

VINTAGE PORT 2016 DECLARATION



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“The keynotes of 2016 are purity and refinement. The Vintage Ports of the three houses are stylistically distinct but all display elegance and poise, a wonderful purity of fruit and tannins of great quality.” He added: “Yields at the harvest were below average. The amount of 2016 Vintage Port offered will be relatively restricted and allocations will be tight. The 2016’s are likely to become rarities in future, particularly given the trend towards enjoying Vintage Ports young.”

Adrian Bridge, Managing Director, The Fladgate Partnership’s

“Two factors stand out in 2016. Heavy rainfall in spring meant that the vines had plenty of water throughout the summer. Secondly, the ripening season started relatively late and lasted well into September. This led to very gradual and even ripening of the crop with all elements in perfect balance at the time of the harvest. Picking started later than usual on all of our houses’ estates, particularly those located in the Pinhão Valley. Harvesting conditions at the end of September and early October were perfect, with cool nights contributing to long fermentations and gentle, complete extraction. As a result the wines are solidly structured with firm, well integrated tannins and display very fine fruit quality.”

David Guimaraens, Technical Director and Head Winemaker, The Fladgate’s Partnership

“The weather throughout the vintage has been exceptionally good and this has allowed maturations to develop perfectly. Courage was needed to hold back on picking too soon. Many weren’t so patient and jumped the gun in my view. The lagares have given balanced Baumés and exceptional colour. The wines are wonderfully fresh and have great elegance as well as structure.”

Charles Symington, Symington Family Estates



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THE 2016 VINTAGE

The 2016 Vintage Ports really are exceptional, with some of the most refined tannins ever, supporting beautiful red fruit flavours with extraordinary intense, purple colour. The wines have impressive structure and balance, with Baumés, acidity, tannins and colour in rare and perfect alignment. This is no doubt a result of the later ripening cycle which allowed the grapes to mature evenly and completely. This is certainly a Vintage to include in your Cellar to enjoy in your later years!

THE HARVEST REPORT

The growing season that preceded the 2016 harvest consisted of a warm winter and cool spring — both exceptionally wet — followed by one of the hottest and driest summers on record. August saw two heat waves during which weather stations recorded maximum temperatures above 40°C. The vines naturally slowed photosynthesis, resulting in the lowest sugar readings of the last 20 years by mid August. Fortunately, much needed rain arrived between 25th and 26th August where it was most required, namely in the Douro Superior. This rain during the critical ripening phase made all the difference in rebalancing the vines, putting maturations back on track and helping Baumés to progress.

The first week of September brought a heat wave with record-breaking temperatures above 40°C. The summer heat was mitigated by the abundant winter and spring rainfall which had provided enough moisture in the soil to sustain the vines. A late vintage was on the cards and patience was required to allow the vines to complete grape maturations at their own pace.

More welcome rain fell between the 12th and 14th September. This timely rain was the decisive moment of the vintage, and the weather then continued benign, with beautiful warm, sunny days and cool nights. Further rainfall only returned on the afternoon of October 13th, the day after the last grapes were picked. The vintage could not have taken place under more perfect conditions.



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POCAS



POÇAS

£150.00 IN BOND (6 X 75CL)

This Portuguese family owned Port House has led a revolution against the more illustrious and famed Port Houses over the past twenty years. It is now accepted alongside the like of Taylors and Fonseca in the quality league of Vintage Port, due to its continued performance in blind tastings.

Founded in 1918 by Manoel Domingues Pocas Junior, the company was initially a producer of brandy used in the production of Port wine, however it eventually progressed on to produce its own ports, the first of which was in 1960. Today it is also famed for its outstanding production of Colheita ports (vintage tawny's) alongside its inimitable style of Vintage Ports.

Winemaking is under the control of Jorge Manoel Pintao, who joined the family business in 1987 after graduating in Chemistry at the University of Porto. His influence has had a magical effect, launching Pocas onto the world stage and winning "Fortified Winemaker of the Year" at the IWC in 2001 when the 1997 Vintage won the Fortified Wine Trophy.

