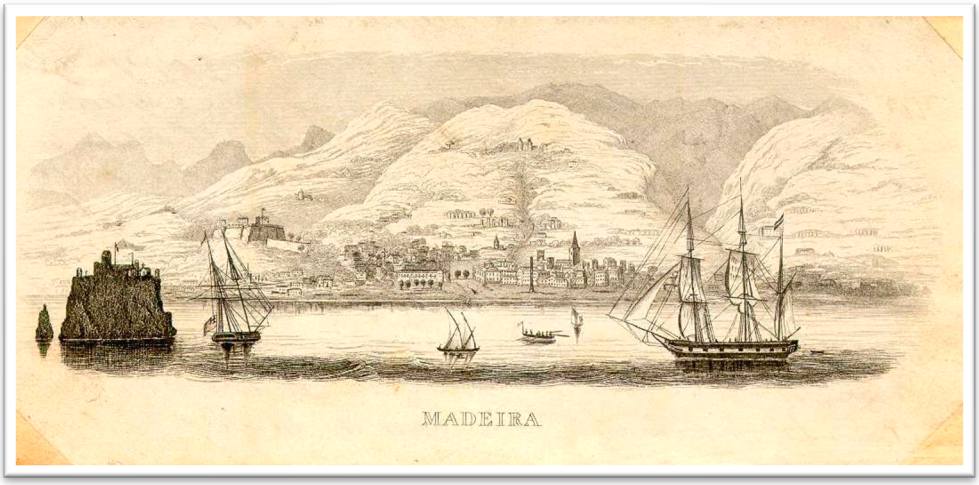
HISTORIC MADEIRA SERIES

-THE RARE WINE COMPANY-

"These are the most affordable, representative examples of classic Madeira available. A collaboration between the importer and Barbeito's Ricardo Diogo Vasconcelos Freitas. The idea behind these bottlings is to capture some of the magic of vintage Madeira: the beautiful aromas, intensity of flavor and, most importantly, the acidity. Given the fact that 1.5-3 ounces is a sufficient pour and that once opened, these simply will not go bad, these are also among the best deals we have in the store for those looking for a truly unique addition to the cellar."

-K&L Merchants



Year Founded: **1998**

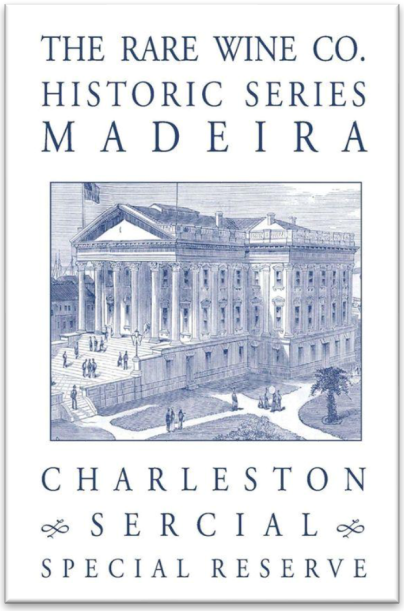
Region: **Madeira, Portugal**

Winemaker and Owner: **Ricardo Diogo Vasconcelos Freitas of Barbeito and The Rare Wine Company.**

Known for: **Madeira with Historical Pedigree and Character – all the blends containing wine at least 30 years of age.**

Cool Fact: **The Declaration of Independence was Toasted with Madeira from this Producer.**

