

## Pink Elephant 2006 Estremadura

17 Apr 2007 by JR  
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A cheap Portuguese pink with a silly name and a screwcap? Have I taken leave of my senses? No, I promise. All roads lead to this wine this week.

For a start, and perhaps least importantly, it's on special offer. Usually £5 a bottle, it has been reduced to £4, or rather £24 for a case of six from Tesco online.

It was also one of relatively few completely new wines that Britain's leading supermarket chain showed at their press tasting recently and one that actually stood out on the basis of how the wine tastes.

It is also usefully low in alcohol – just 11.7%.

And particularly suitable for this lovely summer weather we are suddenly enjoying here in northern Europe.

And I have chosen it mainly because it contains a quarter of the heady Dão grape Alfrocheiro which I rediscovered in the massive [Portuguese wine tasting](#) I undertook recently in Düsseldorf, backed up by my [detailed tasting notes](#). The other three equally important ingredients are apparently the noble Touriga Nacional of the Douro, the juicy Castelhão that is Portugal's most planted variety and Cabernet Sauvignon. And this is no saignée spin off of red winemaking. It is a specially- designed pink wine made exclusively from deliberately free- run juice rather than the thinnest, most watery stuff.

Pink Elephant is made by José Neiva of DFJ Vinhos of Estremadura with Australian David Baverstock whose main work nowadays is Esporão in the Alentejo. DFJ produces a wide range of pretty commercial wines and has enjoyed considerable success as a result. In his book *The Wines and Vineyards of Portugal* Richard Mayson relates Neiva's appealing business philosophy: "The world has two classes: rich and poor. There are more poor people than rich and my intention is to make good wines for the poor – the best wines drunk by as many people as possible."

After tasting it, being impressed by the balance and value of the liquid itself, and writing all of the above, I've only just read the [story behind Pink Elephant](#) and see that it was specifically created by its UK importers 10 International to be drunk with highly spiced Indian and Thai food, and that a dozen of my wine writing friends and fellow Masters of Wine were involved in putting it together, backed by quite a bit of detailed consumer research.

All that sounds eminently sensible. But I'm a bit worried that 10 International also promise 'guerrilla marketing' of this new brand on their website. Have I unknowingly been guerrilla'd? All I can say is – Not as far as I can tell.\* I was just impressed by the amount of character packed into this inexpensive, well labelled, screwcapped bottle (as apparently was my fellow taster Steven Spurrier who was presumably as surprised as me not to find a kitschy elephant on the label). It's very juicy and fruity but you would never guess it had even 13 g/l residual sugar since there is lots of (6.72 g/l) zesty acidity too. I wouldn't dream of recommending that you hang on to this wine, but can thoroughly recommend it for drinking over the next few months. Like all decent commercial wines it is being held in bulk under inert gas so that it will be fresh for subsequent bottlings to order.

My sincere apologies to the majority of visitors to this site who are not the UK residents to whom Tesco online will deliver most effectively, but 10 International assure me they plan to see this wine in many countries other than the UK, notably the US. It certainly deserves a good importer and could be just the thing to put Portugal back on the mass market map. A Mateus for the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

\* Bill Rolfe of 10 International has just called me to assure me that I have not been guerrilla'd. "I just mentioned 'guerrilla marketing' on the website to tell the trade I don't have a proper marketing budget," he admitted.  
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