

raising the bar

What's a widely-held misconception about Port?

That it's made from a single varietal. A Port is made from a blend of different grapes, such as Tinta Barroca, Tinta Roriz or Tempranillo, and Tinta Cao. It also ages longer than most other wines without losing its aromas. We have Ports that have been cellared for more than 100 years, and they are still drinkable.

What's the key difference between still wine and Port production?

During the fermentation process, we add brandy—it stops the fermentation, keeps the residual sugar, and increases the alcohol content. Thus, as it ages, the elements of the brandy and the grapes' sweetness become more integrated. When you compare a 10-year-old Tawny Port with a 20-year-old, you'd notice that the latter is lighter in colour, but its aromas are more layered with ripe fruits. You can say that as Port matures, it becomes reborn.

Port talk

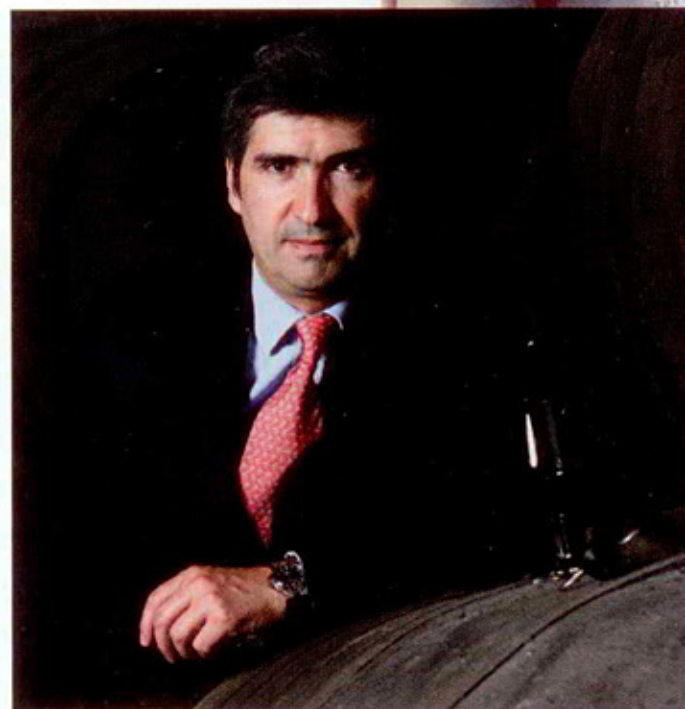
Why Pedro Silva Reis, president of Quinta de Ventozelo, a winery in Portugal's Douro region, thinks Chinese tea can help the enjoyment of Port.

What's a common mistake people make when serving Port?

It's important that it be served at 16°C to 18°C. In Asia, I have seen Port in the care of bartenders. I think sommeliers do a better job at looking after it, as they know how to suggest the right temperature and pairings, or the most suitable occasion to drink it. Bartenders have a tendency to just pour whatever they are asked to serve.

How long will a bottle of Port keep once it's opened?

You should not store it for more than three weeks. It won't turn to vinegar or become bad—it just gets slightly over-oxidised. But for vintage Port, it should be finished within three to five days after opening.



Tell us a few ways to enjoy this fortified wine.

The wine is used for sauces, such as making a reduction, but it can also be eaten with Charentais melons—a very popular pairing in France. It can also be used as an ingredient in making Bifé Marrare (a Portuguese staple of steak in cream sauce). Having Chinese tea alongside Port would also be useful, as the former cleanses the palate and dries your tastebuds so you wouldn't get tired of the sweetness of the wine.

Quinta de Ventozelo is available at Top Wines. Tel: 6468 3866