

Quinta do Noval 20 year- old tawny port

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Apologies if you are enduring temperatures and humidity which make the thought of drinking port either laughable or distasteful, but for many of us, 'tis the season of drinking to keep warm and festive, and there are few more delicious drinks for this than port.

Tawny port is the drink of the port professionals – port that has been gently aged to mellow fruitfulness in old casks in northern Portugal until the fiery colour and alcohol of a young port has been left behind and what's left is a lovely tawny unguent for the palate. Think of this wine as a soothing treat that you deserve after the hurly burly of the previous few weeks (and note that the port trade somehow manage to force down this style in quite some quantity even in the blistering heat of a Douro summer).

Most port houses make a 20 year- old tawny, a blend of ports that have been aged in oak for at least 20 years, but I found Quinta do Noval's current offering to be particularly convincing. It is more assertive than most and finishes just a bit drier and more positively. This is wine!

Unlike Noval's 10 year- old tawny, this wine is made entirely with the produce of the world- famous vineyards of the Quinta do Noval historic estate itself – although it's funny to think that the wines must all have been made long before [AXA](#) took over this somewhat run- down estate in 1993. I should imagine strict selection was necessary to ensure that this wine is of such obvious quality.

The price varies enormously, as you will see from [winesearcher.com](#). One Singapore retailer appears to be offering it at the equivalent of just £12.26/ \$21.21. US prices vary from \$42.79 from the Pennsylvania monopoly to \$80.99 from Colonial of Little Rock while prices in Spain and Portugal seem particularly high. But one of the best prices is £22.95 from Berry Bros who offer it under their own William Pickering label. This has to be a great buy for a nutty, rich, utterly warming mouthful of wine that is more than 20 years old.

Drink this with cheese, with fresh walnuts, with your favourite book – or even your favourite person.

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