

2017 Tokaj Nobilis Pezsgő Brut

Tokaj, Hungary

Born and raised in Tokaj, Sarolta possess a strong maternal sensibility and keen awareness of the changes and challenges facing Tokaj - one of the best known yet most forgotten wine regions in the world. Beginning her career studying at the University of Horticulture in Budapest, she also took advantage of the recently fallen Iron Curtain and spent time in France, Italy and Spain. Upon returning to Hungary, she worked at Gróf Degenfeld and soon after became the inaugural winemaker at Béres Winery in nearby Erdőbénye overseeing 45 ha of vineyards. Preferring closer attention to detail and the total knowledge inherent in small-scale winemaking, she left and planted her own 6 ha in 1999. In 2005 she converted a traditional 19th century house into a winery and cellar in the middle of the town of Bodrogkeresztúr. In addition to dry and off dry bottlings of Furmint, Hárslevelű, Kövérszőlő, and Sarga Muskotály, she is also making incredible late harvest and Tokaji Aszú 5 and 6 Puttonyos. All her wines embrace a myriad of volcanic soils with remarkable aromatics and balanced acidity.



VINEYARDS

Barakonyi Vineyard Barakonyi rests on the backside of Fortress Hill (Varhegy) just north of the town of Bodrogkislalud and very close to the Zemplén forest. Originally classified in 1737, the name has origins dating back to the 14th century. The main component of the soil is rhyolite detritus locally referred to "powder." The top soil is very thin, hummus poor, and often absent in most places. The vineyard is planted to roughly 38% Furmint, 23% Hárslevelű, Kövérszőlő 28%, and 11% Yellow Muscat. Csirke-mál Vineyard The soil here is a mixture of heavy clay with exposed volcanic tuffa and hardened black andesite. Given its distance from the river and the exposure to wind, botrytis is kept at bay making it ideal for dry wine production. The previous owners left it about 30 years ago and it lay largely fallow until Sarolta starting bringing it back to life in 2004. Today the vineyard consists of roughly 75% Furmint, 10% Kövérszőlő, and 15% Sarga Muskotály.

WINE MAKING

Grapes are hand harvested and sorted both in the vineyard and in the winery. All single vineyard wines are fermented with native yeasts in 220 liter Hungarian Zemplén Oak barrels and aged on the lees a minimum of 8 months until bottling. Half the barrels are new while the rest are two to three years old. The overall approach is minimal intervention, avoiding botrytis in the vineyard, focusing on a healthy spontaneous fermentation, and letting the vintage decide the balance of sugar, acidity and fruit.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

Sparkling wines are a growing category across the board in Tokaj. You're never reaching for acidity here, and many sites are adjusting to climate change where botrytis is less and less consistent. There is also of course a faster turn around in the cellar compared to the naturally sweet wines. Sarolta has been tinkering with traditional method wines since 2009, and was among the very first to do everything in house herself. She opted out of taking the aromatic route with grapes like Hárslevelű or Sárgamuskotály, and has instead focused on Furmint. Furmint comes with the risk of having way too much lactic acid if picked too early or waiting too long and having way too much sugar. In addition to the pick date, she's also very meticulous about destemming and removing all traces of stem. You say pedicel, I say peduncle... In any case, the base wine is never pumped and pressed very light and low. Only free run juice. Fermented in stainless steel, the secondary fermentation landed it at the upper end (11 g/l RS) of the Brut spectrum, but Furmint needs it. This is a great BTG option and tastes like Tokaj first and sparkling wine second.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Tokaj (Tok-eye)

GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Furmint

CLIMATE: Continental (hot summers & cold winters)

SOILS: Heavy clay, andesite and rhyolite tuff

MACERATION & AGING: First fermentation in a tank, second fermentation in bottle.

ALCOHOL: 11.6%

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 11.7 g/l

ACIDITY: 6.16 g/l



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