The grapes are harvested by hand and transported to the lagars in 3kg trays to ensure that they arrive in perfect condition. After a controlled fermentation with extended maceration, the fermentation is stopped by the addition of grape brandy. The Port is then aged in wooden vats until bottling.

TASTING NOTE

An intense ruby colour, the bouquet is very aromatic with a superb expression of rich, ripe prune fruit. The core is powerful and firm with an astonishing intensity, the mouth feel silky and elegant, with a persistent and expressive richness and a fine balancing freshness. A beautiful, refined Vintage Port.



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SMITH WOODHOUSE

£170.00 IN BOND (6 X 75CL)

The Smith Woodhouse 2016 Vintage Port is entirely based on the Madalena vineyard, primarily from the field blend of very old mixed vines. They cover just over half of the vineyard's 17 hectares, and in 2016, the yields of these Vinhas Velhas were exceptionally low, a meagre 200 grams per vine, practically one bunch from each vine. The remarkable depth and complexity of the wine reflect the concentration and structure provided by these grapes. The remainder of Madalena is planted with Touriga Franca, a late ripening variety, well suited to the conditions of the Rio Torto area where typically the crop takes longer to ripen. This component from Madalena, the Vinha das Flores — true to its name - provides distinctive floral aromas of violets and rockrose. This was one of the latest starting vintages of recent years, even by Rio Torto standards. Picking only began at Madalena on September 28th, starting with the Vinhas Velhas and then moving on to the Vinha das Flores. The harvest took place under perfect blue sky conditions and moderate temperatures, with warm days and cool nights. It became evident from the outset of the vintage, judging by the superb quality of the grapes reaching the winery, that the long wait since the 2011 Vintage declaration was, in all likelihood, finally over.

TASTING NOTE

Aromas reminiscent of bergamot and tea leaf, coupled with aromas of rockrose and violets. Substantial on the palate, showing ripe, black fruit and liquorice. Seamless, peppery tannins give freshness and excellent structure.



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COCKBURN'S

£225.00 IN BOND (6 X 75CL)

From 1808 to 1812, Robert Cockburn, born into a distinguished Scottish family, served as a soldier in the Peninsular War under the Duke of Wellington. The Anglo-Portuguese army fought long and hard campaigns to expel the invading forces from the Iberian Peninsula. While campaigning in Portugal Robert Cockburn discovered the Douro region and its wines and resolved to return and dedicate himself to this great wine region.

In 1815, when hostilities ceased, he returned to the country that had captivated him and founded his own Port house.

Cockburn's 2016 components;

Quinta dos Canais	68%
Quinta do Vale Coelho	24%
Quinto do Cachao de Arnozelo	8%

Grape Variety percentages;

Touriga Nacional	62%
Touriga Franca	21%
Alicante Bouschet	8%
Sousão	9%

TASTING NOTE

Aromas of red fruits with hints of clove and ginger. On the palate, intense red fruit flavours with a dry character combine to produce a long finish marked by Cockburn's signature 'grip'. The Cockburn 2016 displays archetypal schistous-soil structure, complexity and length.



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WARRE'S

£255.00 IN BOND (6 X 75CL)

Two Englishmen, William Burgoyne and John Jackson opened offices in northern Portugal as Burgoyne & Jackson - initially a general trading company, exporting wines, olive oil and fruit, as well as importing dried cod and English woollen goods. In 1703 the Matthew conferred additional rights to non-Portuguese merchants and the partnership was formalized.

Over time, the company admitted new partners and its name changed accordingly; in 1718, Mr. John Clark married to Miss Prudence Burgoyne. Following his marriage, the firm traded as John Clark, by 1723 it was known as Clark & Thornton and finally in 1729, it became Messrs, Clark, Thornton & Warre, with the arrival of the first Warre in Portugal. This was William Warre, born in India (1706), where his parents and grandparents were long established members of the East India Company.

By the close of the 18th century, Warre's had become one of the leading companies as illustrated by the total shipments of Port for 1791. In that year, 21 companies exported a little over 30,000 pipes of Port, of which Warre & Sons accounted for 2,937 pipes, i.e. 10% of the total.

