

Madeira

The Wine of Patience



JASON TESAURO AND PHINEAS MOLLOD

Jetting from an abyssal Atlantic plain three and a half miles deep, the Portuguese island of Madeira is the craggy, lush jewel of a tiny archipelago. The name means “island of woods”; as early as the 15th century, Madeira’s boundless forests intrigued marauding pirates and seafarers like Prince Henry the Navigator. Nearer to Casablanca, Morocco, than to mainland Portugal, the island is best reached by plane from Lisbon. After

a flight over 600 miles of flat, blue ocean, the so-called Emerald Isle reveals itself amid imposing basaltic cliffs and stiff crosswinds before the harrowing descent into Funchal Airport on what was once the world’s shortest runway. “I’ve been on flights that had to make three attempts before successfully landing,” says Mannie Berk, founder of The Rare Wine Co., the largest importer of Madeira to the United States and holder of old and rare wines outside the island. But those who brave the voyage are richly rewarded.

Madeira’s story is rife with grandiose tales of a seven-year fire, Columbus’s island palace, and mythical Atlantis. As the last port before many a long trip around the Horn of Africa or across the Atlantic, Madeira became a hub for traders who swapped durable goods for wine. This is how pipes of the local product traveled all the way to America, where they became an 18th-century sensation—our Founding Fathers toasted the signing of the Constitution with snorts of Madeira (and the 1795 Barbeito Terrantez is still on the market, should you care to commemorate the event). Today, Madeira is a niche region. Producing just over 3 million liters of wine annually (compared to 95 million in Porto) and unequipped for much enotourism, it has room to grow, but little reason to take shortcuts. “Ours is the opposite of table wine,” says Luís D’Oliveira, owner of Pereira D’Oliveira. “We are never in a hurry to sell.”



Demijohn in the Sotão da Amendoa Vinhos, or “Loft of the Almond Wines,” at Blandy’s in Funchal (left); island of Madeira (above).

Indeed, “from Prohibition until the 1980s, Madeira was virtually extinct in the United States,” observes Bartholomew Broadbent, CEO of Broadbent Selections. As Chris Blandy, CEO of the Madeira Wine Company (a subsidiary of the Blandy Group), quotes Port vintner James Symington in a chestnut often repeated around the lodge, “Madeira is like a Ferrari: everyone knows the name, but very few have sampled it.”

Aiming to change all that, Broadbent organized a Madeira tasting for 400 people in San Francisco in 1989—and soon after, he says, “Napa’s Tra Vigne had three by the glass and every good Bay Area restaurant had at least one. I spent the next 10 years of my life promoting Port and Madeira almost exclusively; now, whereas Port is very flat, there is increasing interest in Madeira because it has more practical usage and a fantastic story.” Sommeliers—who are, notoriously, always on the lookout for the next big thing—thus find themselves returning to a wine that’s been sipped for centuries. More than a mere historical curiosity or a one-note dessert accompaniment, Madeira (pronounced *mah-DAYR-uh*, not *mah-DEE-ruh*, in Portuguese) is a

wine of vitality and relevance to the patient consumer, with astounding range and texture.

Terroir and Viticulture

The best wine I will make in my life will not be enjoyed until I am dead.

—Justino’s winemaker Juan Teixeira

Madeira is tough on winemakers. The topography is uneven (grapes grow only near the coasts, at up to 1,975 feet in altitude); the most desirable grapes are the hardest to cultivate; the plots are tiny (more than 5 acres constitutes a large holding); and all equipment must be transported from the mainland. Some 3,000 farmers work a mere 990 acres—or about .2% of the vineyard acreage of Bordeaux. Systems of *levadas* (irrigation channels) prevent flooding and shuttle water from the higher elevations down to the coasts. Tour the island via its immaculate motorways and modern tunnels bored through the undulating mountains, and you’ll see vineyards fighting for space with shiny new homes and banana groves. Viticulture is practiced by

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Luís D'Oliveira of Pereira D'Oliveira in Funchal (above); Chris Blandy of Blandy's (top right).

hand, mainly on *poios*, as the terraces built atop steep bedrock are called. Although the soil, with its naturally high tartaric and malic acids, is willing, the winegrower must be intrepid: some plots are accessible only by ladders or rough-hewn stone steps. “Many growers walk 15 minutes with 50 kilos on their back just to reach the road,” says Justino’s winemaker Juan Teixeira.

