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Portweine von Niepoort Ouro do Douro



Niepoort NEWS



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Niepoort Port Wines

Ouro do Douro (Douro's Gold)

The biggest lines in wine fairs happen when Dirk Niepoort is at his stand. He is one of the best known and kindest producers in the world and has many positive qualities, in particular modesty, kindness, sincerity and an incredible passion when it comes to (Port)wine production and tasting. Axel Probst approached the phenomenon Niepoort, tasting with pleasure.

The Niepoort family, originally from the Netherlands, produces Port wines since 1842. The Vintage Ports, produced since 1927, are legendary and the "Colheitas" (Harvest) sensational. The fifth Niepoort generation, the brothers Dirk and Verena, is developing this heritage in a magnificent way and present themselves, as producers, with a unique and amazing range of quality wines.

This happens, even though England, the traditional world champion in the consumption of Vintage Ports for years, has never been a considerable market for the Niepoorts. On the one hand, this is justified by the small production amounts. But above all it is due to the refusal of the Niepoort family to change their name to "Newport" to satisfy the English market, so that the English consumer is able to pronounce correctly the name of the firm. Without this adjustment, according to the former agent, they wouldn't stand a chance in the English market, because "people in England don't drink anything they don't know how to pronounce".

Sales, markets and declaration

The main markets of Niepoort Port wines are therefore, besides the German-speaking countries, Belgium and the Netherlands. Niepoort annually exports about 450 000 bottles of Port wine, including 20 000 to 30 000 bottles of Vintage Port. In direct comparison with the large

producers, Niepoort has a market share of about 1%, due to small production amounts. Niepoort has always had a very strict declaration philosophy and their procedures are not subject to agreement with other producers. The declaration only happens when the quality is unmistakable! Niepoort has declared both years in almost all "split declarations," provided that the quality matched the expectations.

Strengths and (no) weaknesses

You can point, for most producers of Port wine, the preferences and the emphasis they place in their wines: some produce exceptional Tawnies with age indication (10, 20, 30 and 40 years-old) and "Colheitas", others give more importance to Vintage Ports. No other producer has so far been so brilliant in the two categories for decades. Niepoort is a true allrounder. Their Vintage Ports are at the quality level remarkably consistent, there are no failures to point out, and their "Colheitas" also have an excellent reputation among their competitors. Niepoort produces for many years now Port wines as well as high-quality red and white table wines, and has managed to get excellent results in both domains. Especially the red wines (Douro DOC) have earned much to the positive positioning of the brand in the market in the last two decades; they have even become dominant in the past decade.

Despite the significant investments



made in new production sites and infrastructure, such as the new large cellars in Vila Nova de Gaia and at the Quinta de Nápoles estate, in the Douro valley, the Niepoorts maintained their traditional cellars in Vila Nova de Gaia. That's where the legendary "Colheitas" and Vintage Ports age since the 19th century. Guided tours and events are always a special pleasure in this place. A Port wine cellar could not be more authentic.

Special features

In addition, Niepoort is the only firm that continues to produce the so-called "Garrafeira" Port Wines. After a few years in large casks, are transferred to large bottles called "demijohns". "Demijohns" are very round, large bottles, with a capacity of 12 liters, which, according to Dirk Niepoort, "were just standing there and with which we were experimenting." After ageing in "demijohns", the wine is bottled (0.75 liter bottles). The label indicates "bottled" and "decanted", with the respective years; the first date refers to the bottling into "demijohns".

In the words of Dirk Niepoort, the "Garrafeiras" fall somewhere between "Colheitas" and Vintages. Since at Niepoort's they are knowledgeable in both categories, it is possible to see regularly the results of the "Colheitas". Although the Port Wine Institute has not seen this additional role with enthusiasm, it agreed

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recently with the continuation of "Garrafeira" production. "Garrafeira" were produced in the years 1931, 1933, 1938, 1940, 1948, 1950, 1952, 1967, and 1977. About a thousand bottles are produced for each year.

The Niepoort estates

The Niepoort family got his show-estate, the Quinta de Nápoles, in 1987. The grapes from this estate are exclusively used to produce table wines, reds and whites. The grapes for Niepoort Ports are planted mainly in the region of Upper Corgo, about 15 kilometers from the city of Pinhão. Along with the Pisca vineyard, since 2003 Niepoort property, there are old leases with growers in the region around the Mendiz valley, which in part were still sealed with handshake. Niepoort has a total of about 62 hectares (about 153 acres) for the production of Port wine.

