The Port Companion: A Connoisseurs Guide by Godfrey Spence

Need To Brush Up On Your Port?

Are you a wine lover who thinks that LBV is an all-girl pop trio--and that tawny and ruby are its lead vocalists? If so, you might just want to check out The Port Companion by Godfrey Spence, former London wine retailer and current lecturer for the trades Wine & Spirit Education Trust. In this handsome, full-color guide packed with history, tasting notes, maps, and entries on over 300 venerable port houses (including addresses and phone numbers), Spence just as colorfully shows you a region whose grapes are still crushed by foot, and where the Olde School British shippers still pass the decanter to the left at the weekly Factory House luncheons. Its subtitled A Connoisseurs Guide, and by the time youve finished, youll be able to talk porto as if you were to the quinta born. Every pertinent port fact is here: Englands 1678 trade embargo against France, sending traders scrambling for a French wine substitute; the fraudulent wine adulteration using elderberry juice--prompting the sanctioned destruction of every elderberry tree in northern Portugal; the report card letter grade (A through F) assigned to every vineyard. Youll learn that port is a classic wine that permits over 48 grape types--both red and white--in its blend, approves of 20, desires 5, yet is tolerant of over 120. And theyre all grown in an area where the topsoil is rarely more than four inches thick and dynamite frequently must be used to plant the vines. The Port Companion is a concise reference suitable for both novice and connoisseur. --Tony Mason

I'm relatively new to the joys of port wine, so when I saw this book I bought it immediately. I have not been disappointed. The helpful history, geography, tasting sections are relatively brief but interesting, and the review section is stellar. If you want to become an informed port consumer, buy this book!

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