Cultivation is but a side business for most; in fact, the younger generation was leaving the industry in droves until the recent financial crisis compelled many to return.

A single producer may buy grapes from hundreds of growers—Justino’s purchases about 5,500 pounds from each of 900 growers annually—who are paid 1 euro per kilogram



(2.2 pounds) for grapes coming in at 9% alcohol (more if riper), as certified by the Instituto do Vinho da Madeira. Not least for being so hard earned, Madeira’s exciting personality is almost a foregone conclusion. “The grapes grown here, the volcanic soil, the human experience: even if you copy the technology, you will not equal the wine,” Teixeira proclaims.

Grape Varieties

The principal grapes are four whites—Sercial, Verdelho, Boal (commonly anglicized as Bual), Malvasia (Malmsey)—and one red, Tinta Negra Mole, the most widely planted variety on the island and the one commonly used to make inexpensive blends and cooking wines. Sercial (also known as *Esgana Cão*, or “dog strangler,” because of its acidity), is the driest, lightest white variety and thus ideal for aperitifs; after nearly two decades in cask, however, its jagged

A MADEIRA GLOSSARY

Aguardente: The spirit used to fortify Madeira, which, by law, must be derived from grapes. In a 750-ml bottle of Madeira, grape spirit measures only 10 ml. *Aguardente de caña*, a distillate made from local sugar cane, is not used in Madeira production; the *aguardente* for wine production is now imported from France at 96% alcohol.

Canteiro: The traditional method for aging the best Madeiras in 650-liter neutral-oak barrels stored in warm warehouses. Upper floors and rooms near south-facing windows concentrate the wines more robustly; lower floors, lower placement, and north-facing rooms mature wines more slowly.

Colheita: A single-vintage Madeira that spends at least five years in cask.

Estufagem: The aging method used for inexpensive Madeira blends, in which the wines are stored in stainless-steel or concrete tanks heated to around 122°F. The heating elements of modern *estufa* tanks are jacketed to prevent burnt flavors from marring the wine.

Frasqueira: A single-vintage wine that’s aged at least 20 years in cask and two years in bottle.

Granel: Low-quality bulk Madeira used for cooking. Made with salt and pepper, it’s classified as a food product to protect the wine brand.

Rainwater: A lighter, drier style made from Tinta Negra primarily for the U.S. market. The story goes that it derives its name from the rainwater that seeped into pipes of Madeira left on the docks of Savannah, Ga., shortly after the Civil War, diluting their contents (although the style itself existed prior to that time).

Reserve: A Madeira blend that has been aged at least five years in wood. Old Reserve requires 10 years of aging.

Verdelho (left) and Tinta Negra (right) grapes at Justino’s Madeira Wines in Caniço-Santa Cruz.



Photos by Jason Tesaro (top), Juan Teixeira (bottom)



Blandy's Funchal vineyards (above) and wine-lodge tasting room (top right).

tartness is tamed and it becomes a breathtaking wine of uncommon brightness. Verdelho produces a medium-dry wine, slightly darker than Sercial—smooth, elegant, and versatile, perfect for pairing with seafood and lighter meats. Moving up the richness scale but downward in vineyard elevation, Bual is the prototypical medium-sweet, full-bodied Madeira, darkest of the white varieties; it softens dramatically after decades in wood. Malmsey is the sweetest Madeira, with classic vanilla and caramel overtones that make it a peerless dessert wine, though it finishes dry. The last two grapes are generally referred to by their anglicized names in the American market, but for purists, “Boal is with an *o*: ‘BWAL,’ not ‘BOO-ahl,’” maintains Vinhos Barbeito wine director Ricardo Freitas, “and Malmsey does not exist in Portuguese.”

The medium-dry red Bastardo (known elsewhere as Trousseau) and sweet, low-acid white Moscatel are found in limited quantities, as is Terrantez (no relation to Argentina's Torrontés), an off-dry white that, with age, can produce a beguiling wine with a delicate, bitter finish. Beyond the beauty and unexpected acidity of the sweeter

Justino's winemaker Juan Teixeira.



Canteiro storage (left) and 1976 Terrantez (above) at Blandy's.

varieties, the palate-busting drier styles—Sercial, Verdelho, and Terrantez—routinely astonished us with their verve and complexity.