The Niepoort team

Despite the more mediatic presence of Dirk, Niepoort would not be what it is without Dirk's sister, Verena, behind the scenes. Verena coordinates and organizes business operations, which may not always be easy, given Dirk's partly very spontaneous ideas. It's hard to imagine a more perfect team at the head of this enterprise.

The brothers Niepoort, Verena and Dirk, rely on the cooperation of the Nogueira family, for many generations working with the Niepoorts. At present, the Niepoort's masterblender is "Zezé" Nogueira, and his son José Rodrigo is now starting to take the first steps to take over one day. Luís Seabra is in charge of the enology department. His main occupation is the control and care of vineyards and the creation of Port wine batches. Last but not least, Nick Delaforce, whose task is the quality control of Ports and logistics.

Ruby Fabelhaft Max: Transparent ruby color. Fresh, floral nose, with a slight spicy touch. Fruit aromas on the palate, with a full range of red fruits. **14/20 drink**

Tawny Fabelhaft Moritz: Orange colour, transparent. Fresh bouquet with slight nutty aroma. Silky on the palate, with subtle hazelnut notes. Elegant finish. **14/20**

10 y White Old Tawny: This white Tawny is produced from Port wines that age between 6 to 19 years in oak pipes. Golden-oily in color. Concentrated, fruity nose: notes of honey and flowers. Very complex palate. It is only the second batch of this wine. Bottled November 2008. **17/20**

10 y Old Tawny: Bright colour, dark red, clear. Light wooden notes and still plenty of fruit in the bouquet. Complex palate,



with nuts and a remnant of the primary red fruits. Well structured finish. **16/20**

20 y Old Tawny: The 20 y Tawnies are true champions – Niepoort's as well: clear, light orange colour, attractive bouquet of nuts and dried fruits. The primary fruit has completely disappeared. On the palate, rich notes of raisins and prunes, very balanced. An excellent 20 y Old Tawny. **17/20**

30 y Old Tawny: The color is much lighter than the 20 y Old. Extremely complex and deep nose with notes of honey, malt and caramel. On the palate, marzipan and wooden notes, the honey notes of the bouquet are very well balanced and complex. Long finish, full and round. Only those who taste this Tawny realize why Niepoort does not produce a 40 y old... **18/20**

Very Dry Old: In relation to this Port, not even Dirk can say more than that he has been in the bottle for more than 40 years. Orange and gold in colour, transparent. On the nose, aromas of honey cake, fresh nuts and a touch of spice. The mouth reveals much better the dry notes than the bouquet. Light medicinal touch. **16/20**

Crusted 2007: The first Crusted Port from Niepoort. Purple, dark colour, with purple reflections typical of a young Vintage Port. Lots of fruit, supported by good acidity and tannins. Long, fruity finish. At the level of a Single Quinta Vintage. **17/20**



2007 Late Bottled Vintage Port: Fresh bouquet, with spicy notes, very attractive. Rich tannin structure and acidity on the palate, which overlaps the fruit. Keep for some time. **16+/20**

2005 Late Bottled Vintage Port: The present Niepoort LBV reveals red fruit, spices with notes of tar and tobacco on the nose. Full and round on the palate. Lighter, but more spicy than the Crusted Port, which was tasted in direct comparison. **16/20**

2003 Late Bottled Vintage Port: Dark red matte in colour, displaying an average structure. The bouquet reveals a good mix of fruits, raspberries and currants, over a background of spices and mocha and roasted coffee flavours. The palate is fruity, complex, with a well balanced tannin structure. This is an excellent young LBV, can cellar for some years. As usual at Niepoort's, it is not filtered. **16/20**

1998 Colheita (bottled 2009): "Neither flesh nor fish," says Dirk regarding this Colheita, and he is right. This Port still has the fruit notes of a Ruby and a slight hint of dried fruit of an older Tawny. As a whole very appealing, but has not yet had the time to develop the typical notes of a good Colheita. (Tasted in 2010) **16/20**

