

2023 Črnko Skin Contact Muscat

Štajerska, Slovenia

The Črnko farm is located on the eastern side of Slovenia, north of Maribor and just south of the Austrian border. It is a breath taking environment of endless rolling green hills lined with vineyards that stretch the length of the horizon. Until 1918 this area was known as Lower Styria (formally Austria) and had been for many centuries. Grapes have also been cultivated here for over 2,000 years in addition to famed aromatic hop fields and ethereal pumpkin seed oil; a real treat with the local wines. The rich agricultural diversity of these Slovenian Hills owes itself to fertile soils and the unique convergence of Continental, Alpine and Mediterranean climates. In large part it is the balance between these climates that make the wines of Slovenia so regional and so interesting. The bulk of Črnko's production is divided between their line of single varietal premium bottlings and the easy drinking house cuvee Jareninčan. Small amounts of sweet wine and a sparkling wine called "Oceanus" that is aged 250 feet under the Adriatic are also produced. Not surprisingly, Silvo Črnko beams with happiness and so do his wines.



VINEYARDS

The two south/south west facing vineyards the Črnko family farms are planted to a specific form of marl. 16 million of years ago the region was part of the Pannonian Sea and exploding with life. Today it is 2.5 miles thick of sedimentary soil. It looks a lot like slate but is brittle and silty to the touch. This unique soil is common to the famed vineyards of Brda, on the western side of Slovenia bordering Italy and lends the same mineral complexity to the wines; especially the whites. Jareninski Vrh is the hill the Crnko farm lies at the base of. Behind it 3.5 hectares total of Yellow Muscat, Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Muscat Ottonel, Laski (Italian) Riesling, Riesling and Pinot Gris rise quickly to about 400 meter above sea level. The vineyard is pretty and steep. Even Silvo Črnko, who grows the grapes and makes the wine, gets winded during a stroll. Half a mile away is the equally steep vineyard Slatinek; 2.5 hectares of Yellow Muscat, Mueller-Thurgau, Sauvignon Blanc, Laski Riesling and Gewurztraminer.

WINE MAKING

Only estate fruit is used. Hand harvested by family and friends into small plastic bins that are then transported to the winery by tractor. Harvest is split between the best selection of grapes used to make the single variety wines. The remainder of the juice finds its way into Jareninčan. For the Jareninčan most grapes are co-fermented but others (usually the aromatic) are blended in after fermentation. Single variety wines rest briefly on the lees.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

We're always looking at ways to build upon our long partnership with the Črnko family. Here is one such experiment. While the Jareninčan is a field blend, there are often blending components that don't make the cut. Silvo has also wanted to experiment with longer skin macerations. Two weeks on the skins in open vats followed by spontaneous fermentation in a 50 year-old 500L Slovenian used barrel. 90% Yellow Muscat and 10% Muscat Ottonel. This is the same fruit material that he ferments 22 meters deep in the ocean for 1624 days. It can handle a lot. We tasted an early example back in April of 2022 alongside one of the best Domača goveja juha (homemade beef stew) we've ever had.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Črnko (Chair-n-koe)

APPELLATION: Štajerska

GRAPE COMPOSITION: 90% Yellow Muscat and 10% Muscat Ottonel

CLIMATE: Continental, Alpine Influenced

SOILS: Marl

MACERATION & AGING: Two weeks on the skins in open vats followed by spontaneous fermentation in a 50 year-old 500L Slovenian used barrel.

ALCOHOL: 10.7%

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 2.9 g/l

ACIDITY: 6.38 g/l



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