

NIEPOORT VINTAGE PORT 2011

At Niepoort, the decision to 'declare' a year for Vintage Port is a serious yet exciting one. As small and family-owned producers, we have to combine our current know-how with the legacy left to us by our forbears. In this way we can assure the future reputation of our Vintage Ports .

At Niepoort, a Vintage Port will only be made in years where the component ports deliver a special combination of power and elegance. Our finest ports from 2011 have exhibited all these traits.

Harvest Notes

The agricultural year in 2011 will be remembered for relatively low precipitation during the winter and an unusually early bud burst in March, along with a sudden extreme heat in June which literally led to burnt clusters in exposed and early varieties such as Tinta Barroca. Although July and the end of August were relatively cool with some light precipitation in the final days of August and first days of September, temperatures picked up and the harvest had to be accelerated to avoid berry shrivel.

In the end, low yields combined with very good acidity and great colour turned up in a perfect year for Vintage Port.

The first fruit was harvested from the more exposed vineyards in Vale de Mendiz, close to our Port winery. Later grapes from Soutelo were picked which give classic more robust wines. Around that time, we also picked the grapes from the less exposed, north-facing slopes in Vale de Mendiz. The Fisca vineyard, which provides such critical fruit quality for a good Niepoort vintage, was picked at different stages of the harvest and has produced some really fine wines.

It is worth noting that when the fermenting musts are fortified there is a temporary loss of colour which picks up straight away as the brandy blends with the musts, however in 2011 it was interesting to observe that young ports were immediately, extremely dark at the point of fortification and have remained so ever since.

Vinification

All the components for our 2011 Vintage Port were trodden by foot in the unique circular granite *lagares* at our small Port winery in Vale de Mendiz and we included almost 100% stems in the vinification.

The component Ports were racked soon after harvest, and aged in *toneis* in the Douro over the winter, before moving them to Vila Nova de Gaia in March 2012. From there, we re-tasted extensively in order to find the ideal wines for a 2011 Niepoort Vintage Port. The final blend then rested again in *toneis* at our Lodges in Gaia until bottling in July 2013.

Tasting Notes

The colour of the 2011 Vintage has further benefited from a cold second winter, showing a dark purple colour right up to the rim of the glass. The aroma is fine, has great depth and intensity with notes of black pepper and dark fruits. The palate is fresh and elegant but underpinned by a beautifully proportioned tannic structure giving it great length and complexity.

2011 Vintage continues Niepoort's tradition to create balanced Ports with great concentration but fine and delicate. Once again we believe that we have produced Vintage Port to last for decades to come.