

Alentejo



WINES OF ALENTEJO

Unique by Nature.



WINES OF ALENTEJO UNIQUE BY NATURE

CVRA - COMISSÃO VITIVINÍCOLA REGIONAL ALENTEJANA

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The Alentejo

WINE REGION

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There is something profoundly invigorating and liberating about the Alentejo landscape: its endlessly open countryside, gently undulating plains, wide blue skies and distant horizons. The landscape mingles with the vines and cereal crops – an ever-changing canvas of colour: intensely green towards the end of winter, the colour of straw at the end of spring, and deep ochre during the final months of summer.

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History

All over the Alentejo there are archaeological markers suggesting that wine has been an important part of life up to the present day. Whilst it is not known exactly when wine and viticulture was introduced to the Alentejo, there is plenty of evidence that they were already part of the day-to-day life in the Alentejo by the time the Romans arrived in the south of Portugal.


It is thought that the Tartessians, an ancient civilisation based in the south of the Iberian Peninsula and heirs of the Andalusian Megalithic culture, were the first to domesticate vineyards and introduce winemaking principles in the Alentejo. The Tartessians were succeeded in the southern Iberian Peninsula by the Phoenicians, a civilisation of maritime traders.

However, the Greeks gradually came to dominate the region, and there is plenty of archaeological evidence of their presence throughout southern Portugal – including hundreds of amphorae (two-handled pitchers). By this time, growing and making wine had already been part of the Alentejo's culture for about two hundred years.

Historical evidence suggests that the first vine varieties in Portugal were of Mediterranean origin and were introduced in the Alentejo. But it was the Romans who really influenced and developed the viticultural and winemaking methods in the Alentejo. Even today, after over two thousand years, chattels of their civilisation continue to be seen in day-to-day tasks. One example is the *podão*, a traditional pruning knife, widely utilised until recently. However, the most enduring tradition left behind by the Romans, and still an integral part of the Alentejo winemaking process, is that of fermenting must and storing wine in *talhas de barro* - clay vessels, produced in all shapes and sizes.

This practice was introduced by the Roman civilisation in all their territories, but only in the Alentejo has it prevailed. Some of these clay vessels weigh up to a tonne, reach two metres in height, with a capacity of storing up to 2,000 litres of wine. The porous vessels are treated with *pês*, a natural pine resin, to prevent leakage.

At the beginning of the eighth century, the Moors invaded the Iberian Peninsula. The introduction of Islamic culture led to a gradual waning of Alentejo's relationship with wine. The years that followed saw frequent skirmishes throughout the peninsula, between Christians from the north and Muslims from the south. As a result, the wine culture remained almost absent in the southern



The wines of the Alentejo have, in common with the region itself, a rich, extensive and relatively unknown history: a long and turbulent history which alternated between periods of calm and storm, vigour and decline; where extensive periods of uncertainty were followed by cycles of enlightenment and vanguardism.



territories. It was only after the kingdom of Portugal was established that the culture of growing and making wine returned to the Alentejo, with the blessing of the royal family and the new religious orders.

By the sixteenth century, vines flourished as never before in the Alentejo with the production of the famous wines of Évora - the wines of Peramanca - as well as the whites from Beja, and the palhetes from Alvito, Viana and Vila de Frades. During the seventeenth century, Alentejo wines, together with those from Beira and Estremadura, were the most famous and renowned Portuguese wines. Unfortunately the War of Independence saw an end to this success. However, it was the creation of the Real Companhia Geral de Agricultura dos Vinhos do Douro - an organisation established by the Marquis of Pombal to protect Douro wines - that prompted the second great crisis for Alentejo wine. One of the measures put in place by the Real Companhia was to force the uprooting of vines in many regions, including the Alentejo. Consequently Alentejo wines were plunged into obscurity.

This challenging period only really came to an end in the mid-nineteenth century, with a campaign to cultivate heathland and reinstate agriculture in the region. A new generation of farmers installed themselves, and there was a revival of the vineyards. A new golden age for the Alentejo gradually emerged, and there was great excitement when a white wine from Quinta das Relíquias, located in Vidigueira, and presented by Count Ribeira Brava, won the Grand Medal of Honour at the Berlin Exhibition in 1888 – the major award at the event. Wines from Évora, Borba, Redondo and Reguengos also received honours at the same event. A few years later, in 1895, the first Social Winery (earlier coop) of Portugal was set up in Viana do Alentejo.

Unfortunately these glorious times were to come to an abrupt end. The phylloxera epidemic, followed by the first of the two world wars, successive economic crises, and a campaign to cultivate wheat and other cereal crops in the place of vines (making the Alentejo Portugal's "bread basket") all contributed to the decline of Alentejo wines. Vineyards were reduced to small plots surrounding the hillsides and commercial production diminished significantly.

It was under the patronage of the Junta Nacional do Vinho towards the end of the 1940s that Alentejo viticulture took its first, faltering steps to recovery. Bringing together several institutions related to the wine industry, and taking advantage of their synergies, this association established a spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance: a characteristic that remains one of the hallmarks of Alentejo wines today.

With the establishment of PROVA (Projeto de Viticultura do Alentejo) in 1997, the technical conditions required to implement a system of quality control were put in place. In 1983, ATEVA (Associação Técnica dos Viticultores do Alentejo) was established to promote vine growing in different regions within the Alentejo. The first Alentejo DOCs (Protected Designation of Origin) were regulated in 1988. Finally, in 1989, the CVRA (Comissão Vitivinícola Regional Alentejana) was set up to certify and regulate all Alentejo wines.

Alentejo

PDO*

* PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN

Cork trees and holm oaks delineate the horizon, symbolic of the region that occupies over a third of continental Portugal.

The distinctive and relatively flat Alentejo landscape, and the fact that there are very few real physical barriers to prevent condensation of the humidity coming in from the sea, means that the Atlantic influence on the region is not significant. However, the few surrounding hill and mountain ranges that do exist are of great importance, as they have an effect on the diverse growing conditions and characterise the different sub-regions of the Alentejo.

Alentejo wines, from all sub-regions, have some characteristics in common. They are all full-bodied, incredibly aromatic, well-rounded and smooth wines, which can be enjoyed young, or stored, in the knowledge that they will age with distinction.

PDO ALENTEJO SUB-REGIONS

1 Portalegre

2 Borba

3 Redondo

4 Reguengos

5 Évora

6 Vidigueira

7 Granja-Amareleja

8 Moura



The eight sub-regions of the “Alentejo” (PDO)

1 - PORTALEGRE

Of the eight Alentejo sub-regions, Portalegre stands out from the rest with its very unique nature. In most aspects –from terrain and soil, vines, altitude and age of the vines – it differs from the other sub-regions. The majority of the vineyards are found in the foothills of the Serra de São Mamede, with some planted on the steep slopes that peak at over 1,000 metres. The higher altitudes host a more moderate climate than in the rest of the Alentejo. The lower temperatures and higher levels of humidity yield fresh, elegant wines. The soil is predominantly granitic in origin, interspersed with small patches of schist in the lower zones. In the hills, vineyard ownership is very fragmented; consisting of a great number of small plots with very old vines, many over 70 years old. Grand Noir is one of the original, still prevailing, grape varieties planted in Portalegre.

2 - BORBA

Borba is the second largest sub-region of the Alentejo, stretching along an axis from Estremoz to Terrugem, and encompassing Orada, Vila Viçosa, Rio de Moinhos and Alandroal. The landscape of this sub-region is punctuated by massive marble outcrops that influence the viticulture and the character of the wines of this area. Substantial patches of red schist, appearing at random in the poor terrain, are the main divergence from the marble outcrops. Borba also has a unique microclimate which means it receives slightly above-average rainfall, and slightly lower than average levels of sunshine for the Alentejo region. This results in particularly fresh and elegant wines.

