

**“May our wine brighten the mind and strengthen the resolution.”--unknown**

## The British and Port

**By: Michael Sones, Winemaker**

Have you every wondered why virtually all Port wines from Portugal have English names? Dow, Graham, Taylor, Fladgate, Yeatman, Croft, just to name a few. Admittedly you will see the odd Dutch or Portuguese name, but overwhelmingly the port houses are of English origin. How is this so? To answer this question we have to go back in history.

Contrary to popular belief, Britain has a long history of drinking wine. We were not just a nation of beer and mead drinkers. Wine had been imported for centuries ever since the area of Bordeaux came under British sovereignty in 1152. This happened when Henry II married Eleanor of Aquitaine and her dowry included the vineyard areas around the Garonne River. For over 200 years, this part of France kept Britain supplied with its favorite tippie Clairette (Claret). This happy state of affairs continued until the late 1600's when relations with France deteriorated and France and Britain entered into yet another war with each other. The wine merchants had to find new wines to import into Britain, so they moved camp to Portugal. Sourcing wine in Portugal was favored by very advantageous tax incentives enshrined in the Methuen Treaty of 1703. Hence, Port wines found a new market with the thirsty British. The wine was shipped from Oporto which is a port town at the mouth of the Duoro River to Britain.

Port wine grapes are grown in terraced vineyards up on the steep slopes of the Duoro River. Numerous varieties are used in making Port wine, but the favored varieties are Tinta Roriz, Touriga Nacional, Tinta Cao, Tinta Barroca and Touriga Francesa. The image of burly men up to their thighs in grape skins is very appropriate for Port making. The wine was made,



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and still is in some cases, in large shallow stone tanks called Lagares. The grapes were dumped in and trodden by the vineyard workers to release the juice. Even when modern mechanical presses arrived on the scene, vineyard workers continued to trod on the grapes. This method produced wines that were better than those made with a press because the feet did not bruise the skins or release bitter and astringent compounds from the seeds. The fermented wine was then shipped down river to the British owned cellars to be aged and bottled.

One of the characteristics of Port is that it is fortified with brandy. This was done by the shippers to ensure the wine was drinkable when it arrived at its destination. In those days spoilage of wine was a problem and this was one of the ways of preserving the wine. The addition of brandy was done just before shipping until a son of a Port shipper investigated one of the wineries up the valley. He had heard that one of the winemakers, a monk, added the brandy during fermentation. The spirits arrested the fermentation by killing the yeast. By doing this you could make a sweet wine with the remaining natural grape sugars that were not used by the yeast. This way of making the wine proved so popular that this practice is continued today. The resulting dark, sweet alcoholic wines were just what the British needed to ward off the damp chills of English weather.

Because of the runaway success of ‘blackstrap’, as Port was known, there was a shortage of good wine to export. This gave the unscrupulous an opportunity to make wines using poor quality grapes with sugar and elderberry juice. Then there was a slump in demand and the British wine merchants complained to the government of Portugal and demanded them to rectify the situation. Regulations were introduced that defined the winemaking process and the area where Port grapes could be grown.

These regulations are still in force today and the Portuguese still demand that only wines made in the Duoro area should be allowed to be called Port. In the United States we use the word Port for all wines that are sweet and have been fortified, but these wines cannot be exported to Europe named as Port even if they are made from Port grapes. One California producer got around this by naming his wine “Starboard”.

Although there are still a lot of British names on Port bottles, those families are very much Portuguese nowadays. Port is not drunk so much in England as it was. There is so much more to choose from in today's supermarkets and wine shops. I still enjoy a nice drop of Port, and BARGETTO'S 2004 Sierra Foothills Port is very good, even if it does not have an English name on it.

## Current Release

### 2004 BARGETTO Sierra Foothills Port

Here is another fine ruby port for 2004. The wine is dark purple with flavors of blackberry jam, cassis and tobacco. The finish lingers with hints of Seville orange.

