



Member's Page

Solemn proclamation of the "1982 Confraria Vintage"

The ceremony that marked the very first proclamation of a Confraria Vintage Port was held Saturday, May 5 1984, at 10 a.m., in the Pátio of the Casa do Infante.

The program was as follows:

10:30 - Departure of the rabelo boats carrying the Confrades from the Ribeira do Porto quay to the opposite bank of the river in Vila Nova de Gaia.

11:00 - Start of the Ceremony of Proclamation of the "1982 Confraria Vintage" at the Adriano Ramos-Pinto reception hall for tourists.

Participating shippers: - A.A. Cálem & Filho, Lda; A.A.Ferreira, Sucrs.; Adriano Ramos-Pinto Vinhos; Barros Almeida & Ca. Vinhos; C.N. Kopke & Ca., Lda.; C. da Silva (Vinhos); Croft & Ca., Lda.; J.H.Andresen, Sucrs, Lda.; Manoel D. Poças Junior, Lda.; Niepoort & Ca, Lda.; Offley Forrester Vinhos, Lda.; Quinta do Noval Vinhos; Real Companhia Velha; Sandeman & Ca, Lda.; Soc. Agrícola e Comercial dos Vinhos Messias; Soc. dos Vinhos Borges & Irmão;

In those early days, the first Usanças stipulated that some of the acts of the Confraria should be connected to the place where it is believed that our patron, Prince Henry the Navigator, was born the so-called Casa do Infante. In effect, the Usanças indicated that it would be desirable if the Confraria Garrafeira were housed in the Casa do Infante, should the Porto Municipality, the owner of the building, be agreeable. The idea for this as the venue for the Proclamation followed quite naturally.

Accordingly, the Confraria proceeded to organise the ceremony but in spite of all their care, it would be fraught with difficulties.

First, although sixteen shippers kindly offered their wines for the 1982 Confraria Vintage, a significant number considering that only 21 Vintage Ports were declared that year, on the day itself very few Confrades actually took part, as we see from the 1984 Report of Activities.

Next, José António Rosas, Head Wine Steward, would proclaim the Confraria Vintage at the Casa do Douro and following this, the Confrades would proceed to the quay on the Douro where they would board a rabelo boat that would take them across the river to Vila Nova de Gaia, as close as possible to the Ramos Pinto lodges where they would appraise all the 1982 Vintage Ports.

Unfortunately, the River Authority refused to grant permission for this crossing on the grounds that rabelo boats were not built to carry people. Luckily, after considerable negotiations, Pinto Moreira, a Confrade who was truly dedicated to everything related to Port Wine was finally able to obtain the necessary permission.

To top it all, it was a filthy day and as the rabelo boat slowly crossed the river, the Confrades on the open boats were buffeted by a heavy wind and their capes soaked through.

Meanwhile, at Ramos-Pinto's, an unexpected difficulty arose. Each shipper had been asked to provide an almude of their respective Vintage Port. This ancient measure equivalent to 25 litres, is measured in containers known in Gaia lodges as canecos.

As we prepared to begin the appraisal ceremony, in which a representative of each shipper would accompany a lodge worker with his respective caneco of Port, we realised to our horror that instead of the traditional wooden, mostly oak, containers, all but two canecos were plastic! It was rapidly decided that only wooden canecos would be used for such a momentous occasion. Consequently, all the Vintage Port that had been delivered in plastic canecos had to be transferred to wooden containers. Of course, the ceremony took much longer than expected.

In spite of all these contretemps, it was a most successful event and at the end of the appraisal, José António Rosas declared urbi et orbi that the 1982 Confraria Vintage Port was an excellent quality wine!

A brief word...

"Just a brief word to inform you that our Brother, Manuel Joaquim Poças Pintão, has retired from Manoel D. Poças Júnior Vinhos,SA, after a lifetime dedicated to revitalising the company and helping it prosper and become an international success. Now that he has some more free time, our Confraria looks forward to his continued collaboration. We wish him much happiness and health and a future full of joy."

Events - Newsbits

Homage to Confrade François Guichard

On March 27 2003, the Michel Montaigne University of Bordeaux sponsored a Homage to François Guichard, Cavaleiro of our Confraria since May 29 1984, whose untimely demise in 2002 stole him from his family and numerous friends and students who held him in great esteem.

