

PORT AND THE DOURO

Port and the Douro

Fourth edition

Richard Mayson

Comprehensive update for seasonal best-seller

Port is a perennial favourite of the festive season, so appropriately this month sees a timely update of Richard Mayson's classic, award-winning book on the subject. In the nearly 20 years since the first edition of *Port and the Douro* was published there have been changes in the vineyard, with growers having to adapt to altered seasons, in the cellar, as new technology becomes ever more sophisticated, and in the way the Port industry itself is organized. Yet Port continues to produce classic vintages and to fascinate wine-lovers worldwide.

In his preface to the book Mayson states that one of his major objectives is to ensure that the book is a 'good read'. This he achieves admirably, particularly through his peppering of the text with boxes offering profiles of key figures in the development of the Port industry and interesting asides on details such as the origins of passing the Port, the decline in popularity of Port and lemon in The Rovers Return and the rumour that Lord Nelson sketched out his plans for the Battle of Trafalgar using a finger dipped in Port.

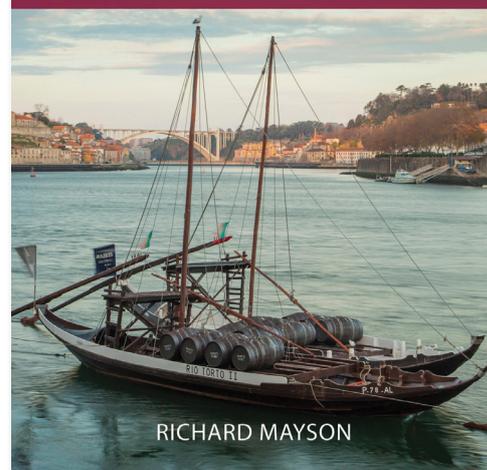
All the essential information for student, sommelier and Port fan alike is here, delivered in a lucid and unpretentious style. To begin with, Mayson provides a history of Port, from the beginnings of viticulture in Roman times to the present day. The vineyards and their vines as well as the *quintas* where they are cultivated are thoroughly explored, followed by an explanation of Port production, both traditional and modern. A short introduction to Port types prepares the reader for a detailed assessment of vintages from 1960–2017. Some of these wines have been tasted afresh for this edition, and notable vintages (both exceptional and poor) dating back as far as 1844 are also included. The structure of the Port trade remains in flux, with the chapter on the shippers reflecting this as Mayson

explains recent changes in fortune and ownership. Douro wine, which pre-dates its fortified cousin and has seen its revival accelerate over the last 20 years, receives an entire chapter to itself. Finally, for those wishing to visit the region, there are some ideas on what to do and where to stay.

Port and the Douro takes an honest and critical view of the region's twin wine industries. In a postscript assessing the future for Port and Douro wines Mayson notes the potential problems of increased tourism, the challenges of competitive pricing and the pros and cons of an industry where most sales are in the hands of just five large companies. He ends on an optimistic note, stating that, "I am convinced that the Douro will continue to be one of the world's most captivating wine regions and that Port will remain among the greatest of wines."

About the author

Richard Mayson entered the UK wine trade in 1984 and spent five years working for the Wine Society. His first book, the award-winning *Portugal's Wines and Wine-Makers*, was published in 1992. *Port and the Douro*, published in 1999, was shortlisted for the André Simon Award and the second edition, published in 2004, won the Symington Award of Excellence. In 2003 *The Wines and Vineyards of Portugal* won the André Simon Award for Drinks Book of the Year. In 2014 Richard was Louis Roederer International Wine Feature Writer of the Year and in 2015 *Madeira: The islands and their wines* was shortlisted for the André Simon Award. Richard chairs the Port and Madeira panel for the Decanter World Wine Awards and lectures to students at Leith's School of Food and Wine in London. In 1999 he became a Cavaleiro of the Confraria do Vinho do Porto.



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