

Van Zellers

A 400th Anniversary Special Edition, this 2020 Vintage Port marries dense red-fruit fragrance with opulent, layered power and a resolutely long finish–built to unfurl gracefully over decades.

VAN ZELLERS



Vintage Port 2020

Douro, Portugal

Region and Vineyards

The Douro is one of Portugal's most dramatic wine landscapes: terraced valleys of **schist** carved along the Douro River and its tributaries. Sheltered from Atlantic influence by the Serra do Marão, the region is warm and continental, yet altitude (roughly 150-600 metres) and exposure create crucial mesoclimates. Historically renowned for fortified wines, the Douro's native varieties—Touriga Nacional, Touriga Franca, Tinta Roriz, Tinta Barroca, Tinto Cão and others—are often interplanted as old-vine field blends that naturally balance perfume, colour, tannin and acidity.

The 2019/2020 viticultural year was atypical: spring rainfall increased disease pressure, but water reserves supported growth before an **extremely hot** July-August. Late August brought slight rain, then severe dehydration of bunches—especially Touriga Franca—reducing yields by 30-35% and concentrating sugars. All Van Zellers & Co vineyards lie in Cima Corgo and Baixo Corgo; in 2020, early, vigilant picking was essential to preserve balance.

Winemaking

Grapes are hand-selected at the cellar door, then **foot-crushed**—grapes and stems—on sorting and into granite lagares. An unusual yet purposeful step sees around **15%** of the total brandy added at the start to homogenise with the must and slightly prolong fermentation. Foot treading continues throughout, ensuring thorough but gentle extraction. When the ideal balance of sugar and flavour is reached, fortification completes with the remaining brandy. Final alcohol: **20%**.

Vintage Port is bottled early to capture primary fruit intensity and longevity. This wine was bottled in **October 2022** (2,742 × 750 ml), consistent with the rubric for top ruby-style Ports that receive short pre-bottling maturation in inert or large neutral vessels and no new oak flavour. Analysis: pH **3.80**, TA **4.5 g/L**, VA **0.2 g/L**, total SO□**93 mg/L**.

Alcohol :20,00 %

Composition: 100% Porto divers

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Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Opaque ruby-purple with a vivid meniscus; youthful density.
- **Aroma:** Deeply concentrated red and black fruits—kirsch, blackberry, dark cherry—suggest hints of rockrose and cocoa; opulent yet precise.
- **Palate:** Intense, **opulent** fruit wrapped in fine, mouth-coating tannins; sweetness seamlessly integrated by freshness and schist-borne mineral tension. Extremely long, promising decades of development.

Did you know?

This bottling marks Van Zellers & Co's **400th Anniversary Special Edition**—a celebratory milestone that coincided with one of the most challenging harvests in memory, ultimately yielding a Vintage Port of striking concentration and longevity.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Stilton or Roquefort:** Salty, creamy blue cheeses amplify fruit richness; the wine's sweetness and tannin frame the pungency and extend the finish.
- **Bittersweet chocolate tart:** High cocoa tones mirror cocoa/berry notes; sweetness alignment avoids clash while tannin counters chocolate's fat.
- **Venison with blackberry jus:** Gamey depth resonates with dense fruit; fortification and structure stand up to sauce intensity.
- **Walnut tart or pasteis de nata:** Nutty, caramelised flavours meet the Port's opulence; acidity and spirit lift keep the palate fresh.



Robert Parker (RP) : 95 Points (2020)

This is a special bottling of their Vintage Port, the 2020 400th Anniversary Special Edition 1620-2020 Vintage Port, which has a very classical nose of dry hay and straw, spices and herbs, with a smoky twist, notes of ripe berry fruit and a hint of liqueur. The palate is powerful and seamless, with plenty of tannin. It's very young and undeveloped but balanced. It felt like a wine from yesteryear, in need of a long time in bottle. It's a lot less sweet at only 84 grams per liter of sugar. I liked this twist to go back to the old style. 2,742 bottles produced. It was bottled in September 2022.