

Xisto Cru Branco



After a decade as winemaker at Niepoort, where he was responsible for some of the best known and highly rated wines to come out of the famed Douro and Porto producer, Luis Seabra decided that he no longer wanted to make wines to someone else's tastes and specifications. Thus, he began his eponymous winery, and set about shattering preconceptions of what Douro wines represent.

The Xisto Cru Branco is one of a series of wines that Luis makes that exemplify and express the intensely terroir-driven style in which he operates. He is a particularly gifted winemaker, one who sees wine as a medium through which a piece of land can speak. "Cru" translates as "raw" in Portuguese, and the transmission of terroir here is unadulterated and singular. This series of wines is one in which he removes every variable but that of the land itself, and the stark expression of the soil that results is extraordinary. He works exclusively with spontaneous fermentation, native yeasts, and large format tight-grained oak for all the wines in this series.

WHAT MAKES THIS WINE UNIQUE?: Rather than single vineyard, this is a single soil field blend, from plots planted in the southern Douro from 1920-1933. It is intended as a clear expression of terroir and place. Sustainably farmed vines, and vinified using only spontaneous fermentation and indigenous yeasts. This way he removes all potential variability other than the soil type as an expression of terroir.

RATING HISTORY: 2017 91+WA; 2016 93WS, 92WA, 93VFTC ; 2014 94 WA



GRAPE: 70% Rabigato, remaining balance field blend of Codega (10%) , Gouveio (10%) and Viosinho Dozelino Branco (10%) . Sustainably farmed vineyards planted from 1920-1933. Tended in mica schist soil from 650-700 m (2,133-2,297 ft) elevation. This is a vegan wine.

PAIRING SUGGESTIONS: This mineral wine begs for bivalves of all sorts, particularly raw. Oysters, clams, mussels. Also makes a terrific pair with bright cheese like chevre.

VINIFICATION AND AGING: Spontaneously fermented in used tonneaux using indigenous yeast present on the fruit. 9 months on the lees. 12 months in French oak used barrels , no battonage, no malolactic fermentation.

PRODUCTION: 320 cs (3 pack)

LOCATION, SOIL, CLIMATE: Vineyards located in southern part of Douro Superior, in eastern Douro near the Spanish border. This is a subregion that experiences extreme highs and lows from a temperature standpoint, with some of the greatest day-night temperature delta in Portugal. As such the fruit experiences terrific hangtime. Vines planted exclusively in mica schist soil at 650-700m elevation.

TASTING NOTES Brilliant straw. On the nose, high toned and mineral driven aromas of sour peach, flowers, fresh fennel bulb and savory. On the palate, more peach, citrus zest and fennel, with white pepper and floral tones rounding out the finish.

ALCOHOL CONTENT: 12.5%

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Luis Seabra