2016 was a late vintage. Picking only began at Warre's Quinta da Cavadinha and Quinta do Retiro on September 19th and September 23rd, respectively. Even at Quinta da Telhada, situated in the hotter Douro Superior, harvesting began unusually late on September 15th. A prerequisite of a classic declaration is for Touriga Franca to fulfill its maximum potential, and this is exactly what happened in 2016. The vintage was ten days longer than in 2015, allowing this and other varieties in all three Warre's properties across the Douro Valley, to ripen fully with beautifully balanced Baumés, acidity and phenolics. There were occasions through the viticultural year when such a favourable outcome was far from certain. A warm winter and cool spring, both wetter than normal, required a great deal of work to protect the vines. While the generous rainfall was to prove providential in sustaining the vines through the hot and dry summer that followed ('like money in the bank' in Charles Symington's words), it did catch many growers off guard during the spring and led to a 20% reduction in the crop across the region.



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At Warre's vineyards, timely interventions not only saved the crop but ensured that the promise of quality would be realised during the vintage.

The hot summer, with several heatwaves and very little rain, strained the vines. However, the water reserves in the soil sustained maturations which advanced slowly until the late harvest. The cumulative rainfall at Cavadinha, to the end of August, was 52% higher than average, and this made all the difference.

Nearly half the Warre's 2016 is made up of old, mixed vines from both Cavadinha and Retiro. In sections of these vineyards, as many as 30 to 40 different varieties are planted together, and at Retiro they are between 80 and 100 years old with a predominance of Touriga Franca, a variety that has typically prospered in the Rio Torto Valley, home to Quinta do Retiro. These vineyards produced tiny yields, just 630g/vine. The structure and complexity of the old vines was balanced with great acidity and freshness from the Cavadinha grapes and the superb floral aromatics from the two Touriga varieties harvested at Quinta da Telhada. Due to the very cool nights during the vintage, the grapes arrived at the Cavadinha lagar winery so cold in the mornings that, in effect, they had a 'cold soak maceration' before fermentation began, favouring excellent aromatic extraction. Harvesting finished at Cavadinha on October 10th, a couple of days before the weather broke. More perfect harvesting conditions could not have been hoped for.

Warre's 2016 components;

Quinta da Cavadinha

Quinta do Retiro

Quinta da Telhada

Grape Variety percentages;

Touriga Nacional 37%

Touriga Franca 17%

Vinha Velha (old, mixed vines) 46%

TASTING NOTE

Typically Warre's in its feminine charm, exuding floral aromas of violets and rockrose. Supple, ripe black fruit flavours, underscored by fresh acidity, rendering superb balance and elegance. Long, lingering finish with delicate tea-leaf notes.



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GRAHAM'S

£310.00 IN BOND (6 X 75CL)

The history of W&J Graham spans three centuries and throughout that time this acclaimed Port producer has remained an independent family business. The story of Graham's is the story of two families – the Graham's and the Symingtons – whose commitment to the making of memorable wines has earned Graham's a reputation as a leader in the production of outstanding Vintage Ports.

W&J Graham was founded in Oporto, Portugal's second city, in 1820 by the two brothers, William and John Graham. The Graham family already had extensive business interests not just in their native Scotland but also in India. The success of their affairs led to them being described by a contemporary historian, as being among the "Merchant Princes of Great Britain." The brothers formed the partnership of W&J Graham with the aim of specialising in the production of the finest Port wines.

After a warm and wet winter that replenished much-needed water reserves in the soil, the weather pattern then reversed, with an unusually cool and wet spring, which delayed flowering and led to some problematic damp conditions in the vineyard in May. Timely interventions however, saw the crop come through unscathed. The summer was extraordinarily hot, with several spikes in temperature above 40 degrees Celsius which caused the vines to very nearly shut down. The water reserves created by the abundant winter and spring rainfall proved critical in providing just enough soil moisture to sustain the hardy vines. Respite from the heat finally arrived between August 24th and 26th when 18mm of rain fell at Quinta dos Malvedos and Quinta do Tua. The vines soaked up the water and maturations picked up, only to be thwarted by another heat surge during the first week of September. Encouragingly, phenolic development was ahead of sugar graduations and so long as the latter could progress, indications were that phenolic ripeness could be achieved at comparatively low Baumés. A late harvest was inevitable as the grapes needed more time on the vines to complete their ripening. The decisive moment of the vintage came on September 13th when a further 20mm of rain came down at Malvedos and Tua.



