

Wines of Alentejo Sustainability Program (WASP)

Receives *Drinks Business* Green Award 2020

**New York, NY, December 14, 2020 --** Portugal’s Wines of Alentejo Sustainability Program (WASP) has been honored at *The Drinks Business* Green Awards 2020, as this year’s recipient of the annual Amorim Sustainability Award. The Amorim Sustainability Award recognizes the accomplishments of a single organization in its efforts to bring about greater efficiencies and effectiveness in the implementation of sustainable practices. Judges look for evidence of change for the better over the past three years and more particularly with the past 12 months. Now in its eleventh year, *The Drinks Business* Green Awards constitutes the world’s largest program dedicated to raising awareness of green issues within the international drinks industry.

This latest recognition follows on the European Commission´s European Rural Innovation Award in 2019, with WASP, one of 15 winners out more than 200 applications, designated an EU Rural Innovation Ambassador in 2020.

WASP was established by the Alentejo Regional Winegrowing Commission (CVRA) in 2014, with the goal of improving the social, environmental, and economic welfare throughout the region. It is the first such program of its type in Portugal. Participation by wineries and growers is voluntary. Today, WASP’s 425-strong membership accounts for close to 50% of Alentejo vineyard plantings.

In July 2020, WASP introduced third-party “Sustainably Produced” certification for members, available via Bureau Veritas, SGS, Certis, and Sativa. Two Alentejo wineries have since become the first in the nation to earn “Sustainably Produced” certification. João Barroso, WASP Sustainability Coordinator, expects many more will earn certification in 2021.

*“Certification increases sales by adding value,”* notes Barroso. *“From the start, we were able to show that even small producers can adopt sustainable practices* ***and*** *save money in the process. Sustainability is not a marketing ploy. It’s a necessity, and the new paradigm for responsible business in the twenty-first century.”*

More new initiatives are planned for 2021, starting with the launch of an online performance calculator, enabling members to measure their individual carbon and water footprint.

WASP and Barroso work with top academic institutions on guiding members toward achieving clearly defined, data-driven goals in eighteen areas; these include water use, energy and waste management, pest management, human resources, air quality, materials, and community involvement. A practical, hands-on approach has produced rapid results, with WASP attracting 93 new members within its first year. That number has increased every year since. By-the-numbers results include multiple successes in the membership’s embrace of Best Practices, notably water management, at 30% in 2015, up to 54% in 2019; irrigation system maintenance, at 27% in 2015, reaching 62% by 2019; monitoring of energy use in vineyards, at 4% in 2015 and up to 30% in 2019; and the installation of nest boxes and perches for birds of prey, up from 5% in 2015 to 27% in 2019 (2019 being most recent year for which data is currently available).

**Alentejo Regional Winegrowing Commission** (Comissão Vitivinícola Regional Alentejana/CVRA): Founded in 1989 as a private institution, dedicated to certifying, controlling, and protecting Alentejo’s wine industry and culture. CVRA is also responsible for promoting Alentejo wines domestically and in selected international markets. Funding comes from the sale of certification seals, placed on the back label of Alentejo bottles, to guarantee the origin and authenticity of the wine.

***The Drinks Business*** is a monthly international B2B magazine and website dedicated to discussion of the latest news and trends in the global beer, wine, and spirits industries. Published by UK-based Union Press.

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