



Winebuddys Tour Diary

Of waves of success, a pope with taste and
wine passion that gets under your skin.

25€ PESSOA

Menu partilha 6 momentos

MENU 4 VINHOS

Authentic Wines a copo 7,50€

WELCOME SHOTS
+ APPETIZERS

SHOT



UP
AND EAT

SÁBADO
12 OUTUBRO
19H30

Disclaimer: The experiences, impressions and views described in this report are inspired by true events. However, since wine, sparkling wine and spirits were often involved in these experiences, the accuracy of the descriptions cannot be guaranteed in every detail.

“Red wine is for older boys one of their most favorite toys.”

Wilhelm Busch



Lisbon, first evening

A band plays in the lobby, the hotel guests dance. We fight our way through the party to the top floor, out onto the terrace in the rooftop bar.

Here Christian, our tour guide for the next days, welcomes us. He is from Lisbon, with a German mother and a Westphalian dialect - it could hardly be more cosmopolitan.

Little by little the table fills up, we five guys who make the tour have started in the late afternoon from different airports in Germany and trickle in between 9 and 11 pm. To slowly “get into the swing of things”, we have ordered a bottle each of red, white and rosé. To eat there are only small things (it's not a restaurant), Porco Preto, Chicken piri piri and Bifanas (typical steak sandwich). Shortly before midnight, the brothers Pedro and Alexandro (Lisboners with a German mother and Rhenish dialect), who supported Christian on a previous tour, come by unexpectedly.

They want to have another drink on the street with the “guys who are new in town”. Okay, said done! Of course it doesn't stay with one - and we don't just stay on the street either. The half troop moves with Pedro and Alexandro still into a club in the backyard and then into a bar on the roof of a parking garage. From there you have a sensational view - but in retrospect, the memories of the next morning are somewhat gone. At some point, however, everyone went to bed.

The band also went home.



**“Drink wine and you will sleep well.
Sleep, and you will not sin.
Avoid sin and you will be saved.
Ergo, drink wine and be saved.”**