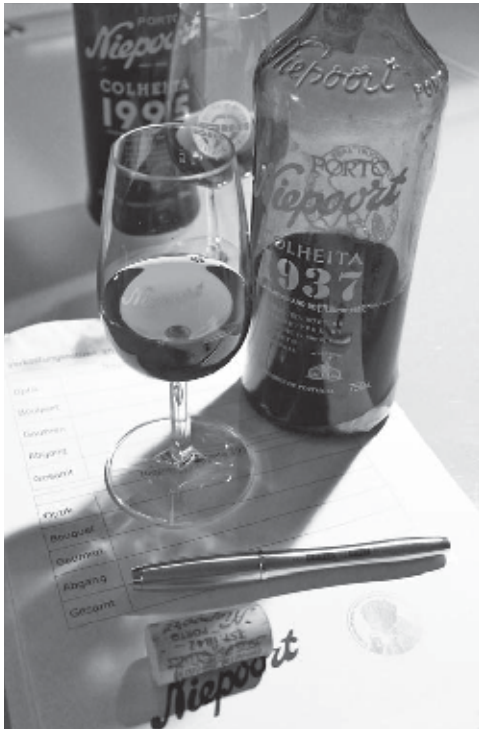
1995 Colheita (bottled 2010): Niepoort's Colheitas are produced for the long term. Often they do not show what they are in early years, but we can already see their potential. Dark brown colour. Elegant bouquet, almost discreet, good acidity and a touch of nuts. The palate shows a nice crisp acidity and nutty aromas. Light, relatively short finish. Still needs some more time in the barrel. **16/20**

1994 Colheita (bottled 2006/2003): In these two Colheitas it was possible to see a clear difference between the first and second bottling. While the first one, bottled in 2003, has more impressive fruit and freshness, the second, bottled in 2006, resembles a 20 y Old Tawny: both bouquet and palate revealed more aromas of dried fruits and nuts. Both very good. Good buy! (Tasted in 2010) **17/20**

1988 Colheita (bottled 2008): Red orange in colour, very transparent and clear. Medium consistency. Nuts and dried fruits in the bouquet, aromas of dates, raisins and nuts. Full, round, fresh palate, without any complicating factors. On the palate, flavors of nuts, with many notes of caramel and malt. Long, full and round finish. Very well made. **17/20**

1986 Colheita (bottled 2010): Deep red color, with pronounced reflections. Notes of walnuts, almonds and dried fruit, both in the mouth and nose. Long, expressive finish. **17/20**

1983 Colheita (bottled 1993): Tasted out of a magnum at the Quinta de Nápoles estate, dark orange in colour, transparent, slightly watery rim. On the nose, gentle nutty aroma and slight alcohol. Elegant palate with notes of almonds and walnuts. Slightly tired but impressive for a Tawny with only 10 years of ageing in the barrel. **17/20**



1970 Colheita (bottled 1989): Lighter in colour than the Vintages of the same year. Complex bouquet, with intense hazelnut and almond aromas. Long and well-balanced on the palate, with lots of dried fruit and almonds. Very long and complex finish, with fresh walnuts and caramel. (Tasted in 2010) **18/20**

1966 Colheita (bottled 1985): Red orange in colour, with good structure. Shows good acidity, fresh walnuts and honey on the nose and palate. Silky and balanced in the mouth, with caramel and honey notes. Long, full finish. **18/20**

1962 Colheita (bottled 2007): Tasted at the Niepoort cellars in Vila Nova de Gaia. Very distinct colour, orange with light touches of green. On the nose, notes of coffee beans and hazelnut. Intense and very complex. Extremely seductive on the palate: walnuts, dried fruit, very deep and complex. Endless finish. A perfect Colheita, the last portion of this year. (Tasted in 2008) **19/20**

1959 Colheita (bottled 1978): Orange in colour, transparent. On the nose, aromas of walnut, hazelnut, coffee; good acidity. Surprisingly fresh for a wine that has been in the bottle for so long. Discreet palate, well supported by the acidity. Coffee, malt and caramel at the finish. Drink now! **17/20**

1937 Colheita (bottled 1995): In 1995, the Niepoorts saw it fit to bottle the 1937 Colheita. Dark brown in colour, with green reflections. Deep, extremely complex on the nose. Good acidity. Very well integrated. The palate reveals a lot of almonds, dates, marzipan, coffee and hazelnut. Extremely long finish. **18/20**

1934 Colheita (bottled 1995): The colour falls between reddish-brown and beige,

very concentrated. Elegant bouquet, seamless integration. On the palate, it reveals primarily malt and honey, against a background of mint and orange peel. Long, cool finish. **18/20**

1900 Colheita (bottled 1970): Orange-brown in color with green reflections. Full and concentrated on the nose, with very present malt and coffee notes against a background of caramel. Full palate, shows good caramel, very concentrated, with aromas of malt and orange peel. Very long, full finish. **18/20**

