

Ep 53 Wines of Alentejo, Portugal and How to taste wines wit...

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SPEAKERS

Janina Doyle, Andre Luis Martins



Janina Doyle 00:07

Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me just cannot get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving wonderful world of wine. And wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you.



J

Janina Doyle 00:31

Hello all you lovely wine people out there and welcome to another episode and actually the last episode of this season. Who would believe that I have now released 30 episodes of Eat Sleep Wine Repeat. So it's time just for a little breather. So this is the last one and I hope you enjoy it. So today I've got a goodie for you. I am talking with Portuguese Sommelier Andre Luis Martins, who looks after the list at the Cavalry and Guards club, a very classy private member's club on Piccadilly in London. So we're going to start with a tasting guide, as Andre is a judge for several wine tasting competitions. So he's going to take you through how he judges a glass of wine. And we're gonna work through those different components. So how both of us look at tannins and acidity and assess a glass of wine. So hopefully, that can help you personally do the same and enjoy that glass just that little bit more. Of course, we're going to talk about Portuguese wines. And I asked Andre very nicely to focus on the Alentejo region, simply because there's a delicious bottle of wine that I wanted to crack open. So before we chat with Andre, let's go to my winery of the week.

J

Janina Doyle 01:51

Okay, so I have had in my wine fridge for quite a while a bottle of Bojador Vinho de Talha, which is an interesting wine that is aged in Amphora. Now the name of the winery is Espaço Rural. They are my winery of the week. So this is a personal project from winemaker Pedro Ribeiro who's also the winemaker of Herdade do Rocim. Now both these wineries make the Vinho de Talha wines and there's something quite cool and unique about these amphora wines. That's what Talha means, it's the Portuguese version of a clay pot. Now the Alentejo region introduced a DOC for the Talha wine back in 2012. So it's still relatively new, although of course, this has a 2000 year old history going back to the Romans. Now, these wines they can be red or white, I happened to be tasting the

red version and his red blend is 40% Trincadeira, 30%, Moreto and 30% Tinta Grossa. So we are talking indigenous grape varieties. They are bush vines, and it is an organic field blend. Now interesting about the Moreto. Of course, I know very little about this grape variety, but it hasn't been planted for the last 50 years. So part of his mission is to recover all these lost grape varieties of Alentejo. Now in terms of how he makes the wines, everything is harvested separately, but then co-fermented together. It's all indigenous yeasts, no temperature control, no additions, no stabilizations. This is a minimal intervention wine. I love the fact that to prevent oxidation on top of these clay pots, they use olive oil, so that acts as a lid. Now they de-stem because it's not possible to put whole bunches into these Talhas. So what they do, they punch down three times a day during the fermentation. And then for about six months, they just leave the wine alone. What they will do, they'll throw the stems in at the bottom to act as a filter. So that will help a little bit so you won't get a super cloudy wine. And it also adds with a little bit of tannin and the age ability of the wines. If you look at a Talha, there's a tap at the bottom of it. And that is how they take the wine off, ready to bottle. Now if we were drinking the white wine, which were not, the white wines, do spend some time on skins and also with stems, just for you to know. Now just before tasting the wine, I want to talk about the sub region. So there are eight sub regions of Alentejo. And as you're going to hear from Andre later, Vidigueira is the, the heart, the home and why? Well it has this real micro climate. It's a continental climate. It has this east-west facing escarpment that runs for about 50 kilometres and that really defines the climate. So ironically, it's more Southern than many of the other sub regions but is the most temperate. Most of the vineyards are planted on hills and they receive cooler temperatures, lots of schist and granite soils. There's a lot of minerality in the wines. The winds that come from the Atlantic still hit this area. Apparently if you ask the older generations, they will say, this is where the white wines come from, because this is just a place of real freshness. Okay, have I got you excited about Alentejo the wine region yet? Time to taste the wine. I bought this from Davy's wine merchants and it is £24.95 a bottle. So, let's give it a go.



Janina Doyle 05:46

Okay, so it's really fresh and lively. There's a real purity of just fruit flavours. Loads of red and black actually, yes, a real mix. Like, I get tart red cherries, with a little bit of wild strawberries, there's a wild nature, you know, fresh herbs, a bit of thyme in there. And then the black fruits, it's more black plums. It's very juicy smelling on the nose and there's a little bit of kind of crushed black pepper, yeah it's super, super fresh. You know, it's much lighter than I expected. Medium minus body at most, but it's got some really earthy tannins, they're very soft though. There's a real crushed granite vibe. Actually, this is reminding me a little bit of Mencia from Spain in the Bierzo region, just to kind of maybe give you a bit of a reference point. Loads of fresh fruits, a bit of sour cherry, but a really lovely, savoury

fresh style. This actually would be a really great summer red. It's got gorgeous high acidity, you could chill it down. Of course, no oak getting in the way. Did you know I have in the fridge right now a spatchcock pouissin. In fact, has anyone got the brand. It's the Gressingham. It's it has like loads of sea salt, a bit of spiciness and this kind of loads of different pepper spice on it. That in the oven will be absolutely perfect with this wine, but maybe something with mushrooms and thyme again to bring out those herbiness. In fact, a bit like a Beef Wellington, but if you changed it for Turkey, or a lighter meat mixed in with all that mushroom and thyme. Oh, that would be sublime with this as well. Okay, enough of me talking. I think it's now time to chat with Andre. And don't forget, you can download the transcript just go to my show notes. And then you can follow along with all the wonderful Portuguese names. Enjoy.

J Janina Doyle 07:57
Andre, thank you so much for joining me today.

A Andre Luis Martins 08:00
You're welcome.

