

# Make your own wine

Do you dream of one day becoming a winegrower? Without buying a vineyard or doing a three year wine degree? There is a way to do it. Rolf Klein reveals all.





Quinta dos Vales offers you the chance to realise your dream of enjoying the life of a winegrower without completely turning your life upside down. The idea is to benefit from the know-how of winemakers and enjoy your own wine as the owner of a small villa or apartment right on your own piece of vineyard.

You decide which grape varieties are planted and which wines should be produced, all within sight of your new home. You can stay there all year round or rent it out to holidaymakers for some of the time. You do not need to buy a tractor or a wine cellar. It's all there. Because you are in a popular winery in the Algarve in the south of Portugal.

## THE PROPERTY

Quinta dos Vales (the name means 'Winery of the Valleys') lies amid the rolling hills of the western Algarve. The owner, Karl Heinz Stock, has guided the vineyard with dedication and passion from humble beginnings to the height of quality, and not only that: his artistic eye gives Quinta dos Vales its special character. Nature, wine and art are the ingredients. People are the chef. The recipe used by Karl Heinz Stock and his son Michael can be summed up

in remarkably few words: "Simplicity. The only requirement for yourself, your team and your product is quality."

Karl Heinz Stock's career has been that of an enthusiast who has turned his passion into a profession. "I wanted to take on the challenge of going from a passive lover of Portuguese wine to actively becoming a winemaker. In the beginning, I did not realise that it was a round-the-clock job. But I am not complaining because success is a great reward," says the former management consultant. His business success and experience – as when he turned a bankrupt company into a flourishing oil business – enabled him to change his career and become a winegrower. "I have always believed that the Algarve has the potential to produce top quality wines. And I was right. Of course that was a great relief." Karl Heinz Stock has transformed the loss-making agricultural business he bought into a concern that is second to none. "The art is to resolutely produce better wines than other people using the same ingredients, but with a slightly different approach." From the beginning, the self-made winegrower has relied on skilled assistance and advice, as a good, motivated team is crucial. Two winemakers – Dorina Lindemann and Paulo Laureano – support the enterprise, helped along by the latest cellar technology, careful

cultivation of the approximately 20 hectares of vines on the roughly 45-hectare vineyard and that special touch. Nature also plays its part, with 3,000 hours of sunshine and the very good terroir of the amphitheatre-shaped vineyards. It is therefore not surprising that in 2008, in only its second year, the first international gold medal for a white from the Algarve was awarded to the Quinta dos Vales vineyard. In 2010, a Touriga Nacional was chosen as one of the top ten reds of this variety in Portugal by an international jury. The wines were successful again in 2017, achieving four gold medals at the Grand International Wine Award MUNDUS VINI. Of course, it is very important for a family business to look to the future. Michael Stock has taken charge of the future orientation of the vineyard, ensuring its continuity into the next generation.

Visionaries like to share their passion with like-minded people. Maybe that is what gave rise to the idea of allowing others to take a step into the life of a winegrower, but without the considerable risk, including the financial one – the idea also makes sense from an economic point of view. Like his son Michael, Karl Heinz Stock has an entrepreneurial mindset. He realised early on that a vineyard can be managed more successfully with several revenue streams, such as cultural events, venues that

can be hired out for corporate meetings and private functions such as weddings, and farmhouses that are let as holiday homes. The property attracts 3,000 visitors, providing finance for new investments. Wine tourism and wine-growing go hand in hand at Quinta dos Vales, and that will remain the case in the future, says Michael Stock.

## BECOMING A WINEGROWER, STEP BY STEP

And now we come to the ambitious new project, which goes far beyond marketing-oriented concepts such as 'vine sponsorship' and 'wine seminars'. It is the tailor-made way to have your own vineyard, your own wine, and participate (not as a shareholder) in the top vineyard Quinta dos Vales. Tailor-made, because the route to becoming a winegrower can be taken by anyone who is interested, at the pace that suits them. You will always have the benefit of professional expertise, without having to take responsibility for the winery – and you can participate as much, or as little, as you like. To get a taste of the wine life, join a Bottle Blending Workshop, where you can look over the shoulders of the professionals and learn how to make your own blend. You will take home three bottles of your own blends, to see how the wine develops in the bottle after six to twelve months.

