

# THE VINEYARDS AND GRAPE VARIETIES OF HERDADE ALDEIA DE CIMA



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ALDEIA DE CIMA

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The Alentejo is a resource-poor region, but it is the only winemaking region in the country with almost every kind of soil found in Portugal. With a unique biodiversity, the highlands of the Serra do Mendro consist of a unique expanse of schist from the Iberian Massif, a unique topography with surprising thermal ranges shown in the diversity of the Herdade Aldeia de Cima's four vineyards – Vinha dos Alfaiates, Vinha da Família, Vinha de Sant'Anna and Vinha d'Aldeya.

In the aim of creating wines with the distinctive characteristic this ancient vinicultural region is known for, the wines from Aldeia de Cima are classic and elegant, revealing the huge complexity of the heterogeneous soils and the character of the native and adapted grape varieties. And it is thanks to this multiplicity of natural factors which form the basis of the wines from Herdade Aldeia de Cima that a unique and very special goal has been achieved: that of savouring the taste of the Alentejo in a bottle.





## VINHA DOS ALFAIATES

### Serra do Mendro

12 hectares of traditional vineyard terraces  
18 *micro-terroirs*

**Grape varieties:** 13% Trincadeira | 25% Alicante Bouschet | 18% Antão Vaz | 12% Aragonês | 8% Baga | 24% Alfrocheiro

**Soil and rock/mineral:** red, brown and yellow sediment soils with rocky fragments | quartz | clay | mica-schist | reddish schist | yellow schist

Starting with the highest plot at 380 metres, exploring the altitude and uniqueness of this rugged terrain, this is Herdade Aldeia de Cima's most surprising and unusual vineyard. The uniqueness of the terrain, cut across by the Ribeira dos Alfaiates, inspired a unique model for the Alentejo: vines planted on traditional terraces, reminiscent of those in the Douro Valley, offering a stunning panorama of the vastness of the landscape separating the Upper and Lower Alentejo.

Its 12 highly distinctive plots are based around an integrated production method characterised by an average density of 2,800 vines per hectare and potential average production of 4,000 kg per hectare.

Planted in irregular groves characterised by quite rounded peaks, over half of the vineyard's plots have a gradient of 30-40% at heights of 300-380 metres and are arranged from west to east, with ideal sun exposure coupled with an unusual thermal range that is key to the freshness of the wine.

The traditional vineyard terraces, with 18 natural zoned *micro-terroirs*, consist of creased and fractured metamorphic lithologies in which dominant mica-schists predominate on steep slopes with shallow arable red schist soil with a high quartz content.

Bearing in mind all of these aspects, the aim is the homogeneous development of these 12 plots of east, south and west-facing vines swept by hot and dry winds. However, they are affected by the altitude, the maritime influence of the Atlantic Ocean and the thermal range which can vary by 20°C in a single day – one of the factors that sets the region apart – creating grapes of balanced maturation where the importance of the schist contributes to the great freshness and mineral content.





## VINHA DA FAMÍLIA

### Mendro Plateau | Santana

1000 m<sup>2</sup> in bush form

1 *micro-terroir*

**Grape varieties:** 9% for each of the following: Trincadeira, Alicante Bouschet, Antão Vaz, Aragonês, Castelão, Diagalves, Moreto, Perrum, Tinta Caiada, Tinta Miúda, Roupeiro

**Soil and rock/mineral:** thick, loamy grey-brown soils with organic matter / rocky fragments | quartz | clay | green schists | amphibolites

Vinha de Família is a recreation of how farming used to be, bringing together on one plot measuring around 0.1 hectare beside the winery 11 regional grape varieties.

Planted in a square one metre across, in bush form, the vines are creeping and unsupported and look old-fashioned in appearance. They are inserted in a microclimate and protect their bunches from the strong summer sunlight with their own leaves. The polychromatic plots, with grape varieties of different aptitudes, provide a balanced and resilient plant obstacle against pests and disease, allowing animal-based farm labour, minimal fertiliser, based on the annual sowing of legumes, weeding, pruning and clearing.

This is a humanised, Mediterranean, abundant and more characterful vineyard designed to preserve the Alentejo's close and spontaneous traditions with species that interact just like a family.



## VINHA D'ALDEYA Mendro Plateau | Santana

4 hectares of traditional vineyard  
10 *micro-terroirs*

**Grape varieties:** 19% Tinta Grossa | 43% Alvarinho | 19% Antão Vaz | 7% Roupeiro | 12% Perrum  
**Soil and rock/mineral:** thick, loamy grey-brown soils with organic matter / rocky fragments | quartz | clay | green schists | amphibolites

This vineyard sits in one of the valleys of the Serra do Mendro where the wind blows more gently and the sun is less intense. This is where, in an area adjacent to the estate's winery, the crispest and most acidic grape varieties were planted, offering the perfect environment for their development. Alongside Alvarinho, Antão Vaz, Perrum and Roupeiro, with which it is hoped to restore a crisp and somewhat forgotten Alentejo, Tinta Grossa was also planted in an attempt to return to the region's roots and rediscover its distinctiveness.

Bearing in mind the mild orography, a traditional vineyard arranged in a modern style was identified as the perfect model to install very carefully distributed stands in which the calibration of grape variety, soil and exposure are the predominant factors. The needs of each variety, as well as the concept of terroir, were studied to create longevity and sustainability and the rootstocks carefully chosen. In the deep, loamy and very fresh soils, the R110 rootstock will give greater resistance and ability to root, enabling regular and balanced plant growth. In this way, ideal conditions exist to create crisp and mineral wines that are quintessential of a region of supreme elegance and sophistication.



