

Technical Specifications

Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes

Language in which the application is submitted: Portuguese (PT)

1. Name of geographical indication to be registered

Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes

2. Category of the spirit drink

Wine spirit

3. Applicant

Comissão de Viticultura da Região dos Vinhos Verdes [Wine Committee of the Vinho Verde Region]

Legal Status: Cross-industry association governed by private law

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4. National and EU Protection

Primary Protection in Portugal: Decree-Law N° 39/84 of 2 February 1984

Primary Protection in the European Union: Regulation No 1576/1989 of 29 May 1989

5. Description of the spirit drink

Physical, chemical and/or organoleptic characteristics:

'Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes' must be clear in appearance.

Organoleptic characteristics:

‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ bearing an indication of its sub-region or variety must satisfy the requirements for ‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’, state the variety used and have a grading of six or above, in accordance with the quality scale given in Figure 1.

Excelente	Muito bom		Bom		Suficiente	Mediocre		Mau		
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

←-----Típico-----→					Atípico-----→					
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0

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Specific characteristics (in comparison with spirit drinks in the same category)

‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ spirits are intense and elegant, with a distinctive freshness of aroma and taste which they owe to the characteristics, themselves unique, of the wines from which they are made. ‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ is produced by distillation of wines suitable for making Vinho Verde.

Type of oenological practice: Cultivation practices

Since the wine used for producing spirit is wine suitable for making Vinho Verde, the link to the geographical setting (human and natural factors) is the same as that which applies in the case of white, red and rosé wines entitled to the Vinho Verde designation of origin.

These wines come from vines characterised by their great expanse of vegetative growth and the fact that they are trained using various systems, which helps bring forth the freshness, aromatic intensity and other organoleptic characteristics which the white, red and rosé wines possess and transmit following distillation into ‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’.

6. Geographical area concerned

The geographical area in which ‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ is produced comprises the following administrative divisions:

- a) All the municipalities in the districts of Braga and Viana do Castelo;
- b) In the Aveiro district, the municipalities of Arouca, Castelo de Paiva and Vale de Cambra and the parish of Ossela, in the municipality of Oliveira de Azeméis;
- c) In the Oporto district, the municipalities of Amarante, Baião, Felgueiras, Gondomar, Lousada, Maia, Marco de Canaveses, Matosinhos, Paços de Ferreira, Paredes, Penafiel, Póvoa do Varzim, Santo Tirso, Trofa, Valongo and Vila do Conde;
- d) In the Vila Real district, the municipalities of Mondim de Basto and Ribeira de Pena;
- e) In the Viseu district, the municipalities of Cinfães and Resende, except for the parish of Barrô.

Map of the Vinho Verde region



7. Method for obtaining the spirit drink

Wine-making

'Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes' is obtained by distilling wines suitable for making Vinho Verde.

The distillation of wines intended for making 'Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes' must be carried out no later than the month of March following wine-making.

Keeping and distillation

The certifying body may lay down special rules relating to the conditions under which, and the place where, the oenological practices and treatments, in particular the desulfitation and fermentation of grape musts with arrested fermentation are carried out, which for 'Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes' must always be the geographical area of production.

Ageing

Aged 'Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes' (Old, Reserve, Very Old, VSOP and XO) must satisfy the requirements for 'Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes' and give off an aroma characteristic of ageing.

8. Link with the geographical environment or origin

Details of the geographical area or origin relevant to the link

'Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes' is produced by distillation of wines suitable for making Vinho Verde. Since the wine used for producing spirit is wine suitable for making Vinho Verde, the link to the geographical setting (human and natural factors) is the same as that which applies in the case of white, red and rosé wines entitled to the Vinho Verde designation of origin.

The white, red and rosé wines are heavily influenced by the mountainous character of the area and the form of the river network, a feature accentuated by the orientation of the main river valleys, which run from east to west and make it easy for the winds from the sea to penetrate.