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Madeira was the United States' most prestigious wine, shipped to connoisseurs in major seaports from New Orleans to Boston. As America's leading merchant of rare, old Madeiras, The Rare Wine Co. has been a major force behind Madeira's recent revival in the marketplace—introducing a new generation of wine lovers to the wonders of vintage Madeira. But it has long been our dream to introduce Madeira's glory to a broader market—teaching Americans about both Madeira's magical quality and our two centuries of shared history. It is our belief that the usual introductions to Madeira—five- and ten-year blends—often fail to offer the extra magic and distinction that marks the great vintage wines. With this in mind, we teamed with Vinhos Barbeito's owner, Ricardo Diogo Vasconcelos Freitas, to create the Historic Series—affordable Madeiras that reflect the style and complexity of the great vintage wines. As the holder of one of the great libraries of 18th and 19th century Madeiras, Ricardo had a unique understanding of the qualities we sought. Our goals seemed simple, but it took over two years of trials to reach our aims. We wanted wines that would express true varietal character and display the traits of vintage Madeira. Each Historic Series Madeira is a blend of young wine (less than two decades old) and very old wine (60-100 years old). Each wine is named for an American seaport where Madeira was popular in the 18th and 19th centuries. The labels feature early engravings and historic information, further evoking a sense of Madeira's towering importance in American history. The critical process in making great Madeira is aging in wood for ten years or longer. This process is called "canteiro." Many inexpensive Madeiras replace this step by heating in tank for about 3 months, which is called "estufagem." The Historic Series Madeira have all been patiently canteiro-aged, in barrels of various sizes and subject to substantial swings in temperature throughout the year.

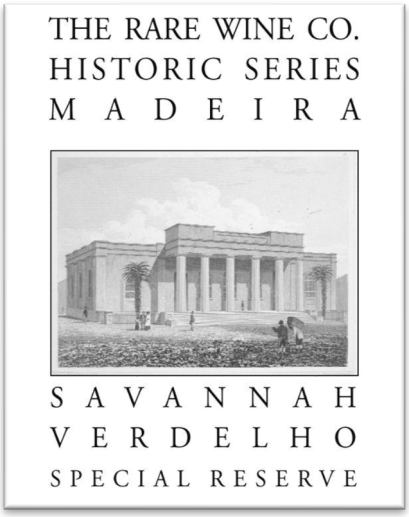


‘Charleston Sercial’

The driest wine in the series and a wine that has been served throughout meals in America for nearly 300 years. Chef Mario Batali won over 1000+ guests at the 2009 New York Wine Experience by boldly pairing Charleston Sercial with a wild boar dish of Wolfgang Puck’s creation. Dry and bracing, like an ocean breeze, this exhibits toffee, grilled almond and iodine notes on a lively structure. It's balanced and long, picking up a walnut aftertaste on the finish. Very harmonious and clean.

94 Points - James Suckling – *“Very complex nose of toasted nuts and caramel. Rich and concentrated with excellent nutty aged character. Bright with beautifully integrated acidity drives the long, very elegant dry finish where there are notes of dried bananas and dates.”*

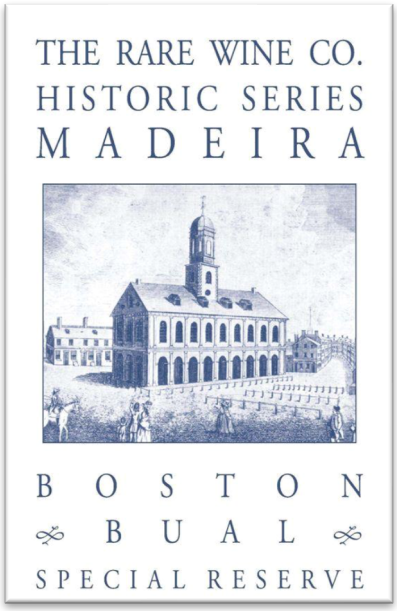
94 Points - John Gilman



‘Savannah Verdelho’

Released in April 2010, Savannah Verdelho is simply incredible, its bouquet exuding orange zest and buttery shortbread with hints of ginger, milk chocolate, and almonds. Lightly sweet with zesty acidity to keep it fresh, the palate reveals notes of candied citrus, ginger, and spicy honey. The finish sharpens all of the above into a refreshing and palate cleansing blend of spiciness and citrus sweetness.

