

## Portugal's Historic Tejo Region: Home to Europe's Oldest, Continuously Operational Wine Estates

*-- Defined by a River. Refined by Tradition --*

(New York, NY, July 8, 2015) – Even before the founding of the Portuguese kingdom, the Tejo region was producing some of the most unique wines in Europe. Tejo boasts some of the oldest, continuously operational wine estates in Europe, as well as those bridging tradition and modernity, and including the esteemed producers Quinta da Alorna, Casa Cadaval, Casal Branco, Fiuza & Bright, and Quinta da Lagoalva de Cima.

Winemaking in the Tejo region dates back to 1170. During the Middle Ages, land concessions required trustees to plant both olive trees and vineyards on the land parcels. Two centuries later, during the Age of Discovery (c.1400), Prince Henry the Navigator ordered Portuguese explorers to travel the trade routes from Europe through Africa and the Middle East. Departing from the estuary of the Tejo River (Tagus in English) at Lisbon, ships were packed with Portuguese wine and other supplies to give sustenance to the mariners on their long journey. By the 1600s, the Santarém District was developing economic importance, as it became the major supplier of goods bound for Lisbon, from ships sailing along the Tejo.

Pulsing with a rich heritage, Tejo today claims a bounty of historical treasures, from Roman ruins and Gothic castles, to Manueline monasteries and medieval hilltop villages. To the Portuguese, Tejo is known as the land of vineyards, olive groves, cork forests and the famous Lusitano horses.

Viticulture has deep roots in Tejo and it is heralded as one of the oldest wine producing regions in the country. Vineyards exist on this region since Roman times, and the influence of past grape-growing cultures is evident in the many architectural relics dotting the landscape. Today, many of Tejo's historic wineries bear witness to the region's centuries of excellent wine production.

Local producers embodying the region's centuries-old winemaking history include:

**Quinta da Alorna** -- Dom Pedro Miguel de Almeida, first Marquis of Alorna, founded Quinta da Alorna in 1723 after conquering the Alorna Fort in Goa, India. Located near the Tejo River, the estate is known not only for its wines, but also for the splendor of a sprawling estate of more than 2,800 hectares near Santarém. For more than five generations, the Lopo de Carvalho family has cultivated the best Portuguese and international grapes on the estate's 220 hectares of vineyards to produce high-quality wines reflecting the region's character, history and terroir.

**Casa Cadaval** -- Casa Cadaval has belonged to the Álvares Pereira de Melo (Cadaval) family since 1648. Located on a sprawling 5,500 hectares, the estate, mainly occupied by cork trees and forests, is known not only for its wines, but also as one of the oldest breeders of Lusitano horses in the world. The 42 hectares of vineyards, located in the terroir known as charneca, are cultivated with mainly native Portuguese varietals such as Trincadeira, Touriga Nacional, Aragonês, Arinto, Alvarinho, Fernão Pires.



# WINES OF TEJO

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**Casal Branco** -- The Casal Branco estate, located in Almeirim on the southern bank of the Tejo River, has been owned by the same family for over 200 years. Of the estate's 1,100 acres, 140 are under vine planted on Miocene sandy soils. Most of the grapes are native Portuguese varieties including Castelão, Trincadeira, Fernão Pires and Alvarinho. The wines are vinified in the estate's 19th-century winery using both traditional and modern techniques, such as foot treading in open tanks with temperature control.

**Fiuza & Bright** -- Fiuza & Bright is a partnership between the Fiuza family, who have a long history of viticulture, and the internationally renowned Australian oenologist, Peter Bright. Working within the region's historic terroir, the winery's vision has been to produce wines embodying the essence of traditional Portugal, while appealing to modern wine lovers. Among the first to plant international varieties in the Tejo region, and as pioneers in the region, their wines have earned hundreds of international awards.

**Quinta da Lagoalva de Cima** -- Quinta da Lagoalva de Cima was purchased in 1834 by Henrique Teixeira de Sampaio, the First Count of Póvoa. When his daughter Maria Luisa Noronha de Sampaio married Domingos António Maria Pedro de Souza e Holstein, the Second Duke of Palmela, in 1842, their assets were incorporated into the House of Palmela. Throughout generations, Quinta da Lagoalva de Cima has remained in the possession of the descendants of the Second Duke of Palmela. The estate began as a stud farm raising Lusitano horses for carriages, leisure, bull fighting and dressage. The family's commitment to wine goes back to 1888 and today the 45 hectares of vineyards are planted with the best Portuguese and international varieties expressive of its unique terroir.

*Comissão Vitivinícola Regional do Tejo (CVR Tejo), known in the United States as Wines of Tejo, is an organization that oversees the viticultural and vinification practices of over 80 producers from the region. Nestled in the heart of Portugal along the banks of the Tejo River, which stretches from just beyond the Spanish border to the Atlantic Ocean at Lisbon, the Tejo region has been producing wines from native Portuguese varieties since the Middle Ages. The Tejo River's breadth and strength elementally impact the soil and climate of the region, deeply defining the region's terroir. These wines embody the enthusiasm, commitment and collaborative nature of its producers, and reflect the unique terroir and winemaking heritage of the Tejo region*

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