



More madeiras

6 May 2010 by Jancis Robinson

These madeiras were tasted either in the lodges of the Madeira Wine Company (Blandy's/Cossart Gordon/Leacock/Miles), D'Oliveiras or Barbeito on the island of Madeira last week, or at the inaugural Big Fortified Tasting in London last month. They are mainly, but not exclusively, rather less ancient and rare than those tasted in [The Great Island Madeira Tasting](#).

It is clear that Barbeito's style is the lightest, driest and most delicate. Blandy's wines tend to be richer and more vigorous and assertive. The D'Oliveiras wines I tasted, all pretty old, betray long ageing in cask. Borges and Justino's both produce some interesting wines that could be quite good value. Henriques & Henriques' current bottlings are certainly competent but not quite as exciting as I remember from when I visited the late John Cossart on the island in 2003. See [Insider's madeira](#).

For specific retail stockists and prices see www.wine-searcher.com or www.vinopedia.com, or use the Find this wine link in the specific tasting notes.

See my [overview](#) in Free for all this Saturday.

BARBEITO

US importer: The Rare Wine Co

Japanese importer: Kinoshita Shijo

UK importer: Raymond Reynolds, Station Road, Furness Vale, High Peak, SK23 7SW, tel: +44(0)1663 742230, info@raymondreynolds.co.uk, www.winesfromportugal.com

Barbeito, Tinta Negra Mole Colheita 2001 Madeira 17 Drink 2020-2040

Cask sample from a wine that will probably be bottled from a single cask, No 10. Quite a deep reddish tawny. Sweet, broad nose - very different from the wines based on the pale-skinned classic varieties. Very aggressive acidity at this stage. Mid weight and pretty robust - not as refined as most, but I suppose we must be grateful that talented winemakers such as Ricardo Diogo Freitas are treating the grape, which accounts for 85% of the island's vines, with such care.

Barbeito Sercial 1994 Madeira 18 Drink 2009-2040

Bottled in Sep 2009 for UK merchants Lay Wheeler. Just 252 bottles filled. Very pale tawny. Very vital, only just sweaty, nose. This was Ricardo Diogo Freitas's second harvest and it was unusually rainy. He shows us this in his new modern lodge to demonstrate that even unpromising years can produce great stuff. There's a hint of chocolate on the nose. Very fine, piercing, delicate nose emerged after the hint of sweat dissipated. Long and delicate, this reminds me a bit of an Equipa Navazos single-butt sherry. This is not painfully dry and indeed the sugar level is almost at the limit allowed for a Sercial. Very fine.

HM BORGES

No UK importer

HM Borges, Old Reserve 10 Years Sercial NV Madeira 15.5 Drink 2007-2020

Pale amber – a little duller-looking than Justino's version. Cheesy, rancio nose, then quite fusty oak on the palate. Delicate but not bone dry, as though a bit of sweetening had been added.

HM Borges, Old Reserve 10 Years Verdelho NV Madeira 16 Drink 2005-2030

Slightly cloudy mid tawny. Some cheesiness on the nose. Quite sweet and with lots of rancio character. Pretty concentrated on the palate as though the wine had been in oak for much longer than 10 years! Assertive. Clean, fresh and tangy on the finish.

HM Borges, Old Reserve 10 Years Boal NV Madeira 16 Drink 2006-2025

Mid fox red. A bit of caramel on the nose. Very sweet and easy and please-all even if not the purest fruit. Hint of fermented fruitcake. Lots of acidity and a bit of astringency on the finish and a little bit of delicacy of fruit.

HM Borges, Old Reserve 10 Years Malmsey NV Madeira 14.5 Drink 2008-2015

Unusually brown tawny colour. Lacks finesse. Just a bit raisiny and woody with the alcohol sticking out.

HM Borges, 15 Years Verdelho NV Madeira 16.5 Drink 2005-2020

Light, clean, well resolved and very vibrant. Very nicely balanced and racy. Long.

HM Borges, 15 Years Boal NV Madeira 16.5 Drink 2010-2030

Very fresh and well balanced and complete. Seems a very natural wine that is not that sweet. Obviously pretty old and rancio. Really gets the appetite going...!