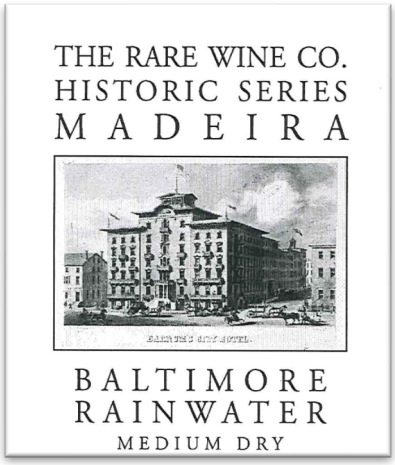
95 James Suckling – *“Smells like apricot tarte tatin with notes of toasted nuts and caramelized bananas. Very crisp and concentrated this has tremendous energy in spite of the intense maturation character, the touch of sweetness pushed way into the background. Super-long finish that’s both rich and refreshing.”*



‘Boston Bual’

Noticeably sweeter than Charleston Sercial and Savannah Verdelho, Boston Bual still boasts remarkable balance and refreshing acidity. The hallmark of this wine is its otherworldly complexity, featuring cinnamon-clove spiciness with overtones of citrus peal and wood smoke. There is just enough sweetness to excel as an after-dinner wine, but its long, dry finish also makes it work beautifully with food. Port and Madeira expert Roy Hersh has written that Boston Bual “emulates some of the finest qualities of vintage Madeira, exhibiting a light amber-tawny color and a nose of dried figs, walnuts, maple syrup, mahogany and a sense of bouillon cube; the mélange of fragrances is complex and compelling. Medium in weight initially, it develops greater heft after a few days open, with a rich and sumptuous mouth feel.”

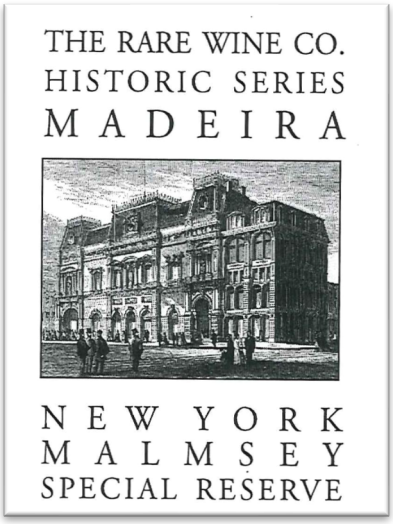
94 James Suckling – *“A rich, powerful and creamy Bual with a slew of dried date, dried fig and caramel character. The acidity builds and builds at the long finish making the final impression very fresh and focused.”*



‘Baltimore Rainwater’

The non-vintage RWC Baltimore Rainwater was designed to reintroduce Rainwater as a prestige style rather than the cheaper, paler versions of years gone by. Its template was a Rainwater that Mannie Berk tasted from the 1820s. It has a light lanolin, melted candle wax, dried fig and orange blossom-scented bouquet that expands nicely with aeration. The palate is crisp and light on the entry, with a vibrant citric thread that combines succinctly with bitter orange and mandarin notes. It is laced with a touch of toffee towards the elegant finish. This is delicate, understated and delicious. Verdelho and Tinto Negro Mole.

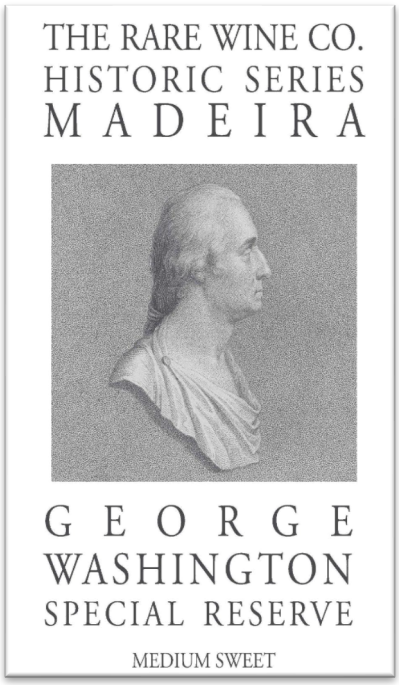
93 Points - John Gilman



‘New York Malmsey’