3 - REDONDO

The Serra da Ossa is one of the highest hill ranges in the Alentejo, with several peaks exceeding 600 metres in altitude. These hills define and demarcate the sub-region of Redondo, sheltering the vines

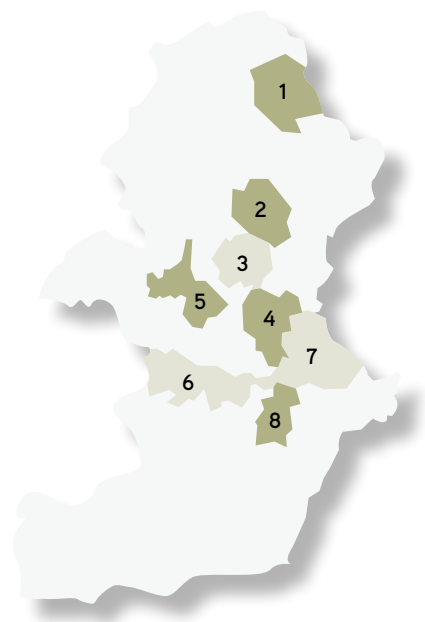
from the northerly and easterly winds, and contributing to fairly consistent cold, dry winters, offset by hot, sunny summers. Soils are generally heterogenic, but with a higher incidence of granite and schist outcrops on the gentle south-facing slopes.

4 - REGUENGOS

Reguengos is the largest of the Alentejo sub-regions, and has a dramatic landscape of poor, stony soil, scattered with a great number of rocky outcrops. The schistose soil and pronounced continental climate – cold winters and hot summers – have a strong influence on the viticulture in Reguengos, producing powerful and full-bodied wines, with excellent ageing potential. In spite of the sub-region's overall size, vineyard ownership in Reguengos is very fragmented; the average area of the plots tending to be smaller than the traditional Alentejo average. Some of the oldest vineyards of the Alentejo are found in this sub-region.

5 - ÉVORA

Évora is considered to be the birthplace of the region's most coveted wines. By the end of the nineteenth century it was one of the most prominent wine sub-regions in Portugal. However, the phylloxera epidemic, followed by the campaign





to cultivate wheat in the early twentieth century resulted in a decline in wine production. It was not until the late 1980s, that Évora, the regional capital of central Alentejo, saw a renaissance in wine production. The hot, dry landscape is dominated by brown Mediterranean soil and produces some of the Alentejo's most prestigious wines.

6 - VIDIGUEIRA

The Vidigueira fault, a natural landmark separating the Alto (upper) Alentejo from the Baixo (lower) Alentejo, gives its name to the most southern of the Alentejo sub-regions. Extending from east to west, the escarpment of the Vidigueira fault imparts a particular anomaly to the climate: in spite of being the most southern sub-region, it has the mildest climate. The soil is generally infertile, mainly of granitic and schistose origin. Vidigueira is home to the Tinta Grossa, which some suggest is a heteronym for Tinta Barroca. Tinta Grossa is one of the most mysterious grape varieties of the Alentejo. Vidigueira, notwithstanding its southerly location, took centre stage in the production of Alentejo white wines for many years - this largely due to the moderate climate that this sub-region enjoys.

7 - GRANJA-AMARELEJA

The Granja-Amareleja sub-region lies in the area surrounding the town of Mourão, bordering Spain in the east. This sub-region has one of the most arid and inhospitable climates in Portugal. Poor soils consisting of clay and schist, as well as a thin topsoil layer with low organic content, and a lack of water, give very low grape yields. These extreme conditions bring forth a pronounced wine character. Scorching, dry summers result in early ripening of the grapes, which in turn produce warm, smooth wines with high alcohol content. The Moreto grape variety has adapted particularly well to the harsh conditions of Granja-Amareleja, and is considered one of the most typical grape varieties of the sub-region.

8 - MOURA

The climate here has a strong continental influence, with huge temperature variations: cold, harsh winters and long, sizzling, dry summers. The soils are exceptionally poor, dominated by clay and limestone and only a thin layer of topsoil. It is hard and inhospitable for the vines, but with good water retention properties. The Castelão grape variety dominates in the sub-region, having adapted perfectly to the extreme and challenging climate. Moura wines are typically warm and soft, with correspondingly high alcohol levels.

“Alentejano”

(PGI)*

* PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION

The Alentejo is divided up into three administrative districts – Beja, Évora and Portalegre, which together define the natural boundaries of Vinho Regional Alentejano (PGI).

In spite of geographical variations within the region, a multitude of grape varieties and heterogeneous soil types – scattered with outcrops of clay, schist, granite, gravel and limestone– there are some traits common to all the wines of the great Alentejo plain. Some of those common traits are the full palate; solid structure and smoothness of the wines; and their huge, plump and seductive fruit. More importantly, all of them are typical characteristics of the wine, appearing vintage after vintage.

Alentejano PGI wine is subject to more flexible rules than those of the eight PDO sub-regions, and enjoys a greater autonomy in the choice of grape varieties, including the growing of some non- Portuguese grape varieties alongside traditional Alentejo varieties. This greater autonomy has been embraced enthusiastically by the industry, not only by producers whose vineyards lie outside the eight designated sub-regions, but also by a significant number of classic and well-known wine producers.

All these conditions form the bases of the enviable dynamism, consistency and unmatched quality of Alentejano PGI.







The Vineyard

and grape varieties



The grapevine is a climbing plant with a relatively long life span. Each grape variety has distinctive foliage, and shape and size of bunches and grapes. In turn the musts are equally distinguishable, producing wines with very individual characteristics, flavours and aromas. Although the wines rarely smell or taste of grapes, the character and style of each wine, whether a single-variety wine or a blend, are very much determined by the grapes used to make it.

There are over 4,000 varieties of grapes identified and catalogued globally. Portugal ranks as the country with the second largest number of indigenous grape varieties, not found in other parts of the world. In addition to the large number of indigenous grape varieties found in the Alentejo, which impart their strong regional distinctive character to the wines and which are extremely well adapted to the geography and climate of the Alentejo, many non-indigenous varieties have been introduced in recent years. These new varieties add widely recognised value, and reinforce the Alentejo's reputation as a leading winegrowing region.

Red Grape

Varieties

1 ALFROCHEIRO

The low genetic variability of this variety suggests that it is a relatively new species, or fairly recently introduced in Portugal. Its origins are largely unknown, but for some time it was known as 'Tinta Francesa de Viseu'. Although its natural home is the Dão region, Alfrocheiro is becoming increasingly popular in the south, particularly in the Alentejo. Alfrocheiro is a fertile and productive grape variety, yielding richly coloured wines with a noteworthy balance between alcohol, tannins and acidity. It is the Alfrocheiro's extraordinary ability to retain a naturally high acidity, in combination with its high sugar levels, which has made it such a popular grape variety in the Alentejo. Its richness of colour compounds has earned this variety the nickname Alfrocheiro Preto (Black Alfrocheiro). Unfortunately the Alfrocheiro is susceptible to disease, in particular oidium, grey rot and excoriosis, which may explain the relatively low popularity of this grape variety. **In terms of aroma, Alfrocheiro delivers berry fruits, especially blackberry and ripe wild strawberry.** It provides firm, yet fine and delicate tannins that add structure to the wine. Alfrocheiro is a fundamental and key component of blended wines.

2 ALICANTE BOUSCHET

Alicante Bouschet's natural home in Portugal has always been the Alentejo. In spite of not formally being recognised as an indigenous Portuguese grape variety, the Alicante Bouschet is so deeply rooted in the Alentejo's wine-making tradition that it is often assumed to be a native species. In fact, it is a displaced variety; the product of a cross between the French varieties Petit Bouschet and Grenache. It is one of the rare teinturier grape varieties (grapes whose flesh and juice is red in

colour) producing deeply coloured wines. Because of this it is often referred to, unofficially, as 'Tinta de Escrever' (writing ink). Its many characteristics include good structure, robustness, tannins and colour - lots of colour. On the rare occasion when it is bottled as a single-varietal wine, it substantiates its reputation as a rustic and well-structured grape variety, able to produce extraordinary and tenacious wines. Perfect in a blend; it boosts colour, vigour and volume - as can be seen in so many Alentejo wines. **The aromas it evokes are of forest fruit, cocoa, olives and vegetal notes.** The Alicante Bouschet is unquestionably the most Portuguese non-native grape variety in Portugal.