The next step up is the purchase of a vineyard plot. The recommended area for one grape variety is 2,000 square metres, to make it possible to plant one to four varieties. The leasehold is valid for 99 years and the price includes the costs of planting and cultivation for the first two and a half years. It is a worthwhile investment, because the buyer creates long-term value that grows with the vines. To ensure that new owners do not have to be patient until their own vines produce a yield, they can rely in the meantime on freshly barrelled top wines from the winery and start making wine, or lease a vineyard that is already established. Depending on the age of the vines, a yield of between 8,000 and 10,000 kilograms per hectare (which



### WINE-MAKING PRICES

Bottle Blending Workshop  
(three hours)  
from €99.00 (including three bottles of  
the relevant cuvée)

Barrel Blending Experience (6-18  
months)  
put together a blend of the best wines  
from the previous year from €15.00 per  
bottle

Rent a Vineyard (12-36 months)  
from €7.00 per bottle in stainless steel,  
from € 12.00 in French oak barrels

Living on a Vineyard (99 years)  
from €60,000, plus a fee starting at  
€6.00 per bottle

equates to 2,500 to 4,000 kilograms of grapes for 4,000 square metres, depending on the desired quality) would produce between 1,500 and 3,000 bottles. That's more than wine lovers can usually drink themselves in a year, so it should also be enough for friends and acquaintances!

### LIVING ON A VINEYARD

As a wine lover and proud owner of your own plot, you might want to watch your vines growing – and even do the work in the vineyard yourself, if you prefer. In

this case, you will need a villa overlooking the vineyard. Construction is scheduled to commence in 2019 on the first of the approximately ten planned units with their own vineyards in the northern part of the Quinta area. They will be luxuriously appointed to north European standards, with double glazing, underfloor heating and air conditioning. They will be around 200 square metres in size, but can also be larger or smaller if required. It is up to the owner whether they use their villa as a holiday home or a permanent residence. If you are not able to take care of your house yourself, this has also been thought of. All the building management, including maintenance, is carried out by Quinta dos Vales.

Those who would prefer something sooner and a bit smaller have the option of one of the 32 ground-floor apartments, which will be available in 16 individual houses from April 2019 onwards. Michael Stock, who is responsible for the project, says: "For 125,000 to 155,000 euros, you get not only a holiday home that can yield a return of up to five percent, but also your own barrel of wine as an extra. Or, to put it another way, you buy yourself a barrel of wine and we give you an apartment as an extra!" Whichever investment you choose,



there is one thing that is priceless and that is the pleasure of sipping the first wine of your own on the terrace of your own vineyard villa, looking out over your own vines.

## THE ART OF WINEMAKING

As a vineyard associate, you become immersed in the quality philosophy that is maintained at Quinta dos Vales. The first and most important question is which

grape varieties to plant. The best adapted to the terroir and climate are the typical, often indigenous varieties of Portugal: Touriga Nacional, Alicante Bouschet and others. The Algarve produces very elegant red wines, similar to the style of the well-known Douro region – the reason that Quinta dos Vales wines won four gold medals at the big MUNDUS VINI Summer Tasting 2017. The winery's oenologists will be happy to provide advice and assistance, even when it comes to planting density,

as this affects the yield and therefore the quality of the wines.

If you then plant your vines yourself (with expert guidance), you will be on first name terms with every vine in later years. And you should definitely not miss the harvest. The grapes are harvested by hand in the early morning to take advantage of the coolness. This ensures that the grapes are healthy. Fermentation takes place until December, first on the mash and then, depending on the wine, in barrels or tanks. The choice of oak barrel – how much toasting, new or used? – is a key factor that determines the style of the wine.

Whether the wine is varietal or matured as a cuvée is an important question. The ageing of the finished base wine in oak barrels lasts up to 18 months. During this time, you will regularly taste the wine to track the progress of the ageing process. The labelling and decoration of the bottle also require decisions. You soon come to realise the invaluable nature of professional assistance as offered by the Quinta dos Vales experts. It is vital for avoiding mistakes. In principle, winemaking is a full-time job. It's good and reassuring to know that associate winegrowers can have the work done by the Quinta dos Vales team if necessary.

Information: [www.quintadosvales.eu](http://www.quintadosvales.eu)



For those interested in finding out more, you can visit us at ProWein at stand 10B15