



## PRIVATE CELLAR



### *2017 Vintage Port Exceptional in every way*

The Port houses are a restrained lot - declarations of a vintage year happen, on average, three times a decade; universal declarations, when all the houses consider the vintage great, are rarer. It is therefore exceptional, with the release of the 2017s, that we have two universal declarations one year after another – the last time was in the 19th Century. For many growers, the idea of a back-to-back vintage is anathema, however the quality of the fruit in 2017 demanded everyone's full attention; Charles Symington, head winemaker at Symington Family Estates, described how *'the intensity, concentration and structure took my breath away'* whilst Adrian Bridge, of Taylor's and Fonseca, considered the vintage so successful that they will be releasing their old vine Vargellas Vinhas Velhas for only the eighth time.

The Douro is renowned for its heat, but even within the context of Douro summers, 2017 was exceptionally hot and dry. A relatively wet winter ensured a reasonable water reserve in the soil for the summer and budburst was early in March, coinciding with the end of the rainfall; a hot dry spring and early summer was followed by an averagely hot August, with no rain recorded in July or August; the source of the Douro even dried up, a first in living memory. Harvest started in August, remarkably early, and finished in mid-September, around the time picking would normally be starting.

As a result of the dry weather, the grapes were very small which gives immense concentration and structure and in turn volume is down by between 20% and 30% on an average year, although the Fladgate Partnership bucked the trend by producing nearly twice as much as in 2016 (this is more a reflection on how small their 2016 was rather than the generosity of their '17s). For many, the stark reality of the small harvest was brought home by how much more fruit was required to fill their *lagares* to the correct level for treading.

2017 is not the only strikingly hot, dry year in recent port history – many of the growers are comparing 2017 with the legendary 1945s, which retain a freshness and fascination even now, more than 70 years on, and we believe that these wines will match that longevity.

Nicola Arcedeckne-Butler MW  
May 2019

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# 2017 Vintage Port

## 2017 Vintage Port

£ per case  
in bond

Taylor's 2017	bottles - 6 per case	£325
	halves - 12 per case	£333
	magnums - 3 per case	£325

*At Taylor's the average production for vintage Port since 1955 is 16,500 cases; production in 2017 was 11,500. The last time Taylor's, Fonseca and Croft all declared back to back vintages was in 1846 and 1847.*

Deep black red, opaque, with dense black fruit on the nose, dusty black skins with a floral note, mineral, tarry and intense and almost earthy. On the palate super smooth on entry, very closed and tight, yet ripe and rich too, a really big beast, the power to Fonseca's elegance, mineral and tight, so hard to define but beautifully layered and complex with scarcely noticeable tannins behind going to a long intense finish full of racy black fruits. Superb. Drink 2040-2055

Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas Vinha Velha 2017	bottles - 3 per case	£375
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*Only the eighth release of this old vine blend with vines aged between 80 and 120 years. 5,600 bottles produced.*

Dense red black to the rim, totally opaque but not tactile. On the nose big floral notes initially and then a sense of brooding power, rich and intense, with hints of red flowers and even a walnut note. On the palate a massive attack of big black fruits, with very primary blackcurrant notes, really structured, powerful yet with a cool minerality, really intense, dense and extremely alluring but clearly needs way more time to develop than the others. Drink 2040-2060

Fonseca 2017	bottles - 6 per case	£320
	halves - 12 per case	£328
	magnums - 3 per case	£320

*Harvest started here on 6th September, the earliest picking date in a generation. 8,100 cases made.*

Deep dense red black, not entirely opaque, with a nose of sweet, herbal black fruit, wild thyme, rockrose, floral, rich and intense, really inviting and powerful too. The palate is smooth and supple on entry, lulling you into false sense of security before it comes back with massive, intense ripe black fruits, spiced and rich, a light note of tar, very alluring, racy and balanced with an incredibly long, intense, supremely elegant and refined finish. Wow! drink 2040-2050+

Croft 2017	bottles - 6 per case	£240
	halves - 12 per case	£248
	magnums - 3 per case	£240

*Picking at Quinta da Roêda began on 31st August, the earliest start date for over 70 years. 3,900 cases made.*

Deep red black with a hint of brick on the rim; on the nose very sweet blackcurrant fruit, very different to the other wines with really primary fruit and little spice at this stage. On the palate deliciously fresh, vibrant black fruit, strong and primary blackcurrant, rich and ripe, more wine-like, with lovely spice and a hint of tar on the end. Really interesting, long and rich on the finish with a slew of lightly minty red fruits. Drink 2035-2045+

