



MADEIRA WINE TRADITIONS

Intangible Cultural Heritage of
Humanity

APPLICATION COORDINATED BY:



Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), signed by Portugal in 2008.



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Intangible
Cultural
Heritage

“ ... the **practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills** [...] that communities, [...] recognize as **part of their cultural heritage** [...], **transmitted** from generation to generation, is constantly **recreated** by communities and groups [...] , and provides them with a sense of **identity and continuity. ...**”

It is not Madeira Wine itself, its history, built heritage, or vineyard landscape that matters most...



... ..but rather the **social and cultural practices** that bring it to life.



- Unusual viticultural techniques that involve a great deal of **manual labour** and **traditional know-how**;
- A "**nanoholding**" covering approximately 400 hectares, cultivated by around 1,600 farmers;
- The continuity of the tradition depends on **verbal agreements** made year after year between the farmers and the cellars;
- The great ageing potential turns old bottles into **genuine time capsules**, with each cellar acting as a true "**vineous museum**".

...that make
this tradition
unique.



A shared heritage,
simultaneously glocal and transcultural.



There are few tangible and intangible heritages that are not related to Madeira wine, making it a central element of the **collective identity of the Madeirans** and their **diaspora**.

At the same time, it is their **most identifiable cultural legacy abroad**, having been appreciated for centuries in countries across Europe, America, Africa, Oceania, and Asia, both as a drink and as a culinary ingredient.

Approximately
1,200
vinegrowers



Madeira wine
lovers around
the world

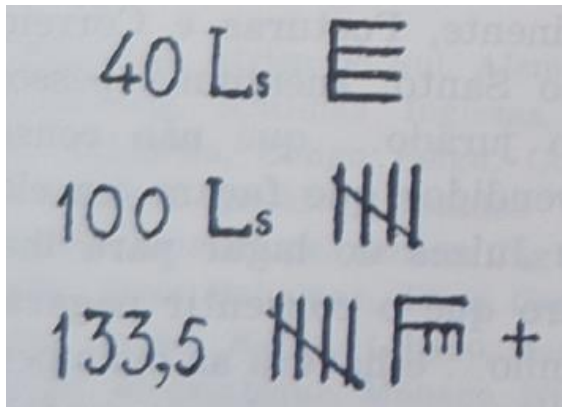
Approximately 1.5
million **emigrants**
and their
descendants.



Approximately
200 **cellar's**
employees.

Comunities, groups, and individuals concerned

A 'complicated' transfer process.



FACTS ABOUT PORT
AND MADEIRA,
WITH
NOTICES OF THE WINES VINTAGED AROUND LISBON,
AND THE WINES OF TENERIFE.



The process of transmitting these three forms of knowledge is carried out, from the beginning, along a **discontinuous chain** that **combines writing, orality, and mimetic learning**, within a framework of **retroactive** and **asynchronous** interactions between these three vectors of knowledge, involving **vine growers, winemakers, and consumers**.

Know-how, storytelling and “degustation code”

The **intangible dimension** of this heritage lies not only in the vast know-how that makes it unique, but also in a very ancient “degustation code” and storytelling refined by each generation.

