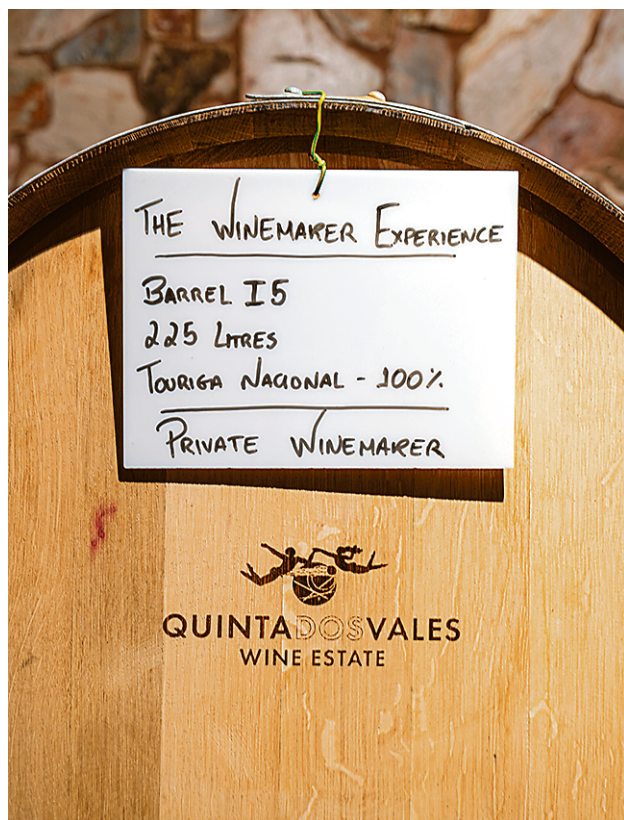


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# Portuguese wine through the ages

Moderate consumption of wine, especially red, helps to prevent heart disease and related illnesses. These findings by scientists at the end of the 20th century are a poignant reminder of long-forgotten eras when wine was also recognised for its health benefits.



in around 200 BC that had the most significant impact on the techniques of wine plantation and production, largely because copious amounts of fine quality wines were required to satisfy the drinking habits of the invading legions. This tradition and industry of Portuguese wine production continued to flourish through the centuries, until it came to a sudden end in the 19th century, when the dreaded Phylloxera pest wiped out most of the wine plantations in Europe. Portuguese wines had to re-establish themselves on the global market, which was a slow but gradual process. These days Portugal has established itself once again, as one of the top ten wine-producing countries in the world. In the modern era, the beauty of Portuguese wines is the great range of diversity and individuality. Each region has innumerable producers and winemakers, each with their own ideas and approaches. For us as consumers what this means is that there will always be something new and exciting to discover, it's impossible to get bored of Portuguese wines!

## The next logical step for Algarve producers – Wine Tourism

Each region of Portugal has its own strengths and weaknesses in terms of wine, and as with any industry, the key to success is in identifying ones unique selling point. An area such as the Alentejo, with huge land-masses, is ideal for a traditional agricultural approach, that of mass production. Whereas the neighbouring Algarve is the polar opposite, agriculture in the Algarve has always been a daunting task, due to the exponentially higher costs of labour as well as land. Which is why for the Algarve the rapid growth of wine tourism was and is the logical next step. The reason for the high costs found in the Algarve is its popularity, with tourists and residents alike. The Algarve is widely considered as the (semi-)hidden gem of Europe, each year receiving numerous global awards and nominations, for everything ranging from its beaches, its gastronomy and obviously its overall quality of life. So it seems only logical for wine producers to also reap the benefits of this fact, which is what so many Algarve

wine producers have been working on these last years. Whether in the form of on-site accommodation, events, guided tours or simply organised wine tastings, these days it's rare to find an Algarve wine producer who doesn't offer a form of wine tourism. Michael Stock, of Quinta dos Vales, explains that "this was one of our founding principles that our agricultural activities would be realised with stubborn adherence to the production of natural wine, without additives or cutting corners. And the losses this approach resulted in would be compensated by our wine tourism activities", which were a cornerstone of Quinta dos Vales from the very first day. In fact, in 2017, a decade after starting down this road, Quinta dos Vales decided to double-down on this approach, with their newest project, The Winemaker Experience. Michael explains that traditional wine tourism is the combination of agriculture and tourism, while The

Winemaker Experience is the integration of these two sectors.

These days the team of experts at Quinta dos Vales don't just show visitors their agricultural activities, instead they have found a way to authentically allow wine-lovers to become fully immersed in the production of wine themselves. Participants of this project have the chance to either plant a new vineyard or to purchase a plot of existing vines, from which they make their very own wine, with the equipment, assistance and guidance provided by Quinta dos Vales. Many people have the dream of making their own wine, and these are exactly the individuals who are ideal for The Winemaker Experience.



[www.docs.quintadosvales.pt/twe\\_more\\_en.html](http://www.docs.quintadosvales.pt/twe_more_en.html)  
<https://www.quintadosvales.pt/twe/>  
[twe@quintadosvales.pt](mailto:twe@quintadosvales.pt)

Some 4,000 years ago, the 'nectar of the gods', as it was sometimes called, was an important part of the daily diet in the Iberian Peninsula, just as it is for many Algarvians today. With Portugal's great history of trade as a sea-faring nation, it was only natural that there

were multiple sources of inspiration in such an important area as winemaking. Many different peoples and cultures contributed by introducing new grape varieties as well as winemaking techniques, which historically led to a relatively high standard of wine production. It was the arrival of the Romans

