



AZORES WINE CO. A PROIBIDA 2018

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The windswept archipelago of the Azores in the mid-Atlantic is one of the world's most unique wine regions, recognised by Unesco in 2004. Vines have been planted here since the 15th century, originally to supply refreshment to ships on the trade routes between Europe and the Americas. The Azores Wine Company is a project between winemakers Filipe Rocha, António Maçanita and Paulo Machado who have worked together to revitalise and rescue old vineyards and forgotten grape varieties, using combination of traditional and modern winemaking techniques to present these treasures to the world.

The volcanic soils allied to proximity to the sea lends the wines a distinctly brisk, saline character. Hundreds of micro-vineyards are enclosed in small walls just a few metres square to protect them from the wind and sea-spray. These walls are made from basalt stones, which had to be removed from the ground before any planting could take place.

These are extraordinary wines with a special character that speaks deeply of their origins. António Maçanita is recognised as one of Portugal's most skillful winemakers, but it is this project borne from his passion for the Azores, which really sets him apart.

An unusual and distinctive red wine – this is made from a

variety technically forbidden in the EU – Isabella. The exact origins of the variety remain unclear, but it is thought to have occurred naturally when European grapes were first propagated in North America, and planted in the Azores to provide resistance to phylloxera. An American hybrid grape, thought to be a crossing of unknown *vitis labrusca* and *vinifera* species.

Light in colour and body, lifted aromas of raspberry, rosehip and a distinctive, complex ferrous, gamey, earthy note. Fresh and tangy, this can be enjoyed chilled and is at its best with food.