J Janina Doyle 08:00
My lovely Sommelier friend. As I always asked everyone in the wine industry. Why did you get into the wine industry? What made you become a Sommelier? Was there a triumphant moment? Was there a wine?

A Andre Luis Martins 08:13
It was accidental. Basically, I moved to the UK after I met my lady and basically I joined as part of, as a bar restaurant manager and I had my, a basic knowledge of wines and it was when I joined the Royal Automobile Club many decades ago, I came across to join the Cellar team at that time and before I noticed I was in love with wine. And the rest was just a journey.

J Janina Doyle 08:41
It just happens, doesn't it.

- A** Andre Luis Martins 08:42
It just happens, it's accidental, you know it, before you notice you start tasting wines, it's like, ah this could be a nice job. And if you have someone who really knows their wines and kind of take you in the journey, before you notice it's too late to look back and that was really what happened with me.
- J** Janina Doyle 08:57
And how long have you been at Calvary and Guards Club now?
- A** Andre Luis Martins 09:00
Just over five years now.
- J** Janina Doyle 09:02
Just a simple quick five years, right? This is a private member's club unfortunately guys, so not everyone in London can just turn up right?
- A** Andre Luis Martins 09:13
So basically most of our members they are Officers from the Cavalry or the Guards regiment. We did take some of the rifle regiments a couple of years ago. And we have a couple of London gentleman's but basily is a very eclectic membership and basically you're looking at, we only take Officers like, like not a lot of the Army clubs would take lower rankings, we just accept Officers, so our membership is very small, with just over 3000 members.
- J** Janina Doyle 09:42
Very nice, but there's also a very nice wine list there, so we can always just dream about your wine list can't we.
- A** Andre Luis Martins 09:48
Yes you can say. As expected as a classic club land we are very strong in Burgundy and Bordeaux but we do have a solid regions from Portugal, Spain, Italy, new world and we have some weird and strange things from a Tannat from Peru to a Cabernet Sauvignon from Okanagan Valley, to a Chardonnay from Ningxia in China. So we do have some

weird things that we do have members who are interested in discovering the wine world, so, the at the present give and take we probably have about 3 to 350 labels in our main wine list as we speak.

J

Janina Doyle 10:29

And tell me, which ones are from Portugal. What are your favourites, go on?

A

Andre Luis Martins 10:35

Basically, as I always say to everyone, when I just said to yourself as well, it's when I when I came to London, my wine knowledge was very basic so, all my wine education has been London based, so I kind of grew up with an international palate, so and being a big lover of Portuguese wines. I always say, I taste Portuguese wine with an international palate. So I'm the big fan, the big supporter, but at the same time, I am the biggest critic. If things are not right, I'm not saying because I like Portuguese wines. I'll say they right, they're not and I'm the first one saying it.

J

Janina Doyle 11:07

Well a man with integrity. We love it. Carry on. Sell it to me.

A

Andre Luis Martins 11:10

So basically, I love kind of some some of the new things. So for example, I have a Verdejo from Azores from the Isle of Pico. That is something wonderful, going to a Riesling in Mafra, in the north of Lisbon, that is absolutely stunning. And after I'm a big Douro lover, so, I do have some wonderful things from the Douro, some back vintages of, I still have a couple of bottles of the first edition of Chryseia. I'm a big lover of Quinta da Boa Vista, probably one of the biggest ambassadors of Quinta da Boa Vista in the world, because I think the wines made there, from that terroir, with a winemaker behind and this is just amazing. And for the ones who don't know Quinta da Boa Vista, there is, there was the Quinta where Baron Forrester sit down and draw the first wine region of the world, so give you how long you go back in history. But at the same time look, Alentejo to doing amazing things. As I normally say Bairrada does some amazing stuff. Dão is just coming through with some amazing wines. So, I think, as I normally say to all the people who worked in industry, we always knew Portugal, it was coming. But it was just bubbling underneath. And I think in the last kind of five years up to now, Portugal is really here and from the top end to the bottom end, the quality and the consistency of the wines is just absolutely stunning.



Janina Doyle 11:23

It's here, and it's ready to stay. So we are of course going to talk a little bit more on Portuguese wines but I want to pick your brain and have you educate us all on tasting wine from start to finish because you do many judging in wine competitions, don't you?



Andre Luis Martins 12:57

Correct, so I've been probably for the last six or seven years I've been a judge regular at International Wine Challenge. In the last four to five years if I'm not wrong, I've been part of the Sommelier Wine Awards. And in the last two to three years I've been part of the London Wine Competition and just to break it very quick to everyone who's listening to us, so International Wine Challenge is probably one of the largest wine competitions of the world. The Sommelier Wine Awards is the largest wine competition for on-trade wines, so the wines are tasting by Sommelier for Sommeliers. So there's a booklet made at the end of the competition that really focused for the on-trade, so 99% of their wines that you find in that booklet, you won't find it in a supermarket shelf or in a wine shop shelf. And the London Wine Competition is a different kind, that is why I kind of accepted to judge there, because basically focusing on quality, packaging, pricing, so the three things are interconnected and I thought it's kind of interesting way to judge wine as well. And basically, that is the way they operate. Most of the competitions they all operate in recommended wines, bronze, silver and gold being your, the wines you expect. But as I say to everyone, when you found a wine on the supermarket shelf with a silver label on it, or in a wine shop, that means the wine is good because it's been tasted and, and one of the interesting things I always say to a lot of people, not in the Sommeleir Wine Awards but in the London Wine Competition and International Wine Challenge, I do judge with different aspects of the industry. So the panel can be made by a Sommelier, a winemaker, a Master Sommelier, a Master of Wine. Someone who works in a wine shop, and someone who is a head buyer for a wine group or head buyer for a supermarket. It can be just someone working marketing to do with wines. So it's a different background and it's quite interesting, because you do learn from different people, different approaches and different perspectives of tasting their wines. And that is, I think is the beauty of it. It's like, no one is dominating the panel, it's like we all came to a consensus and sometimes one says gold, the other two say silver, the other one says bronze and we all need to come to agreement that probably the wine is a solid silver, or something in that line. So it's kind of, when people look at how this wine is judged, it's not just someone sitting there tasting the wine and saying okay, I'm going to give this a gold. It is not Robert Parker, it's not other kinds of competitions where the wine is basically judged and given the score by one person. This is a team effort and I think reflect better the quality of the wine because it's not someones perspective, it's normally three, four, five, sometimes six peoples perspective, reflecting their medals. So, I think it's an interesting side of of this wine

