



Portugal: Summer Refreshers, Big Reds and More featuring Herdade do Rocim

As reviewed by Mark Squires

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Rocim, located in Alentejo in Portugal's south, has a lot going on here this issue...they are showing off some monovarietals never seen before, like the Touriga Nacional and the Alicante. The 2016 Alvarinho is the debut vintage. The Amphorae wines (first vintage: 2013) are finally making their way here, too. The Lisboa wines from Vale da Mata are also here, showing about as well as they ever have. It's a robust and somewhat different group, mingling old and new nicely. For the most part, the wines here are nice values.

2016 Herdade do Rocim Branco Mariana

The 2016 Branco Mariana is mostly a 60/30 blend of Antão Vaz and Arinto, with 10% Alvarinho, unoaked and coming in at 12% alcohol. This is quite a nice deal. In its youth, it is vigorous and rather concentrated for the level, demonstrating both depth and reasonable structure. This is showing beautifully now, making it a fine bargain. It won't reward aging, though, and it should be drunk young. It's worth leaning up a little on it just now. Dive in. **(88 points)**

2016 Herdade do Rocim Branco

The 2016 Branco is mostly Antão Vaz, with 30% Arinto and 10% Viosinho, unoaked and coming in at 13% alcohol. Showing fine concentration for the level, finesse and precision, this elegant, young Branco is in good form this year, one of the best versions I've seen of the brand. Lingering beautifully on the finish, it is dry and serious, with plenty of grip and tension for the level, but an understated demeanor overall. This is not quite as exuberant as the Mariana Branco reviewed this issue, but it has more finesse and a more tightly-wound feel to it. They are both good values. It will be interesting to see how long this stays in peak form, but it is pretty gorgeous and an overachiever right now. Yes, that's a hint. **(89 points)**

2016 Herdade do Rocim Alvarinho

The 2016 Alvarinho is unoaked, dry and comes in at 12.5% alcohol. Alvarinho seems to be percolating through Alentejo. While they don't always remind me of what Vinho Verde produces, they have been pretty successful in their own right. This has a certain fatness to it, but also ripe fruit and fine flavor. There's not a lot of zing and zest, but it does have reasonable tension on the finish and support for the fruit. Plus, it tastes great and feels full in the mouth, granting that it is very young. It is a very nice debut vintage. **(87 points)**

2015 Herdade do Rocim Branco Vale da Mata

The 2015 Branco Vale da Mata is a blend of 60% Arinto, 30% Vital and 10% Viosinho, aged for four months in used French oak. It comes in at 12.5% alcohol. Sharp and very crisp, with a precise mid-palate and a lemon-like hint on the finish, this is a structured white that is all about its energy and verve. The wood impact is minor. As it warmed, it showed nice fruit, too. If you like them bright and zesty, this is a great white for the summer. It may also age fairly well (although the first vintage of the brand was only the 2013, so there isn't a lot of track record), but you need not wait. It is not free from doubt, but this was my personal favorite of Rocim's whites this issue. It is a happy coincidence that it is very well priced, too. With this, the Mariana Branco and the regular Rocim Branco, Rocim offers up a lot of quality and value this issue in fresh whites. **(90 points)**

2016 Herdade do Rocim Branco Reserva Olho de Mocho

The 2016 Branco Reserva Olho de Mocho is all Antão Vaz from 62-year-old vines, aged for five months in 60% new French oak. It comes in at 13% alcohol. Only seen a couple of months after bottling, this was a bit disjointed and showed its wood a little too much. That said, it came around nicely as it aired and warmed, showing finesse and a lingering finish. Very dry and elegant, this should pull in its wood over the next six to 12 months and it should hold reasonably well for several years. **(90 points)**

2016 Herdade do Rocim Rosé Mariana

The 2016 Rosé Mariana is a dry (although it marches close to the "fully dry" line) 60/40 blend of Touriga Nacional and Aragonez. It comes in at 12.5% alcohol. Serious and deep, this is a fine value in Rocim's lineup. It shows plenty of depth for both the level and category, lingering fruit and enough acidity to support the wine. The finish is remarkably sophisticated for the second-level pink, showing off a hint of plums, not just sweet fruit. For those who look for a well-priced red wine substitute in the summer, this delivers a lot for a little and easily has the stuffing to hold up to food. Of course, it will always show best when young. **(89 points)**

