

RICARDO FREITAS SIGNATURE MADEIRAS

HANDCRAFTED MADEIRAS FROM THE ISLAND'S NEW STAR

Over the past two decades, The Rare Wine Co. has almost single-handedly restored America's deep affinity for Madeira, and one of our closest partners has been the young managing director and winemaker of Vinhos Barbeito, Ricardo Freitas.

We began working with Ricardo about 15 years ago, while he was still in his twenties. And so we've had the privilege to watch him emerge as the young star of Madeira.

HIS GRANDFATHER'S INFLUENCE

Ricardo grew up surrounded by the magical old vineyards that his grandfather and founder of the firm, Mario Barbeito, collected and sold. This background, plus Ricardo's skill as a winemaker, made him the perfect partner for our Historic Series project: a series of traditionally styled Madeiras that have become the most widely admired, and best-selling, fine Madeiras in the United States.

But while helping to make the Historic Series a reality, Ricardo has been engaged in his own labor of love, his **Signature Madeiras**. These pioneering Single-Harvest and Single-Cask Madeiras have created a sensation in Europe. (UK journalist Jancis Robinson recently wrote that the "delicately vivid" style of these wines may make Barbeito "the Lafite of Madeira.")

It is with a great deal of pleasure that we introduce these extraordinary limited-production wines to America.

GROUNDBREAKING WINES

While The Rare Wine Co. Historic Series pays homage to the great Vintage wines of the 19th and early 20th centuries, Ricardo sees his Single-Harvests and Single-Casks as launching a new epoch in Madeira's long history. These wines—made just a barrel or two at a time—take on the island's establishment, destroying several shibboleths in the process.

For example, Ricardo is demonstrating that the island's long-abused workhorse grape, Tinta Negra Mole, is capable of producing transcendent wine on its own, without blending with any of the more famous "noble" varieties. While other producers mute the expressiveness of this grape through estufa-

At right, Ricardo in the cellar of the Afonso family, one of his favorite growers in Cama dos Lobos.



heating and the use of caramel, Ricardo uses no caramel and ages only with the gentle canteiro method (which exposes the wine to no direct heat). The result has been pure Tinta Negra Mole wines of rare grace.

PURITY REVEALED

Ricardo has also demonstrated that selected single barrels of young Madeiras, if carefully made and aged by the canteiro method, can be a marvelous drink even at a young age. While the bottling of single barrels would be conventional in other

regions of the world, in Madeira it is considered odd for anything other than a vintage wine to be bottled without blending. In a recent interview, he said that other producers "thought we were crazy, until they saw how well the wines were received."

With his marvelous 1997 Single Harvest wine, he dusted off the notion of the single-vineyard Madeira, allowing a wine to express a unique terroir. Such wines have rarely been made throughout Madeira's history and have been nearly unheard-of in recent decades.

Finally, Ricardo took the unusual step of combining noble varieties in a fixed proportion, with his VB (Verdelho-Boal) blend. The wine has been a huge success, and is now nearing the end of its warmly received second release.

FIRST RELEASES FOR THE U.S. MARKET

Ricardo's methods result in small quantities, usually about 100 cases per release. In 2010, the following wines will be available in the U.S.:

2001 Barbeito Boal Colheita Madeira Casks 48+84

Barbeito Malvasia 30 Year Old Special Lot

1994 Barbeito Malvasia Single Cask '232c'

2000 Barbeito Malvasia Single Cask '44a'

Barbeito VB (Verdelho-Boal) Madeira Lot 2

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Jancis Robinson