-Michael Sones, Winemaker

#### Shipment costs for 3 bottles (500ml)

Pickup Members	\$46.66
CA Members	\$57.66
Out of State UPS Members	\$54.20
(MI, ND, NH, NY, TX, VA add applicable sales tax)	
Freight Forwarder/FedEx Members	\$57.20

Retail price of BARGETTO Sierra Foothills Port is \$18 per bottle  
Prices include 20% CHAUCER'S Wine Club Discount

## Next Release

### 2005 BARGETTO Bella Dolce

This year we decided to try something different, a sweetened Pinot Grigio. The wine is made in a dessert-style with grapes that were grown at Regan Estate Vineyards in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

-Michael Sones, Winemaker

#### Shipment costs for 3 bottles (750ml)

Pickup Members	\$36.29
CA Members	\$48.79
Out of State UPS Members	\$48.10
(MI, ND, NH, NY, TX, VA add applicable sales tax)	
Freight Forwarder/FedEx Members	\$50.10

Retail price of BARGETTO Bella Dolce is \$14 per bottle  
Prices include 20% CHAUCER'S Wine Club Discount

This release is scheduled to be shipped on September 21, 2006.

**Change of address, billing information or skipping or substituting a shipment?** Give us a call prior to the 15th of September to prevent any inconvenience or delays in receiving your next CHAUCER'S Wine Club shipment.

All of our members are important to us, and we appreciate your staying in touch. Don't be shy.

Give us a call at 1-888-400-WINE or send an email to [wineclub@bargetto.com](mailto:wineclub@bargetto.com).

### Wine Club Harvest Party at BARGETTO WINERY

Saturday, September 16, 2006

4:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Come celebrate the 2006 harvest with  
BARGETTO WINERY. More information to follow.

### Did you enjoy your current wine release? Stock up and save!

Buy 6 or more bottles of BARGETTO Sierra Foothills Port  
and receive a 25% discount! Only \$13.50 per bottle.  
\$81 per half case, \$162 per case. Regularly \$18 per bottle.

**Offer ends 9/15/2006**



## Epicurean Notes

### Port and Caramel Ice Cream Sundae (taken from [www.foodnetwork.com](http://www.foodnetwork.com) Emeril Lagasse, 2002)

#### Ingredients for Sundae:

- 1 (1/2 gallon) vanilla ice cream
- 1 cup Port
- Caramel Sauce, recipe follows
- Candied Cashews, recipe follows
- Whipped cream

#### Ingredients for Caramel Sauce:

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/4 cup water
- 1 cup heavy cream

#### Ingredients for Candied

##### Cashews:

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/2 cup packed dark brown sugar
- 2 cups chopped cashews
- Pinch salt

For more recipes check out [www.bargetto.com](http://www.bargetto.com)

#### Directions for Sundae:

Place 1 scoop of vanilla ice cream in 4 parfait glasses. Pour a little Port over each scoop. Drizzle caramel over the Port and top with some of the cashews. Repeat with another layer of ice cream, Port, caramel, and cashews. Top with whipped cream and a little more caramel.

#### Directions for Caramel Sauce:

In a small, heavy-bottomed saucepan, combine the sugar and water and bring the mixture to a boil, stirring often. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is a deep caramel color and has the consistency of a thin syrup, 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from the heat. Stir in the cream, return the saucepan to the high heat, and boil the sauce until it regains the consistency of a thick syrup, about 2 minutes.

#### Directions for Candied Cashews:

In a medium skillet, combine the butter and brown sugar. Cook, stirring, over medium heat until the sugar is dissolved. Add the nuts and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring, until toasted and evenly coated, about 6 minutes. Remove from the heat. Spread the coated nuts on the prepared baking sheet, stirring with a fork to keep from clumping.

Everyone wins when you invite friends to join the CHAUCER'S Wine Club. They will receive three bottles of CHAUCER'S wines quarterly and you will receive a complimentary bottle of wine!