Professor François Guichard was a brilliant geographer who was enamoured with Portugal, Port Wine and the Douro Region, who enthusiastically promoted relations between the cities of Bordeaux and Porto and did much to disseminate Portuguese culture at all levels. He was the author of numerous papers and books on his specialty, some of which has as their subject Port Wine, its economic agents and the Douro Region.

Those who had the privilege of meeting with Professor Guichard knew him as an extremely pleasant and unassuming individual, a great scientist and unforgettable teacher.

The homage in his memory consisted of an exhibition entitled "Autour de François Guichard" and a panel discussion held on the same day.

The Confraria deeply regrets that it was informed too late of this event for it to be present as it would have wished.

Fraudulent use of the Confraria robes

Early last March, one of our Confrades found a wine being sold in Belgium under the Puerto Allegro brand and whose label bore the image of a rabelo boat. The crew of this boat was wearing the traditional robes used by Full Confrades.

Obviously, this is an imitation Port Wine that will no doubt be dealt with by the Port Wine Institute according to the terms of the legislation in defence of the Porto denomination of origin.

Although this is not the first time that an emblem of our wine the rabelo boat is used to deceive consumers, as far as we know this is the first time that fraudulent use has been made of the Confraria robes.



SPECIAL CONFRARIA PRODUCTS: Confraria Decanter

On December 19 1984, the Chancellery informed the Confrades that it had decided to create a Confraria Decanter that should be both dignified and impressive. It was decided that this decanter would be pear-shaped and manufactured by ATLANTIS Crystal.

On one side, the decanter would bear the coat-of-arms of our patron, Prince Henry the Navigator, and on the opposite side, the emblem of the Confraria.

Each decanter would be numbered. At this time, all the Confrades were informed that Decanter No. 1 would be given as a gift to HRH Queen Elizabeth II on the occasion of her visit to Porto in March 1985.

Only one lot of these decanters was manufactured as in September 1985, the Confrades were informed that the pear-shaped decanter would be replaced by a ship's decanter. The numbering of the decanters would, however, continue without interruption.

This is thus the current Confraria Decanter and we are now into the 20th edition. The official Confraria Decanter is offered as a gift to high ranking Portuguese and foreign individuals and may also be purchased by Confrades.

An edition of Atlantic crystal glasses, also decorated with Prince Henry the Navigator's coat-of-arms and bearing the shape of the Port Wine glasses previous to the present Siza Vieira glass, unfortunately was not a great success.

We also have a series of other products for sale to Confrades only:

Necktie, scarf, umbrella (standard size and golf) and pins.



Newsletter

Number 1 - December 2003 - www.confrariavinhodoporto.com

Editorial

Dear Brothers,

Yet another year comes to a close.

As is our custom at this time, we wish to report on this year's activities.

The events that were held during 2003 were marked by their usual vibrancy and cheer.

The Grand Duke of Luxembourg, who honoured us with his presence at our annual Enthronement Ceremony, joined the 34 Heads of Government and State who are Members (Chancellors) of our Confraria.

Poor weather on the day unfortunately forced us to cancel our annual Barco Rabelo Regatta and settle for a sail-by of the boats. We may have lost the excitement of the competition but we continued the tradition of the pageant.

This year marks the launching of our Newsletter, a project that the Confraria had been promising you for many years.

This second issue reinforces our intent to provide yet another means of contact for all those who one day pledged their faithfulness to Port Wine.

We close with our renewed heartfelt thanks to all those who work with us to promote this unique wine, this powerful tie that binds all our Brothers.

Seasons Greetings to everyone.

The Chancellery



This photograph, taken on the occasion of the first Confraria Initiation Ceremony, January 24 1983, brings to mind some interesting details of our Brotherhood's early days that are worth recalling.

The ceremony took place in the Commercial Court at the Bolsa Palace, where all future ceremonies would be held until 1995.

Right after the Confraria was officially created, we approved the Usanças, a somewhat pompous name for the set of rules that form part of our Internal Regulations.

Among other conventions, the Usanças stipulated that the Confrades, or Full Members, on the date the Confraria was created owners and directors of companies (ranked as Mestre) and upper management staff of the same (ranked as Experto) would bear the additional title of Fundador, or founding member.

It is interesting to note that most of the Confrades were not terribly at ease with the robes, particularly when it came to wearing the hat, as none of them really knew on which side they should drape the sash.

