

Historic Series Madeiras

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Madeira was the United States' most prestigious wine, shipped to connoisseurs in major seaports from New Orleans to Boston.

Prominent families purchased vintage Madeira in cask or demijohn, and built sizeable collections for long-term aging. In the late-1800s, successive plagues of Oidium and Phylloxera devastated Madeira production, and the tradition of Madeira drifted into obscurity.

As America's leading merchant of rare, old Madeiras, The Rare Wine Co. has been a major force behind Madeira's recent revival in the marketplace—introducing a new generation of wine lovers to the wonders of vintage Madeira. But it has long been our dream to introduce Madeira's glory to a broader market—teaching Americans about both Madeira's magical quality and our two centuries of shared history.

Origins of a New Idea

It is our belief that the usual introductions to Madeira—five- and ten-year blends—often fail to offer the extra magic and distinction that marks the great vintage wines.

With this in mind, we teamed with Vinhos Barbeito's owner, Ricardo Diogo Vasconcelos Freitas, to create the Historic Series—affordable Madeiras that reflect the style and complexity of the great vintage wines.

As the holder of one of the great libraries of 18th & 19th century Madeiras, Ricardo had a unique understanding of the qualities we sought. Our goals seemed simple, but it



took over two years of trials to reach our aims. We wanted wines that would express true varietal character and display the traits of vintage Madeira. While no "Vintage Character" designation exists for Madeira as it does for Port, we felt that such a creation could contribute to Madeira's ongoing resurgence.

Affordable Madeiras are typically blended for uniformity but, with this project, we seek to create highly individual wines—wines that display uniquely the combinations of acidity, concentration, aromatics, and richness that mark the finest Madeira.

By working with small lots, we are able to include parcels of old wine (many exceeding 30 years old) which give the wines the character of Vintage Madeira. The source and age of these parcels may vary from lot to lot, but they will always help to achieve a more expressive result.

To emphasize America's deep historical connection to Madeira, each wine in the series is named for a U.S. city where Madeira was popular in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Thus, the series offers Boston Bual Special Reserve, New York Malmsey Special Reserve, Charleston Sercial Special Reserve, and New Orleans Special Reserve, which is based on the rare Terrantez grape.

Each bottle bears an early engraving from that city, along with a back label describing the wine and America's special link to Madeira's illustrious history.

RARE WINE CO. HISTORIC SERIES

Madeira, Portugal

OVERVIEW

First Release: 2002

History: The RWC Historic Series represents a close collaboration between The Rare Wine Co. and Vinhos Barbeito. First conceived in 1998, the goal from the beginning was to produce a series of affordable varietal Madeiras that possess the magical qualities of great Vintage Madeira. The difficulty of such a task was great, and, in fact, it took four years to perfect the blends. But finally in 2002, the first two wines in the series—New York Malmsey and Boston Bual—were released. And in 2004, the third in the series, Charleston Sercial, was released. The market reception has been extraordinary.

Each wine is made up 85% of the stated varietal, selected from parcels of wine 10 to 20 years old. The remaining 15% is very old Tinta Negro Mole, 40 to 60 years of age, which gives the wines much of their aged vintage character.

Each wine is named for an American seaport where Madeira was popular in the 18th and 19th centuries. The labels feature early engravings and historic information, further evoking a sense of Madeira's towering importance in American history.

VINEYARD INFORMATION

Soils: Volcanic, on steep, terraced hillsides.

Vineyards: A range of historic sites along the island's coast.

Composition: Each RWC wine is made primarily from its stated variety, with 15% very old Tinto Negro Mole. Residual sugars range from slightly under 2% for the Sercial, to just over 4% for the Malmsey.

WINEMAKING NOTES

With many different sources for the wine, one can only generalize about the winemaking. Historically, the grapes were pressed in or near the vineyards, and the juice transported to the producers' lodges in Funchal. The fermentations were stopped at the desired point with the addition of grape or sugar cane spirit.

Oak Aging: The critical process for making great Madeira is extended aging in wood. Most young blends achieve most of their character by heating over a few months in large vats. The RWC wines have spent years or decades in large barrels of various sizes. This time is what gives them their unique personalities.

THE WINES

“Charleston” Sercial

This Sercial shows the characteristic strong acidity and nutty flavors that have always marked great vintage Sercial. Superb as an aperitif or with the soup and cheese courses. Production: 300 cases/yr.

“Boston” Bual

This elegant Bual shows the classic notes of citrus peel and cinnamon. Its moderate sweetness, combined with good acidity, makes it not only a wonderful after-dinner wine, but versatile for dessert pairing. Production: 400 cases/yr.

“New York” Malmsey

This Malmsey has the deep color and classic toffee and caramel notes that make Malmsey such a favorite among Madeira lovers. It's a perfect wine with which to finish a meal, and is fabulous with rich desserts, including chocolate.

Production: 500 cases/yr.