

Sharing the winemaking dream

How and why this Berlin-banker decided to turn his love of wine into a lifestyle, and now guides others down this road

He is locally known as the founder and manager of Quinta dos Vales, but Karl Stock had a very different background than many would expect. He was born in the beer-capital of the world, Bavaria, and his career later took him into the world of banking, real estate development and oil. Nobody, least of all he himself, would have expected that he would turn out to find his passion in producing Portuguese wine, but that is exactly how it turned out. He first visited the Algarve in 1996, as a tourist, but immediately fell in love with the country and its people. After 2 days he and his wife had chosen where they wanted to live, after 3 days they had chosen the house, and on the fourth day they moved into that very house. Since then the only considerable change has been that he found an appreciation for Portuguese wine, this appreciation turned into a passion and finally this passion resulted in him having to make his own. In 2007 Karl launched Quinta dos Vales as it is known today, with a straight-forward goal in mind: he wanted to

prove that the Algarve can produce premier-quality wines. With his background in finance and the fast-paced world of big-business he predicted this project would take him 12-18 months to accomplish. These days he is the first to admit that he should have asked a few farmers before making that prediction. Regardless, he continued on his journey and saw it through to a successful end. With his wines having received well over a hundred national and international awards over the last decade he can consider the project successfully completed. But that would be boring, so he searched for the next challenge, and far quicker than he hoped, he found one. Namely to help others follow in his footsteps, turning their love of wine into the reality of making their own wine, this was the birth of the project The Winemaker Experience. Along with his son and partner, Michael, Karl has now started selling individual parcels of vineyard to people who have this same dream, of being in full control of their own wine production. Purchasing a small vineyard which is integrated into an

award-winning winery is definitely a creative solution, these Private Wine-Makers get a dual benefit; full control of their own wine production to whichever extent they desire, but without the responsibility of having to run a winery. Thereby making this very personal experience completely care-free. The way they ensure this is by guiding participants through the full wine-production process, offering them their winery and ongoing consultancy, but encouraging the participants to make their very own wine, to their own preferences. This ensures that these Private Wine-Makers take their decisions based on the same information as any professional winemaker. Michael explains that after they have explained the options and consequences of each step in the production process, they challenge their Private Wine-Makers by saying: "Now it's time for you to either ask me more questions, or to take a decision". This responsibility encourages participants to really listen to the technical explanations, because if you don't understand a topic,



you can't take a decision on it. Karl counters that this all sounds harsher than it is in reality. After all, in each such situation we do voice our recommendation of how to proceed, based on their experience with this variety and even with that specific field. So when our Private Wine-Makers are busy or just want a helping hand our team is there to back them up, to whichever extent they desire. The same policy applies to the physical work, participants are encouraged to participate in the harvest for a few

hours themselves, working shoulder to shoulder with the on-site team. But obviously this isn't always possible, for instance, in 2020 almost all of the work had to be handled by the Quinta dos Vales team due to travel restrictions. The Private Wine-Makers were kept updated and remained in control, managing the production process with a combination of photos, videos, emails and WhatsApp. Whereas now they all can't wait to

visit their vineyard and get hands-on again. Karl is very proud of his creation, he clearly says that if this had been available back in 2006 he would have jumped on the opportunity!



www.docs.quintadosvales.pt/twe_more_en.html
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