

Quinta dos Carvalhais,
Dão Branco Especial NV
Dão, Portugal



PRODUCER

Quinta dos Carvalhais is credited with spearheading the quality renaissance of Dão wines in the early '90s and continues to make some of the region's finest wines today. After being purchased by Sogrape in 1988, significant improvements were made to the winery and vineyards, including the replanting of near-extinct Dão varieties such as Encruzado, a grape now heralded as one of Portugal's finest. Current Quinta dos Carvalhais winemaker Beatriz Cabral de Almeida continues to champion these varieties, making an impressive range of estate wines that show lovely depth, vibrant fruit, and exceptional elegance.

VINEYARDS

This 105-hectare property, situated at an altitude of 465-500 metres above sea level, has 50 hectares under vine. Warm days and cool nights at this altitude slow down the grape ripening process and result in wines with lovely depth yet vibrant fruit and a signature freshness. The vineyards are planted on poor granite soils with a predominance of indigenous Dão varieties including Touriga Nacional, Alfrocheiro and Encruzado. Microzoning studies have been carried out on the estate, identifying nine different soil types and a multitude of different microclimates, and each grape variety has been matched to its ideal plot. This precision viticulture provides Beatriz with a great diversity of blending options.

VINTAGE

The 2023 bottling of the Branco Especial is a hugely complex blend of wines from seven different vintages that each impart their own unique quality: 2009 (22%), 2010 (8%), 2013 (8%), 2014 (10%), 2015 (15%), 2018 (16%) and 2022 (3%). A delicious ripeness from warm and dry years such as the 2015 is brought into balance by the more crisp and aromatic wines of cooler vintages like the 2014 and the 2018. 14,733 bottles of the 2023 blend were produced.

VINIFICATION

For each vintage the grapes were harvested by hand into small 20kg boxes and then loaded directly into the pneumatic press upon arrival at the winery. The fruit from the field blend plot underwent a pre-fermentation maceration on the skins for 24 hours before being racked off. Fermentation took place in stainless-steel tanks for around 20 days at temperatures no higher than 16°C. Following fermentation, the wines were then aged in used French oak barrels of various different sizes (225L, 300L and 500L) and remained in barrel until the final blend was assembled and left for a period of time to marry before being bottled in 2023.

TASTING NOTES

Bright golden in colour, the Branco Especial has huge intensity and complexity of aroma on the nose with well-defined aromas of apple, dried fruits and honey married with brioche and warm spicy notes. The wine is rich, with extraordinary body on the palate balanced by a lively acidity. An elegant, complex and very sophisticated white wine.

AWARDS

International Wine Challenge 2020, Silver
Sommelier Wine Awards 2019, Gold

Grape Varieties	40% Encruzado 29% Old Vine Field Blend 23% Gouveio (Godello) 8% Semillon
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Winemaker	Beatriz Cabral de Almeida
Closure	Natural Cork
ABV	14%
Residual Sugar	0.9g/L
Acidity	6.3g/L
Wine pH	3.2
Bottle Sizes	75cl
Notes	Sustainable, Vegetarian, Vegan