Croft Quinta da Roêda Serikos 2017	bottles - 3 per case	£300
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*From very old vines, a field selection of "heritage" vines dating back to 1889 grown on terraced plots: Benedita, Ferradura and Galeria.*

Dense purple black right to the rim with a nose of vibrant fresh black fruit, very primary with a distant feral note, very intense with a touch of orange zest, but closed and restrained. On the palate there is an incredible depth of fruit, rich and intense, ripe, floral with black fruits, seriously powerful yet racy and layered with massive supple tannins behind. Rich and vibrant on the finish, this is extraordinary. Drink 2040-2055

Trio pack of Taylor's, Fonseca and Croft 2017	one bottle of each wine	£175
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		£ per case in bond
Graham's 2017	bottles - 6 per case	£330
<i>47% Touriga Franca, 35% Touriga Nacional, 11% Sousão, 7% Old mixed vines - field blend. 5,250 cases made (11% of production).</i>		
Deep and dense in colour, tactile, with a perfumed nose of dense almost exotic fruit, damson, with trademark mint and eucalyptus notes, inkily deep yet with huge freshness too. Massively ripe on the palate, super intense, perfumed, gorgeously rich and smooth, with the substantial tannins completely masked by the fruit. Fabulously long on the finish, with lovely savoury notes of Christmas spice, orange zest and creamed black cherries. Superb. Drink 2035-2050+		
Dow's 2017	bottles - 6 per case	£330
<i>38% Touriga Franca, 42% Touriga Nacional, 9% Sousão, 8% Old mixed vines - field blend, 3% Alicante Bouschet. 5,250 cases made (16% of production).</i>		
Dense red black, opaque, with a nose of intense exotic black fruits, ripe black cherries and damsons, savoury, with deliciously alluring dusty black fruit, leading to a palate which is super smooth on entry, rich and intense, very enticing and ripe, with notes of walnut and spiced black fruits – some Christmas spice but also fresh spices – and a distant floral hint going to a really long, satisfying finish. Drink 2035-2055		
Warre's 2017	bottles - 6 per case	£270
<i>63% Old mixed vines – field blend, 22% Touriga Nacional, 15% Touriga Franca. Only half the average annual rainfall here, the majority in winter. 3,600 cases made (13.6% of production).</i>		
Deep red black but not as opaque as Dow with a restrained nose of sweet, nutty black fruit, spiced, earthy and mineral, stony, really alluring despite the restraint, leading to a palate of big black fruits, fresh and racy, almost leafy, with lovely red berry notes too – loganberry in both stages of development, some blueberry, creamed spice, cinnamon, with super-ripe tannins ripe behind, again hardly noticeable, and a long, rich, intense finish. Drink 2035-2045+		
Cockburn's 2017	bottles - 6 per case	£240
<i>52% Touriga Nacional, 30% Touriga Franca, 10% Sousão, 8% Alicante Bouschet. 2,500 cases (8% of production).</i>		
Dense red black to the rim, opaque, with a nose of nutty, warm red and black fruits, leafy and fresh, mineral too, really intense and noticeably different again from the others. Super-fresh on the palate, racy with hints of dark chocolate and blackcurrant, some spice but not as marked as others, and slightly more classic in style, fresher and less brooding with a toasty grilled note behind. Drink 2034-2045+		
Quinta do Vesuvio 2017	bottles - 6 per case	£270
<i>35% Touriga Franca, 33% Touriga Nacional, 15% Sousão, 12% Alicante Bouschet, 5% Tinta Amarela. 1,200 cases (3% of production).</i>		
Deep dark and dense with a vibrant nose of feral black fruits, mineral and spiced, slightly earthy, with hints of raw cacao with red fruits behind and some ripe black cherry notes. Super-sweet on entry, rich and ripe, more like wine than port at this stage, mineral with loads of ripe blackberry and blackcurrant fruit, some fresh leafy notes with big ripe tannins behind, very different and more modern in style. Drink 2030-2045		
Quinta do Noval 2017	bottles - 6 per case	£335
<i>A blend of Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca, Tinto Cão, Sousão, Tinta Roriz; harvest from 21st August to 28th September. Less than 10% of production.</i>		
Dense red black to the rim with a nose of delicious stony black fruit, wild and exotic, ripe and intense, floral with walnut notes, really alluring. On the palate lovely big, smooth black fruit, no hard edges, beautiful expression – morello, damson, sloe – all building on the deep, brooding palate. On the finish it is rich and nutty again with a lovely freshness too, and it goes on and on. Drink 2040-2050		



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