3 ARAGONEZ

This Iberian grape variety par excellence is one of the few planted and valued on both sides of the border. It most likely originated in Rioja, where it is known as Tempranillo. This nickname stems from the Spanish word for 'early' (temprana), reflecting the fact that this grape variety ripens relatively early in the season, avoiding the first rains of the equinox. In Portugal it commonly bears the name Aragonez, but is also known as Tinta Roriz in the Dão and the Douro. In Estremadura it has earned the name Abundante (abundant) due to the fact that the vine is very vigorous and productive. The Aragonez has a short life cycle, with a late bud-burst, protecting it from spring frosts. In a hot and dry climate, and grown in sandy or clay-limestone soils, it will produce wines with a perfect combination of vigour and elegance, fruit and spice. As Aragonez tends to produce **wines with a relatively low level of acidity**, it is best blended with other Alentejo grape varieties, such as Trincadeira and Alicante Bouschet.



4 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Cabernet Sauvignon is the most international of all French grape varieties, cultivated in wine-producing countries all over the world. It has found its own space and particular style in the Alentejo, one of the few regions in Portugal where it can ripen to perfection. The Cabernet Sauvignon is a grape variety that is commonly used to enhance wines. It has concentrated colour and a thick skin, adding spice to blends, and giving them body

and consistency. The resulting wines are well-balanced, aromatic, fruity and spicy. In the Alentejo it is seldom bottled as a single-varietal wine; used instead to give structure to many regional Alentejo wines, although its presence is almost always in minor proportions of the final blend. Valued for its versatility, resilience and poise, it delivers wines which can age gracefully and reliably.

Red Grape

Varieties

5 CASTELÃO

This grape variety is sometimes known as Periquita, and also as João Santarém, Trincadeira (or Trincadeiro) and Tinta Merousa in the Douro. To add to the confusion, it bears no relation to Castelão Nacional (also known as Camarate). For decades, it was the most widely planted red grape variety in Portugal, including in the Alentejo, being one of the recommended grape varieties in all eight Alentejo sub-regions. These days Castelão is in real decline. It is absent from most new vineyards where other grape varieties have taken its place. In some places Castelão has been uprooted, or its rootstocks grafted with other varieties on the few old vines that still exist. *In carefully controlled, mature vineyards, where yields are deliberately kept low, Castelão can produce well-structured, fruity wines, with highlights of currants, preserved plums, wild berries and hints of game.* Normally acidic, with prominent tannins, the wines are rustic and sometimes aggressive in character – qualities that Castelão wines cannot easily avoid. Good Castelão wines have excellent ageing potential.

6 SYRAH

Syrah is the non-indigenous grape variety that has adapted most successfully to the diverse climate of the Alentejo. It has adjusted well to the scorching hot summers, the incessantly long hours of intense sunshine and extreme temperatures. Grown in warm, poor soils, Syrah produces full-bodied, robust wines: hot, powerful, fruity, and frequently spicy – characteristics more often attributed to New World wines. Syrah produces early maturing wines that can be enjoyed young, when they are smooth and inviting, although the sometimes can have great potential for

ageing. Syrah is seldom bottled as a single-varietal wine, but small amounts are used in many of the most prestigious wines of the Alentejo.

7 TOURIGA NACIONAL

If ever an indigenous grape variety was selected to represent Portuguese wines, Touriga Nacional would be the one flying the flag! This grape variety from northern Portugal flourished for many generations in the Dão and Douro regions, up until the arrival of the devastating phylloxera epidemic. From its position as the most prominent of Portuguese wines it plunged into disgrace, as a result of its low yields and recurring millerandage (a condition where grapes within a single bunch vary greatly in size, and more importantly, rate of maturity). Attempts to recuperate and select the best clones of Touriga Nacional have reinstated it as the undisputable star of Portuguese viticulture. Nowadays Touriga Nacional is the most renowned Portuguese grape variety, both in Portugal and elsewhere. The Dão and Douro regions, where it is also known as Preto Mortágua, Mortágua, Tourigo Antigo and Tourigo, have both claimed Touriga Nacional as their own. It is a thick-skinned grape that gives rise to a deep and concentrated colour in the wines, but it is the depth of its primary aromas that characterises the variety. *They can be floral, fruity, sometimes with hints of citrus; but they are always powerful and explosive.* It is often best when blended with other varieties, bringing an unmistakable aromatic richness to wines.

8 TRINCADEIRA

Trincadeira goes under several monikers throughout Portugal, including Trincadeira Preta, Tinta Amarela,



Espadeiro, Crato Preto, Preto Martinho, Mortágua and Rabo de Ovelha Tinto. It is a temperamental variety - either loved or hated by growers - but is particularly well suited to the hottest wine-growing regions of Portugal. It grows vigorously and has to be carefully monitored to keep yields under control. Trincadeira produces irregular and unpredictable yields, but they tend to be high. The bunches are compact and susceptible to rot, affirming Trincadeira's preference for poor soil and dry, hot weather. Trincadeira is one of the grape varieties best adapted to the bone-dry

Alentejo. It produces aromatic and fruity wines, which tend to be floral in character, often with vegetal hints when the grapes have not reached full ripeness. One of its most distinctive characteristics is its high natural acidity - a highly desirable quality in the hot Alentejo region. Trincadeira has traditionally been blended with the Aragonez grape variety, forming one of the most complementary and successful partnerships in the Alentejo. In spite of being a challenging and temperamental grape variety, it has proved indispensable to many Alentejo wines.

White Grape

Varieties

1 ANTÃO VAZ

Antão Vaz is a grape variety from the Alentejo that comes into its own in the Vidigueira and Évora sub-regions. Regarded as complex and aromatic, Antão Vaz has attained star status in the Alentejo. It is highly esteemed by wine-growers and wine-makers and considered to be the most important Alentejo's white grape varieties. Antão Vaz has adapted particularly well to the hot Alentejo climate and its sun-drenched vineyards, and is highly resistant to drought and disease. It can be relied upon to produce consistently high yields of grapes, with bunches that ripen evenly throughout. Antão Vaz produces aromatic, well-structured, robust and full-bodied wines. However, it can lack somewhat in acidity – a result of the often adversely hot conditions in which it is grown. Consequently, it is often blended with Roupeiro and Arinto, both of which are guaranteed to bring a sharper natural acidity to the final wine. If harvested early, Antão Vaz delivers wines with a vibrant acidity, exotic aromas and a firm palate. When the grapes are left on the vine a little longer, wines tend to have high alcohol contents and fragrant aromas, making Antão Vaz wines ideal candidates for ageing in new oak barrels. *Antão Vaz is often bottled as a single-varietal wine, typically presenting overwhelming aromas of ripe tropical fruit, tangerine peel and subtle mineral hints.*