HM Borges, Harvest Malmsey Colheita 1998 Madeira 16 Drink 2008-2028

Dar., rich tawny. A bit cheesy on the nose and then lots of sweetness. Rather dry and astringent on the finish. Just not quite as long and ethereal as I'd love.

HM Borges Boal 1977 Madeira 15.5 Drink 1990-2015

Pale reddish tawny. Oak seems not 100% clean – something a bit metallic? Pretty dry on the end. Not quite in balance.

HENRIQUES & HENRIQUES

US importer Golden State Wine Co

UK importer: Mentzendorff, London SE1, joanna@mentzendorff.co.uk

Henriques & Henriques, 10 Years Old Sercial NV Madeira 16 Drink 2006-2025

Mid amber – deeper than the Borges and Justino's versions. Sweeter and nuttier on the nose. Definitely much richer and fuller on the palate too. A substantial Sercial. I would drink this with food rather than as an aperitif.

Henriques & Henriques, 10 Years Old Malmsey NV Madeira 15 Drink 2008-2018

Mid orangey tawny. Rather rank wood on the nose...? Light and dry on the front palate then a bit sticky. Not really very integrated.

Henriques & Henriques, 15 Years Old Verdelho NV Madeira 15.5 Drink 2010-2025

Very full and rich and thick. Good tension but pretty sweetened up. Very firm tannins on the finish. Impressive persistence though.

Henriques & Henriques, 15 Years Old Bual NV Madeira 14.5 Drink 2010-2020

Blackish tawny. Sweaty/cheesy nose. Then lots of raisiny sweetness. Not fresh enough, bit of a disappointment.

Henriques & Henriques, 15 Years Old Malmsey NV Madeira 16.5 Drink 2010-2030

Dark fox red. Definitely fresher and livelier than the Bual of the same age. Rich and rewarding. Though the sweetness is much more obvious than the acidity. Long and reverberant.

Henriques & Henriques, Medium Rich Harvest 1998 Madeira 16 Drink 2008-2018

Reddish fox red. A little cheesy on the nose. No great depth or distinction. Though it is lively and has good bite. Real madeira tang here. Though a bit hard on the end.

JUSTINO'S

www.justinomadeira.com

US importer: Bartholomew Broadbent

No UK importer

Justino's, 10 Years Old Sercial NV Madeira 16+ Drink 2007-2030

Very pale amber. Rather fusty, almost 'boiled' nose and then painful acidity. Appetising and dry. Very light bodied. This would certainly be a palate sharpener! A bit of a hole in the middle though.

Justino's, 10 Years Old Verdelho NV Madeira 15.5 Drink 2006-2020

Mid vibrant, very clear tawny. Not much nose at all. A bit heavy on the front palate and then lots of acidity on the finish. Not very precise.

Justino's, 10 Years Old Boal NV Madeira 15.5 Drink 2006-2020

Deep fox red with greenish rim. Smells quite heated then sweet, nutty and treacle on the front palate with lots of acidity on the finish. A slight lack of fruit in the middle. Rather sudden end.

Justino's, 10 Years Old Malvasia NV Madeira 16.5 Drink 2007-2030

Greenish tawny. A floral note. Lovely life to this wine. Very complete. Easy and nutty and not too sweet with real clean freshness on the finish. Very revitalizing.

Justino's, Broadbent Colheita 1996 Madeira 16 Drink 2010-2030

Reddish tawny with a green rim. Sweet, almost raisiny. Very chewy end.

Justino's, Broadbent Terrantez 1978 Madeira 17 Drink 2010-2025

Pale, lively tawny. Rather 'burnt' on the nose but then very lively fresh palate – real vivacity here. Clean and fresh. Revitalising – medium dry. Sort of amontillado style...

Justino's Boal 1978 Madeira 16 Drink 2005-2015

Lively brown. Sweet, sticky, caramel aroma. A bit light and not the freshest on the finish.

