



Niepoort Garrafeira 1977

The second generation of the Niepoort family, in the late 19th century, had the fortunate idea of buying from a German glass factory in Oldenburg about 4000 demijohns of dark-green glass with varying capacities from 8 to 11 litres. Eduard Karel Jacob van der Niepoort died early and it was his son, Eduard Marius van der Niepoort, Dirk's grandfather, who gave purpose to the demijohns by bottling the best wines of the 1931 harvest, thus creating the type "Garrafeira Niepoort". Since the distant year of 1931 to this day the maturation in the demijohns, sealed with a cork, has been closely watched, it is almost a "sacred" ritual for both the Niepoort and the Nogueira families. The introduction of the Garrafeira 1977 in the market was preceded by in-depth analyses, extensive tastings (very interesting, by the way), so that we could be sure of making the right choice and that, at that moment, we stand before a near-perfect wine! In fact, the Garrafeira is not just a wine; it means by itself quality far above the traditional canons. The tasting offers an unique experience, indeed one that only those who taste and feel can explain. A great mixture of sensations, aromas and flavours with a perfect balance between youth and experience, between the novelty of the fruit and the "good old age" that only long years of ageing can achieve.

VINIFICATION

With the exception of a brief period in July, the summer of 1977 was very mild. In June, blooming was marked by some blossom drop (which led to a poor cluster formation). In late August, the vines showed signs of slow development. However, in early September, heat returned and with it a rapid ripening of the grapes. Like in almost all classical years, it rained slightly before the harvest, thus allowing the vines to recover the water levels and to complete a more perfect maturation process. The harvest began near the end of September.

The entire vinification was made in traditional granite lagares, with 100% stems. During fermentation, the musts showed very dark colours with hues of purple and an excellent balance and acidity. The wine then spent five years in casks in the cellars of Vila Nova de Gaia, and in 1982 it was bottled in demijohns, where it remained for 28 years, under close watch, in search of the perfect occasion for decantation into bottles. This occurred in 2007 and since then the wine has rested quietly in the Niepoort cellars in Vila Nova de Gaia until September 2011, when it was considered perfect for tasting!

TASTING NOTES

Still young in the colour, it is brownish red in the centre and more orange towards the board. On the nose, we are taken to a dimension where everything is both complex, fine and balanced: spices, red fruit (plums), chocolate and light toast with notes of dried fruit and cigar box. The palate confirms just what you expect: elegant, soft, silky tannins that blend perfectly to an acidity giving the whole a great freshness and pleasure. Long finish and a very pleasant taste.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

PRODUCER Niepoort (Vinhos) S.A. REGION Douro SOIL TYPE Schist VINEYARDS Old Vines of the subregion Cima Corgo

AVERAGE VINE AGE 80 years and over 100 years

GRAPE VARIETIES Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz, Tinto Cão, Tinta Francisca, Touriga Nacional, Tinta Amarela, Sousão and others

VINES PER HA 4000-6000 HARVEST PERIOD September/October HARVEST METHOD Hand picked

FERMENTATION Lagares (wine press tanks)/Foot treading AGEING Casks (3 to 6 years) and demijohns (about 20 years)

RESIDUAL SUGAR (G/Dm³) 109.7 ALCOHOL (%) 20.5 BAUMÉ 3.9 TOTAL ACIDITY (G/Dm³) 3.96 TOTAL SO₂ (MG/Dm³) 32

FOOD SUGGESTIONS Garrafeira is a fine and elegant Port and is best appreciated on its own and in good company.