

2022 Maurer Kadarka Gravitation

Fruška Gora, Serbia

When we first visited Oszkár Maurer in 2015, he only had a few wines to show. Since then, he expanded his production into the Fruška Gora, opened a tasting room/restaurant, and redefined 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.

VINEYARDS

The Maurer family has been producing wine for four generations. They now farm 6 hectares in the Subotičko-Horgoškoj region in northern Serbia 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, Ezerjó, Kadarka and Kékfrankos. There's also few international varieties including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Pinot Noir. The region 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 also has 9 hectares in the Srem region a little further south. 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. Called the "holy mountain" or "Serbian Athos", there were over 30 monasteries at one point, of which 16 still stand today. Needless to say, there is something special about this place and winegrowing is documented back to the 1200s. 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. 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

As we were walking along the streets of Sremski Karlovci, Oszkár told us that it pains him that there's "so much history but so little identity" here at the moment. This was a village that once boasted over 500 cellars devoted entirely to local sorts, notably Kadarka, and now there are barely 27 cellars showcasing 95% international grapes. He even noted a few of these beautifully ornate protruding windows designed to highlight how many barrels were for sale by hanging a correlating number of grape clusters. This wine is a sine qua non for what's been forgotten in this area. Largely sourced from the 1st class Nagy-Krisztus vineyard with a little from Krisztus, this is hyper concentration 250 grams per vine botrytis afflicted Kadarka. Picked nearly overripe, it then spends 2 weeks on the skins followed by a year in barrel. Bottled unfiltered by gravity with zero additions. Oszkár is a firm believer that 90% of harmful oxidation in sulfur free wines is caused during bottling. So while gravity and filling with small hoses is 4 times slower and more labor intensive, it's worth it.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Fruška Gora

GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Kadarka

CLIMATE: Mild and temperate

SOILS: Volcanic bedrock

MACERATION & AGING: 2 weeks on the skins followed by a year in barrel. Bottled unfiltered by gravity with zero additions.

ALCOHOL: 14.5%

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.17 g/l

ACIDITY: 8.92 g/l



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