MADEIRA WINE COMPANY

US importer: Premium Port

UK importer: John E Fells, Fells House, Prince Edward Street, Berkhamsted, Herts HP43EZ, tel +44 (0)

1442 870900, www.fells.co.uk

Blandy's, 5 Years Old Bual NV Madeira 15.5 Drink 2010-2020

Bright brownish tawny. This wine smelt much 'sweatier' and smudgier than the preceding cask samples of 2009 (light copper, lightweight, super clean, floral and long) and 2006 (bright orange, already rancio and recognisable as madeira, very clean and fresh and clearly set for a glorious future as a vintage wine). Winemaker Francisco Albuquerque admitted that he added a bit of deeper coloured wine and caramel to the blend because the market expects it. Very competent with clean acidity but clearly more commercial than the Buals from a single year.

Blandy's, Bual Colheita 1991 Madeira 17 Drink 2010-2035

Bright pale tawny - much paler than the 5 Years Old blend. It actually looks almost the same colour as the Bual 2006! Great precision and refinement on the nose. Treacly, fine, rancio nose with a tangy dry finish. Much more delicate than the 5 Years Old. Pure and clean - delicious.

Blandy's, Bual 1977 Madeira 18 Drink 2010-2050

Bottled in 2009. Clean, bright, pale fox red with a greenish rim. Licorice on the nose. Fine, very rancio, this finishes very clean and dry. Very concentrated and obviously the result of heavy evaporation. This is almost certainly going to be the best 1977 I taste for a long time. Extremely clean and pure. The residual sugar is apparently 95 g/l but the acidity is so high that the overall impression is of a dry wine. Great stuff.

Cossart Gordon Bual 1958 Madeira 17.5 Drink 2008-2035

Bottled 2006. This is a wine that the Madeira Wine Company has bottled three times already using various of their different brands such as Blandy's, according to market needs. Brownish, greenish tawny. Sweet, very slightly brackish nose. Lots of acidity but heavier and richer than the Blandy's 1977. Less integrated too, with acidity the dominant component - although it seems richer than the 1977, even though the residual sugar, at 90-95 g/l, is no higher.

Leacock, Bual 1934 Madeira 19 Drink 1990-2025

Bottled 1986. Dark brownish tawny. Very rich, spicy nose. Rich, classic Bual with many, many layers. Even a hint of curry powder. Dried herbs. Massive richness and body before the pure acidity on the finish. 111 g/l residual sugar apparently and 8.45 g/l total acidity! Great stuff.

Blandy's, Bual 1920 Madeira 18.5 Drink 1996-2026

Bottled 2006 (my drinking dates are somewhat speculative). Sweeter and much tamer on the nose than the sample taken straight from the cask in April 2010. Rounded, complex and complete. Rather more civilised and better balanced. Gentler. It was lightly filtered before bottling apparently. There is certainly no hurry to drink this.

Blandy's Bual 1920 Madeira 17.5 Drink 1960-2000

Sample taken from cask in April 2010. Compare and contrast with a (rather fresher) sample taken straight from cask in 2006. Dark brown. Treacly rancio nose and very very concentrated. It reminded me of nothing more than some of the older sherries in the Valdespino bodega in Jerez. Very very slightly rank - just a bit too concentrated for me. Bidding farewell to fruit in an admittedly graceful way.

D'OLIVEIRAS

US importer: The Rare Wine Co

UK importer: Bovey Wines, 12 Higher Tristram, Polzeath, Cornwall PL27 6TF, tel +44 (0) 1208 862613, boveywines@btconnect.com

D'Oliveiras Boal 1903 Madeira 17 Drink 1998-2012

Bottled 2003. Light, bright tawny. Rather fusty nose at first. Very treacly and concentrated with aggressive attack. There is something a little metallic and hard about the end of the palate but it's amazingly persistent. Quite rich. This may have been kept in wood a little bit too long but it's amazing how well it has stood up to the experience. It smells a little like liquid treacle.

D'Oliveiras Malvazia 1900 Madeira 17 Drink 1982-2000

Bottled in 1982. Very, very dark brown. There is even a hint of black here. Oddly, the nose is lighter than that of the Boal 1903 served immediately before it in the lodge. Floral and light on the nose and then very rich and caramel on the palate with a strong cough-medicine element. Masses of acidity but quite syrupy in texture overall. Like that old standby syrup of figs. The nose is delightful but the palate is not exactly ethereal. Though it seems a bit churlish to criticise a 110-year-old wine...

Tags: [madeira](#)