

FRIDAY TASTINGS: RARE WINE CO. MADEIRA

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-By [Craig Bridger](#), Friday December 17th, 2010 at 5:49 pm



Here's how this usually goes: we say *dessert wine*, you say *too sweet*. Well, no. Not Madeira. And certainly not during the holidays, when sweet beverages (how's that eggnog?) are as ubiquitous as reindeer sweaters. Madeira (fortified, aged, and heat-exposed wine from Portugal's Madeira Islands) was once much-loved in America (the founding fathers were big fans). And with their Historic Series Madeiras—four non-vintage selections now available in a limited gift set of half-bottles—the **Rare Wine Co.** reminds us why. Using stocks of Special Reserve Madeira from Vinhos Barbeito (a choice Madeira house) blended with 40-to-60-year old Tinta Negro Mole, the set highlights the versatility and nuance of vintage Madeira without a vintage price tag (the set is \$95). Each bottle is named for an American port that did brisk Madeira trade. The Charleston Sercial is dry, sherry-like, and would romance a cheese plate; the lively Savannah Verdelho could handle a pork belly; the Boston Bual (our pick) has a date with that cigar you've been saving; and the rich New York Malmsey is destined for chocolate. Sweet.