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DOC Alentejo – Portalegre White 2022 – Old Vines

The Tapada do Chaves estate, with a total area of 60 hectares, is located in the hamlet of Frangoneiro in the outskirts of the town of Portalegre in northern Alentejo and has been making wine for nearly a century. There are 32 hectares of land under vines planted on granite soils on the hill side of the São Mamede Mountain, 23 of which with red varieties and nine with white. The estate benefits from a microclimate derived from the low altitude of its vineyard which in turn contributes to a slow maturation of the grapes and the youth and freshness of its white wines, and local Mediterranean-type forestry. Both make the “terroir” that identify its wines.

Not many Alentejo wineries have century old vineyards, as Tapada do Chaves seems to be unique in Alentejo. Its origins go back to the beginning of the 20th century when the Chaves family planted the first vines on their small estate (“Tapada”, or enclosure). Presently, and despite different vineyard renovations over time, there are two original old vineyards with low yield productions remaining that date back to 1901 (red grapes) and 1903 (white grapes).

Grape Varieties: Field blend with Arinto, Malvasia Fina, Fernão Pires, Tamez and Roupeiro

Soil: Granite

Analytical Data: Alcohol (%) – 13.0; Total Acidity (g/l tartaric ac.) – 5.8; pH – 3.16; Total sugar (g/l) – 0.9

Vineyard: Old vine (1903)

Harvest Notes: 2022 was one of the most hot and dry years that has been registered throughout Western Europe. In Portugal, the first 9 months were dry, with 80% of the territory in severe drought between May and August, contrasting with the episode of intense rain during the harvest, posing as a real challenge for viticulture. In the period of vegetative rest, the winter was balanced, even though there was little precipitation. The pleasant spring temperatures created an early bud break and rapid development of the vines. Summer was extreme, with a lack of water and tormented by various heat waves in August, impacting the vines with smaller grapes and difficult maturation that was quite diverse. This was a year of patience and courage in the vineyards. The final perspective of the harvest was different, with a progression of balanced maturation and quality after the September rain, where the Alentejo’s native varieties showed their resilience, revealing their quality.

Vinification: Hand-picked grapes sourced from the “old vines”, planted back in 1903. Hand sorting and full bunch press, clarification of the must through gravity and at a low temperature, followed by natural fermentation in both stainless-steel tanks and French oak barrels.

Ageing: In tank and barrels *sur lies* for 6 months with *batonnage*., then in the bottle for 24 months.

Drink between: 2024 and 2035

Serving temperature: 14°C

Tasting Notes: Straw green color. High aromatic complexity, citrus fruits, orange blossom, dried herb, flint, dried fruits. Lots of balance and intensity, with extraordinary complexity and fruit expression, with a firm acidity. A long and very persistent finish, fruity, with elegance and character.

Winemaker: Pedro Baptista