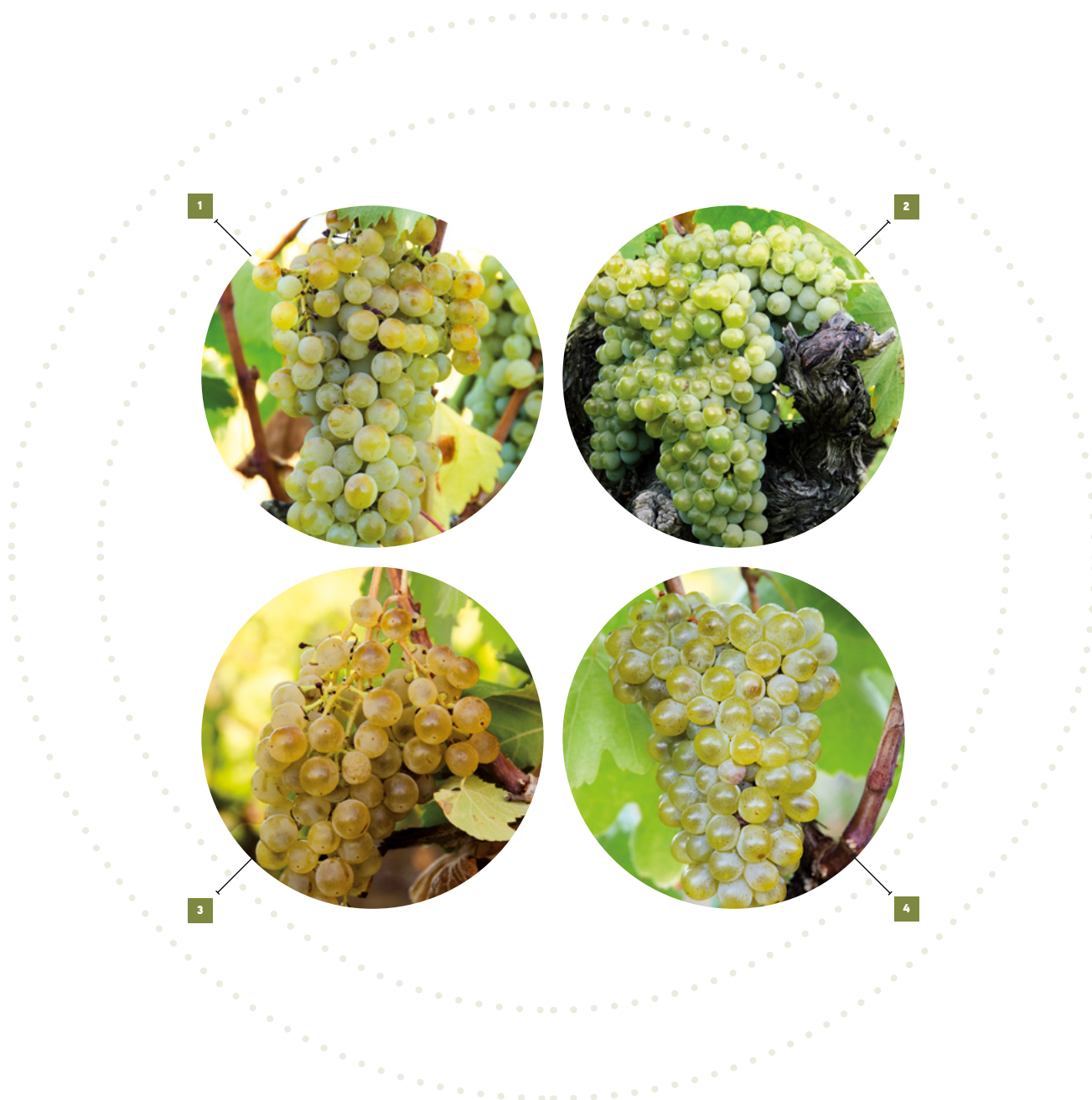
2 ARINTO

Due to its versatility, the Arinto grape variety has spread throughout most of Portugal, and assumed a number of different aliases along the way: it is also known as Pedernã, Pé de Perdiz Branco Chapeludo, Cerceal, Azal Espanhol, Azal Galego and Branco Espanhol. Arinto produces

crisp, vibrant wines, with high natural acidity and mineral profile – fresh wines with good ageing potential. Uncompromising acidity is Arinto's calling card, and the reason for its reputation as the best blending variety. It is a variety of great importance in the Alentejo, as it adds freshness and acidity to the white wines of the region. *Although aromatically restrained, with little exuberance or intensity of its own, it still imparts aromas of green apple, lemon and lime, alongside a vegetal and mineral character, which at times can be quite pungent.* Under certain conditions it can adopt a tropical quality, with exotic aromas of passion-fruit. Arinto benefits from extensive maceration and a long fermentation at low temperature. It can also be further enhanced by barrel fermentation.

3 FERNÃO PIRES

Fernão Pires is the most widely planted white grape variety in Portugal. It is grown throughout all Portuguese winegrowing regions and has gradually taken a stronger hold in the Alentejo. It is a variety that divides opinion among winemakers and growers. Supporters praise its typicity and vivid aromas, whereas critics draw attention to its plainness on the palate. However, given its high productivity, versatility, early maturation and bountiful aromas, Fernão Pires continues to flourish and to impart its personality on the white wine arena. Its versatility allows it to be bottled as a varietal wine or in blends; to be made into sparkling wine; or even to be used in late harvest wines. *Generally speaking, Fernão Pires produces fragrant and extremely aromatic wines, with a charmingly eloquent perfume.* However, they can be low in acidity and sometimes tend to



develop early oxidation, resulting in relatively flat and heavy wines. Fernão Pires wines should be enjoyed young, when they exhibit strong notes of lime, lemon, lemon-grass, lime-tree blossom, basil, roses, tangerines and orange blossom.

4 GOUVEIO

Originally from the north, the Gouveio grape variety is now cultivated throughout the Portuguese mainland. For many years this variety was confused

with the Verdelho grape variety, as they are visually very similar, a misconception that persisted for decades. Therefore, at the beginning of this century, it was forced to change its name to Gouveio, as it bears no relation to the 'true' Verdelho grape variety, from Madeira. The Gouveio grape variety is also known as Gouveio Estimado, Gouveio Real, Gouveio Roxo (pink variety) and Gouveio Preto (red variety). The occurrence of mutations that originated the pink and the red version of this

White Grape

Varieties

grape variety indicate the profound instability and genetic variability of the Gouveio. It is a vigorous variety that ripens relatively early and gives yields of medium size. It is sensitive to powdery mildew and late rainfall. Because of its natural richness in acids, producing fresh lively wines, Gouveio has been rapidly and widely adopted throughout the Alentejo. *Generally its wines are quite rich in alcohol, with a firm acidity and a creamy and full-bodied palate, delivering fresh citric aromas and notes of apple, peach and anise.* Typically elegant and rich in glycerol, Gouveio wines have a great ageing potential.