When you look at the photo, you will notice that they did not drape the sash around their neck, to fall over the chest, on the left, as it is worn today.

In addition to the beauty of the frescos that cover the walls of the courtroom, one notes the very few persons who assisted at this, the "greatest event in the history of the Confraria". Right at the back of the room, in front of the camera, we can make out 4 individuals: Eduardo Serpa Pimentel, Chairman of the Port Wine Institute at that time, Godinho de Almeida and João Sarmento, both of the Port Wine Shippers Association, and another person we cannot identify, possibly a representative of the Porto Commercial Association.

With the years, the number of persons assisting at the initiation grew to such an extent that, in 1996, the ceremony was moved to the Hall of Nations, at the entrance to the Bolsa Palace, where it acquired the importance and splendour that are its due.

Another point of interest is that Article 25 (d) of the Usanças stipulated that the "crystal decanters used in the ceremony should be set on a stone base made of schist from the Douro Region (representing the foundations of the region) and framed in oak (representing the ageing of Port Wine)".

Our dear brother, José António Ramos-Pinto Rosas took on the task of arranging the said schist stone bases. Much to his regret, however, a few weeks before the first ceremony he confessed that this had proved to be an impossible. Those who knew José António Rosas well can imagine just how much he strove to fulfil this task...

Founding Members of the Confraria do Vinho do Porto:

Mestres

Acácio M. Poças Maia, Adelino José Dias Vigário, Alfredo Ramos-Pinto Cunha, Alistair B. Robertson, Álvaro Pinto de Gouveia, Amyas J. Symington, António da Rocha Pinto, António de Vasconcelos Maia, António Jorge Filipe, António Manuel M.P. Vasconcelos, Armando Augusto F e Silva, Arnold Gilbert, Bruce Duncan Guimaraens, Carlos Artur de Seixas Farinha Beirão, Cristiano José Seabra van Zeller, Eduardo da Costa Seixas, Fernando Luiz van Zeller, Fernando Maria van Zeller, Fernando Moreira P. Nicolau de Almeida, Francisco Javier Olazabal, Horácio Correa de Oliveira, Ian D. F. Symington, Ian Stewart Sinclair, James R. Symington, Jean Cayard, Jeremy E. Bull, João Manuel Maia de Almeida Barros, João Ribeiro de Mesquita, Joaquim Manuel P. De Oliveira Cálem, J. Gordon Guimaraens, Jorge Maria Cabral Ferreira, Jorge Poças Pintão, José Carvalho de Gouveia, José Luiz Jerez Riesco, José Manuel O. De Almeida Barros, José Manuel Soares Silva Teixeira, José Ramos-Pinto Rosas, Júlio A. Caldeira, Manuel Angelo O. de Almeida Barros, Manuel Carlos da Silva Santos, Manuel da Silva Reis, Manuel J. Ferreira de Lemos Silva Reis, Manuel João de Almeida Barros, Manuel Joaquim Poças Pintão, Manuel Maria Magalhães Ferreira, Messias de Melo Bptista, Michael D. Symington, Michael Warren Sellers, Maurice H. S. Bower, Nicolas John Heath, Paul D. Symington, Pedro Manuel Ferreira de Lemos Silva Reis, Peter Michael Cobb, Peter R. Symington, Ricardo M. Rosas Nicolau de Almeida, Robin Allan Noelle Reid, Rudolph M. Van Nieport, Thomas Norbert Higgins.

Expertos

Carlos de Oliveira e Silva, Hillary P. Reader, João Rosas Nicolau de Almeida, Joaquim Morais Carreira, Luiz Versadas de Noronha e Távora, Manuel José da Mota Pereira, Rui Jorge Barros Barbosa, Vasco Magalhães.



Ceremony for the Enthronement of New Members 2003

The Ceremony for the Enthronement of New Members of the Confraria do Vinho do Porto was held on June 27 2003 in the Hall of Nations, Bolsa Palace. The ceremony began at 6:30 p.m. and our Confraria welcomed 61 new Confrades, bringing the total membership to 1100.