William Shakespeare

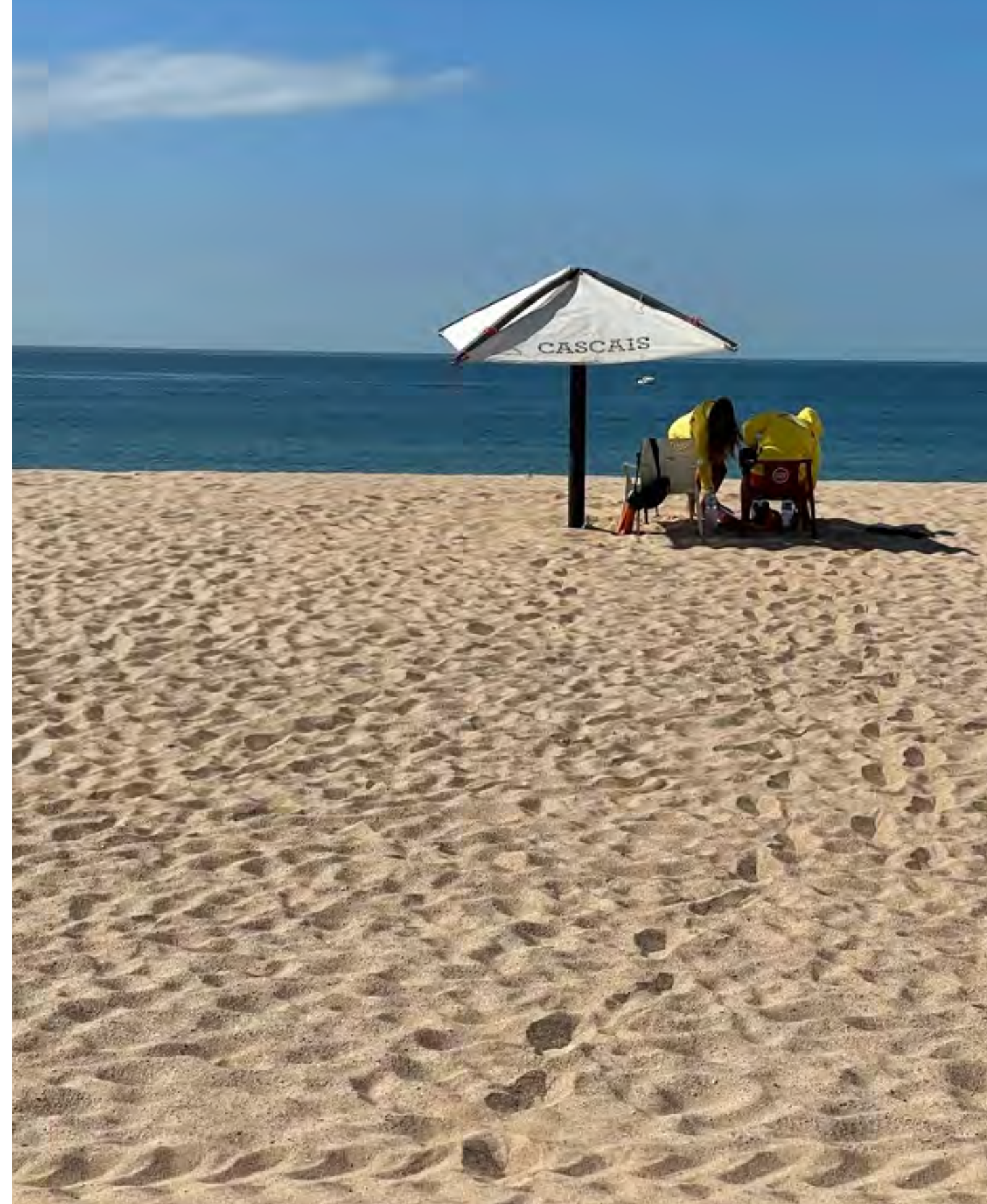


Lisbon, second day, morning + noon

The long evening takes its toll in the morning. Everyone is fine, but no one wants to jog. Okay, breakfast then. The service staff jokes that the Germans are always the first to the tables – why would we get up so disciplined even on vacation? After the first coffee, we are ready enough to joke back. Next time, we would just put our towels on the seats to reserve them and then sleep on.

The mood is good, Christian joins us and off we go. Small tour of Lisbon, Alexandro is also already on the road and we meet him by chance on the street (is just ne small town). He invites us to a café that Christian also does not know; a bit rocked, but the young man behind the counter considers himself a god at the portafilter machine. No, he is not a barista, but a “café sommelier”. One can argue about the self-description, but his espresso is sensational. Alexandro goes back to the office, we head for a few nice view-points, take a gin- ja (liqueur made from sour cherries) next to the opera and then go to the first tasting.

In Lisbon's best wine store, Christian gives us an introduction to the growing areas, grape varieties and wines of Portugal. Of course, they are also immediately tasted, discussed and mostly found to be quite good. Lunch in the time-out market (a little tourist program must be). First there is ham, then pregos (another steak sandwich variant), plus water (“because of last night”).



With the first tidbits of wine knowledge in our heads and with a good foundation in our stomachs we leave Lisbon in a northerly direction and drive to the first winery of the tour. The way is also the goal: the coastal road, Estrada Marginal via Estoril, Cascais, Sintra, leads through a breathtaking landscape with sensational views. Do you know the 17 Miles Drive in California? A section of our route is at least comparable – if not better.

Cultivation area “Lisboa” // first winery of the tour

Just now the tractor comes from the field and brings grapes that need to be processed immediately.

The winemaker Jorge (our host) is still busy and asks us to help him. So we haul the the grape containers and realize that wines are the result of strenuous manual labor. Then we go with Jorge to the vineyard, where we learn that the wine grown on these few hectares is different from almost all the wines of Europe.

These vines still have their own roots (are “root true”), while almost all other grape varieties in the world(!) no longer have their own roots, but are grafted onto roots (“Unter- lagsreben”) of American grape varieties. This is a consequence of the phylloxera invasion at the end of the 19th century, which changed viticulture forever. These grapes are therefore a real rarity, even from a worldwide point of view - and we are allowed to taste them. Jorge explains to us what is so special about this terroir. We dive into the vines, varieties, soils, climate, weather, topography and the good hand it takes to make a really good wine out of all this (which also inspires the wine journalist of the New York Times).

What’s the secret?
Jorge smiles and says, “The salty touch of the Atlantic”.

