

## Vintage Library Port 2003, Dow's, Individual Box

Douro Valley, Portugal



<b>Product code</b>	DW4803BX
<b>Grapes</b>	Port Blend Red
<b>Country</b>	PORTUGAL
<b>ABV%</b>	20
<b>Case Size</b>	6
<b>Closure Style</b>	Cork
<b>Producer</b>	Dow's / Symington Family Estates
<b>Vintage</b>	2003



### Producer

The roots of Dow's standing as a great Port house reach back over 200 years. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, Dow's Vintage Ports have been landmark wines in virtually every great year, consistently setting the standard amongst all Port houses. Vintage Ports such as the remarkable Dow 1896, the 1927, 1945 1955, 1963 and so on until the Dow 1994 are all legends in the history of this great wine. These Ports are still magnificent today, even when 50 or 100 years old. Few wines can claim this quality and pedigree. In 1912, Andrew Symington became a partner in Dow's and today five members of the family own and work in the company: they personally manage all aspects of winemaking from the vineyard to the final bottling.

### Tasting Notes

Typically Dow's in style, this 2003 is outwardly less flamboyant than its peers, but gradually unlocks its complexity, sophistication and mystery. Aromas of cassis and blueberry come hand in hand with notes of black olives and green pepper. Prodigious on the palate, with a powerful structure, lean and taut with Dow's hallmark drier edge. A formidable Vintage Port with decades ahead of it.

### Viticulture

The grapes for Dow's Nirvana come from two of Dow's key vineyard sites, namely the Quinta do Bomfim and Quinta da Senhora da Ribeira vineyards, which have been owned by Dow's since the late 19th century. Bomfim is situated in the centre of the best wine-producing area, known as the 'Cima Corgo', which offers an ideal balance between the relatively wet 'Baixo Corgo' to the west and the intense heat of the 'Douro Superior' to the east. Bomfim is south-facing ensuring ample exposure to the sun; its stony schist soil affords excellent drainage allowing water to reach the vines' deep roots; the annual rainfall is near perfect at 800mm and the



altitude ranges from 120 to 340 metres above sea level. The climate is consistent, blessed with a favourable combination of temperate and Mediterranean influences, respectively from Portugal's Atlantic coast and the Spanish hinterland. The principal grape varieties planted are: Touriga Franca, Touriga Nacional, Tinta Barroca, Tinta Roriz and old mixed vines. Two-thirds of the vineyard is now over 20 years old, whilst one third is between 30 to 40 years old. Senhora da Ribeira, on the other hand, is located 24km upriver from Quinta do Bomfim and is set in the remote, hot and dry Douro Superior and commands a magnificent north bank position. The quinta's high proportion of old vines (45% are over 25 years old) is of critical importance. The old vines are very low-yielding, producing on average less than 1Kg of grapes each, giving intense and concentrated grapes.

## Winemaking

The year was notable for its particularly hot summer interspersed by useful rain showers. In June, a spell of very hot weather caused many immature bunches to dry up altogether, with a useful thinning of the overall crop. Fortunately, with plentiful reserves of ground water (after a very wet winter) there was little evidence of the vines suffering from excessive hydric stress. The high temperatures recorded in August (fractionally above 40°C for a few days) were not unusual for the Douro, while parts of France were experiencing temperatures close to 50°C. The heat did reduce yields, though, (even by Douro standards); at Senhora da Ribeira the old vines managed just 0.87 Kg/vine. At Bomfim some generous heaven-sent rain at the end of August refreshed the grapes and favoured balanced ripening. We began picking at Bomfim on September 18th and at Senhora da Ribeira on the 22nd. The grapes were in remarkably good condition, with no signs of any heat damage and with Baumés very promising at 13.2° for the Franca and 13.8° for the Nacional