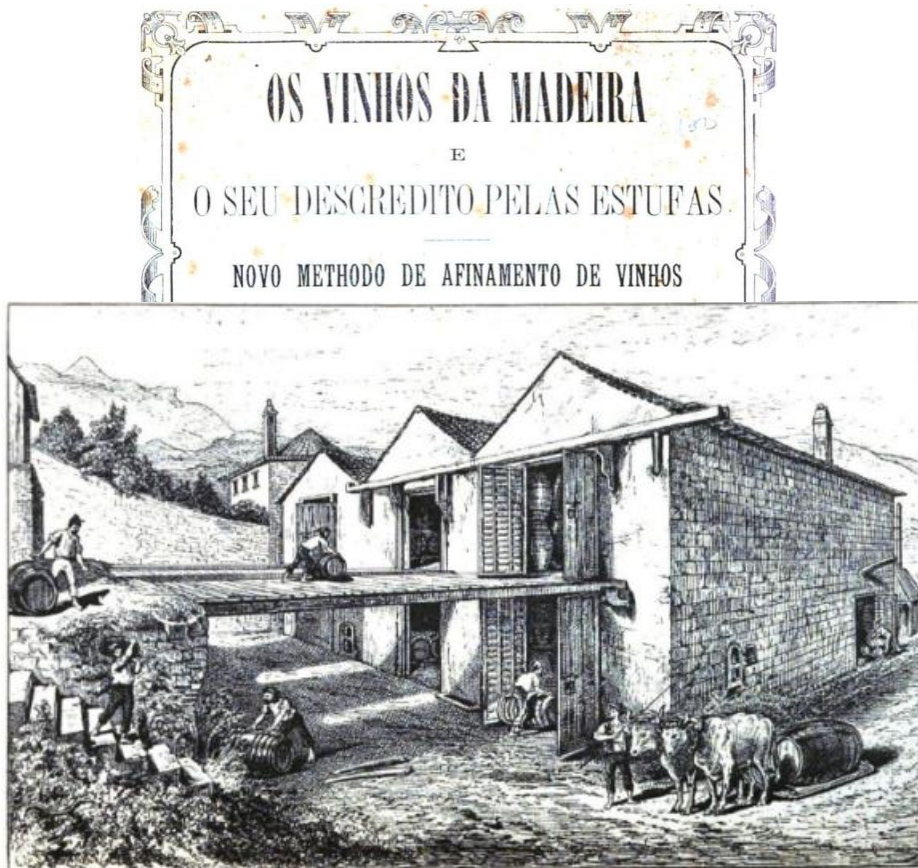




The storytelling

The storytelling is what gives all those involved a **sense of belonging** to the same heritage community, despite the ocean that separates them. It is fundamentally a **consensual and unifying** way of explaining Madeira wine, which places its origin not on land, but at **sea**.

Know-how: innovation is part of the DNA of this tradition.



This narrative also helps to rationalise the fact that winemaking techniques have **constantly evolved** since their 'invention' around 250 years ago.

What truly makes their know-how unique is not the methods employed themselves, but the eminently pragmatic way in which its practitioners have managed to maintain, over a long period, a subtle balance between **tradition and innovation**.

However, it remains a **heritage wine** in the sense that it is defined, from a **legal perspective**, as being faithful to a contemporary tradition.

The 'degustation code': a cosmopolite tradition



It is the 'degustation code' that makes the case of Madeira wine very particular, if not **unique**.

In fact, the vast majority of those who value it are not from Madeira. It is a very dispersed community, spread across more than **60 countries** on all continents, with its true size not being precisely known.

Some nations even claim Madeira wine as part of their **national culture**.

Ecological sustainability



Operating in a fragile ecosystem, Madeira producers and distributors are fully committed to **reducing their carbon footprint.**

The fact that vineyard work is almost exclusively **done manually** also drastically limits CO2 emissions and other pollutants released into the atmosphere by agricultural machinery.

Social sustainability



Although it is a **small-scale activity**, Madeira wine is essential for the sustainability of the **entire agricultural sector**.

Farmers are crucial in reducing food imports needed to supply the islanders and around **2 million tourists**. Their resilience helps maintain the **picturesque landscape** that makes this destination so attractive