1863 Colheita (bottled 2003): This collection was passed to demijohns in 1972 and bottled in bottles of 0.75 liters in 2003. A very intense color, glossy dark orange, with greenish reflections. Incredible concentration. Bouquet extremely intense, very present notes of honey, caramel and malt. Palate very intense, very sharp notes of wood, honey and caramel. Full-bodied, long, balanced, complex. Final long, almost endless, with lots

of malt and caramel. Still very young. (Test performed in 2009) **19/20**

1977 Garrafeira (bottled 1982, decanted 2005): Dark red in colour, complex structure. Plenty of fruit and chocolate on the nose. Balanced palate, with lots of raspberry, chocolate and caramel notes. Long finish. More a Colheita than a Vintage. (Tasted in 2010) **17+/20**

1964 Garrafeira (bottled 1971, decanted 1989): Orange red colour, very bright. Expressive nose, showing the age, but with a very attractive freshness. The palate reveals many notes of honey and malt, and raisins. Very long, cool finish. Very good. (Tasted in 2010) **17/20**

1948 Garrafeira (bottled 1953, decanted 1973): Reddish brown colour, with a pronounced water rim. Shows good acidity, fresh coffee and honey notes. Seamlessly integrated palate, full, with many dried fruits and acacia honey. Long, full finish. A good representative of this unusual variant of Port. (Tasted in 2010) **18/20**

1931 Garrafeira (bottled 1938, decanted 1978): Orange red colour, completely transparent. Elegant bouquet with notes of fruit, acacia honey, malt and very mild red fruit, light notes of mint. Fresh on the palate with malt and eucalyptus. Long, complex finish. Impressive. **19/20**

2009 Vintage Port: Balanced bouquet, with fruit and spices, cassis, raspberry and blackcurrant. Elegant palate, with very well-balanced acidity, tannins and fruit, predominantly black currant and black cherry, sweet wood and violet aromas. Long finish. **17+/20**

2009 Bioma Vintage Port (barrel tasting): For legal reasons, the name "Pisca" has been

changed to Bioma. In direct comparison with the "classic Niepoort", it reveals even more intense floral notes, violet, rose and intense fruit. Sweet, full, very complex on the palate, where blackberry and cassis predominate, good acidity and well-proportioned tannins. Long and full finish. **18/20**

2008 Bioma Vintage Port (barrel tasting): The former "Pisca" is now being passed to small pipes. Deep structure. Spicy on the nose, full of fruit and floral notes, blackcurrant and a hint of green bananas. Fruity on the palate, with light acidity and tannins, notes of pepper and tobacco leaf. Not a classic, but seductive. **17/20**

2007 Pisca Vintage Port: Deep black colour. Spicy nose, discreet fruit. Very intense palate with good acidity, alcohol and tannins. Long finish. It pleases me more than the regular 2007 Vintage Port. Production: 5,000 bottles. **17+/20**

Pisca/Bioma Vintage Port

For over 40 years now the grapes of the Pisca vineyard have been used for Vintage Ports. Dirk and his team have done a lot, since its acquisition in 2003, to further improve the quality of this 5 hectare (12.5 acres) plot. In 2007, Niepoort produced the first pure Pisca Vintage Port. For legal reasons related to this designation, it was renamed Bioma in 2008. After the initial processing, the Pisca/Bioma Port remains in 5000 liter vats for several months. It is an experience the Niepoort family had already carried out with the legendary 1970 Vintage Port. Niepoort dilates the deadlines for the bottling of Vintage Ports, more than most producers, and this also applies to the Pisca Port. According to the Port Wine Institute, Vintage Ports must be bottled before June 30 of the third year following the harvest. Dirk still does not know how long he will leave his 2009 Pisca, now called Bioma, in the vat. But he will most certainly bottle it when the moment seems right, regardless of the statutes. At the price level, the Pisca/Bioma Vintage is similar to the regular Vintages, although Niepoort could have followed, for marketing reasons, the path of a Vargellas Vinha Velha, Noval Nacional or Vesúvio Capela.