Winemaking Methods

After the crush, the juice is permitted to ferment for as long as a week before a neutral grape spirit (*aguardente*) is added to halt fermentation at the desired level of sweetness, bringing the wine up to 18-19% alcohol (see “A Madeira Glossary” on facing page). The exact duration depends on the variety as well as its ripeness; the sweeter the grape, the shorter the fermentation.

The Tinta Negra grapes used for blended Madeiras are placed in *estufas*—stainless-steel or concrete tanks heated to around 122°F to mimic the “curing” process of antiquity, when barrels made the hot and turbid voyage around the equator by ship. “*Estufagem* is not for outstanding quality, but great value,” says Teixeira. Following a period of rest, the wine is stored in neutral American- or French-oak casks for at least three years.

Following fortification, the best grapes are slated for the *canteiro* method. They are stored in old, 650-liter oak barrels in warm warehouses,

OUTSTANDING RECENT RELEASES

Barbeito Boal 1863 \$545
Deep linseed-oil color, with a mature nose of walnut and wood. Multifaceted flavors of nuts, pears, apricot, vanilla, and sea salt demonstrate restraint and real depth.

Barbeito Malvasia Single Cask (500 ml) 2001 \$35
Woody and tangerine-peel aromas complement a sweetness that edges into dryness on the palate. Jubilant but not overpowering; silky, not sticky.

Barbeito Malvasia 20 Year Old N.V. \$75
This blend displays a burnt-amber color, with roasted walnuts accompanied by fruit undertones on a substantial body; it tastes like a Zino Davidoff cigar, full of harmonious flavors leading to a toasty, caramel finish. Ricardo Freitas says he was inspired by “the sweetness of Sauternes and the minerality of Riesling, plus fruit ideas—not aromas, ideas!”

Barbeito VB (500 ml) N.V. \$35
Of this woody, three-cask blend of 60% 10-year-old Verdelho and 40% 10-year-old Boal, Freitas says, “I tried a 50/50 mix, but the extra Boal was killing the brightness of the Verdelho, which brings exuberance and architectural decoration. Boal provides the foundation and full body.” Like both hands on the piano, the grapes work together to produce full bass and treble flavors of leather and pine.

Barbeito Verdelho 1885 \$520
A deep, warming balsamic aroma emerges from a nose bustling with dried apricot, milk-chocolate-covered cherry, and Virginia tobacco. The nectar-filled body is spectacularly balanced.

Barbeito Verdelho Canteiro Cask 119b+e (500 ml) 1996 \$40
Bottled in 2012 from a single vineyard on the island’s north coast, this green-amber Madeira offers *après-rainstorm* aromas and a deep, velvety texture. Pure elegance is exemplified by the sublime mouthfeel, set off by notes of pistachio, vanilla-bean *crème fraîche*, and salted caramel.

Barbeito Verdelho RWC Historic Series Baltimore Rainwater N.V. \$47
Based on an 1822 sample that made its way to the United States, this wine combines notes of toasty oak with smooth sophistication—the character of the old in a new blend of 80-year-old Tinta Negra.

Blandy’s Alvada 5 Year Old N.V. \$20
A 50/50 blend of Bual and Malmsey. Sassy and modern, with bright, friendly high notes, this Madeira balances warm, toasty nuttiness with acidity through the delicate caramel finish. A great young wine, perfect for a party.

Blandy’s Bual 1920 \$750
Dark yet translucent in the glass, with cascading

aromas of vanilla bean, pear, green apple, and bourbon; old library and lemon balm meet honey and *crème brûlée*. This satisfying vintage pushes all the buttons: youthful acidity, mature fruit and body, ecstatic finish.

Blandy’s Bual 10 Year Old (500 ml) N.V. \$30
Blandy’s amber-colored blend displays a heady nose of dark chocolate, tobacco, vanilla, and faint potpourri. Moderately sweet, with bold acidity and classic toastiness, it finishes spicy, sweet, and long amid gentle prune notes.

Blandy’s Malmsey Colheita (500 ml) 1996 \$50
Bottled in 2012. Blandy’s varietal *colheitas* showcase the grape’s characteristics—in this case, orange rind and citric acid—rather than sweetness. Dark amber in color, this outstanding dessert wine features elegant baklava aromas.

Blandy’s Sercial Colheita (500 ml) 1995 \$50
Bottled in 2011. A beautiful gold-copper hue is followed by scents of *rhum agricole* with hints of tropical fruit and sea breeze. Welcoming acidity, great texture, and a clear finish combine to make a superb match for Madeira’s famed *espada* (black scabbard fish).

