

**Client:** JP Ramos  
**Source:** The Sunday Telegraph (Stella)  
**Date:** 25 May 2014  
**Page:** 59  
**Reach:** 411003  
**Size:** 225cm2  
**Value:** 5148



## Drink

Suffering from oeno ennui? The indigenous grapes of Portugal could remedy that, says *Susy Atkins*

Anyone remotely intimidated by grape varieties might find Portugal's indigenous vines terrifying. Can I tempt you to a glass of *esgana cão* (it means "dog strangler", apparently due to its high acidity)? Or *borrado das moscas* ("fly's droppings", from the dark dots on the fruit) or *rabo de ovelha* ("ewe's tail", the shape of the bunch)? This makes Portuguese wine sound most unappealing, I know, although actually its trove of indigenous grapes is a great asset, producing distinctive and often delicious styles. So if you're bored by chardonnay, merlot et al, turn to Portugal, quick.

### Tipple Tip

#### THE RIGHT WHITE

Forrest is a New Zealand winery known for aromatic dry whites, and now it has released The Doctors' Sauvignon Blanc 2013, Marlborough, which has plenty of juicy grapefruit flavour, but only 9.5 per cent alcohol. We love it served cool with white fish. £8.99, from Waitrose

I recently went to a tasting held by the talented Australian winemaker David Baverstock, who has chosen to spend his working life in Portugal's Alentejo region, at the Esporão winery. Enthralled by the local grapes, he spoke admiringly about *trincadeira*,

*aragonez* and *roupeiro*, among others, extolling their unique flavours, textures and aromas, before showing us a range of wines that combined opulence and ripeness with complexity and character.

And there are excellent Portuguese table wines on the high street this summer, especially among the reds. From Sainsbury's Taste the Difference Douro 2012 (£8.50), a rich, aromatic blend of port grapes, to Majestic's fresh, cherryish Ramos Reserva 2012, Alentejo (£8.99, down to £7.64 each for two or more until 1 September), to Asda's sweetly ripe, juicy Extra Special Dão 2011 (£5.48) and Waitrose's damson-scented, spicy Douro Valley Reserva Quinta de la Rosa 2011 (£11.49), plus those below, there's plenty to reward the daring.



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### TRY THESE

**Tagus Creek 2012 White Tejo** (*Asda, £6.25, down to £4.50 until 31 July*) A cracking offer on an interesting, worthwhile blend of chardonnay with Portuguese grape *fernao pires*, delivering a nutty, peachy, fairly rich, dry white

**Tesco Finest Touriga Nacional 2011** *Alentejo (£7.99)* A pretty serious red for the price, peppery and savoury, long and full-bodied on the finish. *Touriga nacional* is the best-known grape in port production, here unfortified



**Esporão Reserva 2010** *Alentejo (Christopher Piper Wines, christopherpiperwines.co.uk, £18.46)* Big, ripe blueberry and blackcurrant fruit, with minty chocolate hint and refined but grippy tannins on the finish – all the better for taking on beef or venison