



Wine Flight November 4th, 2009 Passport to Portugal



2008 Muros Antigos Loureiro

Vinification:

Named after its Roman-Medieval bridge, Ponte de Lima is located in Portugal's northwest corner, the Alto Minho. This wine is made with the grape Loureiro.

Tasting Notes:

With a bright lemon color, this wine boasts youthful aromas of pine, lime, ginger, white cranberry and bay leaf, and it finishes with a long, pleasant splash of minerality. This wine has plenty of character and structure with many layers and textures.

Food Pairings:

The Portuguese often pair shellfish with pork -- legend has it this combo dates back to the dark days of the Spanish Inquisition, when knowledge of (and willingness to eat) dishes such as Amêijoas na Cataplana was a sort of test of one's Christianity. Pork and shellfish are, after all, proscribed foods for those of both the Jewish and Muslim faiths. While there's no telling if this legend is true, it is certainly the case that Amêijoas na Cataplana is an extremely old -- and very Portuguese -- recipe. The acidity in the tomatoes, the saltiness of the different kinds of pork, and the brine of the clams makes for a perfect pairing with Muros Antigos Loureiro.

PLCB 62192 @ \$12.99

2008 Quinta da Romeira Arinto

Produced from Arinto grapes in vineyards around Lisbon, this is a delicious cooler climate white wine.

Tasting Notes:

This dry white wine presents a bright, pale straw color, and complex lemon and tropical fruits aromas. It's a very fresh and elegant wine with spicy citric fruit flavors and a long finish.

Food Pairings:

Pair with a light summer salad and blackened catfish, sea bass, or shrimp scampi. Also goes well with traditional Portuguese Amêijoas na Cataplana (Clams in a Casaplata). A cataplana is a large hinged metal container shaped like a giant clam shell that can be clamped shut. If you can't find one, just use your trusty wok.



PLCB 53362 @ \$11.99

2005 Touriga Nacional Esporão

Definitely the best known winery from the Alentejo wine region, the history of Herdade do Esporão's estate goes back 700 years. The modern winery today boasts three historic monuments: a medieval Tower, the Bow and the Chapel (all declared national heritage monuments).

Tasting Notes:

Shows typical violet and dark berry fruit aromas combined with a toasty oak complexity. Red plum, currant and cherry flavors are the hallmarks of this fresh, zesty red, with baker's chocolate and hints of caramel on the finish.

Food Pairings:

Nothing goes to waste in Portugal, as it traditionally has not been a wealthy society. Meals are built around inexpensive cuts of meat or fish caught that day, cooked low and slow over hot fires with hearty vegetables like turnips, cauliflower and carrots for stews, while turnip greens are cooked down and incorporated into olive oil and potato filled soups. Pair this tannin filled red wine with simple, delicious, comfort food: roast lamb, rabbit stew, quail and partridge terrine, bread porridge, or thin shaved slices of salty, cured ham.

PLCB 64124 @ \$21.99

2007 Dona Ermelinda Freitas

Tasting Notes:

With a deep purple color, and a spicy and fresh nose, this medium bodied wine is bright and fruity. The nose is spicy and fresh with aromas of raspberry and red currant. Raspberry flavors follow on the palate with plum, baking spices, oak and dried cherries. It is a bold wine that finishes with pleasant tannins.

Made from 70% Castelão, 10% Touriga Nacional, 10% Trincadeira, and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, this red should be served at cellar temperature.



Food Pairings:

Try with juniper brined double cut pork chops. Can pair with any fruity, herby flavored white or red meat.

PLCB 52299 @ \$11.99