Afterwards, we sit in the autumn sun for almost two hours, tasting and discussing the wines. From the entry-level wine for 8 EUR to my new favorite white wine (65 EUR), the rosé that will be released in late fall (price still unclear), to the top product for 180 EUR (the second to last of 300 bottles, thanks Jorge!).

The other guys are also buying like thirsty cellar masters - and we are only at the beginning of our enjoyment road trip. Jorge is pleased, it’s a high-turnover afternoon. Luckily Christian will take care of the transport of our booty to Germany. Shortly after we are back on the coastal dream road.

Christian drives and looks ahead, all the others to the left and watch how the sun dives from the cloudless sky into the sea.





Eating in Peniche, snoring in Sao Martinho

Due to several photo stops we reach Peniche late. A look at the almost empty beach and the last surfers in the endless waves. There we go to the best restaurant in town (which is really not expensive). Fortunately, a reservation was made for us well in advance, otherwise there's no table here. For us there is "fish full". First the fish soup or cod eggs, then rabalo or squid. The dessert comes from the in-house patisserie. Although the store has a terrific wine list, after the extensive wine tasting in the afternoon, everyone now prefers the acid-free craft beer (Christian even alcohol-free).

Before we leave, we stroll through the attached wine store. Here is everything that we will taste and enjoy in the next few days - and much more. Great views!

Off in the car to, San Martinho, where we have a townhouse for us. After a port wine nightcap we go to bed at midnight. The Schnacrcher get a single room - since all snore, also all bedrooms of the house are needed. The surf can be heard well and drowns out the snoring.

**"A bottle of wine contains more philosophy
than all non-fiction books."**

Louis Pasteur

Tag

“Cultivation area Lisboa” // second day, second winery

Two of the guys pick themselves up and we see the basement, huge oak trees-. go to the beach for a jog. The barrels, the old distillery (except for others stretch out breakfast. The operation), a Bugatti from the 20-the regional economy is a lot of fun. Wahnsinns ham ensures that all rolls are gone. For this we have now a good basis for the next winery.

Passing vineyards, apple and pear orchards and the village of Bombarral, we reach our destination. There we are greeted by Ana, who was at the German school for a long time and is happy to speak German again.

Her family owns this picture-book winery: we see the estate house, meet grandma (103 years old), stroll through the picturesque garden and then into the vineyard. We learn about the purpose of roses in the vineyard (spoiler: they are the alarm system for fungal infestation), that the “good winegrowers” almost all work “organically” but forgo the elaborate certification process, and that small children used to clean the wine barrels from the inside.

Years and the historical grape press. Then the tasting begins. It is conducted by Ana’s colleague Christina, who immediately inspires us with her infectious good humor.

This is also the case with the white and red wines from different price ranges (from 6 to 120 EUR), but also with the brandy and especially the grappa (both 30 EUR).

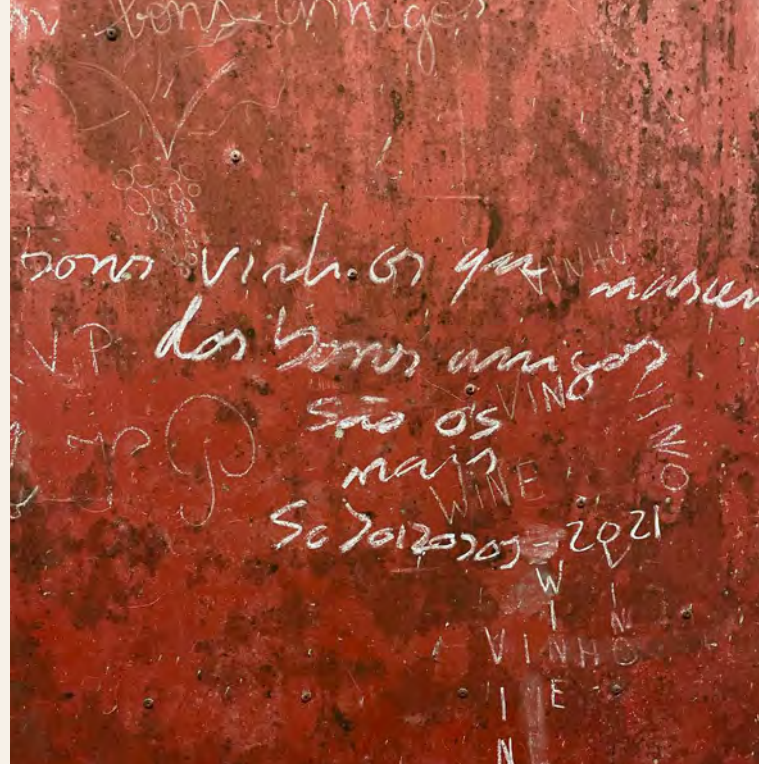
The latter, by the way, is drunk ice cold here – another lesson learned. And again plenty of shopping – so the promotion of the regional economy is really fun.



