



REGIONAL CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

PORTUGAL

RICHARD MAYSON

TASTING WITH RICHARD MAYSON

■ **Ch'ng Poh Tiong** is the publisher of *The Wine Review*, Southeast Asia's most established wine publication. He also works as a wine consultant with clients including Le Meridien Kuala Lumpur and Singapore's FairPrice and Liberty Supermarkets.

■ **Richard Cockledge** MW is the owner of Oxke Wines, a specialist importer of fine European wines, set up in 2002.

■ **Vascos Magalhães** has worked in the wine trade for 26 years. He spent 20 years as a port wine blender, and the last six working in wine communication for Sogrape Vinhos, as a lecturer on Portuguese Wines.

■ **Alan Montague-Denis** is prestige business manager at Mentzendorff, where he has worked for 15 years, having started out at Hatch Mansfield and Majestic.

■ **João Pires** is wine director at The Vineyard at Stockcross and previously worked at the Ritz Four Seasons and Ritz Carlton in Lisbon.

■ **Rui Reguinga** is a consultant winemaker based in Portugal. He has 15 years' experience in various regions of Portugal: Dão, Estremadura, Ribatejo and Alentejo. Since 2004 he has been consulting in Mendoza, Argentina.

For Richard Mayson's profile see p30.

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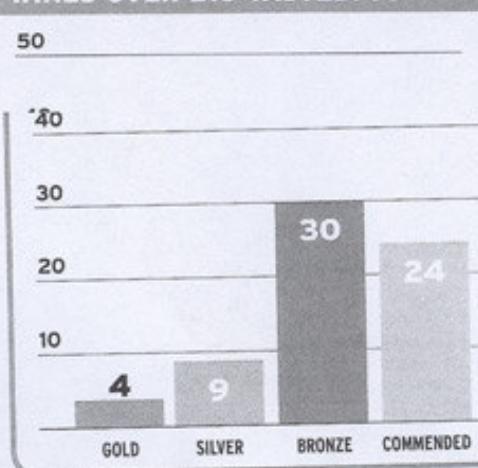
THERE WERE MORE Portuguese entries than ever this year with 204 wines tasted over two days. Though relatively few whites were entered, it was encouraging to see some distinctive whites winning medals in what is seen as predominantly a red wine-producing country. Four classic *vinhos verdes* won medals including a wonderfully esoteric red *vinho verde* (Casal Paço Pedreiro), taking Silver.

The reds were dominated by entries from the Douro and Alentejo, with a large number of wines from the 2003 vintage. This was an extraordinarily challenging year, and sadly too many wines were hot, over-alcoholic and marred by over-extraction. But some winemakers got it right and their wines stood out, scoring highly as a result. Overall though, wines from the 2004 vintage showed better balance and scored more highly. There is no shortage of character and individuality in Portugal, with the majority of wines in the Awards being from indigenous grapes. Once again, wines based on Touriga Nacional scored highly, with a Gold awarded to a stunning wine from Quinta dos Roques in Dão. Touriga Nacional, which probably originated

in Dão, is now gaining ground further south and is fast turning into Portugal's ex-libris.

There is, however, a growing number of wines made from blends of Portuguese and international grapes, with Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon the highest on the list of foreign imports. There were good-value reds from the Setúbal Peninsula and Estremadura with an encouraging number of wines from the undervalued Castelão grape, particularly in the 2004 vintage. There were all too few wines from the Dão and Bairrada but there was a Gold awarded to each (Quinta do Encontro from Bairrada and the aforementioned Quinta dos Roques) as well as a number of Silver medals. The undervalued Ribatejo region won a Silver for the first time (the first vintage of Marquês de Cadava). As in previous years the panel was sparing with Golds but the four wines that were thoroughly deserved their colours. Portugal is making an ever-increasing number of truly world-class wines and deserves much greater prominence on the world stage. The Decanter will lift the profile of the worthy medal winners at home and abroad.

WINES OVER £10 TASTED: 99



WINES UNDER £10 TASTED: 105

