recommended wines, noting the issue in which our review first appeared, accompanies each profile, including not only high-scoring wines but those recommended as either an Exceptional Value (EV) or a Good Value (GV). Finally, a short list of facts about each winery is included for quick reference.

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Sebastião Mesquita



QUINTA DE VENTOZELO

As table wines have come to play a significant role in the Douro, classic quintas like Ventozelo have begun to make a name for themselves on the international wine scene. The Quinta de Ventozelo dates back centuries as a supplier of grapes and wine to Port shippers. But it wasn't until 1999, when the Spanish group Proinsa purchased this 1,480-acre estate, that Ventozelo began bottling wine under its own label.

Ventozelo runs along a mile of Douro frontage, on the south bank of the river near São João da Pesqueira. Of the 494 acres of vines (all "A-rated"), 24 are more than 100 years old—mainly the sources for the Vintage Port and the top table wines. Tinta roriz (tempranillo) accounts for the largest varietal planting; in '01 it produced a lively, dynamic wine, with Douro intensity grown right into its vibrant fruit. The supple texture comes from finely grown grapes treated well in the winery, (the table wines are fermented in stainless steel tanks with temperature control). The texture is also one of the best assets of the quinta's 2000 Douro red, a succulent, schisty wine and a steal at \$14. Winemaker Sebastião Mesquita also makes a less expensive red labeled Cister da Ribeira. It's a fresh country wine in '01, filled with scents of esteva and the same suppleness of texture that runs through all of his best wines at Ventozelo. Currently, Proinsa is making a five-million-euro investment in the vineyard and production facilities, making this historic quinta a property to watch in the future. —J.G.

15 wines tasted, 10 recommended

- 93** '00 Douro \$14 (4/05)
- 92** '01 Douro Tinta Roriz \$19 (4/05)
- 90** '00 Douro Reserva \$24 (4/05)
- 88** '03 Douro Touriga Nacional \$19 (10/05)
- 87** '03 Douro Tinta Roriz \$19 (10/05)
- 87** Porto Reserva \$15 (4/05)
- 86** '01 Douro Touriga Franca \$19 (4/05)
- 86** Douro Cister da Ribeira: '00 \$9 (4/05); '01 \$9 (4/05)
- 85** '98 Porto LBV \$23 (4/05)



Quinta de Ventozelo \$14
2000 Douro (93 points, Portugal) The scent of Douro schist runs straight through this wine, the tannins in the end carrying as much of that dry stony edge as the initial aromatics. The texture feels succulent rather than weighty, the exposition of flavor sleek and clean. An elegant wine from a quinta in São João da Pesqueira, this has plenty of tannin to sustain it in the cellar. A steal at the price. *Supreme Wines & Spirits, Pleasantville, NY*