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From Douro to Alentejo



The Symington family—the largest landholder in the Douro Valley and a Port producer with brands such as Graham’s, Cockburn’s, Dow’s and Warre’s—purchased a 500-acre estate in the Alto Alentejo from João Lourenço. After five generations and 135 years in the wine business, this marks the family’s first vineyard purchase outside of the Douro. The property is in the Portalegre district, neighboring Richard Mayson’s Quinta do Centro, and bordering the São Mamede Natural Park. The elevation of the site, around 1,700 feet, lends it a relatively cooler climate than districts of the Alentejo to the south. According to Rupert Symington, the family plans to maintain the 106 acres of vines, a mix of aragones and trincadeira

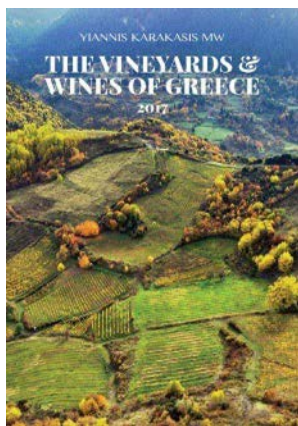
preta with some foreign varieties including alicante bouschet, cabernet sauvignon and syrah. They will likely change the name, which references the old cheese factory on the site: “It’s called Quinta da Queijeirinha,” says Symington, “which is a bit unpronounceable, so we probably won’t be going there. We expect eventually to bottle 15,000 to 20,000 cases from the estate, but at this point we have a lot of learning to do before we commit to any specific strategy.” Referencing the wines Rui Reguinga makes at Centro next door, he adds, “We admire Rui Reguinga’s wines enormously so we have no doubt that we can produce something really special from this terroir.”

—JOSHUA GREENE

Booze at the Beards

This year’s James Beard Award for Outstanding Wine Program went to Seattle’s *Canlis*, where Nelson Daquip—a *W&S Best New Sommelier* in 2006—has run the wine program since 2002. *Arnaud’s French 75 Bar* in New Orleans was recognized by the James Beard Foundation for 2017’s Outstanding Bar Program, and sommelier-turned-winemaker Rajat Parr of *Domaine de la Côte* was named to the *Who’s Who of Food and Drink in America*. In the book awards, Martin and Rebecca Cate’s *Smuggler’s Cove: Exotic Cocktails, Rum, and the Cult of Tiki* (Ten Speed Press) took the beverage category. —LUKE SYKORA

Greek Wine, Decoded



Want to know who’s making the most exciting wines in Greece right now?

Athens-based Master of Wine Yiannis Karakasis lays out the current scene in *The Vineyards and Wines of Greece 2017*. At 138 pages in e-book form, it’s an easy read, and packed

with information for both novice and pro. Whether you need a guide to the country’s diverse regions and grape varieties, or tips on vineyards to seek out and wineries to try, Karakasis delivers. It’s 14 euros, downloadable at karakasis.mw/vineyards-wines-greece-2017 —TARA Q. THOMAS



Sonoma-Infused Caviar

Jordan Chef’s Reserve Caviar by Tsar Nicoulai is a collaboration between Jordan’s executive chef Todd Knoll and Tsar Nicoulai. It’s made from the roe of California white sturgeon, sustainably raised in Sacramento County and cured for eight weeks in sea salt that chef Knoll extracts from saltwater he infuses with Sonoma Coast kombu. The tiny, firm eggs pop with a complex salinity, subtle and intriguing. It’s \$135 per ounce at jordanwinery.com/shop.

—DEANNA GONNELLA

Gaja and Graci Join Forces on Mt. Etna

Angelo Gaja and Alberto Aiello Graci have announced a joint venture to buy 51.9 acres on Sicily’s Mt. Etna. They will produce wine under a new, yet to be named label.

Gaja, now 76, has been producing wine in the Langhe region since 1961; he branched out into Tuscany with the purchase of *Pieve Santa Restituta* in Montalcino (1994) and *Ca’ Marcanda* in Bolgheri (1996). Graci, 41, owns approximately 50 acres of vineyards near Passopisciaro, and produces about 7,500 cases of wine each year. They met in 2015, and according to Graci, shared a curiosity about life and winemaking that soon led to discussions about a possible collaboration on Etna.

Graci has been working on Etna since

2004; his vines, along with those of most of Etna’s other producers, lie on Etna’s northern face, but the partnership’s property is in the Biancavilla commune on the volcano’s less-tested southwestern flank. Graci says it includes approximately 15 acres of vines planted in 1976 and another plot dating to 2006; he says the soils date back as far as 60,000 years, older than those on the northern flank. “I always thought about the other side of Etna, and how it would differ,” says Graci. “There are similarities in elevation and volcanic origin of the soils, but also some differences. It is important not to be closed, but to explore. Right now we don’t have answers, only questions.” —STEPHANIE JOHNSON