2017 Bott Szamorodni Édes

Tokaj, Hungary

The wines of Tokaj are the product of over 1200 years of melting together different cultures, religions, and ethnicities over a truly unique combination of geology and climate. In a way, József and Judit Bodó, both originally from Csallóköz, an ethnic Hungarian region in Slovakia are perpetuating this tradition of cultural exchange. Following her love for wine Judit went to work for a producer in South Tirol who later hired her onto a project in Tokaj managing the affairs of a small artisan winery: Füleky. Heeding the dream of his wife to have their own winery in Tokaj, József took on the labor of actually looking for vineyards. Upon discovering Csontos, Judit said, "he could not sleep at night." After the birth of their son, they focused solely on their own family winery with József in the vineyards and Judit in the cellar. In 2005 they bottled wine from just 1 ha, the first vintage of "Bott," an homage to Judit's maiden name. Today the couple tends about 5 ha spread among various sites mostly near the village of Erdőbénye. Wines are made exclusively from indigenous varieties. According to Judit, "When we succeed it brings joy to others that is generously given back to us. Since wine forms the quality of our lives, we like living this way." There is a maternal touch to the wines she makes, to compare them to children, they are as disciplined as they are loved. Despite making very little wine, Judit and József have made Bott one of Tokaj's most respected new producers, not just in Tokaj, but all of Hungary.

VINEYARDS

Teleki is located near the top of Tokaj Hill's Southern slope. Planted around 70 years ago and cultivated by hand, their plot only totals around 0.5 hectares. 80% is Furmint and the rest is Hárslevelű. The dominant soil is loess, but this surface layer has been heavily eroded, so roots must dig their way into volcanic tuffa in order to survive. Another key attribute is the low occurrence of Botytis due to more wind at the more exposed higher elevation. Coupled with naturally high acidity and the lower yielding older vines, quality is ensured even in particularly difficult vintages.

This protracted fermentation enhances the elegance and texture of Bott wines. Wines remain in barrel between 7-10 months depending on the vineyard and vintage and are topped regularly. Depending on the vintage and character of a particular vineyard, wines may have residual sugar as Judit lets every barrel finish fermentation without intervention.

WINE MAKING

As is common among some of the best vignerons in Tokaj, Judit and her family personally harvest the fruit ensuring the strictest of sorting. The newly built winery is still small and the equipment consists of relics like an antique wooden press and a medieval looking bladder press from the 60's. Despite looking less than ideal Judit contends that this equipment forces her to be especially attentive, which ultimately benefits her wines. Wines are fermented slowly in mostly used 220 liter oak barrels with native yeast over a period of 6-8 weeks.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

This is the first sweet wine we've imported from Judit and József. For one, they only make it in exceptional vintages because their standard for botrytis is very high. There has to be at least 50% botrytis per cluster and they often need to make more than 6 passes on the same vine to accomplish this. The 2017 is all from the Csontos vineyard where they have the most experience farming. They want both healthy botrytis and healthy non-botrytized grapes, not just a deluge of botrytis. Less oxidative than Aszú but far more layered than a late harvest, this is just pure delicious.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Bott
APPELLATION: Tokaj ((Toke-Eye))
VINTAGE: 2017
GRAPE COMPOSITION: Furmint and Hárslevelű
CLIMATE: Cool Continental
SOILS: Red clay (nyirok) and obsidian
EXPOSURE: Southern
ALCOHOL: 11.4%
RESIDUAL SUGAR: 128.8 g/l
ACIDITY: 6.48 g/l