

Jose Maria da Fonseca y van Zeller LBV Port

The climate in the viticulture year of 2000 in the Douro valley was, in general, warm and dry. This happened mainly in the second part of the vegetative cycle of the vines, with rainfall 15 to 40% lower than the average of the last 30 years. Very exceptional weather conditions in February and March, with very dry and abnormally hot temperatures, were followed by two very cold and wet months of April and May, delaying and affecting the flowering season. This originated a low fertility rate in some of the most important grape varieties and collure affected the whole of the region.

The result was a small yield throughout the Douro. The whole of the summer was very dry, with temperatures in the area of 40°C for some days at the beginning of September, just before the harvest. This resulted in a very high concentration of the different components of the grape berries, which, combined with a very healthy sanitary condition of the vines and different grapes, resulted in very powerful and concentrated wines.

The year of 2000 was the first year for José Maria da Fonseca & van Zeller. Since 1998 that a careful study of various vineyards in different areas of the Douro was undertaken, in order to find a perfect balance for the wines and Ports to be produced by the company. This study and a vast past experience from the partners in the company resulted in a decision to concentrate our first efforts in two main small valleys: the Pinhão and the Torto. Vineyards from these two valleys, home of some of the most famous quintas and best Vintage Ports, were the base for the grapes for the new José Maria da Fonseca & van Zeller 2000 Vintage Port.

The harvest was planned for the second week of September. The grapes from the rio Torto area were brought in to the winery at Quinta do Vale D. Maria in middle September and those from the river Pinhão area at the end of the month. All grapes were foot trodden throughout all the fermentation process in small lagares, containing a maximum of 4.500 kilos of grapes (the average production of a hectare of vineyards in a normal yield year).

All wines aged at the Quinta in the old Port lodge until the final blending took place in May 2002. The wines are expected to be bottled in July/September 2002, resulting in a total of around 12.000 bottles of 75cl.