

Van Zellers

Foot-trodden grapes from Cima Corgo valleys yield a full-bodied, red-fruited Douro with schistous drive and refined tannins, finishing long and poised. Tradition meets precision.

VAN ZELLERS



VZ Tinto 2019

Douro, Portugal

Region and Vineyards

Douro is Portugal's most emblematic wine region, a dramatic amphitheatre of terraced slopes carved from **schist**. Sheltered by the Serra do Marão, it experiences a warm, continental climate whose nuances shift across three sub-regions: cooler, wetter Baixo Corgo in the west; warmer, drier Cima Corgo at the heart; and hot, arid Douro Superior to the east. Schist bedrock splits into vertical plates, enabling roots to delve deep for scarce moisture—vital in this increasingly drought-prone landscape.

VZ Tinto is sourced from vineyards in the **Cima Corgo**—notably the Torto, Pinhão and Douro valleys—planted as traditional field blends. Around **30 Portuguese red varieties** contribute to the assemblage, with Touriga Franca, Touriga Nacional and Tinta Roriz typically central to regional blends, supported by Barroca, Tinto Cão and others. Old vines and mixed plantings lend natural balance, aromatic layering and a mineral line emblematic of the Douro's schistous soils.

Winemaking

Hand-selected grapes are **foot-trodden in granite lagares** for one to three days pre-fermentation to achieve gentle yet thorough extraction. Fermentation begins in granite, then completes in temperature-controlled stainless steel (22-27 °C) with **pigeage by hand**. This marriage of tradition and control preserves fruit purity while building structure.

The wines are racked to one- and two-year French oak barrels (225 and 300 L) to undergo **malolactic conversion** and mature **21 months** before blending and bottling. Tech data: 14% abv; pH 3.72; TA 5.8 g/L; VA 0.9 g/L; sugars < 0.6 g/L.

Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Deep ruby with youthful purple hues; bright rim and strong saturation.
- **Aroma:** Red cherry, wild berry and plum layered with hints of licorice, tobacco leaf and subtle oak spice; a suggestion of warm stone.
- **Palate:** Full-bodied and rounded with ripe berry depth, fine-grained tannins and a savoury, schist-tinged line; balanced acidity carries a **long**, satisfying finish.

Alcohol :14,00 %

Composition: 100% Vinhas Velhas

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Did you know?

Traditional **foot-treading in lagares**—once waning—endures in the Douro for premium wines because it delivers remarkably even, gentle extraction; today it stands alongside piston-plungers and robotic lagares as the benchmark for quality.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Roast lamb with rosemary:** The wine's spice-tinged fruit and firm tannins complement savoury lamb and herbal aromatics.
- **Posta Mirandesa (Portuguese steak):** Concentrated berry fruit and oak polish match the cut's richness; acidity refreshes each bite.
- **Mushroom and truffle risotto:** Earthy umami echoes the wine's savoury depth while its structure counters creamy textures.
- **Aged Serra da Estrela cheese:** Tannins and acidity slice through richness; red-fruit core keeps the pairing lively.

92

Robert Parker (RP) : 92 Points (2019)

The 2019 Tinto VZ is an old-vines (50 to 80 years in age) field blend aged for nine months in mostly used French barriques. It comes in at 14.1% alcohol. This is the first vintage with newly acquired vines at high altitude. A terrific offering, this is wonderfully fresh but also tightly wound and beautifully structured. It lacks the richer and bolder fruit of the 2015 in this report, but the precision, freshness and the intensity might mean this bests it eventually. It is obviously more undeveloped. I'm not really sure which I like better. They are just different, and I like both a lot. You can drink this now, but it will be better in a year, maybe two, if you have patience. It should last for 15 years from the vintage date, maybe more. We'll start there.