competitions.

J

Janina Doyle 15:54

So when you've got these wines in front of you and you're tasting them effectively blind and you pick up a glass, are you tasting them kind of with the WSET method. Are you looking at the colour? Are you smelling it? Are you trying to pick out aromas? Are you then looking for the acidity and structure and balance to work out the quality, or do you do something completely different?

A

Andre Luis Martins 16:18

I use some of the WSET things but I think it's kind of middle term. I always say to people, if you starting to be a WSET student you will do the WSET wine judging. If you are studying for the Court of Master Sommeliers you will follow the Master Sommelier Chart. When you judge the wines for yourself, you will pick up a bit of things and it's things that I know that, they are not used by the, none of the institutions, that I think will give me say, when I taste the wine I look okay, is there typicity on it? What kind of the typicity it is? What kind? Because you can have, as I normally say, you can have two kinds of Barolos. You can have the new style wave of making Barolo or the old school. But I mean, there is no right or wrong. Is the quality there? That is what I'm looking for. And I think I always found, and I'm going back to my junior judging years, where I struggled sometimes because I was not 100% sure if judging that wine, is this the typicity from Vermentino from Sardinia? And at the time I was like, okay I didn't taste as much Vermentinos to know about it, where a few years down the line and I think this is why it's great for Sommeliers to go to these competitions, is you get exposed to things that you never think you're going to be exposed, and you get surprises. For example, this year one of the things, I got came out of all this judging was, I was very surprised what's coming out of Romania at the present. I was very surprised what's coming out from Baja in Mexico was absolutely stunning, some Cabernet Franc's and some Paso Robles, there was stunning wines that is not something I taste everyday and is not something that I find in London every day. So it was, it's kind of, you get exposed to many as well, could be the new things or was just another passing thing. So it's quite interesting as well to bring it back to the industry. It's what this competitions reflect back to you.

J

Janina Doyle 18:11

Okay, that's super interesting as well these countries or shall I say region in Mexico that you've just mentioned. Now, obviously, for the average consumer, they may not know the typicity of a specific wine a Barolo, or Rioja. They might not know there's the more

traditional side or the modern side or a Rioja shall we say. So in terms of you tasting and getting quality, what are you looking for? Or what advice would you give someone tasting their wine, what should they, how should they be tasting it?

A

Andre Luis Martins 18:39

First thing, one of the things that I think is very important, when you taste wine is make sure you have a clean glass and a glass that will give you some space to swirl the wine around, and stick your nose in and, and basically look for aromas, look for freshness. Look for character from the wine. And I normally say you can go two ways or you can have a very bland clean Pinot Grigio where you don't get too much on the nose. Or you can have a buttery cream-rich Chardonnay say, and between the extreme points you'll find something in the middle. And at the same time, its, I normally say imagine when you were a child and your mom and dad take you to the fresh market in the morning. And you've went through the fruit man to the veg man, to the butcher, to the meat man. And imagine all that smells and try to identify what is in the glass, try to call things names. And as I say to a lot of people, you are never wrong or right about wine because all of us have different memories and those memories reflect your childhood, reflect your growing, and that is why a lot of people could identify a lot of flavours and textures in wines, where other people indentify less. Say, it's always why I say to people, Don't be afraid to say what comes in your mind because there's no right or wrongs.

J

Janina Doyle 20:00

Exactly, okay, so they are sniffing it. And they're imagining their grandfather's greenhouse and the tomatoes inside right? Okay. So they've smelt things so they've they've stuck their nose in the glass and they've wrote down some smells, then what? Then what should they be doing?

A

Andre Luis Martins 20:19

And then what. I normally say if it's your first wine of the day, don't taste it, just have a little sip and swallow it. Just to get your your body internalised with alcohol and the flavours and then go for the tasting because I think one of the things is, I always do it myself, I always have the first glass of the day I'm doing a tasting, I will have a little sip because basically it helps me set the buzz and set me the system going. And, and from the second taste, yes, take it into your mouth, swirl it around the mouth. If you're going to drink it, swallow it, if you're not going to drink it, spit it. The first thing I do is, I tried to check how acidic the wine is. How quickly my mouth get watery, say them if it's very slow, that means acidity is probably medium to low, if very quick you get all your buds going in

the acidity and the water that your mouth is watering very quick, I mean you have a wine with high acidity. That means most of these wines with high acidity, white or red normally they're very fresh wines, even when they have years of ageing, you can grab some old Clarets. And I give example, I opened a Claret yesterday from 1992 and I put it in my mouth and I swallow it and the first thing I thought of was, wow, this the mouth getting very watery, the acidity still, and it's 1992 the acidities still very high. And in the end of all the savoury notes is still kind of this, this kind of freshness to the wine that you think okay, how this can hold it together and they hold it together.

