

# Ep 181: The Wines of the Douro Valley with Anne Mchale MW (Part 2)



**Janina Doyle 00:00:07** 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!

Hello, wine friends, and welcome back part two with Anne Mchale, master of wine. Now, if you missed part one, go back. We were talking about the Alsace region in France and Anne's latest discoveries from her recent trip there.

But today, we are talking about the Douro region in Portugal. Why? Well, when I was quizzing Anne about some of her most profound and memorable experiences in wine, one of her moments was treading grapes in the Douro. And so, we're going to be talking about the historical significance of traditional foot treading in port wine production and how this compares to the modern mechanical methods to extract the juice.

We'll be talking about some of the red grapes used in port production. However, there are 80 grapes that we could mention, but the main five that you want to know about are Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz, which is the Douro name for Tempranillo. And side note, I can't even say the Portuguese name, as further down south in the Alentejo region, they call this grape Aragones. But getting back to the grapes, the last two on your list, Tinta Cão and Tinta Barroca.

And of course, we will be talking about this absolutely awe-inspiring landscape, a UNESCO World Heritage Site with its just spectacularly steep slopes, entirely covered by vineyards which can easily be seen from a cruise boat that will take you up the River Douro. And no, I have not been to the region which, if you ask me, is absolutely outrageous and I'm angry with myself that I still haven't popped across on a two hour flight from London. Soon friends.

Right, before we go to the episode, although we do talk about terroir, the soils, the rainfall or more how it diminishes the further inland you go. And of course, the steep slopes get a mention, but we didn't talk about the fascinating building of terraces where over centuries, row upon row of these terraces have been built up these steep hills, but also with different techniques.

So, I want to touch on them now as when you go, you will want to know what you are looking at. So, the majority of vineyards are planted in three different ways. You have the Socalcos, the traditional stone wall terraces dating back to pre-phylloxera times, some built in the late 1700s, early 1800s, by hand, managing to break down the hard schist formations from the ground with minimal tools, I might add, and then build these high walls.

By doing that, they could create flat terraces between the walls where they could then plant a maximum of three rows per terrace, but typically one or two rows. The labour needed to build them is insane. And now sadly, as walls crumble, they are losing some of these historical features because labour to maintain these walls is even harder than finding labour to work these steep hills and vineyards during the year.

But apart from the beauty of these terraces that follow the contours of the hills, they are in fact the best design to deal with erosion, which is a big issue in the Douro. You may also see some slightly lower stone walls with a larger, more sloping vineyard surface area. These were designed in the late 19th century to be able to plant more rows and to be able to bring horses and mules through. But erosion here can of course be more of an issue.

Then you have Patamares. These are terraces developed in the 1980s to allow two rows of vines per terrace. Instead of stone walls, earth banks are built. There is more room for mechanism, that's a positive, and they're much easier to build, but erosion is such an issue. I don't actually think that anyone is doing this anymore and instead single row Patamares exist. But these still have issues with erosion, so let me know if anyone has been there recently and spoken to a producer about this.

Then lastly you have the vertical plantings going up and down the hills rather than following the contours. And these are known as Vinha ao Alto. But they can only be planted on the slopes that are less than 35%.

And to finish off with something that I only just found out about is apparently the oldest stone walls of all, they're called Pilheiros. I hope I'm pronouncing correctly. They're believed to be about 400 years old. So, what I learned is that Pilheiro, it comes from the Portuguese word 'pilhar', meaning to steal. So each Pilheiro has these small holes every two metres where vines were planted alongside grains and corn.

Now, the name comes from the idea that the vine would steal land to grow by itself. Very curious. Right, enough geeking out on terraces. Pour yourself a glass of Douro red table wine, or of course a cheeky glass of port if you are after something a little sweeter. And enjoy the episode.

**Janina Doyle 00:06:01** So, what I really want to do is take you across to the Douro now because you said to me that you had one of your incredible experiences at a winery was there, treading grapes. So, this is something that really is on my bucket list. I think it's on the bucket list of everybody who loves wine. So, tell everybody listening what it's like to jump around in a big – well, I was going to say a big bowl of grapes, but lagares, a granite trough.

**Anne Mchale 00:06:34** So, while I worked at Berry Bros. & Rudd, we sold a lot of port from the Symington Family Stable. So, they invited a group of us out there on a sort of staff training trip. And we visited all the various Quintas of the Symington Stable.