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2007 Vintage Port: Purple colour, almost black, deep structure. Complex bouquet, floral, against a background of spices. In the mouth, this Port is also very complex, with very good acidity and alcohol. Hints of chocolate, light tannins. An expressive Vintage with sufficient depth and strength. Production: 30,000 bottles. **17/20**

2005 Vintage Port: Purple reflections through the dark red colour. Discreet bouquet, with notes of blackcurrant and jam. Full on the palate, with coffee and cassis, light tannins. Short finish. Elegant. (Tasted in 2010) **17/20**

2003 Vintage Port: Black colour, with sharp reflexes. On the nose, coffee and blackcurrant aromas, still lots of primary fruit. Intense, expressive on the palate, massive tannins, good acidity and fruit, although the fruit does not confirm the nose. Long finish. It is beginning to close down. **18/20**

2000 Vintage Port: Magnificent structure, dark red colour with cherry reflections. Fruity, complex bouquet. On the palate, cherry, very complex and deep, slightly acidic. Long and balanced finish, with violet aromas. One of my candidates for Port of this extraordinary year! **19/20**

1997 Vintage Port: Dark red color. Coffee on the nose, very seductive, good underlying complexity. At the moment, full in the reduction phase. Full palate, with chocolate and fruit, great underlying potential. Good finish. Produces an effect of almost excessive extraction and many bottles have problems with false scents. (Tasted in 2009) **18/20**

1994 Vintage Port: Average structure, red cherry in colour, slight watery rim. Balanced and deep bouquet with currant notes. The palate is also amazingly well-balanced. Chocolate and red fruits. Long, complex finish. (Tasted in 2009) **18/20**

1992 Vintage Port: Even darker and fuller in color than the 1991 Vintage. Fruity, very long nose. Full, fruity palate, good acidity, tannins, chocolate. Average finish, with a predominance of chocolate. **17/20**

1991 Vintage Port: Appearance in accordance with the age, good structure. Bouquet shows great character; pepper, good acidity, against a background of red fruits. Earthy on the palate, with lots of character, notes of chocolate and finesse.



Das Douro-Tal aus der Vogelperspektive
[Foto: A. Probst]

Very good. Long finish, with some edges. Shows greater potential than the 1992 Vintage. I have tasted this Port more than 20 times and it excites me with each new tasting. My favorite for this year! **18/20**

1987 Vintage Port: The surprise winner of the night. Young, classic colour, slight watery rim, good structure. On the nose, pepper and lots of freshness, character. Very expressive, complex on the palate, with lots of coffee, caramel, pepper and spices, light tannins, good acidity. Long, slightly acidic finish. **18/20**

1985 Vintage Port: The 1985 Vintage has a problem with fake aromas in the bottle, and Niepoort is especially affected by this. According to my personal statistics, four out of six bottles were affected and only one of them truly demonstrates what it should. Hence, in the second half of the tasting, I had three bottles in reserve to write a decent tasting note – unfortunately, the three bottles had the same problem. Here is an old tasting note: Intense structure, intense black colour. Sweet nose, with spices, exceptional fruit aromas, licorice, tar. On the palate, the aromas remain exactly the same as announced in the bouquet. Surprisingly brief, spicy finish. Purchase not recommended. (Tasted in 2009) **17/20**

1983 Vintage Port: Dark red, fresh colour. Aromatic herbs on the nose, well-structured. On the palate, complex aromatic herbs, full, alcoholic. Average, fresh, slightly acidic finish. (Tasted in 2009) **17/20**

1982 Vintage Port: Pronounced watery rim, the structure reveals to be a bit watery. Discreet and light nose. The palate is also rather simple, slight hint of chocolate. Brief, mild finish. (Tasted in 2009) **16/20**

1980 Vintage Port: Dark red, transparent in colour, slight watery rim. Fruity nose, deep, complex. Full, well-structured on the palate, supported by tannins and acidity. It is currently undergoing a transition from the fruity aromas to honey and caramel. Still retains a bit of both phases. Long, deep finish, with a lot of chocolate. **18/20**

1978 Vintage Port: Slight watery rim, good colour structure. Fruit and caramel in the bouquet, very attractive and not too intense. On the palate, mild fruit, notes of honey and caramel. Has already undergone a long evolution. Average, balanced finish. **16/20**

1977 Vintage Port: Appearance in accordance with the age. Intense structure. Attractive notes of fruit and malt against a more diversified background. Medium intensity palate with lots of honey and caramel. Very long finish. Still fairly closed, but with great potential. (Tasted in 2009) **18/20**

1975 Vintage Port: Fairly light colour, mature, a tawny orange with a pronounced watery rim. Orange marmalade notes, mild, but present on the nose. Balanced palate, yet light. This Port has attained its full evolution, with no margin for further development. Brief finish. Drink now! (Tasted in 2009) **16/20**