J Janina Doyle 21:48

Amazing. I always say to people as well if they are unaware of what is that kind of acidity and how much does their mouth water, grab a lemon and bite into a lemon and then see how much you salivate and that will give you a good starting point of what is acidity and then you can start judging your wine. So if anyone listening do that if you're not sure. So that's what you start with right, acidity.

A Andre Luis Martins 22:11

Correct, I start with acidity. Second thing it's, after you can do the salivating and see how quick my mouth waters, I see how long some of the flavours of the wine persist in my palate and if basically, if they disappear very quick they probably will be short, short length or short palette. If they stay for a while there'll be medium to long palette and basic straight away it already give me a bit of where the wines going to go, you know, if it's going to be kind of easy drinking by the glass or if I can be more gastronomic that is the kind of the point I look at it. Second tasting I'll start going for the aromas, so what kind of primary aromas I get on the start of the palate, in the middle and in the end of the palate. And if I'm getting fresh fruit at the start, kind of more baked or dry fruits in the middle and kind of more the savoury notes at the end, give me some indication of how the potential of ageing of the wine and the kind of grape as well depending of what it tastes say. If they go from the kind, the floral, you will look more for the kind of the white wines of this world and the fruitiest if they can start getting all for this stony fruit characters. You look for this prospect, that is the way I look at it.

J Janina Doyle 23:23

Okay, fantastic. And then do you do a conclusion at the end?

A Andre Luis Martins 23:28

Depends for the competition it is and depends what I want to do with it. So if I'm tasting a wine, that is for me to use a work, my conclusion is, okay, do I get to use to be by the glass? Do I get to use this to be food wine? Do I get to use this now? Do I let this age? What do I do with it? And that is kind of the conclusion I'm making with my wine, it's where I see that wine going from what I just smell and taste and see.

J

Janina Doyle 23:54

So I would always say in terms of your mentioning age ability, if anyone was asking me, again, the acidity if it has a high level of acidity, obviously you know it's going to last a little bit longer. And also I be looking at quite a bit of concentration of fruit flavours so that again, as it ages we know that the fruit is going to diminish, it's going to last a little bit longer. Would you be looking for anything else as well to conclude that it has that age ability?

A

Andre Luis Martins 24:21

I normally look for the body and the structure so it depending how rich and big is the body and as I said look, a great example is some of the Rieslings. You taste some Rieslings and you think okay, this is a very light body but as you just said, the acidity and the fruit concentration gives you the structure to age for for a lifetime. As I normally say so, sometimes the body can be a good thing or as being a full body wine or could be a bad thing, depending what grape we are talking about. And that is kind of not always telling everything. Basically I look at the full picture of nose and palate and see how they can combine together. What's the potential of the wine, you know.

J

Janina Doyle 25:02

You said about how long the length is. What do you think is a long length? Do you consider it when you can still taste those beautiful strong flavours, after a minute, what would you say is a long length, how long?

A

Andre Luis Martins 25:16

A long length it's, for me needs to be kind of after a minute, two sometimes. Some wines, especially the big structure wines, they can persist in your palate for quite a bit. And, and as I say to a lot of people, is not the first time I'm doing this, in some of these competitions, even myself, when I'm doing notes, when I do tastings, that I keep myself writing and when I look, it's like, I still get the flavour. And this is about two, three minutes after I taste the wine. So I mean, that palate or that length, it's huge. And it's some grapes surprise me, I

was saying I have a Chenin Blanc now the present on my wine list from Anjou from the Loire Valley, and it's the kind of grape I always taste and then on the fresh style, you don't get too much length or palate to it. And this one, when I tasted it, I tasted it and I was writing some notes about it. And I noticed myself like three minutes later, I still have this intensity of some of the primary foods and secondary and I thought, what a wine. I was very, very impressed. So that is the kind of things I always look at.

J

Janina Doyle 26:22

Yeah. Okay, and what about sugar? So obviously, the majority of wines, well especially red are dry and then obviously white becomes a little bit more complicated. Do you have any tricks up your sleeve for identifying that difference when it's more just fruit driven, and then compared to when it's off-dry, because that can be really difficult, you know, when it's just, you know 10 grams of residual sugar per litre or just a little bit more, and you've got to differentiate, is it dry or is it off-dry.

A

Andre Luis Martins 26:54

I normally try to identify what kind of fruit I'm getting. And basically, the fruit character is always a good indicator of, that is pure sugar, or is the sweetness of the fruit. And I have a couple of examples on my wine list. They are dry wines. But when you taste them, they taste sweet, but they're not sweet. They are dry wines. It's the characteristic of the fruit. And one of the things that people need to be careful or watch out, it's some white wines with a bit of ageing, you will get more concentration of the sweetness fruit character than really the sugar. I always because of the training I have, when I taste that I can spot it, when is like pure sugar on the wine against what is really the fruit concentration. It's something that is not easy, I think. But my recommendation imagine when you put a glass of water full of sugar and you taste it and it's like sugary water with some of the less quality kind of introduction level wines. If you have that kind of flavour in your mind, you sometimes you can identify that in some of the less quality wines that you can see is literally sugar added to make the wine sweet.

J

Janina Doyle 28:12

I think as well if people were ever wanting to get really into it and figure it out, and they had the time, they could actually take some food that has some sweetness, you know, you could take for instance, a dried apricot or you could take a sweeter sauce that you might put on to a you know balsamic vinegar or something that that glaze or just something, lick that and see the sweetness and then go back to the wine and you may have thought it was sweet but then all of a sudden it's gonna disappear it's gonna seem really dull and

then you know, okay, hang on a minute, this wine is dry. But you know, you can't do that in a blind tasting can you.