Before the next stop we have lunch at one of the at one of the beach stalls in Foz do Arelho. The pregos are delicious, the beer cold, the beach insane. We only go in with our feet, because the Atlantic waves have quite a bit of kick. After that, it's time to drift to the next stop.



A group of five men are standing in a line, viewed from behind, looking at a display of wine bottles on a wooden counter. The counter has a glass display case with a bottle inside. In the background, there are large metal racks and a large stainless steel tank.



Since it is also harvest time here, we meet him in work clothes and smeared with grape juice. With him we taste wine that has been in the barrel for a long time and continues to mature there and Federweißer, which is still in the middle of the fermentation process.

The whites are really good (10 to 25 EUR), the reds very good (10 to 55 EUR). The daily budget of the guys is not yet used up, so again plenty of wine is bought, to stock the cellar at home

Marc Aurel

"Cultivation area Lisboa"// second day, first food manufactory

Although it is almost 6 p.m., everyone still wants to go to the "Cheese Pope from Portugal". So out into the country and a few kilometers to the east. Already the ride through the magnificent landscape in the evening light is an experience in itself.

The stop on the small mountain is well chosen and the landscape gives everyone pause. Arrival: The building does not give the slightest hint that cheese is being that cheese is produced here, which is served in all(!) top 20 restaurants in Portugal.



We arrive and the 75-year-old "Pope" is saying goodbye to a group of US-American students of biotechnology and their professor, who were talking about fermentation here (it is also biotechnology, oldschool and yet timelessly modern).

We try different cheeses (who wants to talk about fermentation with a full mouth?), plus fantastic bread, but there are still some surprises: "Lemon-Caviar" (no details, you have to try). Jams, honey, chutneys and vinegar. The one we try with small sugar spoons knocks us off our feet: probably the best vinegar I've ever had the pleasure of tasting. The "Pope" and his son (why does the Pope have a son?) developed this a few months ago with ten chefs from Lisbon in a three-day workshop. The work was definitely worth it.

Unfortunately, this vinegar is not yet on the market (but still in the barrel), until 2022 we must be patient. So we buy by the bottle the "predecessor" (also really really good, 8 euros), as well as the jams, chutney (4 euros each) and honey (8 euros). From the cheese only so much that it is enough for the next breakfasts, because we can not ensure a cold chain to Germany. The cheese is so fantastic anyway that you always have to eat it immediately.

Sao Martinho, dinner and bar

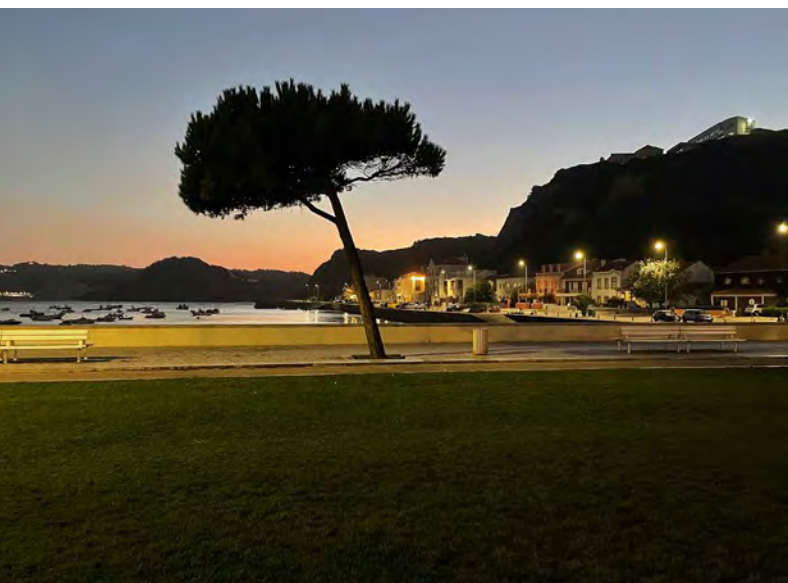
Only at 9:30 p.m. we sit at the harbor pier of Sao Martinho in a small but fine fish restaurant.