2016 Herdade do Rocim Rosé Olho de Mocho

The 2016 Rosé Olho de Mocho is an 80/20 blend of Touriga Nacional and Syrah, dry and coming in at 12.5% alcohol. This has a price uptick from the Mariana, also reviewed, but the style issues are far more important than qualitative issues. This has a fresher feel with more finesse in the mid-palate. The blend gives it a slightly earth hint on the finish. It then finishes with a crisp edge, the fruit nicely lifted. If anything, it is not quite deep as the Mariana, but it may have a bit more power and certainly more elegance. They both do great this issue. Buy some of each. You'll find different uses for them. **(89 points)**

2014 Herdade do Rocim Brut Rosé Espumante

The 2014 Brut Rosé Espumante is a Touriga Nacional, dry and coming in at 12.5% alcohol. It was disgorged in August, 2016 (unfortunately, not noted on the label). Very attractive, this has a bit of toast and dried red fruits on the finish. In its dry and rather serious style, it provides lush texture and a complex medley of flavors on the lively finish. It doesn't have an extremely crisp edge and never goes over to the austerity side of the scale. This is well done, though, caressing, tasty and complex. Drink it on the younger side for best results. **(89 points)**

2015 Herdade do Rocim Alicante Bouschet

The 2015 Alicante Bouschet was aged for nine months in 60% new French oak. It comes in at 15% alcohol. Concentrated and powerful, this is quite an offering at the price level. It is also bursting with flavor, mingling red fruit and beef. As it airs out, it even shows a bit of finesse, although that's hardly the biggest selling point. This has a lot going on and it demonstrates some potential for improvement in the cellar, too. Let's take that in stages, since these monovarietals don't have much track record, but it seems to be built well and more elegantly than the Touriga, a bit of a role reversal. If this holds form as it ages, it's a lot of wine for a modest price. I could say "let's see what happens in a year," but after playing with it for a couple of hours, it seems better to lean up on it. It does have some things to prove in the cellar. It might be best to give this until next year before opening it, although it is approachable with aeration. **(90 points)**

2012 Herdade do Rocim Tinto Vale da Mata

The 2012 Tinto Vale da Mata is a mostly a 50/40 blend of Touriga Nacional and Aragonez, with 10% Syrah. It was aged for eight months in 60% used French oak and comes in at 13.5% alcohol. Graceful, light and pointed, this rather tight Tinto is very Burgundian. It is elegant in the mid-palate with finesse to spare, flavorful on the finish and well structured. It was still a bit closed and tannic when seen, but the tannins will moderate in time. This looks to be a very fine regular Tinto from Lisboa. **(88 points)**

2013 Herdade do Rocim Reserva Olho de Mocho

The 2013 Reserva Olho de Mocho is a blend of 50% Alicante Bouschet, 30% Tinta Múda and 20% Petit Verdot, aged for 16 months in 80% new French barrels. It comes in at 15% alcohol. Tasty and complex, this blend provides some herbs and beef to go with some briars and brambles. It has reasonable concentration and good elegance. It seems to handle its alcohol well. Overall, this does pretty nicely and it should continue to develop with some time in the cellar. **(90 points)**

2013 Herdade do Rocim Reserva Vale da Mata

The 2013 Reserva Vale da Mata is a 60/40 blend of Touriga Nacional and Tinta Roriz, aged for 16 months in 80% new French oak. It comes in at 14% alcohol. This adds a bit of cream and a lush feel to the 2012 regular Tinto reviewed this issue. It is mostly along the same lines otherwise, graceful, showing fine finesse in the mid-palate, good flavor and a fair hit of tannins on the finish. This, however, seems to have even better balance. If it is not quite as pure as the regular Tinto, it is more caressing and feels fuller in the mouth, while retaining that superb, very refined mid-palate finesse. This looks like a winner, but it will certainly benefit from another year or two in the cellar. As winemaker Pedro Ribeiro pointed out, "the wines are bit wild and need a long time before they are released." **(91 points)**