2015 Port round-up: Declarations of content

Noval, Ramos Pinto, The Fladgate Partnership, and the Symington Family will all be releasing some pretty special 2015 Vintage wines

Symington Family Estates and The Fladgate Partnership have announced a range of releases from the hot, dry 2015 vintage, as both companies celebrate being issued with royal warrants as regular suppliers to the Queen and the royal household.

Cockburn’s leads the way for the Symingtons, with the family marking the 200th anniversary of Cockburn’s foundation by making 3,500 cases (plus 100 magnums, 99 double magnums, and 50 Impériales) of Cockburn’s 2015 Vintage Port. The second Cockburn’s Vintage to be made by the Symingtons since they acquired the brand name in 2010 (the vineyards and winery were acquired in 2006) was made entirely in lagares at the Senhora da Ribeira winery from fruit sourced from Cockburn’s two Douro Superior Vineyards Quinta dos Canais and Quinta de Vale Coelha.

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The Symingtons also found vintage conditions to be suitably impressive to allow them to bottle a second vintage of their small-production single-vineyard Port, The Stone Terraces. Declared only when the vineyard produces what the family calls an “incomparable wine” (the only other declared vintage is 2011).

The Stone Terraces is made from fruit grown in the eponymous 2.9-ha (7.2-acre) vineyard at Graham’s Quinta dos Malvedos, a collection of three plots, none of which face south, planted on terraces with walls between 5ft (1.5m) and 9ft (3m) high and largely with no more than one row of vines per terrace. Just 400 cases have been made of a wine that the Symingtons describe as “a remarkable Vintage Port of extraordinary elegance and complexity.”

In a vintage that the family said was the “hottest and driest for 36 years” in the Douro, the Symingtons also produced two Single Quinta Vintage Ports: 950 cases of 2015 Quinta do Vesuvio and 700 cases of Dow’s 2015 Quinta Senhora da Ribeira, from estates facing each other.

on opposite banks of the Douro, but both of which benefited, like The Stone Terraces, from the slightly cooler conditions in the Douro Superior.

The Fladgate Partnership is also marking a bicentenary of its own, with a Vintage release, Fonseca Guimarães 2015 Vintage Port commemorating the 200th anniversary of Fonseca’s foundation. “As we celebrated Fonseca’s 200th birthday in 2015, I’m delighted that the year has produced a Vintage Port of such excellent quality,” said Fladgate Partnership managing director Adrian Bridge. “The Guimarães 2015 will make superb early drinking but will not disappoint those who wish to cellar it.”

The Guimarães is joined in the Fladgate 2015 Vintage portfolio by two Single Quinta Vintage Ports. Taylor’s 2015 Quinta da Vargellas is described by the company as displaying “all the balance and elegance that are the hallmarks of the property,” while Geoff’s 2015 Quinta do Roêda is marked by “grace and refinement.”

Both Quinta do Noval and the Louis Roederer-owned Ramos Pinto have also declared their hands for the 2015 vintage. Some 2,600 cases of 2015 Quinta do Noval have been made, which, according to Noval managing director Christian Seely, amounts to just 9 percent of the quint’s total production. The wine is characterized by “great aromatic intensity and purity of fruit,” Seely added. “The nose has wild black-fruit notes, with great freshness and balance on the palate. There is an underlying strong tannic backbone. The wine is powerful, deep, and long and should develop into a classic Quinta do Noval Vintage Port.”

The Ramos Pinto 2015 Vintage Port, meanwhile, is a blend of two quintas—Quinta de Ervamoira in the Douro Superior and Quinta do Bom Retiro in the Cima Corgo—described by Ramos Pinto master blender Ana Rosas as having “attractive aromas, fruit, and rokrose, [and] a good body with a long, peppery finish. A vintage that will age for many years.”