

2023 réka.koncz Óra

Barabás & Tokaj, Hungary

This is one of those leaps of faith that make the wine world worth it. I had seen these wines popping up here and there in Copenhagen and then a contact from Hungary said he visited and was blown away. As it turns out, Annamária was heading to California with her husband Sven in a few months. Catherine and I ended up taking them around to meet and taste with Evan at Ruth Lewandowski, Tracey at Donkey and Goat, Ryan and Megan at Rhyme, and Duncan and Nathan at Arnot-Roberts. It was surreal to host a winemaker in CA with no real idea about their wines but instead just who they are. Annamária is both soft spoken and careful with her words, a nice counterpoint to the headstrong and risk heavy nature of her viticulture and winemaking. She has a degree in Horticultural Engineering in Debrecen (Hungary) and a Masters in Agriculture (microbiology/yeast evaluation) in Copenhagen, Denmark. After a series of internships and living in the natural wine centric community in Copenhagen, she realized she had something really special right where she grew up. Her hometown is called Vásárosnamény near the Ukrainian border in Eastern Hungary. She came back to purchase 3 hectares of old vines near the village of Barabás. Since her first release in 2016, she is the only commercial producer in a once highly regarded but currently forgotten region. A part of the Bükk region, the climate and soils are similar to Tokaj which is about a 1.5 hours drive due west.



VINEYARDS

Walking in her vineyard up a long dirt road with thick forests on both sides is surreal but also seeing stakes and dilapidated old vines growing in the thick woods as well. She has 40-100 year old vines of Királyleányka, Hárslevelű, Sárga Muskotály (yellow muscat), Rajnai Rizling (Rhine Riesling) and Furmint. Many with 6-10 foot arms sprawling out with multiple birds nests burrowed in. The place is buzzing with birds, bugs, and even some openings to badger dens. Then you reach an obelisk with the colors of the Hungarian flag. This is the border with Ukraine and within eyesight, you can also see occupied guard towers on the next few hills over. The biological and geopolitical diversity here is palpable. The soil here is intensely volcanic. Vitreous rhyolite lava, perlite (similar to Tarcin in Tokaj), and plagioclase rhyolite (high in silicate) form most of the layers. Closer to the surface it's dominated by loamy loess. The wines are not lacking in aromatics or acidity and are perfect for handling both sparkling production as well as mild to more intense skin maceration.

WINE MAKING

As for winemaking, she has a wooden basket press and mostly larger 1000L top plastic fermenters and a few pristine used barrels she purchased from Tokaji Hétszölő. Grapes are usually destemmed, foot crushing is standard, and punchdowns are the main techniques. Wines are typically fermented and aged in plastic until bottling.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

30% is sourced from 50-55 year old vines of Királyleányka, Rhein Riesling, Hárslevelű revived by Annamária and her parents, the 70% of Furmint comes from a certified organic grower in the Tokaj village of Mád (Hintós and Dancka). All of the fruit comes from a myriad of volcanic soils. The furmint was destemmed followed with 2 weeks on the skins and basket pressed into punch downs. Her own fruit was picked together as a field blend and co-fermented in egg shaped fermenters. A mixture of whole cluster and destemmed fruit, everything spent 4-5 days on the skins before being basket pressed to finish fermentation in fiberglass. The two parts were blended in August of 2022. On the Hungarian label, she's not able to write Furmint because of the mixture of appellations, so it's just listed as "F..mint." Deeply structured, full of life and rustic in the best possible way.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Barabás & Tokaj

GRAPE COMPOSITION: Királyleányka, Rhein Riesling, Hárslevelű, Furmint

CLIMATE: Continental

SOILS: Rhyolite, andesite, dacite and tuffs

MACERATION & AGING: Furmint from Mád was destemmed, followed with 2 weeks on the skins and basket pressed. The rest is a field blend co-fermented in egg shaped fermenters.

ALCOHOL: 11.5%

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.3 g/l

ACIDITY: 6.2 g/l



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