We were actually there at Harvest time, which was just magical. So, this was in 2009. They have their Quinta do Vesuvio, which gets released every year as a single Quinta. The grapes from those vineyards never get blended into one of the shippers like Grahams or Warres or anything like that. They never get blended into those vintage wines. They release their own single Quinta vintage every year.

And they are the only Quinta where they retain this traditional process of food treading because I would say, it's probably more efficient and less labour intensive to use mechanical versions of it. But for historic reasons, I think they kind of preserve this tradition there, which I think is really, really interesting.

So, the guys who'd been out picking in the vineyard all day, these guys worked so hard, they'd been picking and then they got into the tanks to tread the grapes. By the time we arrived, we had just been treated to a sort of four course dinner finishing with various vintage ports. And then, we kind of just got in right at the end of the process. And we got in at the stage where they were still doing it in a kind of rhythmical marching.

So, I have some photos that I've shared before, which is us all lined up and we had to wear a uniform, which I find very strange that we all had to wear a tartan shirt and navy shorts. And then, we had to kind of all line up arm in arm and then a guy was kind of shouting time and we were marching on the grapes like this.

We did that for a short period of time as I say these other guys had already been doing it you know for a while and then it turned into a party and again this is going back to one of these historical traditions. A guy brought out an accordion. They brought out some kind of rough red table wine and everybody danced around the lagar and that was really fun.

**Janina Doyle 00:08:48** Around? So, by this point, you've come out of the lagar and you're dancing around it rather than dancing in it.

**Anne Mchale 00:08:55** No, still in it. Yeah, still in it. So kind of thigh deep in must and skins. And what I find really interesting is that it was like some bits of the liquid felt really warm, and then you'd move to a different spot and it would be cold and your legs were stained deep purple. These grapes are really pigmented. If you're ever going to find a way to remember that port grapes are high in anthocyanins. This is it. The legs got stained and it took a few days for it to completely rub off.

**Janina Doyle 00:09:29** Really? Word of advice. If anybody is planning a beautiful night out, women who are going to wear short dresses and high heels, don't be treading any grapes anywhere the day before.

**Anne Mchale 00:09:38** Yeah. Yeah, exactly. You'll have some strange stains on your legs.

**Janina Doyle 00:09:44** Up to your thigh! They will do this treading, you came at the end, but like, four to six hours, right? It's not a few minutes.

**Anne Mchale 00:09:55** Yeah, it's hard work. Yeah. So, the Symington's developed a robotic version of this, which doesn't have the same character and same link to history. But it's a lot more effective. It doesn't get tired. It doesn't require accordion music and rough red wine to keep it going. It doesn't go to sleep overnight.

It mimics the exact pressure of a human foot, which is the reason that foot treading is so effective is that it crushes the grapes and splits open the skins without crushing the pips. The pips would be releasing these undesirable, bitter oils that you wouldn't want in the final product.

That's why this robotic lagar was developed to mimic that action. So overall, I would say it's probably a much more cost effective and efficient way of doing things. But I for one, I'm really glad that they retain the old tradition just for those who want to experience it.

**Janina Doyle 00:10:55** Well, now I don't know if this is included. But if you go to their website, Quinta de Vesuvio, you can actually as a consumer, you can pay. It's not the cheapest I looked, it's €500 per-person. But you can go and have a private day with them, including six hours with them and there's lots of bits and bobs and obviously wine tasting. Not sure.

Everyone, just go to the website, I'll put the link in the show notes and you can see what's included. But I wonder, obviously, you can't tread the grapes if it's not harvest time, but I wonder if you were to book during that time whether you'd be able to sneak in and whether that would be included in the experience but amazing, because that Quinta is beautiful as well to come and visit.

**Anne Mchale 00:11:43** Stunning place.

**Janina Doyle 00:11:44** Right. Yeah. Can you just describe not only being there, but I suppose even the backdrop, the River Douro, I have again not visited this region. It's a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of the crazy steep hills and its history. This specific Quinta is in the Douro Superior towards the region closest to Spain, isn't it? Am I right?