All are hot to finally try once duck mussels (Percebes), which arrive in Portugal freshly caught in the restaurant and cost around 30 EUR/kg (in Germany less fresh and > 150 EUR/kg). In addition we have three bottles of the white wine we bought yesterday in our luggage (how high will the corkage be?). Lured by the “wine he always wanted to try”, the boss sits down with us.

He is enthusiastic and waives the corkage fee in exchange for another glass. Now we have a large Atlantic turbot, which tastes very good and is enough for all of us.

During another visit from the boss (again a glass of our wine is gone), we learn that the fish that lies here before us is bought at the harbor pier directly from the fishing boat and then moves into the kitchen and from there onto the plate. You can taste this freshness. Finally, orange cake and a ginja from Alcobaça on the house.

The bar next door is still open, the music is loud and good. We invest the remaining energy in two rounds of “Port Tonic” and technical discussions with other guests about the upcoming match, FC Porto against Liverpool (addendum: it ended 1:5, that was a tough evening). But then it's off to bed.



Tag 3

Growing area “Dao”// third day, fourth winery

Jogging is cancelled again. But there is cheese breakfast – the products of the “Papstes” are really the hammer. If we had known how often we would be offered really good food on this day, we would have made the breakfast smaller or skipped it altogether.

Then we pack our things and head north with a view of the coast, with a stopover in Nazaré. Here there are in autumn the highest waves of the earth (>25 meters) and then is the world

elite of surfers are on site. We are still a bit early in the year here, so we see waves that are “only” around 8 meters high (as the surfer on the beach explains to us). It is also such an impressive natural spectacle.

On we go, at 12 o'clock Bernado, the next winemaker, is waiting for us. His specialty is sparkling wine.



Sparkling wine plays a much bigger role in Portugal than it does here and is often an accompaniment to a meal – and we, too, change our minds and now see sparkling wine with different eyes. Bernado has fun with us and puts his foot down. First white wine, then a variety of sparkling wines (all méthode champenoise), then the red wine flagship of the house (good thing Christian is driving!). Accompanied by sensational bread and delicious cheese from the neighborhood. In between, we go to the production area. Everything is brand

new, some of the tanks look like giant eggs and are made of concrete. Others are made of wood and stainless steel. For us, it's more about the inner values. Since sparkling wine production already begins with the complex interaction of numerous factors in the vineyard, we drive to one of the surrounding terroirs, where Bernado lets us in on some of these secrets. After more than two hours, we've learned one lesson above all: we need to significantly increase our sparkling wine supplies.



**“I only drink champagne
on two occasions: When I am in love
and when I am not.”**

Coco Chanel



It is almost 3 pm. Beatrice, who runs a small restaurant there with her parents, is waiting for us nearby. The wine rack already shows this clearly. Christian immediately begins to talk shop with Beatrice's father about the wines.

We don't understand a word, but it seems to be the beginning of a new friendship. We eat enguias (eels) and steaks.

“There's no fish from the sea here, we're too far from the coast here, it wouldn't be fresh!” explains Beatrice.

By the way, the sea is not even 50 km away – in Portugal they definitely take the topic “freshness” seriously.

But the cuisine is simply great even without fish, because there is still dessert.





Growing area “Dao”// third day, fifth winery

Manuel is already waiting for us at the door of the next, really impressive winery. His family produces the highest quality home textiles in Portugal, with distribution in all the world's top department stores. At some point, his grandfather had the idea of making really good wine. This much should be said in advance: It succeeded. (Christiano Ronaldo was there a few days before us and must have bought a lot. He is currently concentrating on isotonic drinks – but the wine can easily be stored until the end of his career).

After that, grandpa had the idea to build a restaurant into the mountain. Absolutely cool! It looks as if James Bond is about to dine here at the next table. Of course, the place has a star and a friendly chef. A dinner here is on the bucket list.

After dinner we take a short walk up the hill and enjoy the view.
enjoy the view. Christian offers a couple of natas. The perfect dessert after
dessert - with the perfect view. Portugal shows its best side in every respect.