This, the sweetest wine of the Series, finished in the ‘Top 100 wines of 2006’ in The Wine Enthusiast’s end-of-year wrote that it “unfolds slowly in the glass, gradually revealing layers of depth and flavor. Coffee, toffee and date notes emerge, followed by earthy, almost truffley flavors. Powerful and assertive on the long finish.” New York Malmsey demonstrates why Madeira can be one of the planet's greatest dessert wines. It marries with an astonishing number of desserts, its kaleidoscopic flavors bonding with chocolate, nuts, citrus and dark fruits. But it can also be served during the meal, with foie gras, sweetbreads and almost any dish that has a rich, sweet sauce**.**

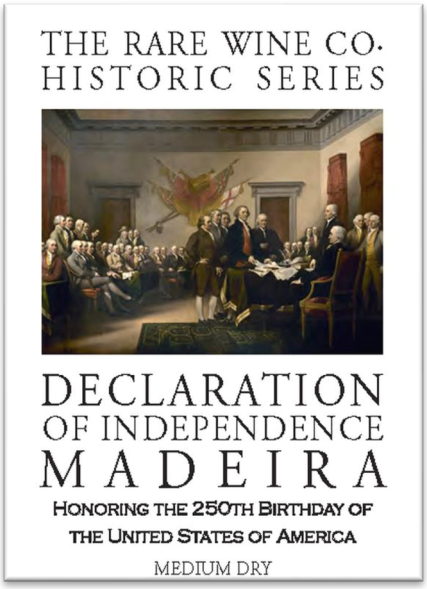
96 Points - James Suckling – ***“****Dense and rich with a wide spectrum of baked apricot, caramelized orange and dried date character. And behind this is a huge structure with great acidity that keeps it very straight on the expansive yet energetic palate. Stunning length and nutty complexity at super-long finish.”*



‘George Washington Special Reserve’

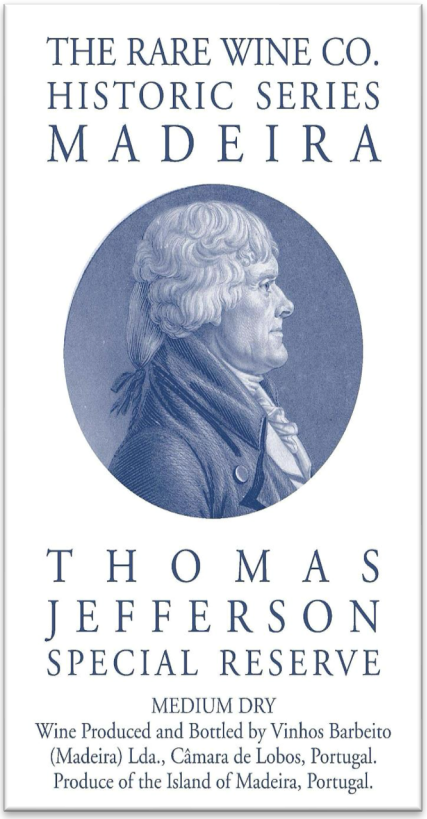
Everyone who’s seen the musical “Hamilton” knows not only of the Founders’ greatness, but also their imperfections. Alexander Hamilton comes across as brilliant, but profoundly flawed, and his killer, Aaron Burr, as a conniving self-promoter. But there is one figure who emerges as unerringly heroic: George Washington. As General and President, Washington sacrificed much both to press the cause of independence and to hold together the country he’d help create. And though he was no longer President when he died in 1799, many wondered if America could survive without him. Over the past decade, The Rare Wine Co. has created a number of Madeiras honoring the nation’s Founders, from Ben Franklin and Richard Henry Lee to Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. Created in conjunction with Mount Vernon—with part of the proceeds going to Mount Vernon—the wine celebrates not only The Father of Our Country but also Washington’s love of Madeira, which emerged in the 1750s and continued until his death. In 1798, just a year before Washington died, a visitor to Mount Vernon reported that the former President “loves to chat after dinner with a glass of Madeira in his hand.” The Rare Wine Co. is indebted to both Barbeito’s Ricardo Freitas, who created the wine, and Aaron Nix- Gomez (the wine historian who writes hogsheadwine.com), who sifted through Washington’s Madeira correspondence to learn what he most liked to drink. Based on what Aaron found, we’ve concluded that Washington favored “rich” Madeira, which in the parlance of the time meant sweet. Ricardo pulled out the stops to craft a Madeira of surpassing elegance to honor Washington. To achieve a level of sweetness of a Bual, Ricardo married a diverse palate of components, including both young and old Madeiras. Once again, he has shown that his gifts as a blender are really remarkable.