**Anne Mchale 00:12:10** That sounds right to me. It's quite inland. Douro is just breathtaking. I was talking about the vertiginous slopes of Kitterle in Alsace. Well, you've just got that everywhere in the Douro. And it was such an inhospitable environment.

Vines were really the only crop that they could plant there because vines have this ability to send the roots down so deep that they will find nutrients where there are nutrients. But in order to be able to plant vines, they had to hack these terraces out of the hillside.

It's just so breathtaking when you stand in one of those vineyards and you've got the Douro River below you and these steep hillsides. And of course, because I was there at harvest time, the grapes are everywhere on the vines and it is truly a magical place to visit.

**Janina Doyle 00:12:55** Do they allow you to go on, I don't know what – I can't remember what they're called, but they have the traditional boats, which of course would have been back in the day the way they transported the port down to obviously the, right on the coast where it's actually typically stored. But they, obviously, don't use it anymore.

But I think you can go on, they do tourist trips now where you can still ride on those really long thin boats. I wish I knew what their name was. Did you get to go on one?

**Anne Mchale 00:13:21** No. No, we didn't. We did go on a motorboat one evening, but we didn't go on one of the traditional ones. But yeah, very happy memories.

**Janina Doyle 00:13:30** My gosh! Yes. Now I can totally imagine. Okay, so we've talked about foot treading, and you've mentioned these kinds of piston plungers, which are the more modern way to now press grapes in a similar fashion.

If I bring it back to a diploma question, I think it would be very fair that they might say to contrast and compare treading by feet and using these mechanical feet, like, I think they're called them port toes in certain places. So, what would you say are the advantages and disadvantages of the two? Or do you feel like now with technology, there's so much similarities in terms of the quality that you get?

**Anne Mchale 00:14:12** I think in terms of style and quality, the modern machines have been developed deliberately to mimic the traditional process. So, really the difference is in the story that you're able to tell. There's no good story from saying we have a machine that does this. It's much better in terms of going back to the diploma. The five P's of the marketing mix, I always encourage students to weave that into their answers if there's any kind of commercial aspect to the question.

And in terms of the promotion part of the five P's, what a great story to tell if you do everything by foot. But in terms of, you know, and then going back to the diploma way of looking at things, how do production factors affect style, quality and price?

Style and quality, we've said there isn't much difference. Price, if you bring price back to cost of production, which is ultimately at the heart of the selling price, then your cost of production, once you've initially made that capital outlay for expensive flashy equipment like this, it's going to be a lot more cost-saving and time-saving to use these machines versus relying on people, especially as there are fewer people available to do this kind of work these days. A lot of young people leave regions like this.

And so, there just aren't as many people. And it's really, really hard work, so the people obviously need to be fed, watered, they get tired, naturally. And so, it's just going to take you a lot longer to get all of it done and cost more.

**Janina Doyle 00:15:50** Probably though in the diploma question, we don't need to talk about the accordion, although that's super visual and important. Probably you wouldn't get a point for mentioning the accordion and the rustic wine at the end, maybe?

**Anne Mchale 00:16:02** It's going to help you remember though, isn't it? So that's why I always say to my diploma students, you need to be listening to fun podcasts like Janina's because it's just going to bring stuff alive for you in a way that a textbook never can.

So, you're probably always going to think about foot treading now having listened to this in the context of the accordion and the dancing and the rough red wine. And yeah, exactly. Yeah, the rhythmic marching that was very funny.

**Janina Doyle 00:16:35** No, but I was just gonna say what you said about visuals and it's all clues that will help you to remember certain things. Even if we talk about the climate, you always have to remember the Douro is split into three.

Douro Superior, which we were just talking about, is the closest to Spain. Then you've got your Cima Corgo in the middle. These two are the best places for premium. Then you've got the Baixo Corgo, which is the lightest wine, closest to Porto.

I'll always remember that it's the rainiest at the West and then it gets drier and drier as you come into Spain because Porto is actually the second wettest city in Europe. Just the fact that it's so, so wet and when I think of Portugal being so sunny, I find that so extreme that it just really allows me to remember that as we go from west to east, it gets drier and drier and drier just the fact of how rainy it is. So, don't go to Porto. If it rained in Alsace when you went there and it's supposed to be the driest, definitely don't go to Porto.

