

VIÚVA GOMES

TERROIR

The Colares wine-growing region is nestled between its southern border at Cabo da Roca (the westernmost point in Continental Europe) to its northern border at São Julião Beach, and from the steep cliffs above the Atlantic Ocean on its west, to one of Sintra's tectonic plates to its east.

The region, comprising of altitudes between 30m and 200m, is geographically limited by three parishes – Colares, São Martinho and São João das Lampas. Here, the semi-arid climate of the coast joins the moderate humid climate encompassing Sintra's hills, blocking northern winds and augmenting the humidity from the sea. This climactic encounter is responsible for the unique Colares microclimate.

Colares is extremely impacted by the maritime winds from the north and the northwest and has one of the Portugal's lowest number of sunny days during summer. Temperatures are mild with low amplitude, with a yearly average of 15,7°C and 635 mm of rain, and with humidity levels typically above 75%.

The Region boasts a huge diversity of soils from cretaceous and Jurassic sedimentary rocks and sandstones, mainly limestone composed. These contrast with the granitic hills of Sintra, an igneous rock of eruptive origin. However, it is on the Holocene sands on top of these pre-historic rocks, where the own-rooted appellation Colares vines are planted.

Planting vines for DOC Colares wines requires tremendous perseverance, as this process entails the opening of deep holes/trenches in sand, to find the fertile soil at 1-3 meters of depth beneath it. In these deep fertile soils is where the Massal Selection from the previous years is planted.

These climatic, orographic and geologic characteristics are worth studying and highlighting, allowing the encounter of different and unique terroirs within the Region.

HISTORY

The origins of wine in Colares goes far back in time. It is known that during the Roman Empire wine was already being produced in this Region. In 1230, the King Afonso III used to donate land under the condition of vine plantation.

In 1300, besides the parish of Colares, locations such as Galamares, Várzea de Sintra and Fontanelas were highlighted as other relevant terroirs of the Region. The first export of these wines is documented in the 14th Century, during the kingdom of D. Fernando I. The native variety Ramisco has been referenced since 1790.

By the end of the 19th century, the Colares wine region gained momentum, when in 1865, one of history's biggest threats to vines engulfed Europe - phylloxera. This miniscule bug, originally from the North American continent, bites the vines' roots, injecting a poisonous sap into the plants, causing its death over the long term.

Curiously, Colares' sandy vineyards (appellation Colares) were not affected, resisting entirely to this plague. The depth of its roots (8 meters deep in some areas), did not allow phylloxera to attack.

In 1908, Colares was granted its appellation– Demarcation of Controlled Origin (DOC), the most western DOC of Continental Europe.

The Colares Cooperative *Adega* was founded in 1931 and led a crucial role in the region's history. Initially, the coop was seen as organism to verify the genuineness and quality of the wines. And later, as a "guaranteed" client for the small grape growers to channel their crops.

In 1934, 1800 hectares of sand and 150 hectares of other soils were registered in the Colares region. Over the years, the planted area was reduced drastically due to a considerable real estate pressure and change in the wine consumption trends, from fresh and elegant wines, towards heavier and structured. Difficult features to find on a site by the sea.

Today, the total planted Colares area is comprised of 45 hectares of vine, of which only 20 hectares have the potential to be DOC Colares.

Viúva Gomes, founded in 1808, is in Almoçageme, a small village in Colares. A winery that survived the challenges of time. The Domaine is a very small landholding, boasting a total area of 5 hectares, complemented with collabs from selected growers.

WINES

A viticulture project that respects ancestral practices while creating wines without artifices.

Viúva Gomes Viticultores, collaborative wines, created with own and farmer grapes, not on sandy soils. A "village" wine, bounded by the geographic limits of the appellation, although not fulfilling the requirements for the DOC Colares statute.

Viúva Gomes Colares, Colares appellation wines. From own rooted vines, planted on sandy soils. Native varieties – Ramisco (reds) and Malvasia de Colares (whites).

Viúva Gomes "cru/site", showcase of specific terroirs and singular crus (DOC or non-DOC). Released individually. Wines that value and distinguish the location.

Viúva Gomes Pirata, experimental and pop-up. Allowing the estate to explore the region's terroirs, with an aim to find future crus.