A

Andre Luis Martins 28:46

No but that is true. Like I say to a lot of people on the start of my career, I did go to the market and buy a lot of fruits and kind of eat it today and leave some for the next two or three days to get overripe so I can see what kind of flavours and sweetness they get. So it's another trick you know, you're gonna buy three or four nectarines. You taste one when you buy it, it's kind of green and a bit bitter. You taste one two or three days to be in your fruit basket at home, they start getting sweet and mellow. And by the end of the week, they start getting really overripe and kind of, they don't look very nice but when you taste you get this really nice concentration of sweet flavours and you can say start to say, okay, I can see what is a sweet nectarine taste, when is really sweet. So when you taste the wine that probably is not sugar added but it's the natural sweetness of the grapes. You can say, okay, I can understand this sweetness now. So it's another trick that people can use as well.

J

Janina Doyle 29:44

That's a really valid point. And I think actually, when people say oh, I can't pick out that flavour and I can't pick out that aroma, is just experience isn't it and the best thing you can do just like you've said, is go crazy with every piece of fruit. So I love the fact that you're taking a piece of fruit and tasting over different days. The other thing would be, you know, you take a lemon or you take an orange and you don't just taste the juice of it, you then kind of taste the skin. You take the zest, you taste all the different parts of it. And then when you talk about apricot, a fresh apricot versus the apricot in a tin or versus when they're dried, so it's like taking the same fruit and really seeing it in every different way. Apples baked versus fresh. A green apple versus a red apple and oh my god let's not talk about all the different apple varieties.

A

Andre Luis Martins 30:32

Yeah we will be here till tomorrow. There is about 20 different types of plums, you know, in different parts of the world. They call them different things and they grow them in different ways. So let's not go there.

J

Janina Doyle 30:43

No. But anyway, for everyone listening, go and get a whole load of fruit and have some

fun with it and bake it and grill it and smoke it, dry it, everything and have some fun. Okay, what about tannins? What about tannins? Tell me about tannins.

A

Andre Luis Martins 31:03

Okay. Every time I heard that word, the first thing I come to my mind is a plank of wood that I remembered to taste when I taste my first Chardonnays from the US. It was like eating a piece of wood that was the taste I used to write in my Chardonnay notes. Another plank of wood in my teeth. That was something. But that was the old days.

J

Janina Doyle 31:26

I hope you never actually ate a plank of wood otherwise that is potentially child abuse.

A

Andre Luis Martins 31:29

Look I didn't eat a plank of wood but I did honestly licked a couple of different types of wood to try to understand it. And that is not a fun experience. But if you want to understand how things it is, sometimes you do this crazy things you know. But tannins, I think it's very subjective. And I normally say to people, I give the best example, grab a wine from Italy called Sagrantino.

J

Janina Doyle 32:01

Oh, okay, we are going high tannins.

A

Andre Luis Martins 32:04

So this is probably the wine in the world that, you taste it and your teeth are out. The tannins are abusive, abusive. And after you can grab a Pauillac next to it and tell me if Pauillac has any tannins? You say no there is no tannins. Another thing is are you drinking the wine on your own? Are you drinking the wine with food? Because it's not the first time I'm tasting a wine and I think it's quite tannic. I put a bit of steak in the mouth and I chuck a bit of red wine on top and I say, there's no tannins on the wine because the fatness of the food. It's really it's the tannins on the wine, I think it's how the wine is made, and how you want to use it for. A lot of tannic wines I don't think they made to drink on their own, they are gastronomic wines. Whereas some of Malbecs of this world, or the pinotages or the Cabernet Sauvignon's made on the young style or the Carménère's, they are wine to drink by the glass, to enjoy a glass or two or three and it's the way to look at it. When I do a tasting and I judge the wines, I always compare, I always look at the vintage of the wine,

the grapes against the tannins and understand trying to see what is there, because after that if we start getting very technical, okay, is this tannins from the wood, is this tannins by the winemaking where it does full bunch fermentation, or partial bunch fermentation, tell me more. And basically, it's kind of where to go, what to do in here. And how to identify it, so I think for the less knowledgeable people is, when you taste it, what you're going to do with the wine? And if they have some tannins, it is a food wine, is the way I like, I look at it. With a bit of cheese sometimes helps to soften it up. And if does have no tannins is a wine to have by the glass, I think is the simple way to put it to the less knowledgeable people.

J

Janina Doyle 34:04

No, I think that's absolutely fantastic. And I always say to people, again, if they don't understand what tannins are, just so that they don't have to be punished like you and lick some wood. A slightly more palatable idea is to take a tea bag, make a hot cup of tea, but then just leave it and leave it and leave it and you could do an experiment and you could just do a very, you could take the tea bag out of one cup of tea after a minute and then you could leave one for 10 minutes and then drink it and that dryness that's going to coat your gums, that's the tannins. So I always think, just so people can understand and I guess the rest is practice again, isn't it and feeling do they taste, I always say to people, they're good tannins as in ripe tannins, If you want to put the tongue around your gums and kind of chew and that's a ripe yummy tannins, but when they taste really bitter and the thought of them being in your mouth for any longer, it's horrible, then they're a bit too green. And again, we would mark a wine down. That's kind of how I would differentiate tannins. Alright, so we're all experts in tasting wine. Should we go to Portugal now? I think we should. So I wanted to focus on, I was gonna say Algarve again. I just want to go on holiday. I want to focus on Alentejo, because this region is possibly not so well known when people think of Portugal but it covers like 30% of Portugal. This is the largest region and I think also with the hot climate, the Mediterranean climate, all the sunshine, you get such juicy big delicious wines, and also pretty reliable wines. I'm going to wait to see if you disagree with me, but also really good value wines. So these are some of the best value wines of Portugal. So basically over to you. Tell me what you think of Alentejo.

