



Madeira wine travels to England by sailboat once again



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WINE

Madeira wine has once again battled the open waters by sailboat to reach British shores. Thanks to a partnership between specialist wine importer Raymond Reynolds and leading Madeira producer Barbeito, a unique, commemorative Rainwater Madeira has sailed from the eponymous Portuguese Atlantic island to Britain, just as it did in years gone by.

The bottling, called Atlantic Rainwater, was shipped from Madeira on a wooden sailing lugger called *Grayhound* in July and arrived at the port of Penzance, Cornwall, on 19 August.

'The idea came about six years ago, when we started some investigations to understand how it could work, all the mechanics of it,' Raymond Reynolds told *imbibe*.

The merchant first trialled the idea in 2017 by shipping some cases of Niepoort port: 'We thought it was going to be a one-off, because it was not really profitable, but it tied in well with our concerns over carbon footprints. All these things combined make for a really nice marketing story, but the project actually comes from my own genuine interest in sailing.'

Atlantic Rainwater is a medium-dry Madeira with a base of Tinta Negra Mole from Estreito de Câmara de Lobos and São Vicente, a touch of Serrial from Seixal, and a dash of Verdelho from Raposeira. Made in very limited amounts – only 2,400 half-litre bottles were produced – it was aged in the traditional canteiro method.

The wine importer claims that 'the wine combines beautifully developed citrus and dried fruit flavours with a savoury salinity. The acidity of the wine brings it all together in balance'.

Could this project help the category regain much-needed market share?

'A story like this can catch people's imaginations,' commented Reynolds. 'Maybe their curiosity to try something that has huge historical foundations. We're probably going to do it again, perhaps in a couple of years time. It will never be the same wine, it will be a different blend.'

For all you Madeira fanatics out there, Raymond Reynolds will be uncorking samples at the upcoming Dirty Dozen Tasting on 10 September at Glaziers Hall in London.

£16.75/50cl, Raymond Reynolds