The most marked aspect is the annual pattern of rainfall, with fairly high annual totals (1200 mm on average) and irregular distribution across the year, with most rain falling in winter and spring. Temperatures, meanwhile, change in line with precipitation, in other words the highest temperatures coincide with the lowest levels of rainfall and the lowest temperatures with the highest levels of rainfall.

As regards the average annual temperature and the average maxima and minima, they can be described as not being excessive, which makes for a mild climate.

As for the relief of the terrain, the topography of the region is fairly irregular, divided up as it is by a dense network of valleys associated with the river network, a feature which becomes more pronounced as one moves from the coastline inland. From the geological point of view, soils are mostly of granite origin, while there are two narrow bands of schistous origin which cross the region from south-east to north-west, originating south of the river Douro, one from the Silurian period, displaying carboniferous and slate formations, and the other consisting of schist from the Archaic period.

As a general rule, the soil is shallow and heterogeneous, which makes it necessary to select the soils best suited to viticulture, such as soils of medium depth with good internal drainage and moderate acidity.

The Amarante sub-region, in the middle of the Vinho Verde Demarcated Region, is protected from the influence of the Atlantic and has a high average altitude, which make for greater variations in temperature and hotter summers. The soil is granitic, as in most of the region.

This relief pattern, soil and climate dictate the character of the viticulture, which is one of very expansive vegetation and moderate planting density per hectare. The winegrowing plots earmarked for production of the grapes from which the white, red and rosé wines are to be made lie in river valleys and halfway up hillsides, where Vinho Verde vines are subject to an Atlantic climate with higher rainfall and which is milder so that, in a country with very hot summers, maturation is more moderate and aroma and acidity are balanced in a unique way in the white, red and rosé wines and sparkling wines.

The slow maturation of the grapes and the use of varieties which here, for the most part, have moderate sugar content and acidity levels, give a boost to the profile of the white, red and rosé wines that are fresher and fruitier. Given their moderately high acidity, these wines can be kept under optimum conditions for distillation, producing wine spirits that display their distinctive features of fragrance and freshness.

Human factors

It was in the north-west of Portugal, the most densely populated area since the age of Asturias and León, that this dense population soon spread across the undulating, very variegated landscape. From the 12th century onwards there were many references to viticulture, which grew through initiatives by religious orders alongside the monarchy's decisive contribution. Viticulture was to remain in an incipient state up to the 12th and 13th centuries, at which time winegrowing became firmly established among the people of Entre-Douro-e-Minho. Population growth and economic expansion, the rising commercialisation of farming and the increasing use of currency made wine into a major and vital source of income.

Although exports were still very limited, history nevertheless shows us that 'Vinhos Verdes' were the first Portuguese wines to reach European markets (England, Flanders and Germany), mainly those from the Monção region and from Ribeira de Lima. In the 19th century, institutional reforms which opened up the way to greater freedom of trade, together with the revolution in transport and communications, were to change the structure of regional viticulture for good.

The shift in focus towards quality and the regulation of Vinho Verde production and trade would come about at the beginning of the 20th century, when the Charter of 18 September 1908 and the Decree of 1 October of that year demarcated the 'Vinho Verde Region' for the first time. The 1908 Charter, however, was only regulated in 1926, by Decree No 12.866, which laid down rules for the production of, and trade in, Vinho Verde, enshrining the special status of the Demarcated Region, defining its geographical limits, describing its wines and creating the Committee for Viticulture in the Vinho Verde Region which was set up to implement it. The rules were subsequently amended, in 1929, by means of Decree No 16.684.

An event of great worldwide importance was the adoption of the report calling for the Vinho Verde Designation of Origin submitted to the OIV - Office International de la Vigne et du Vin, in Paris, in 1949 and, subsequently, the recognition of the international registration of that Designation of Origin by the WIPO, the World Intellectual Property Organization, in Geneva, in 1973.

The recognition of the Designation of Origin conferred, in international law, the right to exclusive use of the 'Vinho Verde' designation for a wine with unique characteristics due essentially to its geographical environment, having regard to the natural and human factors which at its origin.

