



UK Additional Regionals

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WINE

with Julian Whittle

Consumers often treat grape varieties as if they were brands. They enjoy one cabernet sauvignon so buy another. That explains why many growers plant ubiquitous varieties such as chardonnay, shiraz and cabernet sauvignon.

Not the Portuguese though, they stick to their guns. When you fancy something different, Portugal is the place to go looking. Here's a Portuguese red to whet your appetite - Tercius Touriga Nacional, £8 at Marks & Spencer. The touriga nacional is a tricky grape for growers. It easily over-ripens, and is extremely vulnerable to cool, damp weather during flowering. But treated properly it's capable of good things, and since the 1980s plantings have increased significantly.

Our example is made by the excellent Falua Winery, with input from M&S winemaker Sue Daniels, and hails from the Tejo region straddling the River Tajus north east of Lisbon. It has a deep colour, is heavy and viscous when you swirl it in the glass. The nose is scented, like wildflowers, and the palate shows dense berry fruit with a damson finish and a hint of mint. There's plenty of tannin, albeit of the silky rather than astringent sort and, while it has seen nine months in oak, the oak isn't obvious.