Blandy’s Sercial 10 Year Old (500 ml) N.V. \$30
Pale topaz in color, this soft Sercial is still young, without the finest notes of more aged examples, but its salty, herbal, melon, and kiwi notes make it a winning aperitif.

Blandy’s Terrantez 1976 \$230
Amber colored, with a beguiling nose like a trip around the island: apple, cherry, kiwi, wood, and wet stone. Diesel, rubber, and cooked caramel complement zippy acidity on the palate, bringing soft undertones of the classic style into a bright, snazzy finish.

Broadbent Rainwater N.V. \$16
Made from 3-year-old Tinta Negra by Juan Teixeira at Justino’s, this medium-dry everyday quaffer exemplifies *estufa* aging.

D’Oliveiras Boal 1908 \$425
Intense, bright mahogany in the glass, this ancient Boal displays delicate scents of berry and almond, including a hint of marzipan. The brilliant palate offers a complete experience of aged, moderate sweetness; the soft finish reveals the wisdom of a century. This is about history, texture, and energy more than fruit.

D’Oliveiras Sercial 1937 \$255
Bottled in 2003. Incredible star brightness suffuses the liquid-caramel hue. Notes of pine, eucalyptus, spice, laurel, and forest brambles emerge on the

nose; the palate is smooth, with a nibble of acidity. Mature, lovely finish.

D’Oliveiras Terrantez 1971 \$135
A dark copper-penny color leads to gradually emerging toffee, pine-needle, and floral goodness, accompanied by a hint of ash. In the mouth, an explosive texture and tongue-curling acidity round into ripeness, with distant citrus echoes on the finish.

D’Oliveiras Verdelho 1850 \$745
A dark-caramel time capsule of acidity encased in honey. With hints of maple syrup and toasted walnuts, its concentration is incomparable, almost approaching that of the venerable 1908 Boal. Paired with *bolo de mel*, its sweetness yields to warmth, bright acidity, and beautiful oxidation.

D’Oliveiras Verdelho 1966 \$146
Bottled in 2012. Toasty notes are topped by vanilla and cappuccino; gorgeous, mild sweetness is carried beautifully by sedate acidity. An amazing wine with a remarkable, perfectly balanced finish.

D’Oliveiras Verdelho 1981 \$95
The rich, golden-amber color precedes aromas of cinnamon toast, wood, musty heat, and toffee. A soft, delicate body is balanced by bright acidity; the persistence is marvelous.

Justino’s Boal 1964 \$327
Reflecting the old style, this dark-varnish-colored bottling is soft yet bright, showing lovely notes of caramel and mint along with dried fruit and campfire, fanned by fresh acidity. The wonderful texture is vital and long.

Justino’s Colheita 1999 \$35
Light copper-bronze tones lead to aromas of *crème brûlée*, sugar cane, and almond. This Tinta Negra’s silky mouthfeel and richness give it life. Complex yet smooth and easy to drink.

Justino’s Sercial 1940 \$273
A wine of meditation, dark brown tinged with green in the glass. Ample acidity is accompanied by green herbs, butterscotch, and toasted almond, with hints of fruit on the finish.

Justino’s Terrantez 1978 \$215
This is an elegant wine with aromas of the countryside—fir trees, berry patches, wildflowers. On the palate, it’s a spicy stew with a delicate finish.

Justino’s Terrantez Old Reserve N.V. \$67
Light amber in color. Scotch-like aromas are laced with lemon and almond bitterness; the palate features lovely earth and toast backed by acidity. For winemaker Juan Teixeira, it recalls an apt local proverb: “*As uvas de Terrantez, não as comas nem as dês, para vinho Deus as fez*” (“The grapes of Terrantez are not for eating, nor to give away; for wine God created them”).

where they gradually oxidize, evaporate, and concentrate, developing complex flavors and heightened alcohol levels over a period of years. As a general rule, three months of aging by *estufa* is roughly equivalent to five years by *canteiro*. A combination of many variables—the grape varieties, the vagaries of the aging process, the climate in the warehouse, the age of the casks, luck—determines whether the maturing Madeiras will be used in non-vintage blends (such as a Bual 10 Year Old) or left to develop for decades. When a wine has been deemed to reach optimal balance and concentration in wood, it is moved to stainless-steel tanks or glass demijohns and preserved in stasis.