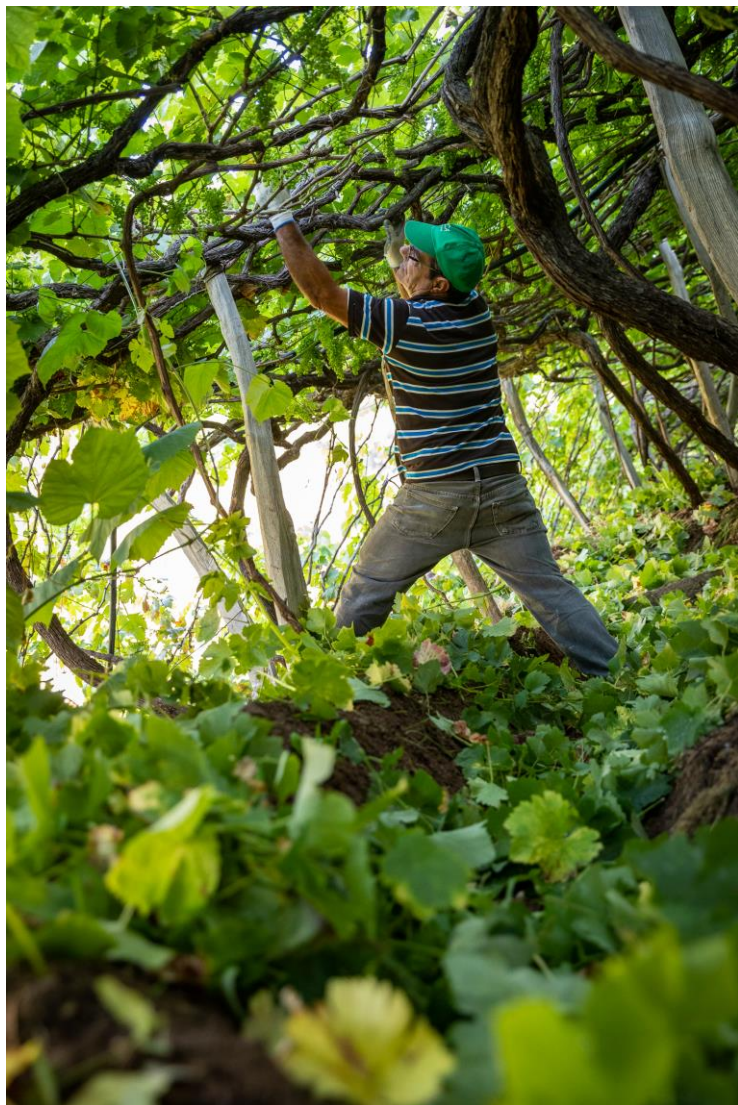
Cultural sustainability



Many producers would have **given up their activity** without the income they earn from the grapes they sell each harvest. The other edible plants they grow, often in the same plots, are less profitable. The continuation of the **rural way of life** and the traditions associated with it largely depends on the Madeira wine production.



Challenges for the (near) future



In this case, the overproduction problems that plague other wine regions are not present. The viability of this sector, in the medium term, will depend less on demand and more **on supply**.

Demographic pressure is the greatest threat. The abandonment of vineyards is also linked to the **low social value** placed on farmers, which makes the profession **unattractive** to younger generations. The craft of **cooperage** also suffers from the same issue.

The application: what is it for?



Since viticulture has long been a sector in which the **University of Madeira** is involved, it is committed to helping find new solutions to these challenges.

The application is just the **first step** that will allow us to test to what extent boosting the self-esteem of those who persist in preserving this tradition, **drawing attention to its cultural and social importance** and the challenges it currently faces, will be a key element in keeping it alive.

The application: what is being done?



- 1- The submission of the application to the UNESCO National Commission requires prior registration in the **national PCI inventory**;
- 2- The **dissemination** and request for **consent letters** from regional, local bodies, and non-governmental entities;
- 3- **Fieldwork and studies** aimed at preparing the application;
- 4- The preparation of the **application dossier**;
- 5- The creation of a **film** to be submitted to UNESCO along with the application.

The application: what still needs to be done?



The next steps are:

1- **Issuance of opinions** by the DRC and the local authorities of the RAM.

2- **public consultation;**

3- registration in the **national PCI inventory;**

4- definition of a **safeguarding plan** in collaboration with other involved entities;

5- preparation of the application dossier for submission to the **National UNESCO Commission;**

6- **submission of the application to UNESCO.**



MADEIRA WINE TRADITIONS

Intangible Cultural Heritage of
Humanity

APPLICATION COORDINATED BY:

