



A Madeira Wine Dinner

The 30 seats were quickly booked but to be honest; did any of the guests really know what was awaiting them? Adam Dahlberg and Albin Wessman, both previously at [Mathias Dahlgren](#), runs [Adam & Albin Matstudio](#) in Stockholm. Two brilliant chefs that not only cooks on an extremely high and intelligent level, they also think wine. No wonder my friend Zvonko, who runs the wine import [Vinopia](#) and represents Vinhos Barbeito in Sweden, had chosen the two guys restaurant for a truly unique and memorable Madeira wine dinner.

Four courses. Eight Madeira wines from Vinhos Barbeito; two with each dish. Two present the wines? The winemaker himself, Ricardo Diogo.

Menu

Baked hen egg, wild garlic, mushroom & a thick cream with chicken reduction

Delvino Reserva, 5 Years Old
Rainwater Reserva, 5 Years Old

Soused herring, creamy new potatoes, crispy cabbage & caviar

Single Harvest (Tinta Negra) 2003
Verdelho Reserva Velha, 10 Years Old

Braised Iberian pork cheek, fried duck liver, browned onion, roasted almonds & fennel pollen

Boal Reserva Velha, 10 Years Old
Colheita Malvasia 2000, Single Cask 225 d+e

Hot chocolate filled bread, maple syrup, melted butter, milk sorbet & grated nutmeg

Malvasia Lote 14050, 20 Years Old
Malvasia 1882, Ribeiro Real

For non-Swedes it's worth knowing that for a few decades Sweden were one of the biggest importers of Madeira in the world. For some time the biggest. This was mainly in the first decades of the 1900 century and up until the second world war. Today, although still being an important market for Madeira wine, the wines has lost their previous top position in the country. But just as in many other countries around the world there's an awakened interest for the island's wines. 100 years ago, a glass of wine in Sweden we're equivalent to a glass of Madeira. It was served with all kinds of food or just as a drink. Let's do that again!

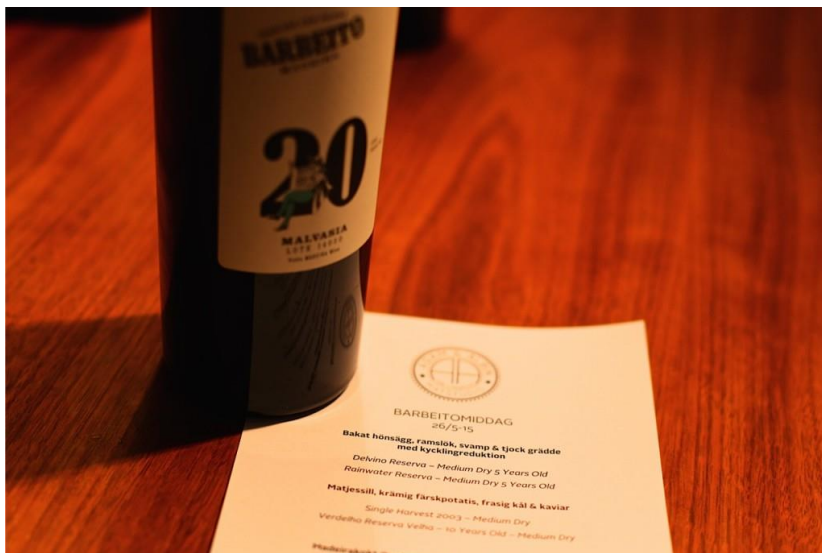
The baked hen egg, wild garlic, mushroom and a thick cream with chicken reduction course paired beautifully with the 5 Years Old Rainwater. The serving was rich in taste but not powerful. Hence the elegant Rainwater which consists of mainly Tinta Negra and a fifth Verdelho, did the job incredibly well. The slightly higher sweetness, the less marked acidity, the lower alcohol; it all contributed to the pairing. The Delvino Reserva, a personal favorite, went fine as well with the dish but probably needs more contrasts, saltier ingredients in the course.



Next course; ***the soused herring, served with creamy new potatoes, crispy cabbage and caviar***, was a crazy good pairing with the 10 Years Old Verdelho. The herring which is called Matjes in Sweden, originally comes from the Netherlands but has become a classic here as well. The fish is ripened in barrels for a few days, in a brine with sugar, cinnamon, clove, sandalwood and allspice. The salty and fat taste impression of the fish, the creamy new potatoes which basically is potatoes, butter and air were rich in taste and needed the Verdelho. Perfect contrasts. The Tinta Negra 2003 is a beautiful wine but simply too elegant for the pairing.



Then a goose bumps moment. Who would have thought that a 10 Years Old Boal with 75 grams of sugar would come out as semi-dry when paired with *the braised Iberian pork cheek, served with fried duck liver, browned onions, roasted almonds and fennel pollen*? One of those moments when the wine and food finds each other. Nobody wins, they just harmonize. Such an elegant pairing. The Malvasia also went surprisingly well, really good actually, but was beaten by the Boal.



A classic dish at Adam & Albin, *the hot chocolate filled bread, maple syrup, melted butter, milk sorbet and grated nutmeg* had no problems becoming best friend with the two Malvasia wines. Both excellent in their way although the freshness of the 20 Years Old Lote 14050 became a preference. Salt meets sweetness, fat meets acidity, the sorbet...such a great pairing. And to be honest, the 1882 deserved its very own moment, alone. After all, only 176 bottles were made.

Drinking only Madeira throughout four courses didn't hurt at all, no lack of freshness either. It's all about serving gastronomic Madeira wines with the food, chilling them and pouring moderately. And for that, Vinhos Barbeito is a great choice. I think Ricardo Diogo were quite pleased as well, with the results.

N.B. The wines were served chilled, at 10-12 C, except the older wines which had a slightly higher serving temperature.

Photo at the top; chef Adam and chef Albin.