Manuel gives us the longest visit of all (> 4 hours). First we visit the entire complex (e.g. the wine cellar blasted into the mountain), then Manuel leads us to the wine, sparkling wine, oil and vinegar tasting. Right at the beginning, however, he opens a cold buffet that blows us away: Cheese, sausage, olives, pâtés and again super good bread and all sorts more.

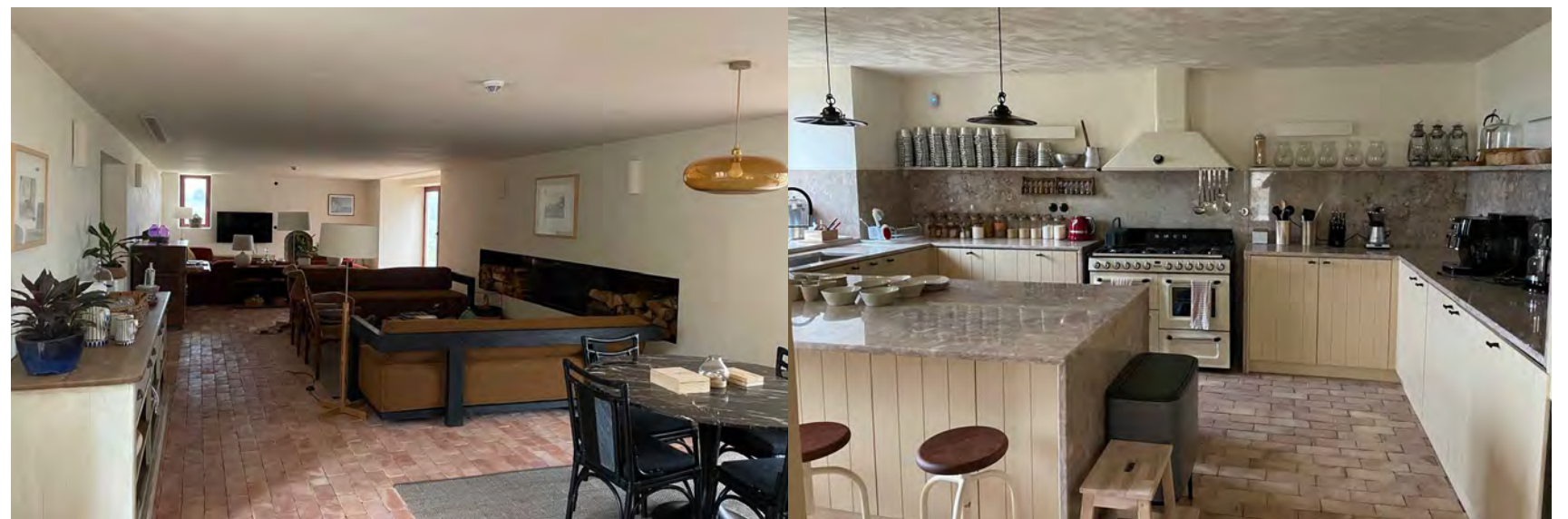
I don't even have to describe it in detail, because the afternoon was unforgettable for all of us.

Somewhere deep in Dao



We spend the night at the next winery, where you can also rent a very nice big apartment (Christian fortunately did this for made for us). Actually, we wanted to cook here tonight itself and then the winemaker of this winery wanted to come to us in the apartment, eat with us and present his wines at the same time. But after it was clear that we will spend a lot of time with Manuel, Christian canceled it.

We'll be back though, no question about it. Instead, we spend some time on the sofa and let the day pass in review with a nightcap. Then it's not far to bed.



“Wine is bottled poetry.”

Robert Louis Stevenson

Tag

4

“Barraira” vineyard // Fourth day, sixth vineyard.

We wake up with a view of the vineyards. This is almost as good as the view of the sea.

