

NEW RELEASE

# TAYLOR FLADGATE QUINTA DE VARGELLAS VINHA VELHA VINTAGE 2011



TAYLOR FLADGATE®

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The 2011 harvest in the Douro Valley produced outstanding Ports following a textbook viticultural year. In addition to its classic Vintage Port, Taylor Fladgate decided to release a very small amount of 2011 Quinta de Vargellas Vinha Velha, the very rare Vintage Port produced from the oldest vines on the Vargellas estate. Comments on the wine and on the viticultural year are as follows:

Adrian Bridge, Managing Director:

“The 2011 harvest has produced superb Vintage Ports which are classics in every sense of the word. The results on the old vineyard at Quinta de Vargellas were particularly impressive and we have decided to bottle a 2011 Vargellas Vinha Velha Vintage Port which, as in the past, is drawn from a rigorous selection of grapes from the very oldest vines on the property. The release will be good news for collectors, although as usual the quantities produced are very limited.”

David Guimaraens, Wine Maker:

“The excellent ripening conditions in 2011 ensured good levels of consistency across the different grape varieties. This meant that the varietal diversity of the old vineyard at Vargellas was able to express itself to the full. As a result, the 2011 Vinha Velha has a wonderful complexity, delivering multiple layers of aroma and flavor.”

The 2011 Vargellas Vinha Velha was made up of a very careful selection of grapes from the old vines on the Polverinho and Renova do Armazém plots whose old terraces are classified as World Heritage.

## TASTING NOTE

Intense purple black color. As usual with Vinha Velha the wine delivers multiple layers of aroma and flavour. The nose is marked by a complex fruitiness, blending aromas of blackcurrant, plum and blackberry. This is overlaid with nuances of dark chocolate, exotic wood and black pepper and a mantle of delicate floral scent. Although the nose is expressive, there is plenty of depth and background hinting at aromas still to emerge with time. The palate is in perfect balance and supported by a dense weave of sinewy tannin. A burst of fresh berry fruit flavor lingers on the finish.

## NOTES ON THE 2011 VITICULTURAL YEAR AND HARVEST

The winter preceding the 2011 harvest was wetter and colder than the 30-year average. Budburst occurred as usual in mid March and warm weather and rainfall in April produced vigorous growth. At the beginning of May dry conditions set in and there was little rainfall in eastern areas of the Douro until late August. However the vines were able to draw from the plentiful ground water reserves built up during the previous winter and bunches developed and ripened in ideal conditions. Véraison occurred a little earlier than usual on 15th June. Mild weather in June and July was broken only by a heat wave in the second half of June. August was hot and dry, with perfectly timed rainfall on 21st August and 1st September rounding off an excellent ripening season and producing a well balanced crop.

Quinta de Vargellas, in the Douro Superior, was the first Taylor Fladgate property to start harvesting on 10th September. Here as elsewhere the crop showed high sugar levels balanced by excellent acidity. In the Pinhão Valley, harvesting started at Quinta do Junco and in the upper part of Quinta de Terra Feita on 14th September and in the lower part of Terra Feita the following day. Fermentations were long, allowing balanced and complete extraction, and musts displayed intense color and powerful fruit character from the outset.



## LABEL



## BOTTLE FORMATS



750ML

## CASES PRODUCED

310





## TAYLOR FLADGATE

Taylor Fladgate & Yeatman was founded over three centuries ago in 1692 and has been family owned and run throughout its history. Taylor Fladgate is recognized as a benchmark for Vintage Port, its classic vintages attracting the highest scores and auction prices. Known for their elegance, longevity and distinctive scented character, they are blended from the finest wines of the firm's own 'quintas' or estates.

These three famous properties – Vargellas, Terra Feita and Junco – occupy distinct geographic locations and each contributes its own unique character and dimension to the subtle harmony of the blend. These properties represent the best of innovation and tradition, combining the most advanced viticultural practices with traditional foot treading, still unsurpassed as a method for making Vintage Port.

## QUINTA DE VARGELLAS

The wines of Quinta de Vargellas traditionally form the 'backbone' of the Taylor Fladgate Vintage Port blend. This outstanding estate, recognized as one of the world's finest vineyards, was acquired by Taylor Fladgate in 1893 although its reputation as a source of the finest ports dates back to the 1820's. Located in the remote eastern reaches of the Douro Valley, Vargellas is known for its elegant, scented wines, with their fine focused fruit and well integrated sinewy tannins. It is also known as a source of one of the rarest and most collectible Vintage Ports of all, Vargellas Vinha Velha, made in very small quantities from the produce of the oldest vines on the estate. Only six have been released to date and the 2011 will be the seventh. The terraced plots containing the oldest vines on the property account for over 15% of the estate's total production. The Vargellas Vinha Velha Vintage Port represents a very limited selection of the production of these old vines and seldom accounts for more than about 2% of the total production of the property.

By far the largest part of the production of the old vineyards is incorporated into the traditional Quinta de Vargellas single-quinta Vintage Port or the declared Taylor Fladgate Vintage, or into other wines when no Vintage Port is made.

The Vargellas Vinha Velha vintage is selected from five individual plots of old vineyard: Polverinho, Renova do Depósito, Renova do Armazém, Gricha and Vinha Grande. The age of the old vines on these plots varies from around 80 to 120 years. Each plot, which is harvested individually, produces wine with its own distinct character and contains a wide variety of grape varieties in which no one variety predominates. The exception is the Polverinho vineyard, which was the site of the first single-variety batch planting experiments in 1927 by Taylor Fladgate partner Dick Yeatman, whose pioneering work underpins the firm's thorough understanding of the classic Douro grape varieties.

Winemaker David Guimaraens noted: "The remarkable characteristic of the Vinha Velha vintage ports is their multi-dimensional complexity and their distinctive and subtle personality. This derives from the rich diversity of grape varieties planted on these old terraces, many of which are traditional varieties not widely used today."