Decree No 42.590 of 16 October 1959 created the guarantee seal as a means of safeguarding the origin and quality of Vinho Verde, and Decree No 43.067 of 12 July 1960 promulgated the rules to that effect. As a consequence of Portugal's accession to the European Community, 1985 saw the promulgation of the Demarcated Regions Framework Law, which was to reshape the organisational structure of the Committee for Viticulture in the Vinho Verde Region.

The characteristic feature of viticulture in the region is small-scale farms and a high number of winegrowers, vines planted continuously or along borders and trained at medium or high level, with expansive vegetative growth and moderate to low planting density. This gives the white, red and rosé wines and sparkling wines of the region a characteristic freshness owing to their gradual, slow maturation.

Vinification in the region is carried out to produce wines which can be white, red or rosé, and an acidity which guarantees freshness of aroma and lightness of taste is common to all these wines.

Aromas of fresh fruit and flowers stand out in the white wines, aromas of red and yellow fruit in the rosés and similarly young fruit aromas stand out in the reds. Despite having a capacity for ageing due to their acidity, the fresher, more mineral notes are what define the white, red and rosé Vinho Verde wines and sparkling wines, linked as they are to the Atlantic-influenced climate, the soil and the mountainous character of the region, while wine-growing with expansive vegetative growth and moderate density is also a distinctive feature of the production of white, red and rosé wines, and this difference extends to the wine spirits distilled from these wines.

Specific characteristics of the spirit drink attributable to its geographical area

‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ has to have a minimum alcoholic strength by volume equal to or greater than 37.5 % vol., be colourless or between yellowish and topaz in colour.

The minimum requirements of ‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ in terms of aroma are: there must be no obvious defect, it must reveal the raw material it was made from (wine), it must be of sufficient quality (a mark of 5) and it must be true to type (mark of 5), in accordance with the quality and distinctiveness scales.

‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ bearing an indication of a sub-region or a variety must satisfy the requirements for ‘Aguardente Vínica de Vinho Verde’, state the variety used and have a mark of six or higher.

‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ spirits are intense and elegant, with a distinctive freshness of aroma and taste which they owe to the characteristics, themselves unique, of the wines from which they are made.

‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ is produced by distillation of wines suitable for making Vinho Verde. These wines come from vines characterised by their great expanse of vegetative growth and the fact that they are trained using various systems, which helps bring forth the freshness, aromatic intensity and other organoleptic characteristics which the white, red and rosé wines possess and transmit following distillation into ‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’.

Factors relating to growing practices, microclimates, wine types, vine populations and ways of training the vines for white, red and rosé wines have led to the division of the Vinho Verde DO geographical growing area into nine sub-regions, where white, red and rosé wines are produced which, because of their distinctive features, can be used to make wine spirits. After being distilled from these wines, these display the qualitative characteristics that are equally associated with the grape varieties from which they are made.

Thus, the Amarante sub-region, protected as it is from the influence of the Atlantic, is at a high average altitude, so that temperature variations are greater and the summers are hotter, conditions which favour the development of certain varieties which mature later: Azal and Avesso (white) and Amaral and Espadeiro (red). The soil is granitic, as in most of the region. The white wines usually exhibit fruity aromas and a higher than average

alcoholic strength for the region, and the red wines and sparkling red wines benefit from the soil and climate conditions mentioned above, which make for good ripening of the grapes, particularly those of the Vinhão variety.

In the Ave sub-region, vines are planted more or less throughout the Ave river basin, in an area of rather irregular relief and at low altitude, which makes it more exposed to winds from the sea; the climate is characterised by low thermal variations and medium rainfall figures, so this sub-region is above all a production area for white wines and sparkling white wines with a lively freshness and floral and citrus fruit notes. The Arinto and Loureiro varieties are found right across the sub-region, being suited to this type of mild climate owing to their intermediate ripening, neither early nor late, as is Trajadura which, by ripening early, is smoother, perfectly complementing a batch of wine with Arinto and Loureiro.