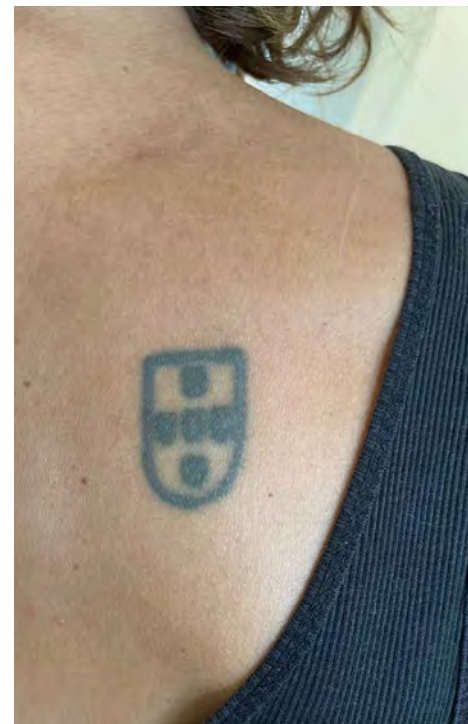
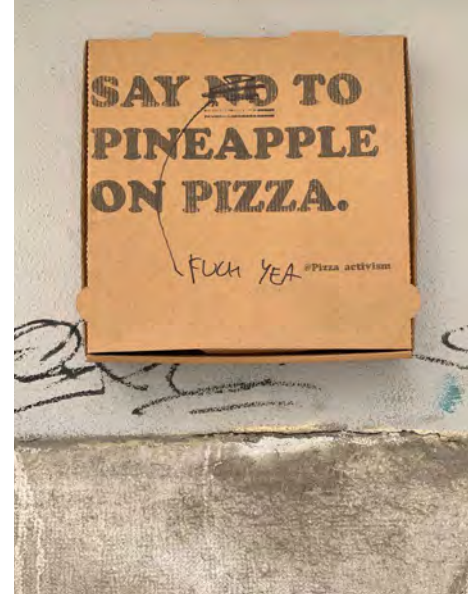
After breakfast we leave. Luis is waiting for us. He is a real celebrity in the Portuguese wine scene – and beyond. He welcomes us together with Maria, who has a tattoo of the Portuguese beer brand Sargres on her back and who shows us the winery and the special production method in a rather difficult terroir. She also goes with us to the cellar where the really old wines are. There it becomes sad. She shows us that the cork quality was so bad in the 70s and 80s that they lost many wines.

Whenever we told that we were going to meet Luis, we were congratulated. At the same time we received several times the tip to visit the restaurant specialized in suckling pig in the neighborhood of Luis. Unfortunately, however, we did not get a table there so spontaneously. We also talk to Maria about this. “Wait a minute, I’ll try to sort this out, Luis has a good line to them”. After a short phone call from Maria we have the table: For lunch we have suckling pig with champagne – also on all other tables in the restaurant.

Our horizon of enjoyment is enriched by another fascinating facet at the very end.

We can only guess at the drama – in any case, it is a loss for the wine lovers of the world. Fortunately, there are plenty of fine wines to taste that are in good shape. Wine and sparkling wine in all variations.

We all realize once again that we have drunk too little sparkling wine so far in our lives. We buy plenty to change that in the future.



Time, to say goodbye

It's late. We are on the highway - to the airport in Porto. We look ahead at the first signs. But above all, we look back enthusiastically. On a tour with friends that took us for a few days, far away from everyday life, from the job, from daily annoyances and monotony. We have a unique pleasure road trip behind us and can now board the plane full of new experiences and memories.

**“O wine! O wine! I feel better than ever!
Pour it! Pour it! That's what I call therapy!”**

ETA Hoffmann

Already on the return flight we realize that despite the full program we have missed an insane amount. More exciting wineries, restaurants, bars, manufactures - plus we drove past half a dozen world heritage sites without visiting them. There are endless beaches where we did not jog. The “best road in the world” that we didn't drive. Fish halls, markets and cafes we haven't visited, chefs we haven't looked over their shoulders.

And then there's this cattle farm that produces kobe-like meat and ... I have to stop. Our own bucket list for Portugal is getting very, very long.

But we can come back. We've actually already decided to go away together for a few days every year now. (Maybe next time we'll take our wives with us. But only maybe.) Christian says there is still a northern tour (Douro and Vinho Verde) and a southern tour to Alentejo. There you go! Take care Portugal, see you soon again.

A special thanks at the end goes to our guide:

“Best Christian, your constant bomb mood, your expertise in Portuguese wines, your organizational skills and your social skills within our group, made sure that we had a unique and unforgettable time. See you.”



“Anyone who tries to make you believe that he knows all about wines is obviously a fake.”

Leon Adams



Winebuddys Tour Diary
Contact Axel: +49 171-7473908