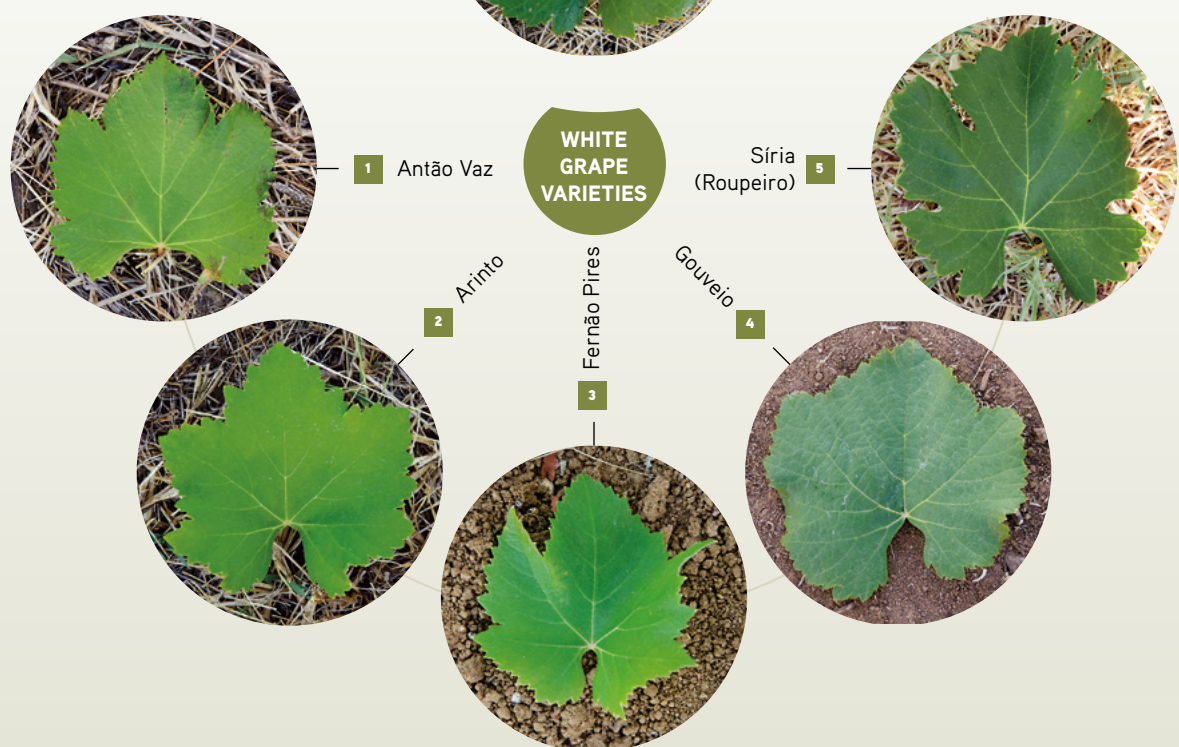
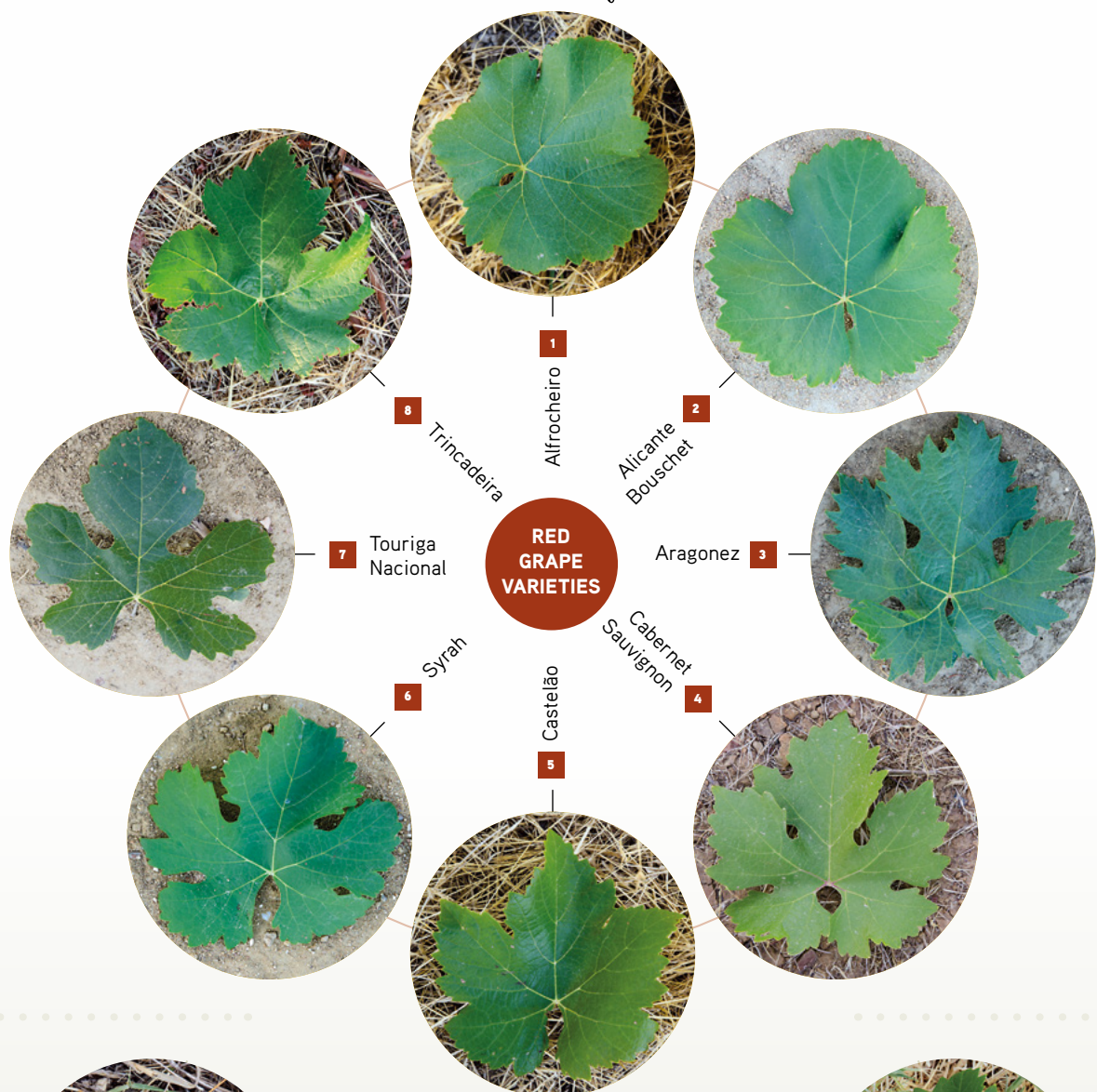
5 SÍRIA (ROUPEIRO)

This variety is a grape of extremes. Little is known about its origins, but its vast genetic variability suggests that it has a long history in Portugal. The geographical distribution of this variety is peculiar, extending from the north to the south in a

narrow strip along the Spanish border. This grape variety has an abundance of alternative names, including Roupeiro, Alvadourão, Crato Branco, Malvasia Grossa, Códaga, Alva and Dona Branca. But it is best known as Roupeiro, the name it was given in the Alentejo, where it is still one of the most widely planted white grape varieties. In the 1980s Roupeiro was considered to be the most representative of all of the Alentejo white grape varieties, as well as the most promising and relevant to the region - the recommended variety for almost all of the sub-regions. *Roupeiro was highly regarded for its high yields and its exciting primary aromas: fragrant and seductive citrus notes, primarily of orange and lemon, and hints of peach, melon, bay leaf and wild flowers.* However, Roupeiro critics point out that the wine's initial aromatic exuberance is quickly lost, becoming rather neutral after some months in bottle.



Leaf





Viticulture

Season by Season



SPRING

The first indication that there will be a harvest is when the vines start to shoot, at the end of their long hibernation. The soil between the lines of the vines is trimmed and the shoots are trained along the trellis wires. There is some apprehension in the vineyard, due to the risk of early spring frosts. In the winery, wines are monitored - the barrels are topped up and their contents analysed. Some wines are finally bottled, the categorising of young wines begins, and final blends are decided upon.



SUMMER

Temperatures rise, flowering starts, and the vines begin to grow rapidly. At this time of year, the care of the vines is the one that requires enormous amounts of manpower and time. *Véraison* takes place in mid-summer - this is signalled by a change of colour in the grapes' skins and gives an indication as to when the harvest might take place. In the winery, it is time to bottle any remaining lots of wine, and to give the winery a final clean-up before the upcoming harvest. The inventory is checked and requisitioning is carried out. All other final preparations are seen to.



AUTUMN

It is harvest time; time for maturation controls, and prayers go out for good weather. Once ripe, the grapes are harvested manually or mechanically, and the winery buzzes with activity as masses of grapes arrive in a very short space of time. Presses start working and the first fermentations saturate the winery air with their aromas, and mosquitoes. The management of the available vats is a complex operation, and for over a month no-one stops to rest in the winery.



WINTER

The vines become dormant in winter; a time for rest and recuperation after a long production cycle. It is the season when pruning is carried out - one of the most important, but tiring, tasks in the viticultural year. The vine trellising system is also prepared for the next season. In the winery, wines maturing in barrels are monitored; every single detail noted. Sedimentation and racking take place, as well as wine bottling.



Wines of Alentejo

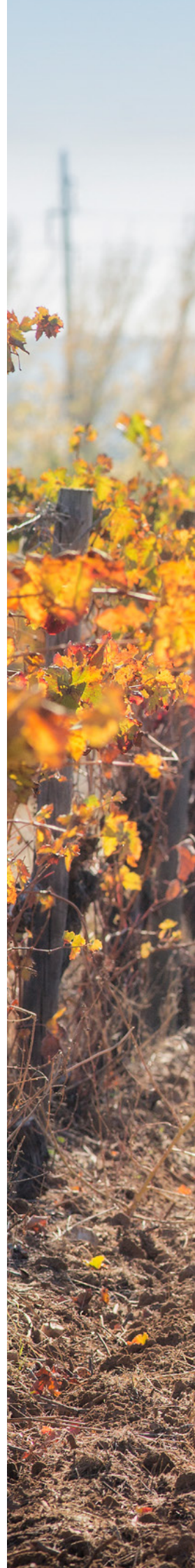
Sustainability Program (WASP)

Sustainability is not a trend. It is the new paradigm of the 21st century.

Exponential and continuous economic growth is impossible, natural resources are not infinite and we only have one planet on which to live. Companies and people who don't take these facts into account will gradually become irrelevant and naturally overlooked by consumers and possibly by new international politics.


Having sustainable production in viticulture means that it needs to be economically viable, attentive to the environment and the specific needs and concerns of our society. In May 2015, the CVRA launched the Wines of Alentejo Sustainability Program. The use of natural resources, and most particularly of drinkable water, is one of our main concerns. The good practices promoted by this program are as simple as how to set up a flow meter to control the consumption of water or how to use the cover cropping as a way to increase the quality of the soil, the water holding capacity, the soil organic matter or the capture of carbon dioxide. The use of sheep, geese and chickens is recommended in the fight against weeds or pests. Fighting climate change also means reducing the use of herbicides and pesticides, which can be toxic to non-target plants and animals.

The program promotes recycling and dematerialization of processes as well as the use of more sustainable products such as cork stoppers, barrels and other certified forest materials. It also encourages education amongst employees, to increase the understanding that all the efforts their companies make towards sustainability go far beyond the vines and the winery: it needs to be an integral part of their lives when they go back home. This will help to raise awareness of how their actions impact on their lives in an indirect and positive way.



The program has already contributed to reducing energy consumption by 30% and water consumption by 20% for several producers, merely by implementing these good practices. Recycling habits and the encouragement of a circular economy are highly promoted with 38% of WASP's members converting their organic waste into fertilizer for the fields.



A person wearing a white shirt is holding a wine glass filled with red wine. In the foreground, another wine glass filled with red wine is visible, held by a hand. The background is slightly blurred, showing the person's torso and the wine glass they are holding.

In the Portalegre, Évora and Beja districts of the Alentejo region, you will easily find villages loaded with history, whitewashed houses and this fantastic feeling of peace and balance which can only be offered by meals accompanied with an Alentejo wine.

Wine Tourism



Wine routes have become the most visible form of wine tourism in Portugal, and are particularly well represented in the Alentejo. These routes cover a total of 70 wineries, all of them offering a range of visitor experiences; from simple tours of the vineyard and winery, to hosting wine tastings and serving meals. Some of these wineries also include rural hotels, providing the visitor with an opportunity to enjoy the charm and tranquility of the Alentejo countryside.

The routes criss-cross the Alentejo, divulging the rich diversity of this wine region. In the Portalegre district, the route focuses on the producers and countryside of the northern Alentejo, embracing the bleak hillsides of the Serra de São Mamede, the highest peak south of the river Tejo (Tagus).

In the district of Évora (the city of Évora is a World Heritage Site), the route runs through the sub-regions of Borba, Évora, Redondo and Reguengos, in the heart of the Alentejo wine region. To the south, in the Beja district, the route winds its way through the sub-regions of Granja-Amareleja, Moura and Vidigueira, revealing a calm and tranquil Alentejo.

Alentejo

Gastronomy

The Alentejo cuisine is one of the richest and original in Portugal. It has developed as result of the isolation and poverty that the region has endured, requiring a great deal of creativity in the use of limited available natural resources.

Alentejo gastronomy, as a rule, makes use of seasonal and local produce, including some wild plant species such as asparagus, purslane, river mint, pennyroyal and coriander, as well as garlic, oregano, tomatoes, chick peas and grains. Cereal grains are at the core of the traditional Alentejo diet. The bread, along with olive oil, is used as a base for soup - a staple dish in the local gastronomy. To complete the region's cuisine - lamb; a mandatory ingredient in many of the most emblematic Alentejo dishes. The flocks of sheep that graze across the Alentejo hillsides supply the milk from which some of the most outstanding cheeses of Portugal are made; such as Serpa, Nisa and Évora.

The Alentejo pig breed (*porco preto* – black pig) is the most renowned ingredient in the gastronomy of the region. Foraging freely across the countryside - feeding on acorns of the cork tree and holm oaks - the meat takes on an unrivalled flavour and texture. It is a flavour that is unmistakable; be it in the *plumas* or *secretos* (pork shoulder), *carne do alguidar* (fried marinated pork meat), in smoked pork products, such as *paio* and *paiola* (traditional sausages), or in *pata negra* ham.

The list of Alentejo products with Protected Designation of Origin (DOP) is endless. It includes DOPs such as *Ameixa d'Elvas* (plum), *Azeite de Moura*, *Azeites do Norte Alentejano* and *Azeites do Alentejo Interior* (olive oils), *Azeitonas de Elvas* and *Azeitonas de Campo Maior* (olives), *Borrego do Nordeste* and *Borrego do Baixo Alentejo* (mutton), *Cabrito do Alentejo*, *Cabra do Alentejo* and *Chibo do Alentejo* (goat meat), *Cacholeira Branca de Portalegre* (sausage), *Carne Alentejana* (veal), *Carne de Porco Alentejano* (pork), *Castanha de Marvão* (chestnuts) and *Cereja de São Julião* (cherries) amongst others. The list goes on, with an almost infinite collection of local produce awarded Protected Designation of Origin and Geographical Indication.

To round off a meal in the Alentejo perfectly, one could have some of the famous convent sweets and pastries. These sweets and pastries, which were created in convents and monasteries (hence their name), are made with numerous egg yolks and vast amounts of sugar. Often they also include other ingredients; commonly almonds or cinnamon. Some of them have noble names; such as *bolo real* (royal cake) from Convento do Paraíso de Évora, *sopa real* (royal soup), *manjar celeste* (heavenly sweet) and the sweets and desserts from Convento de Santa Clara; and others more mundane names like *bolo podre* (rotten cake), *toucinho rançoso* (rancid bacon), or *encharcada* (soaked pudding).



Wine Grapes used in

Wines of Alentejo

blends





AUTHORISED AND CERTIFIED ALENTEJO PDO AND ALENTEJANO PGI PRODUCTS:

- Still wine – white, red and rosé;
- Sparkling wine – white, red and rosé;
- Fortified wine – white and red;
- Pomace Spirit (*Bagaceira*);
- Grape Spirit

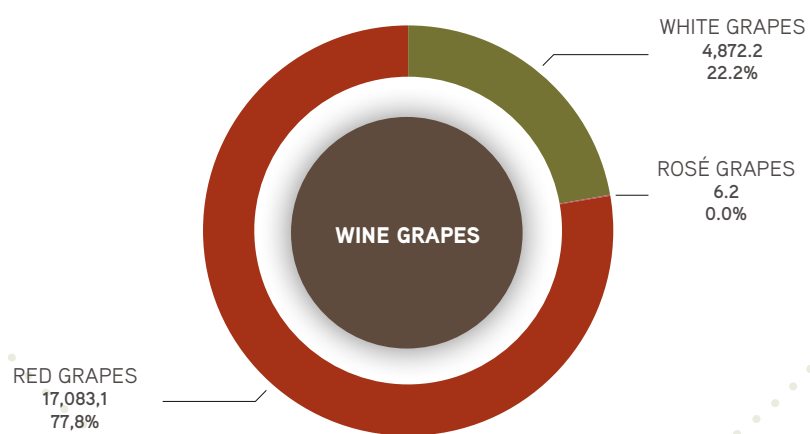
1. ALENTEJO PDO - PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN

Maximum authorised yield per hectare: 8,500 kg (red wine) and 10,000 kg (white wine).

