

2024 Maurer Kadarka Pét Nat

Subotica, 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

These grapes are at the forefront of Oszkár's permaculture experiments focused on un-pruned vines. Without pruning, the leaves become much larger and stronger. When there was an early frost a few years ago, the leaves cradled the clusters and protected them. The same thing occurred with shielding from sunburn. The idea of crop thinning and leaf pulling certainly has its place in promoting a singular ripe and volume heavy harvest, but Oszkár is convinced that while it might hit the right brix, it won't be the most delicious because it's not what the vine wanted. It's also been a few years since this experiment began and a significant portion of the 2024 harvest was from vines growing up trees. This is the kind of symbiosis he's been looking for despite added labor and lower yields. Despite being non-disgorged, the pressure is under control when opening and the sediment rests at the bottom of the bottle. There's a special wildness to this Kadarka especially in the absence of botrytis and the resulting longer élevage in the dry still wines.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Subotica
GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Kadarka
CLIMATE: Mild and temperate
SOILS: Sand
MACERATION & AGING: Non-disgorged
ALCOHOL: 12.4%
RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.8 g/l
ACIDITY: 6.6 g/l



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PO Box 1270 | Los Altos, California 94023 | USA
www.DanchAndGranger.com
info@DanchAndGranger.com