



Wine

Chin Chin: the wine that's become a must-have for middle England

Well made, relatively affordable and instantly recognisable, the Portuguese *vinho verde* is a go-to summer tippie

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The clinking of recycling bins being set out on the roadside has become a familiar sound this year as the country works its way through its seemingly endless series of summer bank holidays.

But whether you were toasting historic events this weekend, or simply drinking to get through it, chances are, someone at your party turned up with a bottle of the wine that has become the must-have tippie for middle England - Chin Chin *vinho verde*.

Marked with a label showing a cartoonish red beast in shorts and high socks wielding some glasses, Chin Chin has become the wine of now, the Casillero del Diablo of Gen Z, relatively affordable, instantly recognisable - and Instagram-friendly. It helps too that it's not widely available. Fewer than 100,000 bottles are sold each year, so it doesn't feature on major supermarket shelves, making it a classic scarcity-value success story.



📷 Chin Chin's distinctive label has played a part in its success. Photograph: Miguel Machado/Chin Chin

It's also ... green. Translated from the Portuguese wine style known as *vinho verde*, this shouldn't be taken literally: the wine is youthful, hence green, rather than its actual colour. It comes from Vinho Verde, one of Portugal's designated wine regions - the green is also said to reference the verdant vegetation in the north-west of the country along the Atlantic coast. The taste itself is light, fresh and dry, with the slightest hint of fizz.

Though available on some British shelves, *vinho verde* had been eclipsed by other European wines. Then, during the pandemic, as people began to socialise outdoors, came the rise of Chin Chin. Made with minimal intervention or chemicals, it was developed by the people from the London restaurant Noble Rot, in collaboration with the [Quinta do Ermízio](#) vineyard and winery - all capped off with a playful label designed by Spanish artist Jose Mendez. Chin Chin struck a chord, becoming a go-to summer bottle, a [cult classic](#).

"We were looking for the holy grail - a cheap, delicious house white wine that we could put our name to," says Dan Keeling, co-founder of Noble Rot. "We'd be lying if we said that we weren't a little surprised by quite how much it captured so many drinkers' imaginations, but it's a well-made versatile classic that suits so many situations, so why not?"

It has also become something of a meme. The moment the sun comes out, you can't move in certain trend-conscious urban areas for a tartan rug, a tin of Perello olives, some inexplicably flavoured Torres crisps and the accompanying bottle of Chin Chin. According to [Real Housewives of Clapton](#), an Instagram account charting the latest tastes and absurdities of east London and beyond, its success is largely about branding - and even the cost of living crisis.



📷 Chin Chin wine's grape harvest. Photograph: Chin Chin

"It's kind of like a common reference point for a nice wine," the person behind the account tells the Guardian - they ask to remain anonymous. "The marketing of it is obviously pretty good. But I think also, it led from during lockdown. People were more willing to spend, I think, on slightly more luxurious items that they could enjoy in their home. Because they weren't spending a tenner on a glass of wine in the pub but spending £12 on a bottle, is kind of a nice thing to do on a Friday night. So I think it was, like, right place, right time."

Despite its success in the UK, if you mention Chin Chin in Portugal, you'll be met with a blank look. You can't actually buy Chin Chin there.

It might not be that way for long. Antonio Monteiro, whose family owns the vineyard, recently got a call from a Portuguese businessman planning a new restaurant in Lisbon, whose wife had tasted Chin Chin in London and demanded that they stock it.

Monteiro thinks its success is down to more than just a fancy label. "You have a project with different components," he says. "Because only one is not enough. So a good wine is not enough. A good label is not enough. A good marketing policy is not enough. So you have to merge everything together."