HRH, Grand Duke Henri of Luxembourg was admitted with the rank of Chancellor. With rank of Infanção, the Confraria initiated Carlos Ernesto Cabral de Melo, the very first Brazilian to be welcomed to our brotherhood and who was elevated from the rank of Cavaleiro which he had received in 1984, Dr. António Manuel de Mendonça Martins, former Minister of Foreign Affairs for Portugal, who was admitted when he was Portuguese Ambassador in Madrid and Dr. José Gregório Faria, former Portuguese Ambassador in London. The other new Confrades were 30 Cavaleiros, 9 Mestres and 18 Expertos.

The Confraria was most honoured by the presence of the President of the Portuguese Republic, Dr. Jorge Sampaio, himself a Confrade, accompanied by his wife, Maria José Rita.

Our Chancellor, Dr. Francisco de Olazabal, presided over the ceremony which ended around 8:30 p.m.. This was followed by a solemn procession to the Old Porto Customs House where the Gala Dinner and Ball have been held since 2001.

Thinking especially of our Confrades who live far from the city of Porto, we shall now give a brief description of the procession, the dinner and the ball.

The road from the Bolsa Palace to the Customs House was closed to traffic and many interested bystanders stood on either side as a Guard of Honour from the National Republican Guard in gala uniform and on horseback, leads the way, followed on foot and in this order by: Chancellery, Confrades with the rank of Chancellor, Infanção, Cavaleiro, Confrades and guests.



Two historic trams that had been released from the Tramway Museum that day, especially for this occasion, provided transport for those who preferred not to walk the 400m that separated the Bolsa Palace from the Customs House.

At the door to the Customs House, the Police Brass Band provided musical entertainment with much gusto, greatly contributing to the festive mood that involved the ceremony from the beginning.

It was a lovely evening, the weather was beautiful and everything went well, from the procession to the aperitifs that everyone sipped as they enjoyed the eternal beauty of the River Douro.

This year's Gala Dinner for some 500 persons was held as usual in a large hall on the first floor. Chef Hélio who prepared the fare, was quite deservedly and widely applauded at the end.

The delectable menu, accompanied by fine wines, was as follows: Terrine of Foie Gras, Churchill Graham White Port; Pockets of Salt Cod, Manoel D. Poças Júnior-Vinhos S.A. Coroa d'Ouro 2002 Douro White from; Tournedos of Venison, Quinta do Crasto 2001 Douro Red; Date Cake, Confraria do Vinho do Porto 20 Years Old Tawny Port; Serra Cheese, Confraria do Vinho do Porto Vintage 1982.



Ceremony for the Enthronement of New Members 2003



XXI Rabelo Boat Race 29 July 2003

Eighteen Rabelo Boats had signed up for this Regatta, whose departure was set for noon.

Unfortunately, the weather that day was terrible, with heavy rain and gusting south-westerly winds that would endanger the stability of these flat-bottomed boats. Besides, they had never been designed for competitions.

The Jury met at length with the representatives of the participating shippers and the River Authorities.

Regretfully, everyone agreed that the race would have to be cancelled. In its stead, they decided that the boats would sail up the river, from Massarelos to the Dom Luís bridge, in stately groups of six.

As usual, the Chancellery hired two river boats from the operators of tourist trips on the Douro River, on which it hosted guests, Confrades and their partners.

Someone who understands these matters, drew our attention to the fact that although the Rabelo Boat Race had always been held on St. John's Day, in 2003 the day of the race had been changed to St. Peter's Day. Clearly, it is never wise to offend the sensibilities of the powers that be...

The Regatta may have been cancelled, but no so the traditional lunch with all the teams at Sandeman's, which again welcomed everyone with the fine cuisine to which we have become accustomed.

Everyone was delighted with The Rancho Folclórico do Porto who entertained us with regional songs and dances whilst we sipped our aperitifs.

As is our tradition, as the Vintage Port was served, the Chancellor warmly toasted all the new Confrades.

In the middle of the dinner room, an Orchestra provided the music for the Ball that lasted into the early hours of the morning, to the obvious pleasure of all the participants.

We have attached several photographs of this wonderful evening in the hopes that more Confrades may be enticed with these images of this most important event in the city of Porto and be encouraged to join us in future ceremonies and celebrations.



Events - Newsbits

Confraria dos Enófilos do Dão - Brotherhood of Dão Wine Lovers

March 10 marked the initiation of new members of this confraria at Viseu Cathedral. Our Confraria was represented at this ceremony by our Inspector of Weights and Measures António Vasconcelos and our Keeper of the Customs Manuel Magalhães Ferreira, both of whom were accompanied by their wives.

