

2009 Quinta de Lemos Tinta Roriz

The 2009 Tinta Roriz was aged for 18 months in French oak (70% new, 30% used). It comes in at 14.6% alcohol. Fresh and intense, this shows a fair share of tannic pop on the finish, giving it some notable intensity. There is a bit of an oak overlay just now, but overall it seems to have the structure to absorb it as time goes on. It's tightly wound and very focused demeanor makes it a bit restrained at the moment, but in a year or two it should blossom. There were 4,666 bottles produced. Drink now-2022.

This fine and relatively young family-owned estate (founded in 1997) now has distribution in the USA, which should be good news for consumers. The hand-crafted, small-production and generally late-released wines usually show fine structure, aiming more for age worthiness and complexity than fruity simplicity. This year's crop, though, seems better-balanced than many in the past, a bit rounder. Maybe that's a function of the vintage. We'll see as time goes on. They tend to be reasonably priced for the quality, too. The vines are still young (around 10 years for the most part), but they are a good representative of the region. It is somewhat astonishing how good the wines already are.

Importer: Quinta de Lemos, MHW, Ltd., Manha...

- Mark Squires (August, 2014)

2009 Quinta de Lemos Dona Georgina

The 2009 Dona Georgina is an 80-20 blend of Touriga Nacional and Tinta Roriz aged in all-new French oak for 18 months. It comes in at 14.6% alcohol. The wood shows too much up front, but that should get better in time. In fact, after an hour or so, it seemed pretty fine. With finesse and focus, this also shows fine, if subtle, concentration and length on the finish. What do you get by trading up here and spending double? Therein lies the problem for consumers, considering how fine the rest of the lineup is. While it doesn't necessarily seem more concentrated than all the others, it mostly shows the most expressive fruit with complexity on the finish, hints of game and leather to go with the violets. It also has the most power. That said, it shows the most oak, too, and that does the wine little good, submerging the fruit and character, at least now. Hopefully, that will improve with time in the cellar (as it did with the 2007, also reviewed this issue). It should have a reasonable aging curve. It is a very nice performance overall. Whether it is worth the price spike will have to be up to you and your wallet. It is not showing as well as the more developed 2007, also reviewed this issue, but I suspect this will surpass it with a f...

- Mark Squires (August, 2014)

2009 Quinta de Lemos Touriga Nacional

The 2009 Touriga Nacional was aged for 18 months in French oak (70% used, 30% new – if you've been following along re: the submissions this issue, the winery evidently has a formula and that is what I was told). It comes in at 14.5% alcohol. This is lovely Touriga, dense and a bit on the muscular side early on, but with fine fragrance, flavor and focus to go with its concentration. Tightening consistently with aeration, it proves to have a fine backbone as well. When it opens with some aeration, it becomes wonderfully expressive and powerfully aromatic. Overall, I'd say this is the best Touriga I've had yet from Lemos, even a little bit better than the fine 2007 revisited this issue. There were 8,000 bottles produced. Drink now-2024.

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2009 Quinta de Lemos Dona Santana

The 2009 Dona Santana was aged for 18 months in French oak (70% used, 30% new). Coming in at 14.3% alcohol, it is a blend of 60% Touriga Nacional, 20% Tinta Roriz, 10% Jaen and 10% Alfrocheiro. Quite charming, this is a lovely and fresh wine with reasonable concentration, good balance and finesse. It is rounder, more accessible and not as tannic as some the winery has produced, but it is no wimp and it has structure. Its juicy and delicious finish will win it some fans who might like it as well as, or better than, some of the bigger boys. Drinking nicely now, it may exceed expectations in the short to mid-term, but it may not have quite the potential for improvement of some of the upper-level wines. Yet, as it sat and aired, its structure seemed fine. It is easily the best value point in the lineup, a can't-miss buy here. It is completely charming, tastes great and doesn't have a hair out of place, seeming serious, yet bursting with flavor. I liked this when I saw it in Portugal, but retasting it at home proved how fine its balance and structure is. There were 43,154 bottles produced. Drink now-2022.

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- Mark Squires (August, 2014)

2006 Quinta de Lemos Tinta Roriz

The 2006 TINTA RORIZ is from a dubious vintage in most of Portugal. This is startlingly good for the vintage and it certainly exceeded my expectations. Deep, with some power on the end, it has a little, initial nuance of roast beef on the nose and a juicy, bright finish. I rather liked this a lot. Some time in the glass helped it, but it is a bit astringent. It otherwise drinks beautifully and seems quite serious, mouth coating and full. It will be interesting to see if this can evolve a bit more and come into better balance. I'm leaning up a bit. There were 1,660 bottles produced. Drink now-2019.

Quinta de Lemos is a beautiful and relatively new winery in the sub-region of Silgueiros. It is owned by the Lemos family and has a lot of promise. The vines remain mostly rather young (the '08 Georgina, for instance, was sourced from 9 year old vines). The wines, though, are faithful to what I view as the region's style--elegant in the mid-palate, while remaining well structured and ageworthy. They have a certain Burgundian feel to them overall, but the structure can tend as much to astringency as support. There are no compromises here, but I did have some concern at times about the balance. These young vines wines have no track re...

