

Rare Wine Co. Historic Series



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

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 Madeiras that possess the magical qualities of great Vintage Madeira. Each Madeira is a blend of young wine (less than two decades old) and very old wine (>50 years old).

The first two wines in the series—New York Malmsey and Boston Bual—were released in 2002, followed by the Charleston Sercial (2004) and Savannah Verdelho (2010). In 2013, Baltimore Rainwater was added to restore to prominence to what was once America’s most prized Madeira style. Each of these five Madeiras 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.

Additional limited releases have highlighted the importance of Madeira in the lives of our Founding Fathers. Others have been used to bottle important parcels of old wine that didn’t qualify for a vintage bottling, or to support charity.

Historically, grapes for Madeira were pressed in or near the vineyards, and the juice was then transported to the producers’ lodges over Madeira’s narrow, mountainous roads. The fermentations were stopped at the desired point with the addition of grape or sugar cane spirit.

The critical process in making great Madeira is aging in wood. This process is called “canteiro.” Many inexpensive Madeiras replace this step by heating in tank for about 3 months, which is called “estufagem”. The Historic Series Madeiras have all been patiently raised in barrels of various sizes; subject to substantial swings in temperature throughout the year. The Special Reserve designation requires the average age of wines to exceed 10 years. Each of Ricardo’s skillfully-assembled blends spends additional time in barrel to meld the components.

First Release: 2002

Winemaker: Ricardo Diogo Vasconcelos de Freitas

Appellation: Madeira

Soils: Volcanic soils, on steep, terraced hillsides.

CORE WINES	Vineyard & Grapes	Winemaking	Average Production
Charleston Sercial Special Reserve	A blend of >85% Sercial with a portion of very old wines. Sercial is grown at high elevations and is generally the last variety to be harvested.	Sercial must is fermented to relative dryness and then brandy is added to stop fermentation and to achieve a final alcohol level between 17% and 20%. Aged in cask.	~500 cases/yr
Boston Bual Special Reserve	A blend of >85% Bual with a portion of very old wines. Bual is grown at up to a 400m elevation. For many Madeira lovers, Bual offers the best combination of richness and elegance.	Bual must is fermented to 40-60g/l sugar, and then brandy is added to stop fermentation and to achieve a final alcohol level between 17% and 20%. Aged in cask.	~650 cases/yr
New York Malmsey Special Reserve	A blend of >85% Malvasia with a portion of very old wines. It is typically grown in warm sites at lower elevations and yields the richest of the classic styles.	Malvasia must is fermented to 96-135g/l sugar, and then brandy is added to stop fermentation and to achieve a final alcohol level between 17% and 20%. Aged in cask.	~650 cases/yr

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Savannah Verdelho Special Reserve	A blend of >85% Verdelho with a portion of very old wines. Verdelho grows on warm sites at lower elevations, and the best examples balance sweetness with formidable acidity.	Verdelho must is fermented to 20-40g/l sugar, and then brandy is added to stop fermentation and to achieve a final alcohol level between 17% and 20%. Aged in cask.	~400 cases/yr
Baltimore Rainwater Special Reserve	A blend of Verdelho from São Vincente and Prazeres, and Sercial from Jardim da Serra. Rainwater takes its name from its pale color and delicate texture and flavor.	Ricardo selects components with lighter colors and textures, and blends them to achieve a bracing style with ~50g/l sugar and over 7.5g/l total acidity.	~250 cases/yr
THE FOUNDING FATHERS - dedicated to our Founding Father's favorite drink.			
Thomas Jefferson Special Reserve	Jefferson's preferred drink was a blend of fine, dry Madeira with a small amount of rare Malvasia, resulting in a wine similar to Rainwater, but more powerful and longer on the palate.	Ricardo blends wildly diverse components to achieve Jefferson's style. The final wine typically contains ~65g/l sugar and over 7.5g/l total acidity.	50-100 cases (when made)
George Washington Special Reserve	A mix of Malvasia from São Jorge, Sercial from Jardim da Serra, and very old Tinta Negra from Câmara de Lobos, blended to reflect the style preferred by our first President.	The rich but refined final wine typically contains ~80g/l sugar and over 7.5g/l total acidity.	50-100 cases (when made)

LIMITED RELEASES

Benjamin Franklin - 2010, 2020

Mr. Madison's Malmsey - 2014, 2016

The Library Company - 2015

New Orleans - 2006, 2010, 2018

The Chief Justice's Madeira (John Marshall) - 2021