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The small volumes of this Graham's 2016 Vintage bottling consist of 6,325 cases, including 600 magnums, and 352 Tappit Hens. The Symington family derive great confidence from the promise that this beautifully crafted wine holds for the future.

Graham's 2016 components;

Quinto dos Malvedos	41%
Quinto do Tua	25%
Quinto da Vila Velha	16%
Quinto do Vale de Malhadas	18%

TASTING NOTE

Classic expression of the Graham's style: concentrated and opulent with layers of fresh, ripe, black fruit flavours. Aromas of mint and eucalyptus with chocolate notes. The Graham 2016 combines superb complexity, structure and balance.



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FONSECA

£585.00 IN BOND (12 X 75CL)

Established as a Port company in 1815, Fonseca is noted for the stylistic consistency of its Vintage Ports which have been made by five generations of the Guimaraens family since its foundation.

Its Vintage Ports are noted for their expressive, luscious fruitiness, which develops great opulence and complexity with age, as well as a voluptuous roundness on the palate supported by velvety mouth-filling tannins. Although they are capable of ageing for decades, the exuberant fruitiness of the Fonseca Vintage Ports makes them immensely enjoyable

The weather pattern leading up to the 2016 harvest was relatively unusual. Rainfall in April and May was almost three times the 10-year average. This replenished ground water reserves reduced by the dry conditions the previous year but also resulted in significant fruit loss and reduction in yields in some areas as well as a late start to the maturation cycle. In contrast, July saw the onset of hot, dry conditions that lasted for the rest of the summer. Ripening was even, gradual and rounded off by a spell of rainfall towards the middle of September. Estates that delayed picking until after the rains were rewarded by perfect harvesting weather, the cool nights contributing to long, well-balanced fermentations and gentle extraction. Wine makers' notes record that the young wines displayed very fine aromas as well as pronounced tannins. This early promise has been fully realised, with the 2016 vintage ports showing elegance, finesse, crisp acidity and tannins of exceptional quality. Picking at Fonseca's Panascal estate began on 21st September and at Quinta do Cruzeiro in the Pinhão Valley on the 28th. Fonseca's third property, Quinta do Santo António, only started harvesting on 6th October.

TASTING NOTE

Dense purple black with a narrow purple rim. The nose opens with very fine pure black fruit, a fusion of black cherry, cassis and blackberry jam aromas, with notes of crushed mint, an ethereal fragrance of violets, and undertones of ripe tropical fruit. The year has added an additional layer of purity and refinement to the subtle, complex Fonseca fruit character, as well as an attractive minerality.



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TAYLOR'S

£585.00 IN BOND (12 X 75CL)

Taylor Fladgate & Yeatman was founded over three centuries ago in 1692 and has been family owned and run throughout its history.

Taylor's is recognised as a benchmark for Vintage Port, its classic vintages attracting the highest scores and auction prices. Known for their elegance, longevity and distinctive scented character, they are blended from the finest wines of the firm's own 'quintas' or estates. These three famous properties – Vargellas, Terra Feita and Junco – occupy distinct geographic locations and each contributes its own unique character and dimension to the subtle harmony of the blend. These properties represent the best of innovation and tradition, combining the most advanced viticultural practices with traditional foot treading, still unsurpassed as a method for making Vintage Port.

The weather pattern during the growing and ripening seasons had a decisive effect on the character of the 2016 wines, with their elegance, refinement, crisp acidity and magnificent tannins. Spring was unusually wet, with heavy rain and relatively cool conditions throughout April and May. This had the benefit of restoring ground water levels, depleted by the previous year's drought, and creating reserves for the hot summer that was to follow. However, the wet spring conditions also resulted in loss of fruit in some areas and a significant reduction in yields. They also delayed the start of the ripening cycle.

Véraison started late, with the first signs visible around the second week of July. From early July, hot dry conditions prevailed until well into September. In spite of the heat, maturation was even and gradual. Together with the late start to the cycle, this meant that, at the end of August, the crop was still far from ripe. Some rainfall in mid-September helped to round off the maturation.

