

BIO: João Madeira Afonso

João Madeira Afonso is a multi-talented wine man: Winemaker, editor, author, judge, speaker, with a surprising past.

João studied viticulture and oenology both in France (Beaune) and in Portugal, beginning in 1987. He has served as the lead winemaker for several brands (Solstício, Equinócio, Respiro) since 2009, focusing on organic grape growing. For the 10 previous years, he served as lead winemaker for the Rogenda brand.

He began a related career, as editor and wine taster, at the *Revista de Vinhos* (Portugal's *Wine Spectator*) in 1994, and since 2000, he has been their Senior Editor. He has published highly acclaimed books for both the novice and the connoisseur, including "Curso de Vinho para Verdadeiros Apreciadores" (Wine Course for True Connoisseurs), "Entender de Vinho" (Understanding Wine) and "Anuário de Vinhos" (Wine Guide Yearbook). For two years (1997-98) he was Editorial Director for the Enciclopédia of Wine.

Starting in 1999, he has been a member of the tasting panel for two of Europe's most prestigious International Wine Competitions: the Concourse Mondial de Bruxelles, Belgium (2006 – 2015), and the Bacchus International Competition, Madrid, Spain (1994-2014).

He is also in great demand as a speaker, moderator, commentator and trainer, having moderated international conferences in Portugal and abroad. Since 2005, he offers wine courses for consumers, in major cities all over the world.

And, while Portuguese is his native language, he is also fluent in English, Spanish and French.

But beyond being able to make, create, judge, and educate people about wines, perhaps the most astonishing fact of his eventful life is his first career: as principal dancer of the Gulbenkian Ballet, the premiere dance company of Portugal, based in Lisbon. He trained with world famous teachers, and performed works of the 20th century's leading choreographers, both traditional and modern, in major European, Brazilian and North African cities, between 1978 and 1994. He had received both Bachelor and Master's Degree in Human Kinetics, and taught Modern Dance in Lisbon.

He has moved from the art of dance to the art of the vine, but his communication skills are equally compelling on these new stages: the vineyard, the cellar, the competition and the classroom.

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