



DOW'S 2011 VINTAGE PORT

James R. Dow



QUINTA DA SENHORA DA RIBEIRA



PRODUCTION: 5,000 CASES - 12/75CL

Dow is proud to announce its decision to declare the 2011 Vintage. In a tradition dating back to the 1800s, our 'declarations' are made only in years when we are convinced that we have made truly outstanding wines, and typically this happens only three or four times a decade. The evolution of our wines over the sixteen months following the harvest is closely scrutinised, and only when the wines are unquestionably of the highest standard do we take the decision to bottle a small quantity of a blend of the very finest 'lots' drawn from our top vineyards. This selection must live up to the exacting standards of past Dow Vintage Ports with the potential to age gracefully in bottle for many decades to come.

As with some of the greatest Dow Vintages of the past, including the legendary 2007, the key vineyards (Quintas) that contribute to the Vintage 'lot' are Quinta do Bomfim, Quinta da Senhora da Ribeira and the nearby Santinho and Cerdeira estates vinified at the Quinta's *lagares* (treading tanks). In 2011 Dow's conducted exactly forty four separate fermentations in *lagares* using grapes drawn from separately planted varietal blocks in our various Quintas. With each fermentation batch representing less than sixteen 'pipes' (8,800 litres), we have made up the final Dow's 2011 'lot' using just six of these batches. Hence we have selected under 14% of our total 2011 Dow's Quinta production to become Dow's 2011 Vintage Port. The total bottling of the 75cl size is just 5,000 cases.





The agricultural year for Dow's starts in November and terminates after the harvest in October. The winter of 2010/11 provided some vital rainfall allowing underground water reserves to be replenished, which was fortunate given the long dry summer that was to come. Flowering and budburst were relatively earlier than usual, and with a warm and damp spring precautions had to be taken to avoid damage from mildew. But then a three-month dry spell came along which thinned the crop and slowed the ripening. Fortunately some generous rains in late August and early September allowed a normal grape maturation to resume and the Vintage started at Bomfim on 5th September, still slightly on the early side.

The principal varietals that make up the 2011 are the violet, silky Touriga Franca (40%), the finely balanced Touriga Nacional (36%) which lends tannic structure and fresh acidity, and a small amount of the deep coloured Sousão (10%) as well as 14% of old mixed plantings. In terms of the vineyard components, Dow's own Quinta do Bomfim, with its typical aromas of figs and cocoa



THE OLD TERRACED VINEYARDS AT QUINTA DO BOMFIM



powder, represents 35% of the blend, whereas the floral and aromatic, super-concentrated wines from our Quinta da Senhora da Ribeira makes up an additional 42%. Further 'Douro Superior' (Upper Douro) character is lent by components from Quinta do Santinho (14%) and Quinta da Cerdeira (9%) — vineyards in close proximity of Senhora da Ribeira — owned by members of the Symington family and managed by Dow's.

Tasting Note: thanks perhaps to the stellar performance of the Touriga Franca from our vineyards in 2011, the best wines of the year are aromatic and floral, with an excellent balance of fruit, tannin and acidity. The Dow displays its classic tight and austere style but with a nose of cassis and redcurrant. The palate starts off with fresh green figs and ends with bitter chocolate. There is fresh acidity and a notable minerality, and no hint of any raisining or over-ripeness on the very long finish. We are extremely confident that this is a great Dow, showing beautifully today, but with a long life ahead of it.

Wine Specification:

- Alcohol by volume - 20% v/v (20°C)
- Total acidity - 4.55 (g/l)
- Baumé - 3.40
- Bottled during April / May 2013 with no filtration or fining
- Winemakers: Charles Symington and João Pedro Ramalho



THE CHAPEL AT SENHORA DA RIBEIRA

APRIL 2013