

2015 João Nicolau de Almeida & Filhos Quinta do Monte Xisto

The 2015 Quinta do Monte Xisto is a blend of 55% Touriga Nacional, 35% Touriga Franca and 5% each of Tinta da Barca and Sousão, aged for 18 months in a 60/40 blend of used and new oak (80% French and 20% Austrian). It comes in at only 13.5% alcohol. This may be where Monte Xisto puts it all together. Wonderfully elegant, crisp and lifted, this still has good concentration, but more importantly, it has the classic intensity of flavor that this vintage delivers to go with its power. Acidity, backbone, power, flavor, impeccable balance and built to age—this has it all, a hypothetical blend of the 2012 and 2011. It is gloriously fresh and graceful, a nod to the 2012 there, but concentrated like the 2011 and far more flavorful. Only bottled for about 20 days before being tasted, this still seemed rather brilliant. I should probably be more conservative under the circumstances, but it seemed too brilliant to mark down. This will be released in September 2017, but you need to give this several years more in the cellar for better results. It should improve steadily over the next decade. For the moment, this looks like an unevolved star.

- Mark Squires (August, 2017)