

2016 João Nicolau de Almeida & Filhos Quinta do Monte Xisto

The 2016 Quinta do Monte Xisto is a roughly equal blend of Touriga Nacional and Touriga Franca plus 5% Sousão, all aged for 18 months in 60% used oak (80/20 French and Austrian). It comes in at 13.5% alcohol. I'm rather surprised at how dramatically this has changed since I first saw it. The hard-edged, impenetrable wine that was only in bottle about two weeks when seen in Porto over the summer has come around to a point where I can sometimes use words like "lush." It is more expressive, fleshier and more interesting, with a hint of game around the edges. It has a certain transparency I appreciated too. That's not to say it is ready to drink. The power came back out with decanting. There is still plenty of pop on the finish here. For the moment, it still doesn't quite seem to match the 2015 in personality, but it may be deeper and more complex. This looks like a beauty, but it still needs some time to evolve, granting that it has taken some baby steps in that direction. Will this eventually surpass the 2015? It may, but let's be conservative just now and see where it goes in a couple of years.

- **Mark Squires (December, 2018)**