

2019 Filipa Pato Nossa Missão

The 2019 Nossa Missão is a single-vineyard Baga from 130+-year-old pre-phylloxera vines on limestone soils. It was aged for 18 months in used Austrian oak and comes in at 12.3% alcohol. Why, you might ask, do you have to spend \$150 on this when the Nossa Calcário red in this report is so good at \$39? Well, you don't, but you do get something very different that seems to have much higher upside potential. The Pato style tends to lean to more polished wines with silky elegance. That is certainly a good description of the Nossa Calcário. This Missão is hardly some astringent monster, to be clear, but this is certainly a more muscular Tinto with extra power. The backbone makes it a little more severe while the mid-palate at least seems deeper in mouthfeel. Overall, this has a darker, more brooding profile. This is a wine that will need some time to open and express itself, while the Nossa Calcário is drinking half decently today and isn't too far off, depending on how you like them. That is the clear winner today, and it will always be the best value, but when they both hit the 10-year mark, the Missão will likely overtake it. And the end won't be anywhere in sight, as it will likely keep improving. (My drinking windows are always deliberately conservative; both may exceed my current end-date limits.) This is all about the potential today, but it is less clear how high the ceiling is. It may wind up being the best red the winery has ever made. Let's start here. This is certainly a lot harder to read than the Nossa Calcário, but that tense, juicy finish with the lifted fruit made my palate tingle a little. It often seemed exciting. This is the vineyard the producer calls its "Royal Majesty." Apart from the pre-phylloxera vines, "it is fully hand-worked; you can't even reach it with machines, and it looks like a big rose garden. In fact, this gives it a big advantage during hot vintages, as the canopy management works as an umbrella to protect the grapes from the sun but keeps the temperature for optimal maturation. We started working with the animals (pigs, sheep and chicken) in this one to recuperate and fertilize in a natural way. With excellent results, we started working in all our older vineyards doing the same. This way we avoid hard handwork, and we create a wonderful ecosystem where the vines become naturally more balanced and resistant to diseases. We planted a lot of bushes (strawberry trees, hawthorn, blackthorn, etc.) and trees (fig, olive, laurel, walnut, etc.) around the vineyard to attract birds and auxiliary insects that protect the vineyards."

- Mark Squires (November, 2022)