

WINE DESCRIPTION

GRAHAM'S 1997 VINTAGE PORT

W. & J.
GRAHAM'S
ESTABLISHED 1820
PORT



Graham's

Graham's wines come primarily from its own Quinta dos Malvedos near Tua and Quinta das Lages in the Rio Torto. Two others, privately owned by a member of the Symington family, Quinta da Vila Velha and Quinta de Vale de Malhadas, also supply Graham with finest quality grapes. All four Quintas are among the best in the upper Douro valley. Graham's also buys grapes from selected farmers in the finest districts. Some of these farmers have been selling their grapes to Graham's for generations.

Tasting Notes

A very intense colour with a deep purple rim, on the nose showing a luscious ripeness with rich floral aromas and undertones of black cherry. On the palate a classic full-bodied structure, packed with layers of ripe fruit and firm tannins, with a long and lingering finish.

The Viticultural Year

January 1997 at Malvedos was extremely cold and most unusually, snow covered the vineyard right down to the riverside. By early February the weather changed drastically, becoming unseasonably hot, no rain falling at all during February and March, with daily temperatures 4 degrees above average. This resulted in bud burst occurring at Malvedos 15 days earlier than usual. The warm weather encouraged rapid wine growth and flowering took place under ideal conditions nearly a month earlier than in 1996.

The wet weather returned in April and May and this, combined with cool temperatures from May to August, slowed down the vines' initial precocious development, leading to an even and balanced maturation. Mid-August heralded the return of the customary Douro heat, although heavy and prolonged rainfall fell on the Quinta on the 24th and 27th August. This was most welcome and had a highly beneficial effect on the grapes. By 10th September the heat had returned and the temperatures reached 42°C at Malvedos. These high temperatures continued throughout the month at the crucial time of the vines' ripening period. The text book maturation and the low yields ensured musts of outstanding quality and concentration.

Reviews & Awards

90 out of 100 Points

"1997s in bottle live up to their heralded reputation." "Lovely claret-like aromas of plums, cherries and spices. Full-to medium-bodied, with a solid core of silky tannins and a long, medium sweet finish. Very refined. A solid Graham."

James Suckling, Wine Spectator, February 29th 2000

"Very 'classic' nose. Gummy, with black cherries. Immensely vivacious on the palate. Huge freshness. Very powerful. Great structure enveloped in total richness. Lovely balancing acidity at the end and a long gummy finish. Superb."

Serena Sutcliffe, A Century of Vintage Port, 2002

93 out of 100 Points

"Blackberries, liquorice, and melted asphalt stand out in this full-bodied, beautifully made vintage ports moderately intense bouquet...it is full-bodied, rich, concentrated and impressive."

Robert Parker, Parker's Wine Buying Guide, 2003

17.5 out of 20 Points

"Deep crimson. Thick, sweet and concentrated. Round and full and unctuous. Lots of macerated prunes and confidence. Lively and dense with real richness but a correct structure. Some floral notes...Dry finish".

Jancis Robinson, 14th October 2004

Peter Symington, responsible with his son Charles for the vineyards and wine making, has been made 'Fortified Wine Maker of the Year' an extraordinary 6 times by the 'Wine Challenge'. Nobody else has won this important award more than once. In 2003, his son Charles won the same award.

Vintage Overview

One of the great Vintages of the decade, with full-bodied and harmonious wines. General declaration.

Contemporary Family Comments

"Picking began on the 22nd under ideal climatic conditions. The fruit was at peak maturity, arriving in the winery at an optimum 18-20 degrees centigrade, with sugar readings consistently above 13° Baumé. At Quinta dos Malvedos the total production was 344 pipes compared to 614 pipes in 1996, a drop of 44%."

October 1996
Peter Symington

Wine Specification

Alcohol by Volume: 20% v/v (20°C)
Total Acidity: 4.6 g/l tartaric acid
Baumé: 3.5

