



HERDADE
ALDEIA DE CIMA



The Herdade Aldeia de Cima is launching a white wine that is matured in wooden vats - a Garrafeira wine from the Serra do Mendro, in the Alentejo

The Herdade Aldeia de Cima's Garrafeira White 2019 is inspired by the unique riches of the terroir of the Serra do Mendro. Here, the stillness of time makes it possible to interpret the origins, while respecting its primary elements: the soil, climate and grape variety. This white wine matured in wooden vats, a unique and timeless wine, has fine textures, mineral notes, and intense fresh fruit aromas, combined with the complexity endowed by the indigenous grape varieties planted at high altitude, tempered by fresh Atlantic winds.

At the Herdade Aldeia de Cima, in the Serra do Mendro, in the municipality of Vidigueira, after selecting the Antão Vaz, Arinto and Alvarinho grape varieties, and after – a gentle pneumatic pressing and slow decantation at low temperatures, the must begin its fermentation using the sur lie process in the new no. 7 Radoux French oak vats. Based on a meticulous sensory level, accurate work is then conducted, keeping the lees in suspension, in the search for finesse and creaminess. A contemplative winemaking process preserves its exclusive character. Finally, the fermentation and ageing for nine months in the barrel and the contact with these large wooden vats, gives it natural balance, intensity, and sophistication of a timeless wine. Although this seems to be a new world trend, the production of wines in large vats and barrels has always been a traditional practice in parts of the so-called European Old World – in Tuscany, Piedmont, Bordeaux, and in Portugal, in the Alentejo region.

TRADITIONAL WINERY AND FERMENTATION IN LARGE OAK VATS

Marked by the encounter between the past and future, the Herdade Aldeia de Cima's boutique winery was opened in 2019 - where the estate's winemakers like to say that there is a "contemplative winemaking process". The project provides a minimal intervention winemaking approach, revealing the diversity and multi-faceted character of the micro plots, soils, and grape varieties.

Ancestry and tradition are sought in the storage room, reflected in the small terracotta tijanas and the amphorae made from ceramic powder on a natural fibre structure, known as Cocciopesto.



Since the beginning of the project, it has been decided that fermentation of the wines in oak vats and Nico Velo concrete tanks is essential to design a winery with a maximum capacity for 100,000 bottles. It was concluded that it is worth waiting and exploring the concept of the Alentejo's wine cellars. "When we produced our first wines, we always defined classic and elegant profiles, which preserved the authenticity of the terroir and revealed the tremendous complexity of the Alentejo's soils, that are so heterogeneous and different from any other part of the country, and of these indigenous grape varieties that reveal enormous resilience, typicality and freshness in higher altitudes such as the Serra do Mendro.

For that reason, it made sense for them to be presented to the market two years after the harvest, which is what we've done so far", explains Luisa Amorim. "But, after working with the grapes from the 2019 harvest in our winery at the Herdade Aldeia de Cima, we found even greater wealth and diversity, since no one piece is like any other, and we managed to obtain extraordinary complexity, together with the pleasant surprise of Alentejo wines when they are made in large-scale wooden vats and concrete tanks, and slow oxygenation to more porous surfaces, such as clay and plaster", adds Luisa Amorim.

The choice of three different French cooperages - Taransaud, Radoux and Boutes - was based on three qualitative criteria: origin of the wood / control of the raw material in the forest, degree of porosity, associated with the drying method, and the cooper's aromatic profile.

From a technical perspective, the manufacturing process of the large wooden vats represents the production of unique items that are made to order for special customers, and take months to deliver, requiring a complex process of exclusively manual assembly. The woods are carefully selected from forests in the centre of France, based on oak trees about seven metres tall, which give rise to staves for a 3000-litre wooden vat, with a total length of 1.70m, thickness of 54mm and average width of 8cm. Each of these factors delivers major subtlety, and makes the wooden notes much softer than normal.

The choice of eight 3000-litre vats for the Herdade Aldeia de Cima was also made in the context of this philosophy; all of them have a cooling system and are carefully equipped with the tools needed by the winemaker — a stainless steel door, rack and sample valves. By experimenting with some of them with white and red wines, it was understood that this was the right way to produce a Garrafeira white at the Herdade Aldeia de Cima.



THE GARRAFEIRA WINE IN A WOODEN VAT

In the Alentejo, it is impossible not to talk about stillness and calm evolution. This concept involves the excellent relationship between a larger volume of wine for a smaller wooden surface, enhancing a stage of greater progressiveness and harmony.

“We believe that the use of a *balseiro* wooden vat, with porous channels that are different from standard barrels, provides a more natural and traditional temperature during fermentation. In the case of white wines this is about one to two weeks longer, providing more structure and a slow micro-oxygenation reaction to the wine, maintaining its colour, aroma and the freshness of the fruit”, explains the winemaker, António Cavalheiro.

