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Pizzato Reserva Alicante Bouschet 2021

Bottom of Form

Produced from a grape (a cross between Petit Bouschet and Carignan) whose pulp is an exceptionally deep purple and rarely grown outside Portugal, this is a fine single varietal example of ‘Ali B’ from southern Brazil.

Although now more than four years old this wine still has plenty of ageing potential and will appeal to those who like their reds ‘meaty’, savoury, full-bodied and aged in barrel.

Ideally decant/open in advance and enjoy as a ‘food wine’, especially with spicy foods, heavyweight meat dishes or strongly flavoured cheeses.

Much admired, a previous (2016) vintage of this wine was offered at the launch party of Jancis Robinson & Hugh Johnson’s ‘World Wine Atlas’, in September 2019.

Description

This is another fabulous red produced by Flavio Pizzato, fifth generation winemaker at the family-run Pizzato winery situated in the Vale dos Vinhedos district of the Serra Gaúcha hills in southern Brazil.

While Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and to a lesser extent Tannat are the red grape ‘workhorses’ of the vineyard here and in the surrounding area, Flavio is not afraid to experiment with lesser-known grape varieties.

Here the Alicante Bouschet (a cross between the Grenache and Petit Bouschet varieties) comes from a single small bloc, producing just 4300 bottles in 2016. Indeed, for several years in the mid 2000’s Pizzato was the only winery in Brazil producing Ali B. The grape is unusual in being one of the ‘teinturier’ varieties – that is, having a deep red flesh – so produces densely coloured wines, with high tannins and concentrated dark fruits.

TASTING NOTES

It's still relatively rare to see a varietal Alicante Bouschet, one of the *tienturier* varieties that has deep red flesh, making it a useful blending component to add colour to a wine, but in a few places including the Alentejo and here in Brazil, it is celebrated and making excellent wines. The colour is suitably saturated and dark, and the aromas are of spicy oak, plum and and grilled meat. There's a direct, smooth and mouth-filling rush of dark, earthy black fruit on the palate, with grippy but ripe tannins and a nice edge of bittersweet cocoa and plum skins to give bite. Despite a modest 13% alcohol it's a big, full-on style with plushness and oaky depths to spare

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