

Quinta da Plansel

Head over heels in love with Portugal



Luisa Lindemann, Kai Schierke, Dorina Lindemann, Hansjörg Böhm and Júlia Lindemann.

When his boat capsized in the port of Cascais, a young German called Hans-Jörg Böhm became acquainted with Portuguese wine. Today his daughter, Dorina Lindemann, is having her own love affair – with her vineyards in Portugal.

For many years, Portugal was described as a sleeping beauty of the wine world, often receiving far less attention than it deserved. Recently, however, thanks in part to the arrival of a number of passionately committed foreigners, this most western edge of Europe, and the Alentejo region in particular, have increasingly attracted the spotlight. None of the outsiders has done more for the Alentejo than Dorina Lindemann at Quinta da Plansel.

The history of this estate, around 100 km east of Lisbon, and its wines began with an accident followed by a pair of succes-

sive love stories. The first of these events was the capsizing of a yacht belonging to a young German called Hans-Jörg Böhm in the port of Cascais, near Lisbon in 1961. Böhm had grown up in a traditional wine growing family in the German town of Neustadt an der Weinstrasse in the Rhineland Palatinate. He knew a lot about German grape varieties and winemaking, but nothing about their counterparts in Portugal. As soon as he encountered them, however, it was love at first sight. Within a few years he had become the largest importer of Portuguese wines into Germany, before deciding to start a commercial nursery of his own

in Portugal in which to breed that country's native grapes. In 1975, the year of turmoil surrounding the Portuguese revolution, he courageously bought a house in Colares followed by the Quinta de São Jorge (a play of words on his name Jörg) in Montemor-o-Novo, the location of the Quinta da Plansel today.

Having sold his family business in Germany, Böhm devoted himself to Portugal and its grapes. He organised two international viticultural conferences, published dozens of technical papers and no fewer than five books, including two – on Portuguese and Iberian grapevine varieties – that have been officially recognised by the OIV (Organisation Internationale de la Vigne). In 2006, Jorge Böhm, as he became known in Portugal, received recognition for his efforts from Dr Jorge Sampaio the President of Portugal, who gave him the order of Comendador da Ordem de Mérito Agrícola (Commander of the Order of Merit for Agriculture).



While pursuing his academic research, Böhm also contributed his knowledge to the Quinta da Plansel winery, launched by his daughter Dorina in 1997. A graduate of the famous Geisenheim University wine course, Dorina had, like her father, fallen head over heels in love with the Alentejo region. She created her first premium wine under the Dorina Lindemann label in 1999, with an initial production of just 2,000 bottles. Two years later, she produced the initial vintage of Plansel Selecta Touriga Nacional from her favourite grape variety, and pioneered the making of single-varietal wines in Southern Portugal, where the practice had previously been unknown. In 2003, she nervously submit-

ted samples of that wine to the Mundus Vini competition and won a Gold medal, the first of an annual series that has continued until the present day.

From those early days, the quinta has grown steadily. Today, its vineyards cover some 65 ha and produce enough grapes to yield around 440,000 bottles of wine every year, which are sold under the Marqués de Montemor and Plansel Selecta labels. The focus, as elsewhere in most of Portugal, is on red. One fifth of Plansel Selecta, however, is white, made from a blend of Verdelho, Arinto and Antão Vaz grapes and, in the case of the Reserva, pure Verdelho. There is also a

small amount of strawberryish rosé, produced from a blend of Aragonez and Alfrocheiro. While Dorina delights in these blends of traditional, indigenous Portuguese grape varieties, her passion lies in the single-varietal wines, built on the foundations of knowledge laid down by her father, Jorge over three decades ago.

The varieties Dorina Lindemann loves best are Touriga Franca, Tinta Barroca and, above all, the Touriga Nacional she used to make her first super-premium, single-varietal wine, in 2001. Her passion for these vines and the land in which they are grown has been passed onto a third generation, with the arrival of her daughters, 18 year-old Luisa, who focuses on viticulture and oenology, and 20 year-old Julia, who works in marketing and sales. Even with these bright, enthusiastic young women at her side, growing overseas sales and a clutch of awards from competitions such as Mundus Vini, Decanter and the IWC, Dorina Lindemann was still very aware of the challenges facing a small family-owned producer. So, she was happy to see the domaine take another evolutionary step when her countryman, a businessman called Karl Heinz Stock who was already owner of the Quinta dos Vales in the Algarve, became a partner in Quinta da Plansel. The coming together of these two quality-conscious German owners and a pair of estates in two different parts of Portugal has not only strengthened both businesses today, it has also helped to guarantee a long-term future for the endeavour that began when Hans-Jörg Böhm's boat capsized over 50 years ago.

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