This is a very challenging exercise, which in the end blends different grape varieties (Antão Vaz, Arinto and Alvarinho), thereby forming an even more refined set, with little human intervention. "Sometimes we say that it is like the work of a goldsmith, where even the noise counts, because it is not possible to make such a wine, despite the hydrometers in the laboratory, unless we turn on a flashlight, listen to the fermentation and the spike in the wooden vat. It is like making a piece of fine watchmaking and understanding when and how the machine is working and that we have to wind it up whenever it needs this" explains António Cavalheiro.

In this context of sustainability and preservation of the varietal character of the wines, the *balseiro* wooden vat provide the Herdade Aldeia de Cima with an opportunity to establish a dialogue with the wine, obtaining greater balance and extra elegance.

Respect for the primary elements – the soil, climate and grape variety - guides the idea of creating different and unique wines. Here we look at the land as our home, looking for fine textures, mineral notes, intense fresh fruit scents and aromas from the Mediterranean forest, the complexity that the aromas of the local grape varieties that are grown at a high altitude are mixed with the flavours originating from soils on sunny slopes, where the temperatures are moderated by the fresh Atlantic winds, originate a different Alentejo, in the Serra do Mendro, that divides the Alto Alentejo from the Baixo Alentejo.

"In the winery of the Herdade Aldeia de Cima, the elements of winemaking and storage help us define and preserve the character of each wine. Using French oak vats with 3000L capacity, we have managed to return to the origins, to the land, to the vineyard, to the encounter with the primary fruit, with gravity and with minerality. It is the perception of natural balance, intensity, complexity, originality, concentration and linearity, true testimonies of the unique conditions in which Herdade Aldeia de Cima wines are made", stresses the winemaker, Jorge Alves.

There are several slogans in this winery, but one is transversal: identity. Respect for the culture of the village is reflected in the image that has been developed by the designer Eduardo Aires. Whatever the path, Alentejo transmits it.

TARANSAUD OVOID BARRELS

Over an 18-month period, the Herdade Aldeia de Cima's winemaking team felt that the major contribution of the large wooden barrels justified the choice and that the relationship between the wine and the wood substantially changes when we talk about small format barrels - 225, 300 or 500L - or large format barrels - 1200, 1500L, etc.

The contribution of the wood "dissipates" through the blend, or is perceived in a much lighter manner, making the wine more elegant over time and therefore more natural and valuable. The wooden notes are discreet, and the process of micro-oxygenation and maturation are slower, thereby contributing to greater freshness of the fruit, which is amazing for ageing in the bottle, and therefore creating a potential Garrafeira wine.



Taking into account the required characteristics and dimensions, the supplier was carefully selected and we chose Taransaud, due to the origin of the wood, thickness, format and final assemblage. We selected the eight 1200L ovoid barrels for ageing. The height of 1.50m by 1.20m in depth, the thickness of 54mm, and the average 7cm width of the staves make these barrels unique pieces of exclusively manual manufacture and assembly.

Wood, as a good thermal insulator, means that the ageing environment is calmer, dominated by the stillness that is necessary for good evolution of the tannins. The textures conferred are the result of natural oxygenation which, due to the slow evaporation, makes the wines richer and more concentrated.

The ovoid shape of the barrel, inspired by ancient traditions and knowledge of the manufacture of *Terracotta* or concrete amphorae, makes us think of the laws of physics. With no edges or corners, the convection currents enable “the eternal movement” of the wine, providing a more advanced ageing process. In the Herdade Aldeia de Cima, we believe that the future can only be created by revisiting ancestral practices. Sustainability only makes sense when there is profound respect for the elements and it is through this impetus of responsibility and consideration for the past that the estate seeks to recreate the destination.

GARRAFEIRA WHITE

Garrafeira is a very old term, which in Portugal was born in the Dão and Bairrada regions and is used for more special wines - "cellar wines" to be aged in the bottle. There is no doubt that the maturation time in the bottle is helped by the integration of the structure, body, acidity, gravity and wooden elements that only the bottle and time can endow to the world's finest wines.

Garrafeira was then governed by the legislation of several wine Regions (DOC's) in Portugal, since this mention is strictly reserved for high-level wines, with a minimum period of 12 months ageing for white wines – with at least six months in a glass bottle. For red wines, the legislation requires a minimum period of 30 months ageing - with at least 12 months in a glass bottle -, in the case of the Alentejo region, which is duly accompanied, over time, by the Alentejo Regional Vitivinicultural Commission (CVRA) that has a specific current account.

This classification is the biggest challenge for a production and winemaking team in the Alentejo region. Its exclusivity is due to the unique capacity of a wine, after a long period of aging, partially in the bottle, to rise to unique moments of contemplation.

