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Vinhos Barbeito – 1885 Verdelho

On 23 mars, 2013 · [Leave a Comment](#) · In [1885](#), [Barbeito](#), [Madeira](#), [Ricardo Diogo Freitas](#), [Verdelho](#), [Vintage](#)

1885. That's 128 years ago. The Danish physicist Niels Bohr's birth year. And the Verdelho of Vinhos Barbeito.

How's it possible that a wine is at its best more more than a century after production? Can you explain it for me? Yes, I'm aware of the unique structure a Madeira wine possesses but still; 128 years goes beyond any logic in my world. I can't drink a wine like the **1885 Verdelho** without thinking in historical terms, without imagining the people behind the wine. Would they have laughed if the thought was mentioned, that somebody would drink this stuff in the 21st century?



When visiting [Vinhos Barbeito](#) I'm always sure of one thing; I will taste something extremely rare or a never heard of vintage. 1834, 1885, 1899 or 1918 for example. The quantities owned by *Ricardo Diogo* are of course negligible. We're talking perhaps a smaller demi-john. A lot of it is not available on the market and are understandably allocated amongst trusted and loyal importers.

I'm poured the wine blind. *Leandro* at Vinhos Barbeito asks me how old the wine is. I love this. It generates brain activity and more than once I've been several decades wrong. This one reminds me a bit of the 1905 Verdelho from d'Oliveiras so I'm guessing beginning of the 20th century. Leandro smiles and shows me the 1885 Verdelho. It's a beautiful glass, filled with elegance and such an amazing precision on the palate. The hazelnuts, the lime zest, oozing wet rocks, the tobacco, the dried fruits.



A beauty on the nose. And the action continues on the palate. Never a blockbuster. A sensual taste filling the mouth with impressions for minutes and the mind for life.

For me *Verdelho* is a personal favorite because of its ability to keep a grape character to some extent, despite being fortified. How it retains the character at 100+ years is a mystery to me. I guess that's what the wine world's needs more of – mystery. Madeira has it. Take part of it – if your wine passion needs a boost and a life time experience!

Availability? For those of you in the US, check with [The Rare Wine Co](#) if it's possible to order. Europeans, check with [The Madeira Collection](#).

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