The Baião sub-region is at the south-eastern edge of the Vinho Verde Region, at intermediate altitude, conditions which create a less temperate climate, with colder, less rainy winters and hotter, drier summer months; these characteristics induce the maturing of later-ripening varieties, for example Azal and Avesso (white) and Amaral (red), which have a greater need for heat at the end of the cycle.

The Basto sub-region is the furthest inland, situated at a high median altitude, which makes it better protected from winds from the sea; the climate is harsher, with cold, very rainy winters (together with the Lima valley, this is where it rains the most in the whole region) and fairly hot, dry summers, which favour late-ripening varieties like Azal (white), Espadeiro and Rabo-de-Anho (red).

In the Cávado sub-region, vines are found more or less throughout the hydrographic basin of the river which gives it its name, fairly exposed to winds from the sea, in an area of irregular relief and at low altitude, factors which mean the climate is mild, without wide variations in temperature and with intermediate median annual rainfall; in addition to granitic soils, there is a band of soils of schistous origin, though it is not very extensive.

This climate is suited to the production of white wines and white sparkling wines, especially of the Arinto, Loureiro and Trajadura varieties, which adapt perfectly to these conditions.

They are wines of moderate acidity with notes of citrus and pome fruit (ripe apples and pears). The red wines and red sparkling wines produced in the Cávado valley are largely lots of the Vinhão and Borraçal varieties, with an intense garnet-red colour and aromas of fresh fruit. In the mouth they exhibit all the climatic freshness of the region where they are produced.

In terms of temperature variations, the Lima sub-region is in an intermediate position in relation to the other sub-regions, although it is the one where the highest rainfall figures are recorded; the altitude where vines are planted is variable and increases as we move from the coastline to the interior, where the relief is also more irregular, giving rise to some microclimates within the Lima valley, and references are occasionally found to lower Lima and upper Lima. As in the Cávado sub-region, as well as granite soils, there is a band of soils of schistous origin, though it is not very extensive.

The white wines are mainly produced from the Loureiro variety. Aromas are fine and elegant and range from citrus (lemon) to floral (rose). The Arinto and Trajadura varieties are also widespread in this location as they adapt well to mild climates influenced by sea winds. The red grapes are, in the main, produced from the Vinhão and Borraçal varieties.

The Monção and Melgaço sub-region has a very specific microclimate, being the only place where the Alvarinho (white) and Pedral (red) varieties are planted, and it shares with the Baião Sub-Region a recommendation for Alvarelhão (red), all three being early-ripening varieties. The soils in this sub-region are of granitic origin, with bands of pebbles in some places. This microclimate is characterised by cold winters with intermediate precipitation, while summers are fairly hot and dry, pointing to a limited degree of Atlantic influence. The sub-region developed around the southern edge of the river Minho, in an area of hillside, which influences the production of the wines and sparkling white, red and rosé wines of this sub-region.

The Paiva sub-region, like that of Lima, is in an intermediate position relative to the temperature variations and high summer temperatures recorded in the Vinho Verde Demarcated Region. It does not, however, belong to the group of sub-regions with the highest rainfall levels, since it is not very exposed to the influence of the sea, but is at a higher altitude inland. This is no doubt why the red varieties Amaral and, in particular,

Vinhão, reach optimal states of ripening. The white wines are produced from the Arinto, Loureiro and Trajadura varieties, which are suited to temperate climates and are therefore common to practically the whole Region, though here they have an ally in the Avesso, a variety more typical of the inland sub-regions.

In the Sousa sub-region, the climate is mild, temperature variations are low, as is the number of days of fierce heat in summer. As regards rainfall, this too is below average. This can be regarded as a transitional sub-region, since it is not directly exposed to the influence of the Atlantic; that influence is, however, felt as the relief is not very accentuated. It is an inland area but does not have harsh winters or very hot summers. The recommended varieties are those typical of milder areas, Arinto, Loureiro and Trajadura, plus Azal and Avesso, which are more demanding in terms of ripening. The most common red wines are made from grapes of the Vinhão and Borraçal varieties which are spread across the whole VVDR, as well as the Amaral and Espadeiro varieties, with the latter widely used to make rosé wines.

