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# Red wine from the Douro region is full flavored

Portugal's Douro region has a well-chronicled reputation of producing fine wine. For many wine enthusiasts, it's a history that's inexorably linked with its legendary fortified wines. Yet the Douro Valley, one of the continent's most visually arresting and geologically diverse vistas, is home to more than just great Porto. Since the early '90s, many of the area's top Port producers also have focused on delivering high-quality red table wines that are worthy of praise in their own right; in styles indicative of its special terroir, native grape varieties and dynamic synergies employing the best talents in the region and beyond.

For red fans seeking distinctive, full-flavored wines that deliver in quality and price, cast more than a passing glance at the dry Douro reds currently available, especially from the excellent 2009 and 2011 vintages.

Among the many notable wine collaborations in the valley is Prats & Symington, as in Bruno Prats, former owner of Chateau Cos d'Estournel in Bordeaux and the Symington Family, historical producers of great Porto marques Quinta do Vesuvio, Quinta do Roriz, Smith Woodhouse, Cockburn's, Dow's, Graham's and Warre's.

Back in 2000, Prats & Symington unveiled the first release of Chryseia, a highly regarded limited production Douro red. Prats & Symington Post Scriptum (\$25) is essentially the second wine of Chry-



QUINTA DO CRASTO  
TINTO DOURO (\$15)  
SUPERIOR (\$25)

seia, made with fruit sourced from P&S's Quinta da Perdiz estate. It's a blend of mostly touriga nacional and touriga franca with small portions of tinta barroca and tinta roriz. Post Scriptum shares much in terms of style with its hard-to-find bigger brother, offering layers of lush black fruit supported by notes of mineral and spice.

When the Symington family added Quinta do Roriz to their Porto portfolio in 2009, they also turned to Bruno Prats to

produce another Douro Tinto from their new acquisition. The result was Prazo de Roriz (\$16), a supple, flavorful red comprised of tinta barroca, touriga franca and touriga nacional.

On its own accord, Symington makes an alternative value from their venerable Dow's estate: Dow Vale do Bomfim (\$12) is a lively, fresh, medium-bodied red featuring tinta barroca and touriga nacional with some tinto cao.

Roquette & Cazes is another partnership of two legendary wine men: the Douro's Jorge Roquette and Bordeaux's Jean-Michel Cazes of Chateau Lynch-Bages. The wine is a blend of 60 percent touriga nacional, 15 percent touriga franca and 25 percent tinta roriz grown on the Douro's steeply terraced schist soils and aged 18 months in French oak barrels. The 2011 Roquette & Cazes Douro (\$35) is a powerful red with rich notes of berries and violets with a long, detailed finish. It's accessible now but certainly cellar worthy, too.

Jorge Roquette also produces noteworthy Douro wines at his Quinta do Crasto estate, including a juicy **CRASTO TINTO DOURO (\$15)** and an expressive, mineral-tinged **CRASTO SUPERIOR (\$25)**, the latter gaining depth and complexity from 12 months in new French oak.

The wines of the Douro reds are admittedly great food wines, too, especially paired with grilled meats such as beef and lamb or served with blue-veined cheeses such as Stilton or Shropshire.

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By Jim Greeley from The Times Herald; 2015