



QUINTA
DO
MONTE XISTO

João Nicolau de Almeida & Filhos
DOURO SUPERIOR
VILA NOVA DE FOZ CÔA

*“The beauty of a living thing
is not the atoms that go into it,
but the way those atoms
are put together.”*

Carl Sagan

History

In 1976, João Nicolau de Almeida marries Graça Eça de Queiroz Cabral in Porto, Portugal. They had three children: Mateus, João and Mafalda. The two eldest followed careers in the world of wine while the youngest opted for a career in arts and culture.

In 1993, João Nicolau de Almeida discovered an extraordinary area for wine production. At first sight, it seemed improbable. It was a hill of schist, and very difficult to cultivate. He began to acquire land a little at a time. A difficult task indeed, as the land was composed of small parcels with a seemingly infinite number of owners. To identify the owners was a task fit for a detective. Throughout, he had the help of his sons. They approached the farmers and sheepherders of the area, essential partners in the identification of the parcels and their owners. Finally the vineyard, Quinta do Monte Xisto, was united.

In 2005, they began to plant the vineyard. Everything started to make sense: each layer of schist that was uncovered presented new challenges and opportunities to reveal the unique characteristics of the land. This is a family project in which the outlooks and technological knowhow of two generations of winemakers were united. They converse, talk and laugh about the schist, about the stem, about tractors, about vine, wine and life. And so was born João Nicolau de Almeida & Sons, carrying on a centuries-old presence of this family in the wines of the Douro region.







The Vineyard

The Quinta do Monte Xisto is located in the Douro Wine Region, in Vila Nova de Foz Côa on the left bank of the Douro River, concretely in the sub-region of Douro Superior. The Quinta covers 40 hectares, with only 10 reserved for vines. It was always clear to the family that maintaining the biodiversity of the *terroir* was of fundamental importance, as much for the vines themselves as for the region. "We are part of a whole, and it is in that whole that we sought to integrate our project." For these reasons, they choose to work in organic farming using principles of biodynamic agriculture.

And so to work! A true hill of schist to work for the plantation of vines, which in order to survive must embed their roots deep into the ground, seeking a regular source of water. It is, however, this very struggle for survival that produces grapes with such a strong and unique personality.

But how to grow the vineyards, which grape varieties? João Nicolau de Almeida was a pioneer in vertical plantation in Douro, as well as in the study of the grape varieties. The family opted for this kind of plantation with various levels of exposure and altitudes, in order to permit a blend of warmer and cooler zones. The selection of the varieties was not only based on a knowledge acquired over many years, but also on the diversity afforded by the land and on the principle of absolute respect for the Douro culture, and for the specific *terroir* of Douro Superior. The red varieties include Touriga Nacional, Touriga Francesa, Tinto Cão, Tinta da Barca, Tinta Francisca, Souzão and Roriz. Rabigato was chosen as the white variety.





Wine

It is on the vine that one begins to make wine. “We believe that the simpler the process of making wine, the more easily one can reveal the origins of the wine, of its *terroir*. With less interference, the final product will be more faithful to the land.” And that’s how is made the Quinta do Monte Xisto wine, vinified in granite *lagares* with foot treading followed by 18 months of aging in 600 litre barrels. The grape varieties are Touriga Nacional, Touriga Francesa and Souzão.

Of a glowing and brilliant appearance, the nose reveals its authenticity and transports us into the world of the Quinta. When we allow ourselves to be engaged by the wine, new aromas of fruit and forest surprise us, supported by an elegant and balanced structure. Full of personality, it ends expressively and reflectively.

Tasting a wine is a cultural and social experience, but above all a personal one, as it is determined by our predisposition to be transported by its flavour.



The Family

Each member of the family gives his contribute to the development of the project, according to their own skills. However they all participate and follow the various aspects of it.

João Rosas Nicolau de Almeida

Born in Porto, descending from traditional families of Port Wine, João studied Oenology in Dijon and Bordeaux. Throughout his career he has contributed significantly to the study, evolution and modernisation of the Douro's viticulture and winemaking. He is the project's mentor.

Graça Eça de Queiroz Cabral

Born in Porto, descending also from families related to the Port Wine and Douro Region. She studied philosophy and works in Ramos Pinto's archive. She's the link that binds the family together.

Mateus Cabral Nicolau de Almeida

Lives in Douro, in Vila Nova de Foz Côa. Mateus studied Oenology in Bordeaux and worked in various countries before moving to Foz Côa in 2003.

He is the project's manager.

João Cabral Nicolau de Almeida

Divides his time between Porto and Douro. He studied Oenology in Vila Real and viticulture in Montpellier. He participated in the development of this project from the beginning, and is actually responsible for the viticulture and winemaking at Quinta do Pessegueiro.

Mafalda Cabral Nicolau de Almeida

Lives in Douro in Vila Nova de Foz Côa. She studied theatre and the arts. She leads development projects in the region to promote the heritage of the Douro and Côa valleys. She is responsible for the communication of the project.



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