## VINHA DE SANT'ANNA

### Mendro Plateau | Santana

4 hectares of traditional vineyard  
7 *micro-terroirs*

**Grape varieties:** 33% Arinto | 30% Alvarinho | 13% Aragonês | 24% Trincadeira  
**Soil and rock/mineral:** loamy yellowy-brown soils with fragments of rock | quartz | clay

At the foot of the plateau of Aldeia de Cima lies Vinha de Sant'Anna, a heartfelt homage to the village of Santana and its people. On a plain enveloped by young legacy-marking cork oaks stand 4 hectares of vines arranged along traditional lines of 2.5m x 1m. Aided by balanced sun exposure, the hot afternoons are countered by the freshness of the soils, where small streams from the Serra do Mendro surround the plot and create a rich and harmonious ecosystem. The grape varieties planted, which also feature in the Vinha dos Alfaiates and Vinha d'Aldeya, reflect the search for the complexity and complementarity that the various terroirs infuse into Herdade Aldeia de Cima's wines, making the oenologist's work a challenging one. The Aragonês and Trincadeira grapes (rootstock R110) will undergo longer maturation and create crisper wines compared to the grapes in Vinha dos Alfaiates. As for the Arinto and Alvarinho grapes (rootstock SO4), the last also planted in the Vinha d'Aldeya, the exposure and thick, deep soil will create more characterful and structured wines.



## THE GRAPE VARIETIES OF HERDADE ALDEIA DE CIMA

### Red Grape Varieties

#### **Alfrocheiro**

A red grape variety of unknown origin, it is most commonly found in the Dão region in Portugal, but is also very well adapted and widespread in the Alentejo. The hot climate allows good maturation resulting in concentrated wines with very good plant and floral notes that can improve the batches from a hot region. Small berries and bunches. Cool and damp climates hinder maturation, but it is also sensitive to dehydration in very hot and dry climates or under direct sunlight. These grapes must be handled carefully to obtain the best results. Due to the ability to protect bunches within their foliage, the vines were planted in the hottest - but most ventilated - part of the Vinha dos Alfaiates.

#### **Alicante Bouschet**

French in origin, this grape variety is ideally suited to the conditions in the Alentejo, creating very good wines either as varietals or when added to improve others. Very well adapted and resistant to a hot and dry climate, this is the predominant grape variety in Vinha dos Alfaiates and planted in the more exposed and hottest areas.

### **Aragonês**

Spanish in origin, this grape variety is recognised in many regions. In Portugal, it has been most common in the Douro Valley and Alentejo for many years. Highly productive, which could partly explain its popularity. It is most adapted to cooler areas, but the introduction of irrigation to vineyards has substantially improved its quality in hotter climates. When very mature, it creates well-structured and highly tannic wines with great longevity. In Vinha dos Alaiates, it is planted in cooler micro-terroirs. In Vinha d'Aldeia, the number of vines in cooler areas has been increased.

### **Baga**

Portuguese in origin, this red grape variety is most prolific in the Bairrada region. It prefers cooler climates and as a result, in the various micro-terroirs in Vinha dos Alaiates, the coolest were selected, planted facing east to protect it from sunlight and to shield it from the high evening temperatures in west-facing vineyards.

### **Tinta Grossa**

Portuguese in origin, this red grape variety is most popular in the Vidigueira sub-region, though in total terms the amount of land cultivated with these vines is small. Its planting on the poorest soils in Vinha de Sant'Anna is a return to the region's roots. It is a very vigorous variety but one that confers a wine with good acidity and elegance.

### **Trincadeira**

Portuguese in origin, this red grape variety is very well adapted to hot regions, with the Alentejo being its most widespread region. Adds excellent freshness and a herbal character, adapting very well to poor terrains that increase concentration. Due to these characteristics, this grape is planted in the hottest parts of Vinha dos Alaiates. Given its importance to the estate's wines, the amount of the poorest terrain planted with this grape has also been increased in Vinha d'Aldeia.

## **White Grape Varieties**

### **Alvarinho**

A white grape variety from the north-west of the Iberian Peninsula that is found most commonly in the Monção sub-region. Relatively unproductive but with excellent aromatic characteristics and very good acidity that helps to balance wines in hotter climates like the Alentejo. In Vinha de Sant'Anna and Vinha d'Aldeia it is planted in the coolest soils.



### **Antão Vaz**

Portuguese in origin, this white grape variety is most commonly found in the Vidigueira sub-region. Very well adapted to hot and dry climates and highly productive. Adds freshness and complexity to the wines of this region. This is the most widespread and important white grape variety and is therefore very important in our vineyards. It is the only white grape variety planted in poor soils in Vinha dos Alfaiates, and is also planted in the cooler soils in Vinha de Sant'Anna.

### **Arinto**

Portuguese in origin, this white grape variety is most commonly found in Bucelas, but is very well adapted and used throughout the country. In the Alentejo, it adds an excellent freshness to wines by virtue of its acidity and mineral content. This grape is naturally integrated into Vinha D'Aldeya, where it is planted in areas of cooler soil.

### **Perrum**

Portuguese in origin, this white grape variety is most commonly found in the Alentejo and is integral to the appellation of origin of the Alentejo's vineyards. It brings a natural acidity and low alcohol content that improves a wine's freshness in hot and dry climates.

### **Roupeiro**

Portuguese in origin, this white grape variety is most commonly found in the Alentejo. It is very well adapted to hot and productive climates, with its characteristics helping to give wines greater complexity. It is planted in averagely cool soils in Vinha de Sant'Anna.