

2006 QUINTA DAS MAIAS “BLANC DE NOIRS” SPARKLING WINE

Appellation d’Origine Contrôlée DÃO

Vintage and harvest: Following a very rainy two months period (Oct./Nov. 2005), came a very dry and cold Winter. With the upcoming Spring, rain returned in full force in March and April, leaving the vineyards with plenty of water for the approaching growing season. May was dry and unusually warm but very good for the flowering and fruit set period. The following four months (J/J/A/S) were very hot although all of them with a few showers in the between, which helped to keep our vineyards with enough water supplies in the soil and a smooth and healthy maturation of our grapes. Harvest began on Sept. 6 and ended on Oct. 2. Result of a “strong” pruning in Winter (to renovate our older vines), a thorough green-harvest in the end of July and natural causes not yet fully explained or understood, the quantity dropped a lot: we had a decrease of 30% in the white and 25% in the red grapes’ quantity which is not alarming given the good stocks, both in quantity and quality, from our three previous vintages. Naturally, we began by picking the white grapes, which were very healthy, with good alcohol content and fantastic natural acidity promising fresh, flavourful and balanced wines, specially the Malvasia Fina and the Encruzado, as usual. Regarding the reds, the harvest must be divide in two different periods: before and after Sept. 21. The grapes picked before Sept. 21 were well matured, very healthy, with good sugar content and natural acidity, thus we have wines of Alfrocheiro, Jaen, Touriga Nacional and even Tinta Roriz (a difficult one in the Dão region) with full body, well balanced, dark colour and very clean flavours. Contrary to what was expected, the Tinto Cão, which is known for its toughness, and the Touriga Nacional that were picked after the rain (fortunately for us only a small part) conducted to diluted wines with unbalanced and green tannins. In spite of this, and in perspective, we are happy with the results; although not reaching the very high quality of 2005, this harvest provided us with enough good wines to keep the general increase in quality experienced in the last years in Quinta das Maias wines.

Grape varieties: Alfrocheiro (75%) and Jaen (25%).

Winemaking technology: handpicked grapes only slightly pressed to avoid any colour extraction, followed by fermentation in stainless steel vats with selected yeasts at a controlled temperature of 15-17° C.

Bottling: before bottling the wine was only subject to a tartaric stabilisation by the action of the cold and an addition of 24g of sugar and encapsulated yeasts. “Prise de mousse” in the cellar at a temperature of 14°C.

Analysis:

Alcohol by volume (alc. / vol.):	NOT
Total Acidity (g / l C ₄ H ₆ O ₆):	YET
Sugar (g / L):	AVAILABLE

Organoleptic tasting: integral “BLANC DE NOIRS” brut sparkling wine with tiny and persistent bubbles; it shows very good structure and complex aromas which have good length..

Aptitudes: a food pairing sparkling it goes well with rich and flavourful meat or fish dishes.

Service: between 7 and 9°C temperature.