Producers that delayed picking until after the rains were rewarded with perfect harvesting conditions, with cool nights helping to extend fermentation times and allow for gentle extraction. The first grapes were picked at Taylor's Quinta de Vargellas on 17th September, with the Pinhão Valley estates following on the 23rd and 26th respectively.



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TASTING NOTE

Deep purple black with a narrow magenta rim. High notes of pure, intense woodland fruit with lively accents of green apple, fresh plum and raspberry. Around this core of bright, singing fruit is a heady aura of gumcistus and wine herbs. On a deeper register, exotic notes of cedarwood and jasmine provide an additional dimension of complexity. The wine has an attractive leanness and muscularity with sinewy, linear tannins that integrate seamlessly into the mid palate and then re-emerge to hold the wine in a confident grip. Energised by a racy acidity, the intense berry flavours continue to build into the long finish. Although the keynotes are refinement and poise, the wine displays the restrained vigour and stamina that are the hallmarks of the Taylor style.



CROFT

£470.00 IN BOND (12 X 75CL)

One of the original founding port houses, Croft traces its origins to 1588 when the company was established in England by Henry Thomson, a member of the Merchants Company of York. The Croft family, which joined the partnership in 1736 and gave the firm its present name, served the Port trade with great distinction.

The reputation of Croft as a Vintage Port producer derives to a large extent from its ownership of Quinta da Roêda, one of the finest estates in the Douro Valley, and from such legendary wines as the Croft 1945, recognised as one of the finest of that landmark year. In September 2001, Croft became part of The Fladgate Partnership, the family group which also includes the famous Taylor and Fonseca Port houses.

The viticultural year in the Douro Valley began with a very wet spring. In April and May, 249mm of rain fell at Croft's Quinta da Roêda estate in the Douro Valley, nearly three times the average for the last decade. This rainfall was welcome after the very dry conditions in 2015 and helped restore ground water reserves at Roêda and throughout the Douro Valley. As a result of the cool, wet spring conditions, the ripening season started late. The first colouring of the grapes was observed around 11th July and coincided with the onset of very hot, dry weather which continued until mid-September.

During the ripening season, the weather station at Quinta da Roêda recorded 13 days with temperatures exceeding 40°C. In spite of the heat, owing to abundant ground water reserves and the late cycle, maturation was slow and even. At the end of August, most grapes were far from ripe. In mid-September, a spell of rain helped accelerate and complete the ripening process. In the second half of September and well into October, the weather remained fine, providing ideal harvesting conditions. Low night-time temperatures helped to extend fermentation times and allow for gradual and gentle extraction, a factor which contributed to the elegance and finesse of the 2016 wines and the quality of the tannins. Picking at Croft's Quinta da Roêda started on 17th September.



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TASTING NOTE

Intense purple ruby core with a vivid purple rim. The nose displays the ripe strawberry and blackcurrant fruitiness and resinous notes of rock rose and eucalyptus that are the essence of the Croft Vintage Port style. The palate opens with a surge of rich berry fruit flavour and is supported by a dense mesh of close-knit tannins. Although the wine displays some of the plump, rubenesque character of prior Croft vintages, the accent here is on symmetry and finesse. The characteristically exuberant fruit and heady herbal aromas are carefully modulated and the wine is classical in its proportions. An elegant and aromatic Vintage Port, perfectly poised between opulence and restraint.



VINTAGE PORT 2016

ORDER FORM

Prices given are per case, in bond Melton (Ex VAT & Duty)

		Cases Req'd	Case Cost in Bond	Total
POCAS 2016	(6 x 75cl)	.....	£150.00	.....
SMITH'S WOODHOUSE 2016	(6 x 75cl)	.....	£170.00	.....
COCKBURN'S 2016	(6 x 75cl)	.....	£225.00	.....
WARRE'S 2016	(6 x 75cl)	.....	£255.00	.....
GRAHAM'S 2016	(6 x 75cl)	.....	£310.00	.....
FONSECA 2016	(12 x 75cl)	£585.00
TAYLOR'S 2016	(12 x 75cl)	£585.00
CROFT 2016	(12 x 75cl)	£470.00

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