

Edgar Brutler Sisu

Crișana, Romania

Transylvania has always been a bit of white whale for us. This is where horse carts often outnumber cars and self-sufficient agriculture is the norm. Literally translating to "beyond the forest," it also has an unbroken winegrowing tradition going back at least 2000+ years. It's a surreal place where the language is Balkan Romance, the food is Hungarian with some key distinctions, and where the imprints of both the Middle Ages and Communism are frozen in time. Edgar Brutler's family was a part of the Swabian migration to Transylvania and arrived in the 1850s from Stuttgart. Edgar originally started down a musical path then studied oenology at Geisenheim. As Edgar puts it, "I was born there, my family lived there, my family worked these vineyards and walked this roads and paths." Working old vine field blends, and making wines based on smelling, tasting, and feeling rather than numbers and analytics are Edgar's focus. Music still plays a big part in his life and an image of sound board levels adorn the label of the Grünsitz.



VINEYARDS

The village of Beltiug is in Satu Mare County in the Crișana region. This northwestern corner of Romania has a temperate continental climate, surprisingly warm for what we think of as Northern Romania. The soil is really thick loam (20-30 meters) and plantings date back as far as 1926 and as recent as last year. Edgar's grandfather planted their original 4 hectares. The traditional grapes of the area are Fetească Regală/Königliche Mädchenraube, Fetească Albă, Welschriesling, Mustoasa de Măderat, Furmint, Kékfrankos/Blaufränkisch, and their signature grape of Grünsitz. He has new plantings of Baras and Juhfark in the works. There are a number of unidentifiable grapes in the older field blends as well. Farming is without herbicides, chemical-synthetic sprays and mineral fertilizers. Spacing is 1 meter so everything is labor intensive and must be done by hand.

WINE MAKING

Given his formal education at Geisenheim and working at larger more technical wineries, Edgar has a firm grasp of the science and the predetermined recipes needed for those kinds of wines. It's also incredibly useful information when stripping everything away and has allowed him to open up his mind, take risks, and activate the same part of his brain that brings him joy from music. Except for his pét-nat where he measures density to ensure bottles aren't exploding, he's not picking, pressing or doing anything based on the numbers. All wines are spontaneously fermented in a 200 year old cellar, unfiltered, and the only addition is SO₂ (10-20ppm) at bottling and many are without any additions at all. He's also adamant about the control and feedback from using a basket press. Especially for the Grünsitz where a long and high pressure pressing is essential in managing the tannins and extraction. There's no cell phone reception or internet in the cellar. Deep and quiet.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

This vintage went dry super fast and needed some fresh 2023 fruit to get back up the residual sugar this wine absolutely requires. The previous vintage was technically a "demi sec" despite many, including ourselves, perceiving it as Brut if not Brut Natur. To imagine drinking it fully dry would be an act of self-flagellation. In any case, this is a Pét-nat made from 100% Grünsitz. Sisu is a Finnish word that roughly translates to a strong willpower to go through difficult times even if it seems hopeless. Apart from being wildly appropriate for this vintage and the wine business as a whole, it's also the required mindset to tackle the thick skins of the grape and retain freshness. Foot trodden in the press is where the tannins come from. There's no extended maceration here. This is then followed by a super slow fermentation in tank and finished with around 10 g/l RS to balance out the acidity and texture. It was disgorged once in February to blow out the tartaric acid, but keep most of the sediment. Super limited, but a completely unique pét-nat.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Crișana

GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Grünsitz

CLIMATE: Continental (hot summers & cold winters)

SOILS: Clay, loam, sand

MACERATION & AGING: Foot trodden in the press followed by a very slow fermentation.

ALCOHOL: 8.8%

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.28 g/l

ACIDITY: 10.65 g/l



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