A

Andre Luis Martins 35:58

Okay. I think Alentejo it's, first thing let's put it in context of Portugal. So we are south of the Tãçes or Rio Tejo and basically all the way to the north of Algarve. That is all Alentejo. It is the flattest part of the country, the most flattest part of the country. And the hottest and driest of Portugal and in Alentejo you don't find a lot of vineyards on the coast and most of the vineyards are inland. So that is kind of breaking down Alentejo. It is a region that have some iconic wineries and some iconic vineyards. One of the vineyards

and one of the wines that is done, it's Pêra-Manca. Next to Barca Velha probably will be the two most iconic and price wines of coming out of the country as we speak. Again, we're looking as one of the Vidigueira, that is one of the regions of Alentejo. That's probably the heart and soul of some of the great Alentejo wines coming out at the present. But at the same time, you do have different prospects of wine coming out of there. So one of the ones you asked me before we start this session was wine of Talha. And for the people less known is very similar to how Georgian make wine, so in clay pots ageing the wine. So that is a couple of the things out of Alentejo. Most of the production of Alentejo until not far ago was red wines because of the heat.



Janina Doyle 37:42

The climate right?



Andre Luis Martins 37:43

Where more and more white wines are coming out of Alentejo as well and some of them's doing some amazing stuff. So you have the easy drinking kind of uncomplex fresh fruity-driven floral white wines to the most kind of oak complex and kind of richer wines. On the red wines you have all that you would expect, so you have the Indigenous grape varieties from their and you have the kind of more international grapes, your Merlots, your Cabernet Sauvignons, your Alicante Bouschet. Alicante Bouschet again, is international wine grape, but at the same time, it's been seen in Alentejo for many, many decades. And it's kind of, it is in the middle of, it's typical for the region - Yes. It's an international grape - Yes. In our region is it an indigenous grape - Yes and no. Kind of say, it's sitting there on the blank. Alentejo as I said, is a hot region. But again, it does have some slopes, which does help kind of control the temperature across the vineyards. And it does suffer from, so basically overnight if you have that Atlantic influence, the sea, the breeze coming from the Atlantic can have a massive impact on the vineyards across Alentejo. If you have the wind's coming from Spain, especially in the summer, if it's coming from the plateau from Spain that is bringing even hotter winds than the day so it's kind of a hard region to work in require a lot of canopy management from the winemakers but as you said, it's making some amazing wines.



Janina Doyle 39:25

Because I suppose just for people to understand this is so large, of course if you are a vineyard closer to the Atlantic is going to be moderated from you know the ocean slightly. We're not on the coast, but there's gonna be a slight moderation but then if you're going further inland because it's obviously next to Spain, it's attached to Spain, the more kind of

north and east you get the more continental you get.

A

Andre Luis Martins 39:48

Correct. But again, you have a lot of rivers going through. You have one of the biggest water reservoirs of Portugal is in the heart of Alentejo. So that little things have a lot of impact on the kind of the micro climates of each individual region and vineyard. And as well we have the Serra de São Mamede just kind of the border between Alentejo and Spain. It does have an impact as well on the kind of the altitude where the vineyards are located as well. Even though we're not looking at high altitude, we're looking at 2,3,4, 500 metres above sea level. That's help as well moderate the vineyards temperature as well.

J

Janina Doyle 40:17

Well, now, you mentioned the heart of Alentejo which is Vidigueira. But there are eight sub regions, would you say that Vidigueira is probably the most important one?

A

Andre Luis Martins 40:41

I think is the most iconic and is the kind of the most historical region making wine. And basically, that is why I mentioned it because I always use Vidigueira as one of my reference when I'm looking at a wine from Alentejo, even though it comes from different parts of the region. It's one of the sub regions that I always look at and see why they're doing and what's the winemakers looking at making their wines there.

J

Janina Doyle 41:11

I would also say and this has come from a hell of a lot less knowledge of Portugal. But Reguengos because of Esporão, the winery?

A

Andre Luis Martins 41:20

Yes, Reguengos. But again, you are probably looking at one or two wineries in Reguengos. Even the corporative of Reguengos make amazing things, even though being a cooperative is one of the things I always say, in Portugal, you have great cooperatives doing amazing wines.

J

Janina Doyle 41:38

Tell me okay, what's the story with Esporão? Because of course, they're one of the most

well known wineries in Alentejo and as far as I believe, or certainly the story I tell is that they kind of put Alentejo on the map.

A

Andre Luis Martins 41:53

I think between Cartuxa and Esporão, they did two regions that they did two wineries, they probably kind of help put Alentejo on the map. If you say Andre, you need to choose to wineries from Alentejo to represent Alentejo, they will probably be the two wineries that I will pick up straightaway. And again Esporão is an iconic winery and with iconic wines and the most interesting things, in the last couple of years over the last two decades, they are trying to go back to how they made things in the past, the original way. And I think David Baverstock is a great winemaker of Portugal.

J

Janina Doyle 42:34

Is he Australian?

