

The ASTOR Guide to...

PORTUGAL



*P*ortugal is known for making wines that are reasonably priced and refreshingly different. Many of the best values on our shelves are Portuguese.

*M*ost Portuguese wines are still based on indigenous grape varieties (there are over 230). Touriga Nacional, Periquita, and Tinta Roriz (a.k.a. Tempranillo) are the most popular red grapes, while Alvarinho and Trajadura are the most popular white varieties. Muscat and Malvasia are growing in popularity as well.

*A*mong Portugal's 55 defined wine regions, the **Dão** and the **Douro** are the best-known producers of red table wines (as opposed to fortified wines, such as Port). Reds from the Dão and the Douro are dense, rustic, well-balanced, and often terroir-driven, making them a great alternative to the modern, fruit-driven styles that dominate the market today.

*T*he **Alentejo** is another region to watch. Reds from the Alentejo, made mostly from indigenous grapes, have been catching on lately in the US, and it's easy to see why: they typically show dark fruit, great concentration, and firm structure.

*W*hen it comes to white wine, **Vinho Verde** takes center stage in Portugal. Vinho Verde is the name of both the region and the wine it produces, and this name ("green wine") comes not from its color, but rather from its youth and freshness: most of these wines are meant to be consumed very soon after they are bottled. The Vinho Verde region produces other styles as well: there are age-worthy white Vinho Verdes, light red Vinho Verdes, and fresh rosé Vinho Verdes.

*R*ecently, technology has allowed Portugal's winemakers to update and improve, though they are careful to maintain certain traditional practices. As long as they keep using fascinating indigenous grapes, offering incredible values, and producing brilliant wines, we'll keep bringing them to you.

