

The Alentejo Wine Region Unveils New Icons at "Battle of Icons" Evening Tasting Event in London

On December 4th, the Alentejo wine region introduced its latest collection of 'Icons' at a special tasting event hosted by Wines of Alentejo at 67 Pall Mall in London. This marked a significant moment in the region's efforts to raise awareness of its exceptional wines, which remain relatively undiscovered in the UK.

The event, aimed at key UK wine trade professionals and journalists, featured a blind tasting of 9 top-tier wines selected by renowned Portuguese sommelier Rodolfo Tristão, one of Portugal's best sommeliers and former president of the Association of Portuguese Sommeliers. These wines, soon to be recognised as Alentejo Icons, showcased the region's diversity and excellence, with attendees sampling three flights of three wines, each paired with food and accompanied by Alentejo music and visuals of its stunning night sky.

At the end of each flight, participants used an interactive app to select their favourite wine. The top wines from each flight were chosen as the new Alentejo Icons: **Reserva do Comendador White 2022** (Adega Mayor), **Chão dos Eremitas Moreto Red 2022** (Fita Preta), and **Abegoaria dos Frades Moreto Red 2022** (Abegoaria). After a final retasting, the standout wine of the evening was Fita Preta Chão dos Eremitas Moreto Red 2022, crafted by acclaimed winemaker António Maçanita.

Francisco Mateus, President of the Alentejo Wine Commission, highlighted the importance of such events in the UK, a key market for Alentejo wines, as it represents 4% of the total of their exports, both in volume and value (ranking 9th position) and they'd like it to grow. *"This event provided a rare and invaluable opportunity to showcase the rich history and exceptional quality of Alentejo wines. With UK consumers increasingly seeking authentic, high-quality wines, Alentejo is primed to make a lasting impact. It was a chance not only to highlight our unique winemaking traditions, like the ancient practice of Talha wines made in clay pots, but also to spotlight the incredible diversity of our region. Alentejo is one of Portugal's largest and most varied wine-producing areas, with eight DOC distinct sub-regions, each offering its own unique character and expression."*

The 16 guests at the event came from a diverse range of backgrounds within the UK trade and press, including sommeliers, wine writers, importers, and retailers, each with varying levels of knowledge about Alentejo. This created a dynamic atmosphere, fostering stimulating discussions and a rich exchange of insights. The sommelier Rodolfo Tristão and Paula Nunes, from the Alentejo Wine Commission, were on hand to guide the conversation and address guests' questions.

Noémie Favrat, Head Sommelier at L'Atelier Robuchon, praised the event: "The wines were remarkable, and I discovered a new style of red wine. It was a wonderful evening, and I learned a lot about the region."

The "Battle of Icons" event is set to return in 2025, with a special focus on sustainably certified wines from the Wines of Alentejo Sustainability Programme (WASP). Established in 2014, WASP has become a pioneering initiative in the region, promoting environmentally responsible and socially sustainable viticulture practices. To date, 25 producers are certified under the programme, which has earned multiple awards for its commitment to sustainability. The programme plays a crucial role in shaping the future of Alentejo wines, ensuring that quality and environmental stewardship go hand in hand.

For more information on Alentejo's new Icons, please contact the Alentejo Wine Commission.

About Wines of Alentejo

Wines of Alentejo is the official Alentejo Regional Winegrowing Commission, a private institution dedicated to certifying, controlling and protecting the Alentejo PDO and Alentejano PGI wines. It is also responsible for promoting the Alentejo wines both domestically and in selected international markets, such as the UK. Wines of Alentejo has put in place the multi-awarded **Wines of Alentejo Sustainability Programme** to support the improvement on the environmental, social and economic performance of the region's winemaking activities and to promote the recognition of the sustainability performance of the region's wines as an instrument to affirm Alentejo brand in internal and external markets.

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About The Wine Agency

Since 2012, The Wine Agency has been focused on providing innovation and quality in Wine Marketing, Communication, PR and Wine Events for its clients in the wine trade, specialising in promoting Portuguese wineries or regions, as well as Portugal as a wine country in the UK. The Wine Agency has been working with Wines of Alentejo since 2022.

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