**Anne Mchale 00:17:40** That would be a disaster! But I really like what you've just said, Janina, because I think making these links and understanding these primarily actually geographical concepts that helps us to prepare for our diploma exams in a way that we don't need to learn every single tiny little detail of every indigenous grape variety and every budding time and ripening time because you could swamp yourself with details like that.

And if you want to get a distinction, then I probably would advise that you do learn all those little details. But actually what you're going to come away with having passed the diploma, you'll probably not going to remember all the micro details because, let's face it, you can look them up when you need to, but what you're going to come away with is the kind of thing that you've just said.

You now understand, you have this innate understanding that the rainfall moves from the West and, again, the same concept applies if the Vosgues mountains weren't there to act as a rain shadow for Alsace, it would be a lot wetter.

And likewise, as you move inland in Douro, it's drier and this pattern is repeated in many parts of the world, then you've got something to write straight away. As long as you understand the geography of a given region, there's always something that you can say.

**Janina Doyle 00:18:56** Totally agree. And actually, I mean, this is the other thing as well. I remember when I was doing my diploma, what potentially was useful was actually trying to tie regions all around the world together so that I could then say, okay, which are all the regions that have really steep hills, which are all the regions that are sandy soils, just trying to put them together and link them. Then obviously, when you're stuck, just guess and hope for the best.

One of the things that's a quite good guess is if it's a region that's very close to the coast, there may well be quite a bit of sandy soils, just because logically that would make sense. One of the things bringing me back to talking of soils in the Douro, which is schist and granite for anybody. It's not by the coast, so it makes sense it's a little bit rockier.

Visuals, again, in the Douro Superior, which was always a region that is newer, it was harder to get to and navigate, those soils were so tough and so rocky that people were using dynamite and blowing up holes to be able to put their vines in originally. Somebody told me about that. I don't think it happens with every single place, but it has been done.

The thought of using dynamite or something similar to blow up, to create holes in rocks. Again, for me to think of schist and granite, it's a lot easier because I have the visual of how rocky the area is and how inhospitable it is. And therefore, then the roots have to work really, really hard to go down and find some nutrients somewhere. So, it's trying to tie all those bits together.

**Anne Mchale 00:20:28** I think that's really helpful for people. The more links that people can make, the better. And that is what I encourage students to do when they're going through these vast materials and extracting information that they're going to be able to use in the exam that they just look for these links and note them as soon as they find one.

**Janina Doyle 00:20:45** What do you feel is a good way to maybe, if we were to talk about Touriga Nacional, the main grape variety – obviously, port is typically a blend. In fact, actually, I think you could use like 80 varieties. But obviously, it is typically like the famous five.

Touriga Nacional, I mean, would you maybe get a question in a diploma where somebody has to break down, just focus entirely on what does Touriga Nacional taste like? Or would they more focus on the blend as a whole? What do you get as a style? What do you think?

**Anne Mchale 00:21:22** In terms of the D5 Fortified exam, they don't actually release the past exam questions. So it was hard to know in the context of port, what exactly might show up. I would imagine it would probably be broader than that. Explain how the grape growing and winemaking affects style and quality in vintage port, let's say.

And then you would be expected to bring in the grape varieties and you would be expected, I think, to write a little on the common ones and primarily Touriga Nacional. But I don't think you'd have to write in such intense detail.

Again, likewise, if you in D3 had a question on the table wines of the Douro, I would be advising, if you're looking for those higher grades that you do have a sentence to write on Touriga Nacional, but you wouldn't need to go into a whole paragraph on Touriga Nacional because perhaps the Douro Valley would be one of three regions featured in the question, or there would be a broader kind of set of factors that you were expected to talk about rather than just the blend or just the individual varieties. Does that answer the question?

**Janina Doyle 00:22:29** Yeah. No, it does. And actually, it's really interesting that, again, it's funny. I realised this is probably the only reason I passed, that I did naturally try and create connections and visuals. And actually, what's quite good for anyone listening about blends, when the typical blend that everyone thinks about may be Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and also maybe a little bit of Cabernet Franc, that typical blend from Bordeaux and what does each one add?

