

2019 Maurer Mézes Fehér

Fruška Gora, Serbia

When we first visited Oszkár Maurer in 2015, he only had a few wines to show. Since then, we've witnessed plans like expanding his production into the Fruška Gora, opening a tasting room/restaurant, and redefining what many of these nearly forgotten grapes taste like, while always keeping a close eye on the traditions of both his grandparents and the region's 2000+ years of documented winemaking history. His aesthetic and philosophy are starting to permeate everything above and beyond the vineyards and cellar. The Maurer family has been producing wine for four generations. It was during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the 19th century that they moved from Salzburg to the southern part of the Kingdom of Hungary. They now farm 15 acres of land. 6 hectares in the Serbian wine region of Szabadka directly south of the Hungarian-Serbian border, and another 10 acres in the Fruška Gora mountain district in Syrmia, Serbia, located 40 miles away from Belgrade and bordered by the Danube River to the north.



VINEYARDS

Technically Maurer is in the Subotičko – Horgoškoj region in northern Serbia, but it was formerly a part of Hungary's Csongrád up until 1920. The population is mostly Hungarian and viticulture knows no borders. Names of grapes and places are therefore constantly changing from Serbian to Hungarian and vice-versa. Oszkár farms about 6 hectares here including the oldest known Kadarka vineyard in the world planted in 1880 in addition to other plantings in 1912 and older plots of Kövidinka from 1925. The rest of the plantings include grapes like Olaszrizling, Slankamenka, Ezerjő, Kadarka and Kékfrankos. There's also few international varieties including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Pinot Noir. Oszkár also has 9 hectares in the Srem region a little further south. Hungarians called this area Szerém, the Croats Srijem (part of it still spills into Croatia), and the Romans Syrmia. The main feature, apart from the Danube River, is the Fruška Gora Mountain. Once an island in the Pannonian Sea, the soil is volcanic with a marine layer. Some call it the "holy mountain" or "Serbian Athos" because at one point there were over 30 monasteries of which 16 still stand today. Needless to say, there is something special about this place and winegrowing is documented back to the 1200s. Planting in broad strokes, the Subotičko is largely defined by sandy soils and old vines, and the Szerémség by volcanic soils heavily influenced by the Danube River. Everything is farmed organically with zero absorbable chemicals. High density stake trained vines are the most typical and cover crops are natural. Everything is worked by hand or with the help of horses. Harvest is managed with local labor and the help of family and friends.

WINE MAKING

Everything is handpicked in small bins and all fermentations are spontaneous (primary and secondary). The use of older oak, small and large format is paramount. There are no additives to any of the wines apart from SO₂ at bottling for select wines. Maurer basically has two tiers: Rege and Maurer. The Rege wines have low SO₂ (25-40ppm) and the Maurer line is zero compromise with zero additions of any kind. Wines are typically only racked once before bottling and everything is bottled unfiltered.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

This is our third vintage of this grape and happily the third time I've had to write something completely new about it. Mézes Fehér, literally, "honey white" is typically able to contract a ton of botrytis without dropping acidity. The 2018 had around 20% botrytis infection, fermented on the skins for 7 days and aged in large Hungarian oak. The 2017 was aged under flor with two weeks of maceration. The 2019 by contrast, has much less botrytis, only spent 24 hours on the skins, and had zero flor. It's ripe, aromatic, structured, and in many straddles the divide between the 2018 and 2017. Bottled unfiltered with zero additions.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Maurer
APPELLATION: Fruška Gora
GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Mézes Fehér
CLIMATE: Sub Continental
SOILS: Volcanic bedrock
MACERATION & AGING: fermented on the skins for 24 hours and aged in large Hungarian oak.
ALCOHOL: 13.7%
RESIDUAL SUGAR: 2.88 g/l
ACIDITY: 7.34 g/l



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