The Herdade Aldeia de Cima's Garrafeira White 2019 mirrors the unique wealth of the terroir of the Serra do Mendro. With the five senses always present, meticulous work is conducted, while keeping the lees in suspension, looking for finesse and creaminess. Fermentation takes place over a 32-day period at 12°C. The importance of choosing the right wood, from French forests, associated with a volume ratio that is higher than the contact surface, makes micro-oxygenation a progressive and balanced process. A contemplative winemaking process preserves this exclusive character. Finally, the ageing in the same 3000L wooden vats gives it a natural balance, intensity, and the sophistication of a timeless wine.

GARRAFEIRA WHITE 2019

(CVRA designation: 12 months of ageing, of which 6 months must be in a glass bottle)

Harvest period: 26 August to 27 September

Origin of the grapes: Vidigueira

70% Antão Vaz

25% Arinto

5% Alvarinho

Blend that is fermented and aged in 3000L New French Oak vats for 9 months, followed by 10 months maturation in the bottle

ABV = 14%

Total acidity = 5.6g /L

Bottling: June 2020

Production: 5820 (75cl) + 115 (1.5L)

Retail price of 75cl bottle: € 42

Retail price of 150cl bottle: € 82



RESERVA WHITE

Reserva White 2019 combines the terroir of this land in the municipality of Vidigueira, influenced by the fresher climate and the diversity of skeletal soils, which produces a balanced wine with fragrant aromas, linear structure, high density and a captivating minerality. Made from the Antão Vaz 45%, Arinto 45% and Alvarinho 10% grape varieties, gentle pressing of whole clusters, 48 hours of decantation at low temperatures, the Arinto Alvarinho blend was fermented in Nico Velo concrete tanks. In parallel, the same process was carried out for the Antão Vaz grape variety in second-hand French oak barrels of 500L. The assemblage is made one month later in the Nico Velo no. 14 and 15 vats, providing an ageing process that can generate freshness and minerality, while always conserving structure and density. It stands out because of its transparent viscosity and rich mouthfeel, making it a full-rounded and harmonious wine.

"Wine should always take us back to the territory of origin. It is the incessant search for balance," suggests the winemaker, Jorge Alves.

The stillness that is promoted in the fermentation and ageing process, carefully reveals itself later, in the luxury that subtly emerges inside the glass.

RESERVA WHITE 2019

Harvest Period: 26 August to 27 September

Source of the grapes Grapes: Vidigueira

45% Antão Vaz (2nd year 500l French oak barrels, 6 months)

45% Arinto (Nico Velo concrete tanks 6 months)

10% Alvarinho (Nico Velo concrete tanks 6 months)

ABV = 13.5%

Total acidity= 5.5g / l

Bottling: June 2020

Production: 9328 (75cl) + 199 (1.5L)

Retail price 75cl bottle: € 15.20

Retail price 150cl bottle: € 33



THE 2019 HARVEST

2019 was a relatively atypical wine year from a climatic point of view, not only because there was low rainfall in the winter, which itself made it possible to reduce some outbreaks of diseases, but above all, due to the wide variation in average temperatures, which enabled a slight advance in the vegetative cycle. This advance faded with the spring rains and subsequent climatic developments, and was very favourable for the phytosanitary quality of the grapes. Significant thermal amplitudes, with hot days and cool nights, allowed balanced maturation of the grapes and excellent levels of acidity. Beginning on 26 August 26 and ending on 27 September, the harvest took place on a regular basis, with very high quality musts, resulting in profound wines, with aromatic exuberance, dense and with high concentration.

In terms of white grape varieties, Alvarinho and Arinto were the first varieties to be harvested, followed 15 days later by Antão Vaz. Harvested at the correct moment, the grapes that we received at the Herdade Aldeia de Cima presented an extraordinary balance between total acidity and sugars, with the best possible prospects for wine production and winemaking.



HERDADE ALDEIA DE CIMA: RESPECT FOR THE PAST TO BUILD THE FUTURE

The Herdade Aldeia de Cima is a project conceived by the couple, Luisa Amorim and Francisco Rêgo, who live in the estate with their two daughters. In the estate's 2400 hectares no plot of land is like any other. Luisa Amorim has always known this, since her father, Américo Amorim, owned these lands. This allowed her to create a close relationship with the Alentejo from a very early age. Alongside cork - a core element of her family universe - wine has been one of her great passions for 20 years, running the Quinta Nova de Nossa Senhora do Carmo, in the Douro, and more recently the Taboadella, in the Dão. The Herdade Aldeia de Cima's wines, classic and elegant, preserve the typical character of their terroir. The wines have enormous complexity, based on heterogeneous soils and indigenous and Portuguese grape varieties. The impressive Armazém das Ramadas storehouse, built in 1953 to house cattle, was chosen for construction of the winery, with interior design by Ana Anahory and Felipa Almeida. The team at the Herdade Aldeia de Cima also includes José Falé, coordinator, Gonçalo Ramos, in charge of forestry and animal production, and the winemaking duo, Jorge Alves and António Cavalheiro, with support from Joaquim Faia in viticulture and Nelson Coelho in sales.

Herdade Aldeia de Cima
www.aldeiadecima.com