A

Andre Luis Martins 42:35

I'm not sure if he's Australian or Kiwi. I know he's from that side of the world. So I hope he doesn't take me wrong with me say that. I'm not 100% sure if he is Australian or Kiwi. I know he came in as one of the original flying winemakers to the Douro to help in the Douro. But he moved down to the south and he did an amazing job what he achieved in Esporão. The other region I think Borba, as well, the cooperative in Borba is well known as well. It does some interesting things. Portalegre region, Portalegre as well. So it's kind of and it's very okay to say Portalegre is more up north and is going to be a bit more closer to Spain, probably cooler, Reguengos because you have the big influence of the waters and lakes, they have around, and the big reservoir. Again, they have a lot of influence. On its own Alentejo is kind of a big region. When people say these are from Alentejo, it is very similar to saying oh you have, it's from Bordeaux. What part of Bordeaux? Right bank? Left Bank? It is in Pauillac? Is it in Saint-Émilion? We are exactly in the same situation here. You know, what where they allocated. The Alto Alentejo, the Baixo Alentejo. So we again, kind of we overlook the region as one, but there's more into it.

J

Janina Doyle 43:59

So it's something that people can really investigate. Now, we can't talk about Portuguese wine without talking about those grape varieties in more detail, right? I mean, this is the probably the country with the most indigenous grape varieties. I'm sure maybe a few other countries would argue, but I remember there was a book. I don't know who wrote it,

but it's called Portugal: Land of 500 grape varieties. You know, it's it's an exciting country to investigate.

A Andre Luis Martins 44:23
Yes, absolutely.

J Janina Doyle 44:25
So, one of my favourite grape varieties and you said about white wine is doing better now is Antão Vaz. Can you talk about Antão Vaz? It's such a yummy tropical style.

A Andre Luis Martins 44:36
I think Antão Vaz, if is done on the fresh style is it's a kind of a very crispy, kind of very clean, you know, lovely floral note. You know, sometimes you get this kind of, I normally describe a white peach kind of character and it's amazing as that. For me, I think it does really well, works really well with oak and I think Cartuxa going back to one of the wineries that that I kind of follow. They do their Pera Manca white that is 10 times cheaper than the red. Treated with oak, even their basic Cartuxa white is treated with oak. The wine is such an amazing thing, but as other producers doing Antão Vaz and it adapts really well to barrique ageing.

J Janina Doyle 45:22
Antão Vaz in general they are still doing as a single variety. I know that there are now a bit more blends going on with the whites, but in terms of whites from Alentejo, Antão Vaz is the number one and you can still find lots of it as a single variety.

A Andre Luis Martins 45:36
Correct, yes.

J Janina Doyle 45:37
But with the reds, they generally are blends aren't they.

A Andre Luis Martins 45:41
Yes, you can find some single varieties. Not a lot. But I have the opportunity to try some

Aragonês on it's own. You can find some Alicante Bouschet, some Touriga Nacional on it's own, Trincadeira I think I've tasted one or two.

J Janina Doyle 45:59
I love Trincadeira and it sounds good aswell.

A Andre Luis Martins 46:02
But normally it is in blends that they really come together I think that is Alentejo's best expression is blends.

J Janina Doyle 46:10
Just to point out to anyone if they've ever heard of Tinta Amarela, it's the same grape variety. Just remember the wine world just likes to confuse us. Trincadeira in Douro is known as Tinta Amarela. And we should now obviously talk about Tempranillo, which has a million different names. A million? I might be exaggerating, but talk about Aragonês.

A Andre Luis Martins 46:29
I think Aragonês it's the kind of, I normally say it, it's kind of you get, It can be if it's picked early, it's kind of very elegant. You get this kind of really fresh kind of plum, it can be red cherry, it can be red strawberries kind of thing. And it's kind of the aftertaste you get it kind of, it's not a spiciness of a Syrah but you get this really elegant spicy note that blends really well with the fruit. I think is, and in a blend it brings a lot of character to the blender Aragonês.

J Janina Doyle 47:03
Yeah, and Aragonês, which just to clarify, in case we weren't clear is Tempranillo, as people will have heard of it in Spain. Well its so confusing isn't it?

J Janina Doyle 47:13
Well, to be honest, I think the writer when you read, if you ever read Portugal: Land of 500 grape varieties, even he states, "Well, there's about 300 genuine grape varieties" because of course, it's probably 200 of them really are just literally the same, but depending on where they're grown and maybe a slight different clone.

- A** Andre Luis Martins 47:13
Don't go there. I was reading the last book a couple of months ago that Richard Mason just wrote, he just updated his last version of Wines of Portugal. And I still every time I read I still get impressed. One grape, how many names, they call it across the different regions of Portugal. And in one region, in the same region, the force of the region call it something else and it's like oh my god, can you get the head around this?
- A** Andre Luis Martins 47:58
Yeah, you're probably absolutely right on that one.
- J** Janina Doyle 48:00
But Aragonês is (or Tempranillo) is always a great blending grape, hence why they do the same in the Rioja region. So Aragonês from what I know does tend to blend very nicely with a Trincadeira. And these are the two main reds.
- A** Andre Luis Martins 48:15
And Alfrocheiro as well, because what they do is they, Alfrocheiro brings a lot of freshness to the blend, and they use that to the benefit as well.
- J** Janina Doyle 48:25
Oh, and everyone, just so you know, Alfrocheiroa is Baboso Negro in Spain.
- A** Andre Luis Martins 48:31
Confusing more. Thank you.
- J** Janina Doyle 48:34
Yeah, well, listen, we need to cross reference don't wait. But Alfrocheiro, you can taste some really fantastic styles in Dão, I think, does it come from...
- A** Andre Luis Martins 48:45
Yep. Dão. Yes it is one of the regional grapes from Dão. You are absolutely right.