Causal link between the geographical area and the quality or characteristics of the product or a particular quality, the reputation or other characteristics of the product

The characteristics of 'Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes', namely intensity and elegance with a distinctive freshness of aroma and taste, are associated with the wines that are used in the distillation. The quality and characteristics of the wines suitable for making Vinho Verde, which give the wine spirits their characteristics after distillation, depend on the geographical area in which they are produced.

The vines from which these wines are produced are characterised by their great expanse of vegetative growth and the fact that they are trained according to various systems, which helps bring forth the freshness and other organoleptic characteristics displayed by the red, white and rosé wines. Vineyards are distributed across the river valleys, since this is where vineyards on hillsides display their full potential. These are also with the places where population groups have settled over the centuries, working and adapting the vineyards according to the characteristics of the soil and climate, which has enabled them to develop

and produce white and red wines of great freshness and a certain degree of natural acidity, and sparkling wines characterised by their aromatic intensity and flavour of fresh fruit.

Among the most typical features of the landscape in north-western Portugal are the poles, the 'uveiras' or vines supported by trees, the trellises which cover the pathways, and the grapevines intertwined with trees on the edges of fields; these traditional methods of training the grapevines make it possible to obtain white, red and rosé wines and sparkling wines whose characteristics are linked not only to the natural conditions in the region but also to these methods of growing vines.

Growing vines in the Vinho Verde Demarcated Region currently requires special support structures.

To ensure that the characteristics of the white, red and rosé wines are maintained, the most recent training systems have been designed to make vine cultivation easier and improve production conditions, without departing from traditional vine-growing principles.

Some important characteristics of the white, red and rosé wines are defined starting when the grapes are harvested. It is therefore very important to establish, with the greatest accuracy that wine-growing technology can offer, the date for harvesting the grapes used for making the region's white, red and rosé wines.

The harvest date must be set with an eye to several factors, of which one of the most important is forecasting the alcohol and acidity levels of the wine, these being fundamental elements in the specific character of the white, red and rosé wines. It is well-known that, as the grape transforms its acids into sugars, acidity reduces and the probable alcohol content increases; each variety has its point of equilibrium and every producer can determine what the most appropriate ratio is for the profile of the white, red and rosé wines he means to produce, so as to bring out these characteristics after distillation into 'Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes'.

9. Supplement to the geographical indication

Wine spirit can only be marketed and placed on the market in containers with a capacity of 1 litre or less, properly labelled and bearing a guarantee seal.

‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ with an indication of a sub-region is obtained from grapes produced and vinified exclusively in the respective sub-region.

Although other types of container may be authorised subject to approval by a decision in favour by four-fifths of the votes of members of the general council, ‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ can only be placed on the market in a glass container fitted with a non-reusable sealing device, labelled and with its product certification attested by the guarantee seal.

‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ can only be marketed and placed on the market in containers with a capacity of 1 litre or less, properly labelled and bearing a guarantee seal.

‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ with the indication of a sub-region, the indication of a variety or quality designations may only be marketed in a glass bottle with a maximum capacity of 70 cl.

Distillation facilities for ‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ must be separate from those for other products and be located in the respective geographical areas of production, making the equipment and processes used in distillation better suited to making products intended for the production of wine spirit with traditional characteristics.

10. Specific labelling rules

The labelling of ‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ must be carried out in accordance with legislation and the rules laid down by the certifying body to which it is first submitted for approval.

Use of the Alvarinho variety indication on labelling is exclusive to ‘Aguardente de Vinho da Região dos Vinhos Verdes’ from the Monção and Melgaço sub-region and must be used in conjunction with the express indication of the sub-region and, where the label only indicates the Alvarinho variety, the product must have been made 100% from that variety.

11. Contact Details:

1. Details of applicant

Comissão de Viticultura da Região dos Vinhos Verdes

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2. Details of intermediary

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3. Details of interested parties

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4. Details of competent control authority

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5. Details of control body

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