

2016 Fonseca Vintage Port product-pdf - Portugal - JS98, WA97, D97, WS97, WE97, V96

Why We're Drinking It

OH. EM. GEE. Where, how, why were we so fortunate to snag a parcel of this absolute gem? This is no diamond in the rough, this is shiny, freshly cut, no flaw diamond perfection that...wow, we barely have words. Give us a moment while we try to get it together. Distract yourself with these accolades for a moment: JS98, WA97, D97, WS97, WE97, V96. Say whaaat?

Ok. So. Fonseca. Fonseca is, in the words of Barney Stinson, LEGEN—wait for it...wait for it—DARY. Truly. Their first vintage was in 1840 and with nearly 180 years of history, it's safe to say they know what they're doing. The 2016 vintage is astoundingly good, like hold the door, let me go back and get some more, because not only is it beautifully quaffable now, this will age for decades. Like all the decades. 2099 and it'll still be singing.

Mind-blowing concentration, layers, harmony, weight, grace, intense flavors of orgasmic heights, this wine is everything. Literally everything. And if you think it will last at this price? You're sorely mistaken. This will fly. Now it's just a matter if you bought the flight with it. (Do it, do it now.)

Tasting Notes

Ripe cassis fruit with some raisining notes, figs, damp earth, dark chocolate with embers and notes of bay leaf. Peppery tannins, firm, well structured and bound to age beautifully.

VARIETAL

Port

APPELLATION

Douro Valley

ALCOHOL

20.50

SIZE

750ml

BLEND

Port

The Story to Know

From the legendary 1840, Fonseca's first Vintage Port release, to the superb declared vintages of the last decade, the house has produced a succession of highly acclaimed wines even in the most adverse moments of history.

James Suckling, in his authoritative book on Vintage Port, put it as follows: 'The vintage Ports of Fonseca are perhaps the most consistently great of them all. Not only do they have a striking fleshiness and powerful richness when young, but they retain that youthfulness for decades.'

This consistency derives not only from continuity of family involvement, and the knowledge and skill passed down from one generation to the next, but also a close link with the vineyard. The firm's three estates of Cruzeiro, Panascal and Santo António are the heart of the distinctive character of Fonseca's Vintage Ports.

Fonseca's respect for the vineyard and the unique environment of the Douro Valley expresses itself in the firm's leadership in the field of sustainable and organic viticulture. It was the first house to offer a Port made entirely from organically produced grapes.

However for many wine enthusiasts around the world Fonseca is best known as the producer of Bin No.27. This fine reserve Port, launched four decades ago, is one of the most popular and successful Port blends. Sharing the heritage of the great Fonseca Vintage ports, it displays the opulent fruity character which defines the Fonseca house style.

Perhaps more than any other Port house, Fonseca has built a loyal community of Port enthusiasts who value its individuality and the inimitable character of its wines. These include connoisseurs, collectors, sommeliers and restaurateurs as well as those who simply enjoy drinking its wonderfully rich and complex Ports.

Ratings

98pts, James Suckling

Lots of ripe fruit here with raisins and wet earth that turn to violets and hot stones. Full-bodied, tannic and powerful with fantastic grip and intensity. Grabs you. Impressive. Drink in 2025.

97pts, Robert Parker Wine Advocate

The 2016 Vintage Port is a field blend sourced from the typical three Quintas (Panascal in the Tavora Valley and Quinta do Cruzeiro and Quinta de St Antonio in the Pinh?o Valley). This was not quite bottled when first seen (set for a week later). It is now in the USA. It was aged for 20 months in wood and comes in with 99 grams of residual sugar. This dry and focused Fonseca was, in my initial July 2018 report, the pick of the Fladgate Group's litter in 2016. What has most changed in this issue is that Taylor's is showing a lot better while this has closed down a bit more. This is not seriously diminished, though. It is pretty brilliant. If you want that old-school power, it comes with Fonseca in this vintage. Taylor's may have the sexiest fruit of the three, but this seems to have the most muscle. It is true that the balance on the two just might be affecting that perception. Taylor's has a bit more mid-palate depth to soak up the power. Still, if Taylor's is flashier and richer in 2016, this seems even more serious. In the long lifespan of Ports, to be sure, it won't be unusual for them to keep flipping back and forth. Admittedly, this is also probably the hardest to read. Still, I couldn't help but think that this might have slightly more upside potential. Check in around 2060 or so to see if I'm right. (Send me an email if you don't think so. I want to hear from you.)

97pts, Decanter

Closed and withdrawn on the nose at this stage with an underlying dusting of ripe tannins evident. Firm, sweet cassis and berry fruit, with classic dark chocolate intensity at the core, backed by broad yet tight-knit peppery tannins which lead to a big, grippy finish. Very fine with a hugely promising future ahead.

97pts, Wine Enthusiast

This bottling brings together a fine structure with great fruit to give a luscious wine that is also destined for long-term aging. With its ripe berry flavors sustained by some acidity, this is already balanced. Drink from 2028.

97pts, Wine Spectator

This leads in with bramble, spearmint and blueberry notes, with the energy extending through the core of dark plum, blackberry and fig fruit. The finish features a strong graphite spine, allowing this to draw deep water, but this remains stylish in feel overall. The definition of suave. Best from 2030 through 2055.

96pts, Vinous

The 2016 Fonseca Vintage Port began to be picked on 21 September at their Panascal vineyard, their Quinta do Cruzeiro vineyard not picked until 6 October. It is deep, almost inky in colour. The bouquet is very intense with luscious black fruit laced with embers, clove and hints of bay leaf. There is wonderful purity here and a broodiness that suggests you'd better be patient. The palate is sweet and lively on the entry with some gorgeous ginger and curry leaf notes littered over the compact black fruit. There is wonderful density to this Fonseca. It is like a coiled spring with so much energy towards the finish that you just know this will be a long-term prospect. Superb.