2. ALENTEJANO PGI - PROTECTED GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION

Maximum authorised yield per hectare: 15,000 kg (red and white wine).

TOTAL AREA OF VINE: = 21.961,5 ha



■ Mandatory grapes, which must represent - either individually or in a blend - a minimum of 75% of the final blend used in Alentejo PDO wine products.

■ Wine grapes that may be used in Alentejo PDO wine products and which must represent - either individually or in a blend - no more than 25% of the final blend.

■ Wine grapes that have been authorised to produce only Alentejano PGI wines since 2018.

WINE GRAPES		AREA (ha)	PERCENTAGE	
TINTAS		17,083.1	100.0%	Σ %
1	■ Aragonez	4,243.7	24.8%	94.0%
2	■ Trincadeira	3,029.5	17.7%	
3	■ Alicante Bouschet	2,531.2	14.8%	
4	■ Syrah	1,980.6	11.6%	
5	■ Touriga Nacional	1,305.3	7.6%	
6	■ Castelão	1,016.4	5.9%	
7	■ Cabernet Sauvignon	838.7	4.9%	
8	■ Touriga Franca	409.1	2.4%	
9	■ Alfrocheiro	398.1	2.3%	
10	■ Moreto	298.7	1.7%	
11	■ Petit Verdot	290.1	1.7%	5.2%
12	■ Tinta Caiada	147.3	0.9%	
13	■ Merlot	110.6	0.6%	
14	■ Petit Syrah	97.3	0.6%	
15	■ Tinta Grossa	57.8	0.3%	
16	■ Carignan	55.9	0.3%	
17	■ Tinta Miúda	45.2	0.3%	
18	■ Tannat	32.3	0.2%	
19	■ Grand Noir	27.2	0.2%	
20	■ Caladoc	22.3	0.1%	
21	■ Tinto Cão	22.2	0.1%	0.8%
22	■ Pinot Noir	22.1	0.1%	
23	■ Baga	21.6	0.1%	
24	■ Tinta Barroca	17.4	0.1%	
25	■ Grenache	15.9	0.1%	
26	■ Sangiovese	13.1	0.1%	
27	■ Manteúdo Preto	7.5	0.0%	
28	■ Tinta Carvalha	4.0	0.0%	
29	■ Zinfandel	3.4	0.0%	
30	■ Cinsaut	2.5	0.0%	
31	■ Nero D'Avola	1.2	0.0%	
32	■ Corropio	0.9	0.0%	
Authorised since 2018		14.0		0.1%
33	■ Sousão	9.5	0.1%	
34	■ Carmenère	2.4	0.0%	
35	■ Cabernet Franc	1.3	0.0%	
36	■ Marselan	0.8	0.0%	
37	■ Monvedro	0.0	0.0%	
38	■ Camarate	0.0	0.0%	
ROSÉ GRAPES		6.2	100.0%	Σ %
1	■ Gerwurztraminer	3.2	51.6%	100.0%
2	■ Pinot Gris	3.0	48.4%	

Note: All the authorized varieties for Alentejo PDO wine products, may be used for Alentejano PGI in any percentage.

WINE GRAPES		AREA (ha)	PERCENTAGE	
BRANCAS		4,872.2	100.0%	Σ %
1	■ Antão Vaz	1,251.2	25.7%	86.0%
2	■ Síria (Roupeiro)	872.4	17.9%	
3	■ Arinto	776.5	15.9%	
4	■ Rabo de Ovelha	265.4	5.4%	
5	■ Fernão Pires	261.2	5.4%	
6	■ Verdelho	243.2	5.0%	
7	■ Gouveio	139.2	2.9%	
8	■ Alvarinho	137.1	2.8%	
9	■ Viognier	133.9	2.7%	
10	■ Manteúdo	108.6	2.2%	
11	■ Sauvignon Blanc	82.6	1.7%	12.0%
12	■ Diagalves	81.1	1.7%	
13	■ Viosinho	74.1	1.5%	
14	■ Perrum	72.2	1.5%	
15	■ Alicante Branco	69.0	1.4%	
16	■ Chardonnay	63.5	1.3%	
17	■ Moscatel Graúdo	43.7	0.9%	
18	■ Semillon	43.0	0.9%	
19	■ Encruzado	28.9	0.6%	
20	■ Trincadeira das Pratas	28.8	0.6%	
21	■ Marsanne	17.7	0.4%	1.8%
22	■ Vermentino	10.6	0.2%	
23	■ Petit Maseng	10.0	0.2%	
24	■ Riesling	9.4	0.2%	
25	■ Roussanne	7.5	0.2%	
26	■ Tália	7.4	0.2%	
27	■ Mourisco Branco	6.2	0.1%	
28	■ Malvasia Fina	5.0	0.1%	
29	■ Larião	4.3	0.1%	
30	■ Tamez	3.8	0.1%	
31	■ Malvasia Rei (Assario)	3.5	0.1%	
32	■ Chasselas	1.4	0.0%	
33	■ Sercial	1.2	0.0%	
34	■ Bical	1.0	0.0%	
Authorised since 2018		7.6		0.2%
35	■ Chenin	3.7	0.1%	
36	■ Loureiro	2.2	0.0%	
37	■ Rabigato	1.7	0.0%	
38	■ Cercial	0.0	0.0%	
39	■ Marvasia	0.0	0.0%	
40	■ Azal	0.0	0.0%	
41	■ Galego Dourado	0.0	0.0%	
42	■ Verdejo	0.0	0.0%	

Facts & Figures

(2018)

NUMBER OF BUSINESSES

368

Most are family businesses,
directly managed by family
members.

PRODUCTION BY WINE TYPE

78.1%
RED



20.5%
WHITE



1.4%
ROSÉ



AVERAGE PRODUCTION PER HECTARE

7,626kg



TOTAL VINEYARD AREA

21,961
HA

TOTAL VOLUME OF EXPORTS (<2 LITRES)

18 million
LITRES

TOTAL WINE PRODUCTION

107
million

LITRES



In 2018
Wines of Alentejo
price per litre was:

3.33 €
litre



TOTAL APPROVED AREA OF VINE FOR

ALENTEJO PDO

15,985

HA

ALENTEJANO PGI

5,976

HA



37%*



Market share of
Wines of Alentejo in
volume in Portugal:

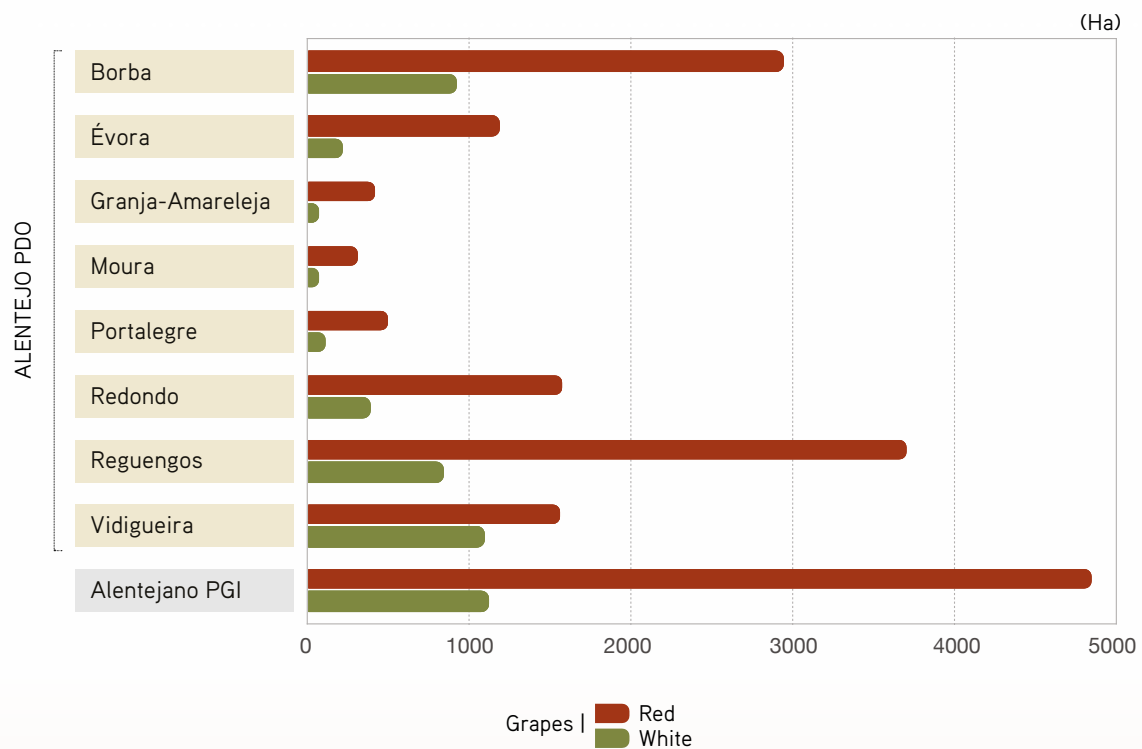
*Source: Nielsen

When their
Market share
in value was:

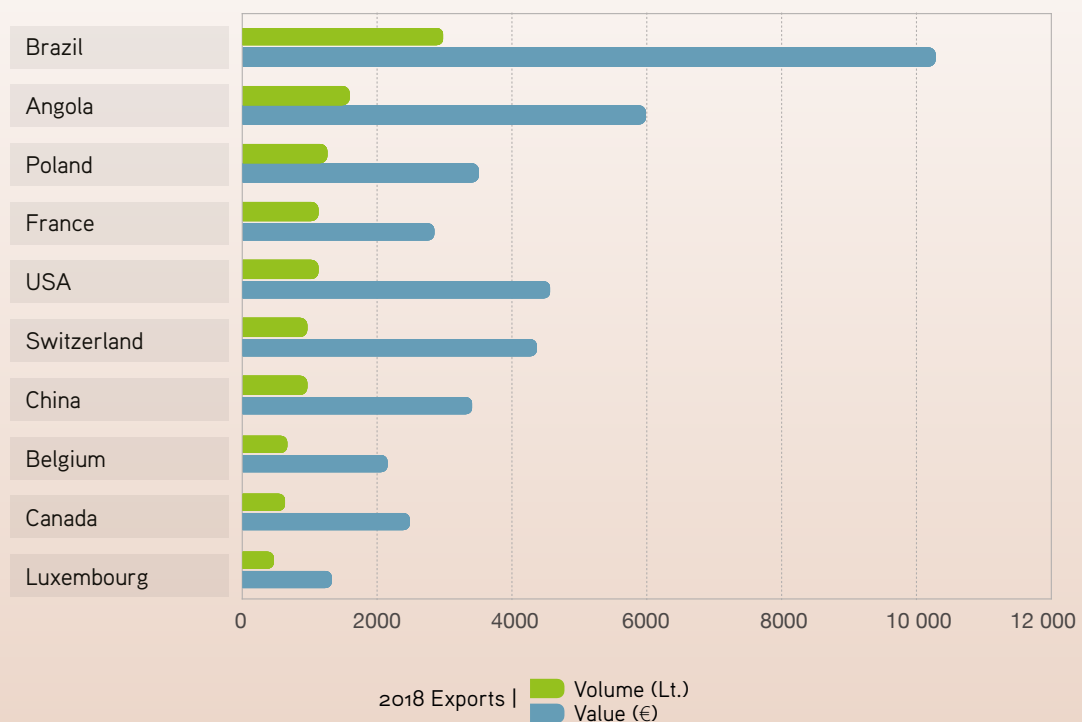


40%

APPROVED AREA OF VINE FOR ALENTEJO PDO AND ALENTEJANO PGI



TOP 10 WINES OF ALENTEJO EXPORTS





Guarantee

of origin



The Comissão Vitivinícola Regional Alentejana (CVRA) – Alentejo Regional Winegrowing Commission - was created in 1989 as a privately run organisation, with the specific objective of certifying Alentejo PDO and Alentejano PGI wines. It was certified by the Instituto Português de Acreditação (IPAC) in 2010, under the NP EN ISO/IEC 17065 standards, as an organisation authorised to carry out wine product accreditations.

All producers in the region seeking to use the Protected Designation of Origin (DOC Alentejo) or the Protected Geographical Indication (Vinho Regional Alentejano) must obtain certification of their products by the CVRA. This can be done for the following products: white, red or rosé wines, fortified (liqueur) wines, sparkling wines (white, red or rosé), pomace spirit (*aguardente bagaceira*) and grape spirit (*aguardente vínica*).

The process of certification followed by the CVRA abides by the rules of the Guide NP EN ISO/IEC 17067, which stipulates the following steps to be taken for certified wines of the region:

Wines of Alentejo's

Certification Process

1) VINEYARD'S REGISTRATION

This includes the geographical reference of the vineyard plot, the number of vines and the grape varieties grown within this specific plot. This information is verified in loco and a computer register is created.

2) PHYSICOCHEMICAL AND SENSORY ANALYSIS

As soon as the wine has been produced and the blends made up, a sample of each wine or blend is subject to a physicochemical and sensory analysis. This is a series of physical and chemical analyses covering six essential parameters, confirming the important characteristics of the wine:

- Actual Alcoholic Strength by Volume,
- Total Alcoholic Strength by Volume,
- Total Sulphur Dioxide,
- Total Sugars (glucose + fructose),
- Total Acidity (expressed as tartaric acid),
- Volatile Acidity (expressed as acetic acid).

These tests are carried out by the CVRA's own laboratory - Laboratório de Análises Físico- Químicas da CVR Alentejana. The laboratory is accredited according to the NP EN ISO/IEC 17025 standards of IPAC and approved by ILAC - MRA (International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation).

In parallel to this process, a sensory analysis is carried out on the same wine sample by the CVRA's tasting panel - Painel da Câmara de Provadores da CVR Alentejana. This tasting panel is also accredited according to the NP EN ISO/IEC 17025 standards of IPAC.

Only when the wine has undergone both of the above processes (physicochemical analysis and approval by the tasting panel), will the CVRA consider whether the wine fulfils the requirements to carry either the Alentejo PDO or the Alentejano PGI seal of approval.

3) LABELLING

In order to guarantee that the consumer is given comprehensive product information, and that national and EU legislation is complied with, the CVRA is also responsible for the approval of the information to be included on the product label.

The vineyard register, the physicochemical and sensory analysis and the approval of the wine labelling are the mandatory steps towards ensuring the traceability of the wine until its release.



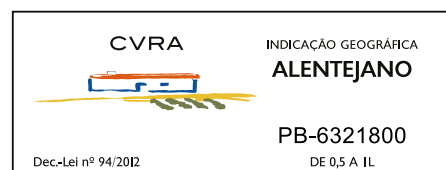
Certified wines are required to comply with all the processes referred to above, and to abide by the rules and regulations defined and monitored by the CVRA.

This in turn results in each certified bottle receiving an individually numbered seal of guarantee that is placed on the back label. This seal warrants the quality and origin of the wine to consumers, both in Portugal and abroad.

SEAL OF GUARANTEE



Alentejo PDO



Alentejano PGI

[illegible]

Sustainability is part of our philosophy. CVRA is committed to use low impact materials and products.
Thus, this brochure was made using paper from forests with a sustainable management certification and printed with vegetable based ink.

**COMISSÃO VITIVINÍCOLA REGIONAL
ALENTEJANA**

(ALENTEJO REGIONAL
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GPS Coordinates

38,56287, -7,90934

N38º 33' 46'' W7º 54' 33''

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WINES OF ALENTEJO

Unique by Nature.

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