Janina Doyle 48:48

I think it's just such a fantastic region to explore. And quite clearly, it's gonna be evolving now that it's had so much more investment because of course, you know, going back 20 years ago, no one had really heard of it. It was the EU fund... well 20 years ago? It was the 1980s, I think it got EU funding, so that's helped with that expansion. Can we quickly go back to the Talha wine? So, because Talha wine is this traditional wine with 2000 years worth of history. I find it really fascinating though, that they put the wine in Amphora but then seal it with olive oil. I think that's cool.



Andre Luis Martins 49:23

Yes. Absolutely. So, it's basically, it's the lid to stop the wine to oxidise to get any of the defects from, so basically you're looking for the micro-oxidation. Instead of you having the micro-oxidation from the oak barrels, you have the micro-oxidation from the clay, like the Romans used to do back on the days, the Greeks and if it worked well for them, why doesn't it work now, and I tell you I've tasted some amazing reds and whites from Talha. Some of them with a lot of ageing. Luckily, a lot of the producers are recovering the old methods and there's a couple of wineries now really taking that very serious to the next level. And there's a couple of new projects coming very shortly in the market with some extraordinary wines, aged in Talha, with indigenous grape varieties from Alentejo with kind of very old clones, so that'll be really interesting to see that things.



Janina Doyle 49:25

So anyone who's interested in that they need to look out for the, I'm saying VINHO is how it's spelt. Wait, I'm doing it VINHO for us English people how it's spelt. Vinho and then it's de Tal-HA so obviously we're pronouncing it 'TalYA' but that's how you would see it written on a wine label. So people know to look out for it right.



Andre Luis Martins 50:46

And the flavours they really really really amazing and some of the white wines do really well in Talha but I think the reds, I think the reds, it's really where the future is, especially some kind of high quality with concentration will come from the red.



Janina Doyle 51:04

Awesome. I think if anybody wants to know about grape varieties more, what I always find really useful: <http://www.winesofportugal.info/> They don't have 500 grape varieties there.

They certainly have at least the main 30.

- A** Andre Luis Martins 51:15
They have the major, they will point you to the major grape varieties in each region. So if you go to the website of the Wines of Portugal they'll have there, and after they have the link to the Sub websites, so most of the regions in Portugal have their own website. So wines of Alentejo does them. They all have their own website if you want to more details about the region.
- J** Janina Doyle 51:36
Love it. And there's some, right, we haven't even touched on Rosé but there's some lovely Rosés coming out. They are a bit more intense, a bit more aromatic as well from Alentejo.
- A** Andre Luis Martins 51:44
Yeah, you basically still have the classical Rosatos if you want to call it like that, where they kind of remember the Spanish intense red wines but there's some beautiful kind of Provence style Rosés being made. And I normally say with a bit more character because some of..
- J** Janina Doyle 52:02
There are a bit stronger, aren't they.
- A** Andre Luis Martins 52:03
The thing is they use a lot of Touriga Nacional as one of the grape varieties and basically the fruit intensity, even being pale, is great character there. And it does really kind of, it is a more intense Rosé, if you want to describe it like that.
- J** Janina Doyle 52:22
Exactly. Yummy. Okay, everyone, go and grab a bottle of Alentejo. You're amazing. Thank you very much for certainly making sure as well I pronounce things correctly in Portuguese.

- A** Andre Luis Martins 52:33
Absolutely a pleasure. Now we know we need to do one about my favourite region of Portugal in your next.
- J** Janina Doyle 52:39
Which one is next? Which one?
- A** Andre Luis Martins 52:39
We need to talk about Bairrada but we need to do a tasting.
- J** Janina Doyle 52:44
Sparkling! Baga grape variety!
- A** Andre Luis Martins 52:47
Baga aged with some time sleeping in bottle, early picking, late picking, oaked and unoaked and talk about that because I think it's a region very small in the perspective of Portugal. But some of the wines coming out of there is from the other world I think.
- J** Janina Doyle 53:06
Right, that is for another episode. Thank you so much, Andre, you're awesome. And we'll catch up for a glass of Baga or Sparkling very, very soon.
- A** Andre Luis Martins 53:16
Definitely.
- J** Janina Doyle 53:16
Thank you. See you soon.
- A** Andre Luis Martins 53:17
Pleasure, bye bye.



Janina Doyle 53:22

Right well, I definitely need to do more episodes on Portugal in Season two. Let me know, what do you want me to focus on next season? Are you wanting the lesser known wine regions, perhaps focus on countries like Romania and Croatia? Or should I be going more in depth for the Loire Valley in France and Tuscany in Italy? Let me know about what grape varieties, wine styles, things I haven't covered that you want to know about. You can contact me on Instagram. The handle is @eatsleep_winerepeat or send me an email janina@eatsleepwinerepeat.co.uk And for those of you that have listened all the way through and sent me wonderful support, so much love for you. Anyone who's just joining me now, do prepare yourself, go and enjoy these old episodes. I'll be back in six weeks. So that's the 16th of August. Now I will finish as always with my wine quote and I've chosen a Portuguese writer and poet and his name is Fernando Pessoa. I chose him because he was in fact the writer that inspired the Bojador wine that I tasted at the beginning, you can find one of his poems on the back of the label but for the wine quote, It is something very simple and he was noted to have said:



Janina Doyle 54:45

"Life is good, but wine is better."



Janina Doyle 54:49

Yes, it is. Guys, seriously, this has been so much fun and so interesting. This journey of doing podcasts by myself. I hope you've enjoyed the season. I cannot wait to bring you season two, so much love to you all. Go grab yourself something totally delicious and I will see you again on another episode of Eat Sleep Wine Repeat. Cheers to you!