And Cabernet Sauvignon, yeah, okay, it's the structure, a bit more of the power. Merlot's the soft, rounder one. And Cabernet Franc gives you the perfume and maybe the more herbal, earthy edge. Well, it's really interesting to then go, okay, let's take and look at a blend and what does each element do? And kind of almost like there's normally the same players in it. And the same way Touriga Nacional for me is, of course, it's power and it's bold and it's intense. But Touriga Franca, which incidentally, visually and connection sounds a bit like Cabernet Franc... Touriga Franca, kind of, ok. And Touriga Franca gives the perfume.

You've got the Touriga Nacional, which is the main component, which again, it's playing that role of Cabernet Sauvignon and it's always going to be the majority. And then what does Touriga Franca give? Well, it's the perfume. So that's how, again, and I would try and do that around the world, but in this context, we're talking about Douro, that that helped me a little bit.

**Anne Mchale 00:23:52** Yeah, those are absolutely brilliant tips, because it's just such a huge volume of information in these textbooks that if you don't have a photographic memory, and what percentage of the population has a photographic memory is tiny, then you have to find some kind of strategies. And what you've done is linked these in a way, which means that the concepts actually sink in rather than you just cramming it for one day before the exam and then forgetting it again the day after.

**Janina Doyle 00:24:24** I mean, again, everyone has a different way that their brain works. And some of the stuff that I come up with is ridiculous. And some people would think it's crazy. But like Tinta Barroca always reminds me of the Barroca vitamin C. I don't even know what it's called or if it's how it's exactly spelled. But those vitamin C tablets you put in water and it fizzes.

But it gives because it gives a fruitiness to the wine. Sorry, I wish. No, every day, I do put them into water, I promise. Because it changes. You've got something plain and now you're putting it in and it adds a fruitiness because it was always really orangey. I'm like, oh, Tinta Barocca adds a fruitiness and it can add to the body. It just rounds it out. That was my way of being able to remember what that did to the blend. I guess everyone just needs to have a look at what each component does and then add their own little visual that they'll be able to remember.

**Anne Mchale 00:25:18** Yeah, really good.

**Janina Doyle 00:25:19** What were your experiences when you'd finished treading grapes? Did you spend some time in Porto? In the town? Did you spend some time drinking white port with, what do they put it, is it tonic or is it soda?

**Anne Mchale 00:25:32** Yeah, we didn't spend any time in Porto. We flew there and then we just headed straight into the vineyard areas, but we did have many white ports and tonics overlooking the Douro.

We stayed in the Graham's Quinta. Quinta dos Malvedos. Again, I don't know how to pronounce the Portuguese properly, but that's where we stayed. They have a hotel there. I remember just sitting on the terrace of that Quinta with the white port and tonic. They just serve it as you would make a gin and tonic. You just replace the gin with the white port and it's a gorgeous beverage. Really, really delicious. You're making me wish it was summer.

**Janina Doyle 00:26:12** It's nearly, nearly summer. Again, I just really love a lot of the information, you can Google and you can start absorbing, but it's also, I love for the people listening to get excited about visiting these regions. And this is one of the regions that really is on my list because it's not just about, well, most wine regions are just beautiful as hell anyway, but this one, it's so historic. It's so iconic. Fun fact. I found out recently. This is actually the third oldest demarcated wine region in Europe. I did not know that. I knew it was old.

**Anne Mchale 00:26:45** That's right. It goes back to the 1700s, I think, doesn't it?

**Janina Doyle 00:26:49** You are correct. And for anyone listening, I do not know this by heart. I literally just Googled it before we started the podcast. 1716 was Chianti. Then Tokaji came, which was 1730 something. See, again, look, I literally just looked this up an hour ago and I still can't remember. But yes, 1716 probably is Chianti. 1730 something is Tokaji. And then this one is 1756?



**Anne Mchale 00:27:21** Yeah, that sounds right to me.

**Janina Doyle 00:20:22** I think so. Good. Let's go with that. But it is. I mean, wines have been made for hundreds and thousands of years in many, many places in Europe. But again, to have things that have been demarcated, the rulings to have such history, to be able to look back and actually see how they've classified zones and how it's grown. And it looks beautiful.

And now there's table wines as well as port and there's white port. And I think there's now rosé port and not that I've ever tasted Rosé port, but it's exciting. It's brilliant. I always think it's empowering to absorb that history as well as the nature and the flavours, right?

