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Blending Is An Art Form; Vinhos Barbeito's Mãe Manuela

Vinhos Barbeito; 1992 Verdelho Frasqueira

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A new Madeira wine release and I'm like a child on Christmas eve! Especially if it's a Verdelho....

In August 2013 Ricardo Diogo, at Vinhos Barbeito, bottled the 1992 Verdelho Frasqueira. Aged for only 21 years in cask, you might be able to figure out what kind of vintage wine style to expect here. **By the way; 21 years only.** Is there any other wine in the world where we're talking in terms like this? Patience and perspective. Kudos to all the unselfish Madeira producers who knows that the wine they make, might be bottled first by the next generation winemakers following. In these stressful times when it's all about selling the stuff even before it's bottled, these guys should be your ultimate wine heroes.



There's a special story behind the 1992 vintage wine. It's actually the first vintage Ricardo Diogo produced. The Verdelho is a part of a trilogy of 1992's from him and beside the semi-dry Verdelho there are also a Sercial and Boal Vintage. Whether or not he was nervous, or uncertain what to do, it doesn't show in the wine. Now I do know that Mr. Diogo never stops surprising me and the quality at Vinhos Barbeito has

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5 quick ones 5 Years Old 15 Years Old 20 Years Old
 1940 1954 1995 2011 2012 Adegas do Torreão Artur Barros e Sousa Lda Bastardo Blandy's Blends Boal Camara de Lobos Canteiro Colheita Cossart Gordon Fajã dos Padres FRANCISCO Albuquerque Funchal Henriques & Henriques Images Ivo Couto Juan Teixeira Justino's Leacock's Luís d'Oliveira Madeira Madeira Wine Company Malvasia Mannie Berk Pereira d'Oliveira Retailers Ricardo Diogo Freitas Sercial Single Cask

just kept on being at a reference level for years.

The **1992 Verdelho Frasqueira** are limited to 1,150 numbered bottles. The wine has a lovely transparent light amber like color and I wonder if it didn't have me already there. Then sniffing the wine I quickly realize that Ricardo Diogo has been pretty consistent over the 20+ years he's been making wine at Barbeito. There's a Ricardo trademark air from the first vintage wines in 1992 until today. Although innovative and constantly curious there's still the cool appearance in his wines, the freshness and the marked acidity. The 1992 is no exception.



tasting note (*tasted at three occasions*)

Lots of citrus fruits in the still quite youthful bouquet. Lemon peel, the slightest orange peel scent as well. It's a mature, yet youthful and refreshing feeling on the nose. I know, it sounds like a contradiction but then again, I'm having Madeira in my glass! Oriental spices, clove, nutmeg and curry especially, then a green feeling together with old wood, stone cellar and fudge.

Tasting the wine starts the craving for food. The acidity is really marked in this one and beautifully balanced with the moderate sweetness and slight green unripe lemon note. Sugar cane, spices, herbs and dried tobacco. Apricots and salty almonds. The concentration and length impresses and I can't help but to wonder how he manages, because the wine must have been stored in cooler canteiros, having the refreshing feel in mind. Guess he knows what he's doing, Ricardo Diogo. This is a tremendous effort and to my knowledge there's still some left of it in cask.

The MAM opinion:



Buy the wine? It's USD 95 at **The Rare Wine Co** for a 50 cl bottle. Make this your choice at New Year's eve, together with the creamy mushroom soup. Mail me for the recipe! In Europe or other parts of the world, consult wine-searcher to locate it in your country or check out the retailers list on the site.

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