

THAT LITTLE WINE BAR

James The Sommelier – Vinho Verde

'Wine honors the soul, so honor it with yours.'

Portugese Vinho Verde: Green never tasted so good

Portugal is renowned for its port wine; the thick, sweet digestif enjoyed by many after a dessert and invented to fill the picky needs of the English. A little less well known are Portugal's white and red wines. This seems to be a bit of a shame considering that the north of Portugal is the only place to sample wine heritage amidst community singing, vines climbing street lamp-posts and Latino maidens carrying pots on swaying hips. And where the majority of the population still makes a living solely through wine production. Experience, then, an evidently conscious effort to preserve indigenous varietals and replace colonizer grapes (despite the fact that few wine drinkers know any of the names!) and experience one of the most unpretentious and true wine growing regions in the world.

Vinho Verde white wines, particularly, are grown in the largest and most northern region of the Demarcated Region of Vinho Verde- the northwest of Portugal, an area traditionally known as Entre-Douro-e-Minho. Vine growing here still uses traditional methods of raising the vines off the ground via high trellises or even lampposts to allow space for agricultural farming beneath and to protect the vines from disease; an old technique which is fast dying out, but nice to know that some people just aren't concerned about trends.



The taste of these unpretentious whites from northern Portugal is the real point, however. Literally translated, "Vinho Verde" means "Green wine" describing the young character of the wine, with the taste remaining dry, acidic and massively refreshing in hot climates. While not strong in taste due to their low alcohol content they can be complex with floral, aromatic bouquets as well as fruity nuances on the tongue. On top of this eminently drinkable character for refreshing yourself after the sun has had its wicked way with you, the wine also holds a surprise in the form of its light fizz. Not even classed as semi-sparkling, the bubbles tend to reinforce its crisp nature, gently tickling the back of your throat and leaving you desperate for that next sip. Again, an old concept but stalwartly kept through the ages, and now arriving full-circle as something unique and new. There is, therefore, something to be said about sticking to your guns.

With this much variety in taste it is not surprising that there are over 20 'recommended' and 'authorized' grapes that producers from the region choose from to make these Vinho Verde wines, depending on the locality they are growing in. Some of the most popular grapes, however, are Loureiro, Arinto, Trajadura. White Vinho Verde wines are the most important wine export and the most drunk at home on Portugal. As one of the most suited wines to be consumed as young as possible (what better excuse to drink... immediately) white Vinho Verde is a pleasant surprise to all and puts everyone at ease. As Paolo Alexandre put it 'And I will remember green wine, The white village I left behind the sea.'

Tips: Try our new Messias Vinho Verde for your first (and probably not last) taste of Portugal.

For more information about wine join our wine classes at That Little Wine Bar, 54 Chow Thye Road,
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