1970 "potta" Vintage Port: Perfect orange

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colour, very well-structured. Full bouquet, round, with lots of plum and caramel, very well-balanced, but with a lot of pressure. Well-balanced palate, great intensity of all the necessary ingredients. The fruit moves slowly to honey and caramel. Very prolonged finish. This Port will fit perfectly in the series 1927-1942-1945-1955. **19/20**

1970 Vintage Port: Normal bottle. The "normal" bottle exists with a regular paper label and with painted letters, as Niepoort has had several problems with their bottle suppliers – however, the content is the same! Even the Vintage of the "normal" bottle was compelling: a bit darker, a still fresh dark red with reflexes. Still almost closed on the nose, with lots of raspberry and plum. Intense fruit, notes of the primary fruit are still recognizable. Lots of pepper and freshness on the palate. Very long, cool finish. A major Port, still with a great future ahead. **19/20**

1966 Vintage Port: Dark red colour, perceptible watery rim. Deep, full structure. In the bouquet, pepper, chocolate and a whole range of spices, attractive freshness. Full, complex palate, with good acidity and full notes of caramel and honey. Very long and intense finish. (Tasted in 2009) **18/20**

1963 Vintage Port: Very young in colour, slight watery rim. Intense bouquet with honey and caramel. Less fresh than the 1970 Vintage, but still an attractive depth. Full, complex palate, but not excessively. Long finish, slightly one-dimensional. Unfortunately the 1963 Niepoort Vintage does not live up to the high expectations for this exceptional year. (Tasted in 2010) **16/20**

1960 Vintage Port: This is the surprise winner of the race. None of the tasters gave so much for this Vintage 1960, including Dirk Niepoort. Full color, dark red. Surprising freshness, predominantly floral nose, attractive, complex aromas of mint and tea. Fresh, complex and round on the palate. Long, intense finish. The best of the 1960s so far! **18/20**



1955 Vintage Port: Young, full colour. Chocolate in the bouquet, full and round. The palate holds the promise of eyes and nose: malt, honey, caramel and chocolate,



supported by acidity and light tannins; silky. Extremely attractive and long finish. Close to perfection. (Tasted in 2010) **19/20**

1945 Vintage Port: Despite the pronounced watery rim, this Port with more than 65 years appears to be still almost young: full color, red-orange. Extremely intense nose, with aromas of coffee and caramel, malt and honey, full and complex. Fully integrated and balanced on the palate, with predominant notes of honey and caramel, a slight hint of hazelnut in the background. Extremely long finish, remaining for several minutes, going through various stages. Perfect now! **20/20**

1942 Vintage Port: Niepoort's litre bottle of the 1942 Vintage is certainly unique! Dirk Niepoort comments: "A litre bottle of port wine is the right size for two people, on the condition that the other one doesn't drink." Intense structure, very pronounced dark orange colour, slight watery rim. Attractive, extremely complex on the nose, with many notes of malt and caramel. Full palate, with predominance of malt, caramel and a lot of clover honey notes. Long, complex finish, slightly dry. Excellent. This Port at its peak right now. Decant for at least 3-4 hours. (Tasted in 2010) **19/20**

1927 Vintage Port: Dark colour, almost young, from a visual standpoint one does not notice any fatigue. Surprisingly fresh bouquet, with lots of coffee and pepper. Full palate, well-integrated, with many notes of honey and caramel, against a background of raisins and dates. Can still cellar for another 10-15 years. (Tasted in 2010). **18/20**

Summary

Niepoort is a very special producer and one of the last truly family businesses. While at the moment a process of centralization in the Port wine business is taking place, this relatively small producer is positioned, by virtue of the constant innovations and developments, in the upper segment, in terms of quality. The constancy of Vintage Ports, "Colheitas" and "Garrafeiras" is rather unusual, and even the Tawnies with age indication (10, 20, 30 years old) can withstand any comparison with the competition. In Germany, Niepoort has created a reputation in recent years, mainly because of their red table wines, especially the "Fabelhaft." Among connoisseurs, "Batuta" and "Charme" are on the top list. For this reason, Niepoort's Ports were getting a little bit pushed to the background. Wrongly so, in my opinion, because a bottle of Porto Niepoort is a true discovery by all quality standards; in great "Colheita" and Vintage years it is really an absolute pleasure!