

2023 Vina Cota Baba Manda Blanc

Promina, Croatia

In the ocean of futility that is the wine business, very few things are as frustrating as trying to paint the full experience of drinking a wine at its origin without resorting to box checking or overused superlatives. But when we visited Petar Cota's (TSO-tah) corner of the Dalmatian hinterlands, we immediately knew it would be one of these ineffable experiences. After arriving at sunset to hike to the spectacular Manojlovački waterfalls, rousing the Roman military camp of Burnum (dating back to Augustus), making a night visit to the vineyards we ended up at Petar's home and cellar in the village of Oklaj. And after an incredible meal, learning about the family history and tasting through finished wines and many experiments in the cellar, an equation emerged: Krka River + Dinaric alps + Adriatic climate + Bura winds + Karst limestone + local grapes + good people = Vina Cota

VINEYARDS

The Krka river is the largest travertine cascade system in Europe. There are 17 stunning waterfalls of crystalline water with an incredible diversity of flora and fauna. Its source gushes out from underneath the Dinaric alps, highest mountains in Croatia. They keep the harsher weather at arms length while the coastal mountains keep the sea's direct influence at bay. These mountains are also the source of the famous Bura winds, dry, cold and intense high pressure winds that flow down towards the warmer low pressure Adriatic.

They can be so violent as to close highways, tear off roof tiles, and keep ferries moored to their docks. Equally important, they cool and dry the vines. The South-easterly Jugo wind (aka Sirocco) also hits here. Warm and full of disease-causing moisture, the Jugo is bad. Nevertheless, both winds require heavy cover crops and foot stomping fertilizer into the soil to prevent them to be blown away. Nitrogen fixing is tricky here and requires a lot of manual labor. And the stones! You really need to drive through the Dalmatian Coast to fully understand this. Stones are to Dalmatia what shrimp are to Bubba Gump. And while we normally jump to Friuli and the Carso for hot limestone and Dolomite rock talk, it actually runs from that eastern edge of the Italian/Slovenian border all the way down through Dalmatia as well. Countless sinkholes, caves, and underground rivers litter this landscape and flavor the water that the vines drink.

WINE MAKING

Petar enjoys his day job in aluminum construction and his brother is an accomplished furniture carpenter. Both are using these skills to rebuild older structures on their property along with new ones. There's also a direct link between construction and winemaking. A measure twice cut once philosophy in the cellar insofar as keeping things practical, efficient, maintaining an attention to detail, and being patient. A similar zone for both pursuits.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

is a co-fermented blend of Maraština (Mara-Shteen-uh) and Debit. Baba Manda refers to the daughter of Marko and grandmother to Petar, who plowed the first Cota vineyards. Maraština, also known as Rukatac on Korčula, and Malvasia Bianca Lunga in Tuscany, was historically prized in Croatia for making Prošek (passito style sweet wine). It's aromatic, fruity, handles maceration well, but lacks high acidity. Whereas Maraština was known for sweet, Debit on the other hand was better known historically for sparkling. It's relatively easy to grow with potentially super high yields, so in the 19th century, the government would accept this wine as tax payment - hence the literal meaning of Debit. Over planted and mass produced into neutral wines of little to no character during socialism, when farmed well, the acidity is remarkable for this climate with low tannins and sugar, an ideal partner for Maraština. Grown and picked together, they spend 4 days on the skins before fermentation in stainless steel and older oak barrels. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered with minimal SO₂, it embodies that cross section of fresh acidity and fruit along with some grip and structure from the skins.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Vina Cota (Vina Tso-tah)

APPELLATION: Promina

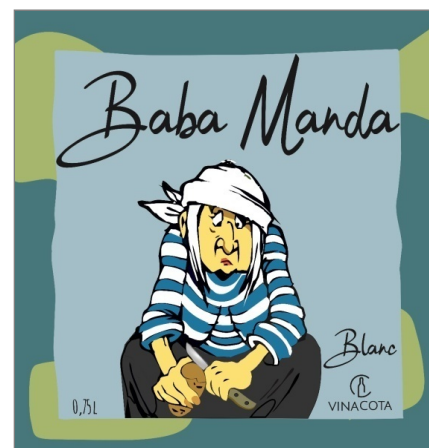
GRAPE COMPOSITION: 50% Debit, 50% Maraština (Mara-Shteen-uh)

CLIMATE: Mediterranean

SOILS: Clay, limestone

MACERATION & AGING: Maraština macerated 5 days in open vats, aged in stainless steel. Debit is direct pressed, left on lees for 2 months.

ALCOHOL: 11.6%



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