Five Days, Four Houses

The old vintages are like currency in the bank. My uncle had more wine than money, but he was happy that way.

—Pereira D'Oliveira owner Luís D'Oliveira

During our five days on the island, we saw Madeira through four lenses, each affording its own perspective: D'Oliveira (which we dubbed “the classic”), Vinhos Barbeito (“the innovator”), Justino’s (“the entryway”), and Blandy’s (“the gentle giant”).

Step into the D'Oliveira lodge from a cobblestone street in Funchal and watch Madeira’s past come to life in the form of creaky floorboards, high rafters, the toffee aromas of mellowing casks, and the cordial manner of its traditionalist owner. Blessed with the finest stock of old vintages on the island, D'Oliveira focuses on quintessentially warm and supple wines meant for the next generation—some requiring 20, 40, 50, or even 100 years to mature. Sampling a flight of library selections dating from the Iraq



Câmara de Lobos estate of Henriques & Henriques.

War back to the Civil War, we were humbled by an 1863 Sercial and a 1908 Boal that was harvested the year the Chicago Cubs last won the World Series.

As we drove up tortuous mountain roads in search of Barbeito’s offices, our GPS was frequently tested by wrong turns with signs understandable in any language: “Impasse.” Whooshing through a sun shower and a slight chill—Madeira can offer three seasons’ worth of weather in one day—we dropped the map and followed an immaculate rainbow to Barbeito’s hilltop winery and its ebullient wine director. As Freitas extolled his exciting young blends, single-vineyard wines, and single-cask releases—not to mention his nod to the past, the Historic Series—he revealed his intense viticultural curiosity, further demonstrated by a small test plot. He has invested in a mechanical *lagar* that mimics the traditional foot-stomping method of yore to produce darker, more textured juice. In his lab, Freitas samples 20-30 casks per

Harvest (left) and estufa tanks (below) at Henriques & Henriques.



TIPS ON MADEIRA PAIRING AND POURING

In the seafaring age, an avocado mashed with salt, pepper, and Sercial was spread on toast and called Midshipman's Butter. According to Andrew Dornenburg and Karen Page, authors of *What to Drink with What You Eat* (Bulfinch Press, 2006), Sercial was also paired traditionally with consommés and cold-meat appetizers. In addition, Dornenburg and Page recommend Verdelho with cream-based soups, cheeses, savory desserts, and nuts and Bual and Malmsey with cheese (especially blue), dried fruits, and nut-based desserts (see also *Match Point*, p. 20).

The dry Sercial, off-dry Bual, and high-acid Terrantez also work well with savory courses. "When I worked at The French Laundry [in Yountville, Calif.], we frequently paired truffle custards with Barbeito Sercial 1910," says Michael Scaffidi, wine director of The Jefferson Hotel in Washington, D.C. (see the *Sommelier Spotlight*, Nov. 30, 2012). "Foie gras with aged Madeira is also lovely as a first course. Madeira's dancing acidity makes it versatile; you can easily switch to another dry white or red afterward." Experiment and you'll discover that Sercial plays nicely with salad or sushi, while contemplative library vintages of Verdelho and Bual shine with pipes and cigars. Young Madeiras can be mixed into cocktails as an alternative to vermouth. The Madeirense take their Madeira with *bolo de mel* and *broas de mel* (honey or molasses cakes and cookies). Luís D'Oliveira, for his part, fancies a spoonful over fresh pineapple or strawberries. "I like very much to finish the meal with a golden key: a sweet Boal," he says.

Madeira bottles should be stored upright, and the wines served at cellar temperature or just above. Because they keep for decades, there's no need to decant them nor to drink them in single sittings; indeed, given their generous aromas and alcohol levels, smaller pours are appropriate (D'Oliveira's preferred Madeira glass has a line at the 1.3-oz. mark). "We currently have about 40 different labels by the glass and three vintage flights," Scaffidi reports. "You can serve a glass from 1912 and be at ease that the opened bottle will not lose texture, complexity, or flavor. It's a total win for profit and increases vintage depth; it also comes in handy for guests who want the grand finale to be from the year they were born."



Espada (black scabbard fish), a Madeirense specialty.