**Anne Mchale 00:28:00** Yeah. One thing that really struck me when I was in France recently is probably most people that you and I hang out with are not in the wine industry and they drink wine as a beverage and they enjoy it. When you're hanging out a lot with your friends and family that aren't that interested in wine, you sort of start to think, it just must be a beverage and why am I obsessed with it?

But then when you get back to spending time with the people who produce it, there's something amazing about the all-consuming nature of how they've built their lives around the vineyard year and everything that's happening with their vines and their wines.

And if we didn't have that level of obsession with any human endeavour, it just nothing would ever have achieved the pinnacle of what it's achieved. You think about art and music and anything like that, you need people to be obsessed with it in order for the quality to be incredible so that people who aren't that interested in the detail of it can enjoy it. That's the way I see it. So, I was really happy to kind of just reconnect with that again, be on the ground and just remember that passion.

**Janina Doyle 00:29:15** I love that I always say, I'm drinking wine for the masses. I'm doing this for you.

**Anne Mchale 00:29:21** It's selfless.

**Janina Doyle 00:29:22** So that you don't have to do all of the work. I'll just bring you the good stuff. When you were in, I don't know if you know the answer to this because you obviously stayed in this amazing hotel and one of the Quintas, which you've just mentioned. Everyone, I'll leave the link in the show notes so you can check it out. Are a lot of the Quintas, do they have hotels?

**Anne Mchale 00:29:38** This one I think it may have been, maybe it was private rooms for guests of the Symington family. I don't know if you were able to book. Yeah, I don't know if you were able to book the hotels. Again, this was such a long time ago as well. It could have changed. Maybe you are able to book it, but it's worth checking. Definitely.

**Janina Doyle 00:29:56** Symington Family Estates – I mean, they are one of the largest, I guess, vineyard holders, wine producers within the Douros. And they've got so many different brands underneath them. They make insane, beautiful, still table wines.

If somebody wanted to go into the journey of getting to know brands and quality wine, I would highly recommend going to the Symington Family Wine Estate portfolio. Are there any others that are not within them that you would potentially suggest?

**Anne Mchale 00:30:30** Yeah, you should definitely check out Taylor's as well. They're similarly historic and well-known. There's a small family owned estate called Quinta De La Rosa, which I have a sort of association with because my niece is called Rosa. And so, when she was born, I laid down Quinta De La Rosa port for her, which may not make it until she's of drinking age, but I'll do my best to keep at least one bottle for her.

**Janina Doyle 00:30:58** You'll try. And they do really good stills as well. I think Quinta De La Rosa, for people to recognise, is quite a black and white label, isn't it? A lot of their labels are black and white, I think, from memory. But they do great. Now your face is looking like it might not be. Now everyone, I'm going to have to Google.

Yeah, with a bird on it. Yeah, it's a white label and then like birds, but you've also got one white label with a kind of a rose. Surprise, surprise, which is a little bit pinker. And then, another white and black feather. Yeah, typically their labels are quite clean, white with black design through them, but their stills are fantastic. As are Quinta do Crasto.

And also, we say the Symington family, but there's the Prats and Symington wines where they've worked with Bruno Prats, Bordeaux from somewhere or other, I can't remember off the top of my head right now. But those still wines – I mean, I really like the still wines of the Douro.

**Anne Mchale 00:32:01** I have not tried those yet.

**Janina Doyle 00:32:03** There you go! Remember, Anne, I'm drinking wines for the masses. That also includes you. That is my recommendation. Ah dear me, brilliant. Thank you very much for just touching on a little bit of your own stories. If anyone's thinking about doing the diploma, hopefully they are inspired and will come and maybe investigate what you're doing.

Equally though, you've got a whole load of different courses. Have you released your course for beginners? That's like a seven day course? Is that already out and released for people to do if they just start on their journey?

**Anne Mchale 00:32:43** Yeah, on my website, I have a sort of very fun and bite sized seven day self paced challenge. And it's specifically focused on improving your confidence when you're ordering wine in a restaurant.

So, it's not kind of your typical guide through all the key grape varieties and all of that. It's a little mini video and homework for seven days in a row gets delivered to your inbox. And you have to undertake a couple of little mini challenges.

But the whole idea is that by the end of that seven days, you can go to a restaurant and already just feel that bit more confident with reading the wine list on your own or talking to the sommelier in the right way that will get you the wine that you want to drink at your budget, which is key, of course. So, that's what I have for beginners.