94 Points - Robert Parker – *“Opens in the glass with complex aromas of honey cake, peach, walnuts, candied peel, spices and old Cognac. Medium to full-bodied, satiny and layered, it's deep and concentrated, with tangy acids, a rich patina of spice and a long, penetrating finish.”*



Declaration of Independence

On July 4, 1776, in Philadelphia's Independence Hall, the 56 delegates to the Second Continental Congress toasted the newly adopted Declaration of Independence the best way they knew how: with Madeira. It was an inevitable choice. Madeira was not only the Americans' most prized wine; it was for them the only wine worthy of such an important moment. We now pay tribute to what historian Joseph Ellis has called "the most potent and consequential words in American history," the Declaration of Independence, which celebrates its 250th birthday on July 4th, 2026. And we do so with arguably the greatest of our "Historic Series" Madeiras yet. Created for us by Barbeito's brilliant winemaker, Ricardo Freitas, the Declaration of Independence Madeira is based on years of historical research by RWC's founder Mannie Berk and fellow Madeira historian, Aaron Nix-Gomez. It captures a style of Madeira favored in 1776 America: refined, elegant, a pale copper color, with its very modest sweetness balanced by bracing acidity, and featuring an aromatic complexity that, in the 18th century, would have been imparted by a long ocean voyage in barrel. To create this richly evocative Madeira, Ricardo blended five old Madeiras from his priceless collection of barrels and demijohns. Balancing power with bracing salinity, 15% of the blend was a magnificent 80-year-old Tinta Negra, while 8% was a 1991 Vintage Sercial. The vines that produced the Sercial are so close to the sea on the island's north coast, the grapes are often bathed in sea spray during the growing season. It is a measure of Ricardo's blending mastery that the five components represent five different grape varieties—Bual, Verdelho, Bastardo, Tinta Negra and Sercial—all seamlessly integrated.



Thomas Jefferson Special Reserve

As an American, Thomas Jefferson had no peer in his appreciation of French wines. But that seed wasn't planted until he was in his forties, by which time he'd been passionate about Madeira for at least 20 years. Born in 1743, Jefferson came of age at a time when Madeira was the king of wine in America—always present on affluent tables and ready to toast important events. For years, Rare Wine Co. had wanted to honor Jefferson's love of Madeira with a commemorative bottling as part of their Historic Series. And in 2012, The Thomas Jefferson Foundation and Monticello agreed to collaborate with the winery on this project. After more than a year's work—perfecting the blend and producing the wine—it was launched with a tasting and lecture at Monticello on October 9, 2013. Joining at the launch was Ricardo Freitas, who'd masterfully blended the wine, and Monticello's resident wine historian, Gabriele Rausse. The wine itself is a spectacular fusion of elegance and depth, and youth and antiquity. The oldest component in the blend is more than 80 years old, a fact that Jefferson would undoubtedly have appreciated.

96 Points – James Suckling – *"A super-silky medium-dry Madeira with great finesse, this reminds me of caramelized mandarin oranges that I loved as a child. However, it also has stacks of candied citrus peel character plus delicate nutty and spicy aromas that cascade over your palate at the very long clean finish."*