Vinhos Barbeito estate in Câmara de Lobos (below) and wine director Ricardo Freitas next to a mechanical lagar (right).



week, because making a successful vintage Madeira involves more than simply storing wine in a hot room for a few decades; if the wine oxidizes too quickly, the sugar concentrates faster than the acidity develops, yielding flabby, pruney wines. Based on his tastings, Freitas moves the faster-maturing juice to lower ground or a cooler part of

the warehouse and transfers tighter samples to sunnier spots. We were astounded by the emerging brightness of his 2010 Malvasia and the Fino-like wonder of the young Bastardo trials. "I use all the traditional techniques without compromise," he says, "but I use technology to improve on tradition, reduce production time, and lessen losses."

Fast Forward to the Past

I am a traditionalist. I've spent my whole career preserving the great winemaking cultures and making sure they're not swallowed up in modern trends.

—The Rare Wine Co. founder Mannie Berk

In its infancy, Madeira was unfortified. Benjamin Franklin was an early advocate of fortification, which became standard practice only in the mid-18th century, but even then, the wines were consumed early. In recent years, Freitas has worked to make young reserves and blends sexy again, finding them a place on the dinner table. Teixeira agrees: "Why should I wait 40 years if they're beautiful now? My job is to increase the quality of younger wines." Justino's, the island's largest producer, lacks deep stores, but its young offerings, like the 5 Years Old Fine Rich Reserve, are as approachable as its winemaker, who notes that "complexity comes with age, but structure comes now." Bottlings such as the 1999 Justino's Colheita from Tinta Negra evince the potential of youthful wines made well.

Our final tasting was at the esteemed house of Blandy's, which recently celebrated its bicentennial. There, the new CEO—Funchal-born, British-educated, 33-year-old Chris Blandy, representing the eighth generation—greeted us at the old lodge. He not only embraces Madeira's viticultural heritage but enthusiastically markets young blends alongside a mind-blowing library of vintages. The Blandy Group is a diversified enterprise with holdings in hotels, travel, media, milling, and shipping. Given the tribulations the Blandy family experienced throughout the 20th century, from an *oidium* outbreak at its turn to Prohibition to the Portuguese revolu-



Photos by Jason Tesaro (top, bottom right); photo courtesy of Vinhos Barbeito (bottom left)

tion in the 1970s, its recent acquisition of other famous old producers—Cossart Gordon, Leacock's, and Miles—could prove a wise venture. As Blandy explains, "Our five-year program includes leasing land via 20-year contracts to preserve the future of noble white varieties." The European Union also promotes the island's winemaking heritage by offering financial incentives to quality-minded producers through its Program of Options for the Remoteness and Insularity of Madeira and the Azores.

Madeira Renaissance

Madeira, virtually the official wine of the Age of Enlightenment, is on the brink of a renaissance. "There's vastly more interest than there was five or 10 years ago," says Berk. "A lot of it

is being driven by sommeliers and chefs who've gotten excited about Sercials and Verdelhos. The South has been a particular hot spot, because Madeira's historical links to Charleston, Savannah, and Atlanta dovetail so nicely with the growing interest in Southern food culture."

Madeira has certainly earned a place on our dinner table, near the writing desk, and alongside liqueurs in the den; a daily sip hearkens back to the British ritual of "elevenses." In this age of indie production, Madeira remains a boutique commodity, yet one that resonates across generations. Sommeliers and consumers alike would do well to discover Madeira's modern incarnations while rediscovering what our Founders knew ages ago. 🍷



Lab at Vinhos Barbeito.

KEY PRODUCERS AND SHIPPERS

According to the Instituto do Vinho da Madeira, the island's production of 3.01 million liters in 2011 represents a decline of more than 15% since 2007, prior to the global economic crisis. France, Germany, and the United Kingdom account for nearly 50% of the export market; the United States, Madeira's fifth largest importer, imports about 6%, with a volume now almost equal to that of 2007. New 3-year-old wines and the sweet and medium-dry styles sell best worldwide. Exports of *colheitas*, *frasqueiras*, and older vintages represent a small but growing sector of the market (Malmsey and Bual are the best sellers by volume), while Sercial and Verdelho sales have now surpassed those of 2007—and exports of Terrantez and Bastardo have begun to grow. Over the past 30 years, large producers have consolidated with or acquired defunct houses and absorbed their inventories, leaving only five exporters of Madeira on the island (Henriques & Henriques and Justino's are under common ownership).

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Aging cellar at Vinhos Barbeito.