- Mark Squires (December, 2012)

2008 Quinta de Lemos Alfrocheiro

The 2008 ALFROCHEIRO is, of course, all Alfrocheiro, a grape that is typically popular in and common to this region. I've had a nice run of Alfrocheiros of late from wineries in the region and this is another nice one. Tight and crisp, this still has lovely texture and a clean, steely finish. There is an earthy note here that adds a little complexity. Like most of the wines from Lemos in this issue, the sensibilities are quite nice, with real structure, some elegance in the mid-palate and a sunny demeanor. Also like most of the wines here, it is rather astringent at times and the astringency can subsume the lovely fruit which early on is intensely flavorful. You have to tolerate or even appreciate a little rusticity, but this is pretty nice overall. Drink now-2019.

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2008 Quinta de Lemos Touriga Nacional

The 2008 Touriga Nacional is revisited this issue for a checkup, about two years after it was first seen. It has come along beautifully. The first look provided a lot of promising moments, but also a lot of hard tannins that were hard to get past. It was an act of faith to rate it well. There was, let's say, more in the way of projections and less in the way of evaluating a finished product. Now, we're closer to seeing the real deal here. Of the fine trilogy between 2007 and 2009, this is coming on like gangbusters and proving that it belongs in the conversation. If it doesn't have the lushness of the "big fruit" vintages like 2007 and 2009, it is displaying very fine concentration in the mid-palate now – it seems equal to the 2007, next to which it was tasted – and fine flavor as well. The fruit has really emerged. Its style is a bit different, consistent, perhaps, with the vintage, leaning more to structure. However, like all of this fine trilogy, that is a relative comment and there is plenty of both. It is hard to choose among them. This relatively young winery is proving both how consistent and how fine it is.

This relatively young winery in the region is an emerging star. Despite working with young vines, the wines have s...

- Mark Squires (January, 2015)

2008 Quinta de Lemos Dona Georgina

The 2008 Dona Georgina is revisited this issue for a checkup. It is an 80/20 blend of Touriga Nacional and Tinta Roriz, oak-aged for 18 months. This brand has not always done itself favors by its oak treatment, which remains fairly obvious for some time, but this shows better control of oak than its predecessor, the 2007 also reviewed this issue. The other problem is the big uptick in price over, say, the Touriga Nacional reviewed this issue. That's up to you and your wallet. That said, there isn't a whole lot other than oak overlay to complain about here now, and that's improved a lot from what I first saw. Beautifully constructed, very focused and more harmonious than I thought it could be, it is showing superb concentration and fine mouthfeel. It feels full in the mouth, a worthy competitor to the 2007 in that respect. It remains elegant and graceful, with an Old World feel to it. The oak should continue to integrate, and it is worth leaning up in expectation of that. It does have that question to answer as time goes on, but all signs are pointing in the right direction.

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- Mark Squires (January, 2015)

2007 Quinta de Lemos Touriga Nacional

The 2007 Touriga Nacional is revisited here for a checkup, and boy, is it coming along nicely. Full in the mouth, the fruit is beautifully expressive now. If it lacks the focused intensity of the 2008, also reviewed this issue, it is bursting with flavor, more harmonious and simply delicious. Sexy and lush, it is no slouch in the structure department either. This shows every sign of developing well and continually over the next decade or so.

This relatively young winery in the region is an emerging star. Despite working with young vines, the wines have show brilliantly. They are ageworthy, focused and able to develop with time. It is astonishing how much they have been able to do in such a short time with relatively young vines. It is a credit to their skill and dedication.

Importer(s):

NLC Wines, Brooklyn, N.Y., (917) 297-7407, WWW.NLCWINES.COM

- Mark Squires (January, 2015)

**2007 Quinta de Lemos Dona
Georgina**

The 2007 Dona Georgina is revisited this issue for a checkup. In theory, this upper level bottling is rather exceptional, but the heavy oak overlay remains rather prominent, at least on opening. That said, while the 2008 reviewed this issue controls its oak better, this has a lush and sexier feel to it that is extremely appealing. A fruit bomb is not all it is, though. That's not Lemos or Dão. It is also beautifully structured, a bit tight on the finish and shows fine grip and penetration. It becomes very elegant with aeration, too, a completely charming wine that makes a great match for food without overwhelming in any area. With air, it pulls in some oak and keeps getting better and better. As the oak fades a bit, the flavors on the finish become far more complex and interesting. It is another impressive performance from this young winery. The only problem with this bottling is the price – it is usually one of their best, often the best, but given the price spike, it is not as far above the rest as one might think. Pricing aside, if you're willing to spring for it, it delivers.

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**2013 Quinta de Lemos Encruzado
"Dona Paulette"**

The 2013 Encruzado "Dona Paulette" was aged for 15 months in a 50/50 mixture of new and second-use French oak. This is only the second release of this white, the winery having concentrated on their reds. A touch reductive when first seen in Portugal, this was also showing its oak far too much, with that flinty nuance on top of that. Happily, I had the chance to revisit this about six weeks later, when it had already calmed down. The wood is obvious, but it is more obvious in power and structure than flavor. It makes this very intense on the finish. It kept getting better as it aired and warmed. With the right food match, this should do very well. It is true that it won't necessarily be everyone's vision of Encruzado, but it is doing far better than I thought it would or could.

Importer(s):

NLC Wines, Brooklyn, N.Y., (917)
297-7407, WWW.NLCWINES.COM

- Mark Squires (August, 2015)