**Janina Doyle 00:33:31** I love that. Don't say what the mini activities are because I love that it's all about the doing as well. It's not just about the learning. Have you released yet? I know it was part of the plans to do something for level three WSET as well. Is that happening still?

**Anne Mchale 00:30:58** Janina, what a question! I've had this idea for about 3-4 years. So, I've just been so busy with all the diploma stuff. But I have trademarked the name, it's called Three Therapy, which is a spin off of Diplomatherapy.

And it is going to be a sort of comprehensive guide, not only to the exam technique side of doing well in level three, which I know is something that people struggle with, but also how to study for it effectively. Because if you've come from level two, level three is just a huge leap up. Like, anyone who's seen the size of that textbook having just read the slim level two textbook will feel daunted by that.

So, my tips are going to help you break down the content in that book so that you can learn it effectively, but then also crucially apply it in the exams. And I will also touch upon how to prepare for the tasting exams.

But as with diplomas, those usually have a higher pass rate, although they feel scarier to sit because a blind wine tasting is scary. They do have a higher pass rate than the theory. So, the theory is where people need more support. So, that is what that course will cover. So, keep your eyes for Three Therapy in 2024.

**Janina Doyle 00:35:08** Great things take time. Rome was not built in a day nor was Three Therapy.

**Anne Mchale 00:35:14** It's out there in the world now though. I've spoken publicly about it so there's no going back.

**Janina Doyle 00:35:18** You better hurry up. There's people waiting. I'm going to put your links, everything in the show notes. For everybody who wants to explore and learn a little bit more about wine, depending on the level, they'll be able to find it.

But thank you. Thanks for just telling us a little bit of your stories and experiences about visiting different wineries. The best way to learn is to drink it and to go to the winery or the wine region. Right?

**Anne Mchale 00:35:39** If you can't quite make it to the wine region then keep listening to Janina because she's going to bring you the best stories.

**Janina Doyle 00:35:46** You're so kind! I paid her to say that. No, I didn't. Much appreciated. So, I will leave it here. Hopefully, everyone is inspired to go and get some lovely nice wines or book a flight and I'll see you again soon. So, thank you so much for coming on.

**Anne Mchale 00:36:00** Thank you, Janina!

**Janina Doyle 00:36:01** Take care. See you!

**Janina Doyle 00:36:05** I hope that's got you in the mood to go visit the Douro yourself. I know there is a Douro museum there that goes into detail on the port wine production if you want to learn more. And there are so many Quintas to visit which are just so historic.

And a quick Google search has shown me that there are certainly several consumer opportunities to go at harvest time and tread your own grapes. Now if you go, let me know, tell me how it was and you can either direct message me on Instagram @eatsleep\_winerepeat or email me janina@eatsleepwinerepeat.co.uk. And if you are looking to do some port wine shopping, may I remind you, you will always be taken care of by [Wickhams Wine](#), so link is in the show notes, who I'm super proud sponsor this podcast. You can try a Krohn LBV 2017. LBV is a wine bottled four to six years after harvest. Then they have the Krohn Vintage Port 2003.

So, vintage is bottled two to three years after harvest, but it's a wine that just evolves for years in the bottle. They also have a Borges Tawny Reserve Port. A Tawny Reserve has to spend at least seven years in oak. So, that will have a little chocolatey, nutty note alongside the fruit. Tawny is actually my favourite.

So if you're there, remember to use the code "EATSLEEP10" for 10% off your first order. And now I shall leave you with a wine quote as always and to bring this all full circle and to finish off again with those emblematic terraces. Journalist turned vineyard owner Chantal Lecouty said:

"It is they who by blending into infinity with the curves of the countryside endow this property with its unique character. Seen from above, the vineyards look like a series of Aztec pyramids."

Make sure you are subscribed, like the podcast, leave a review if you're enjoying it. And next week, I'm talking with Jane Anson, only the well-known wine writer and journalist known as an absolute expert on Bordeaux.

So, we will be talking about En Primeur Bordeaux, which is just finished. So, get ready for some true insider knowledge and I will see you back here again next week. Take care of yourself, wishing you a week of beautiful moments and great wine choices. And until next Monday, wine friends, cheers to you!