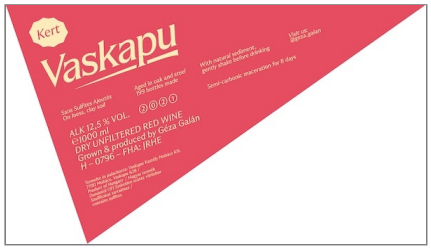
# 2021 Vaskapu Kastély Kert Liter

## *Pécs, Hungary*




I first visited Pécs in 2015 to seek out its modern calling card grape Cirfandli (aka Zierfandler). We never pulled the trigger on any Cirfandli, but the city and region made a distinct impression. While Géza Galán is not originally from the area, his wife Ibolya has her roots in Lánycsók (A girl's kiss), a small village a stone's throw from Mohács. In 2015 Géza started making a little hobby wine in a small cellar that quickly turned into an obsession. Three years later they made a leap of faith by buying the Vaskapu Kastély (Iron Gate Castle) in Mohács. Géza wants his wines to express the "Genius loci" of Southern Hungary, which basically translates to the protective spirit of a place. Farming biodynamically and low intervention in the cellar are the means to this end. He also has two sons, Gáspár 3, and Zsigmond 2, who are ever present at the winery and in the vineyards. This is the kind of family that encapsulates the best of the new generation of growers in Hungary. They are making wine that has long term family legacy in mind in both the health of the soil, the wines, and celebrating the culture of the area. According to Géza, "For me winemaking is life, it is the harmony between the human and nature, the responsibility for sustainability and our smaller societies."

### VINEYARDS

The Pécs appellation is located south of Budapest, west of the Danube, and just above the Croatian and Serbian borders. The sub Mediterranean climate, cool and constant breezes from the Danube, and the protective shelter of Mecsek Mountain culminate in a long, healthy, and warm growing season and little to no risk of frost, great conditions for organic/biodynamic viticulture. The bedrock is volcanic, but it's the loess, clay, forest loam, and extremely high lime content that drives the structure of the wines. Historically, Furmint and Hárslevelű were both planted. Other traditional grapes included Kadarka, Olaszrizling, Traminer, Sárgamuskotály, and later Királyleánynya. During the early 1830s Cirfandli came in from Austria and became immensely popular. Given the climate, reds like Kékfrankos, Cabernet Franc, Pinot Noir, and Merlot have taken hold since the early 1990s. Géza's 2.5 hectares encompass a mix of the past and present. Everything is farmed according to biodynamic principles including no tilling and organic spraying is kept to a minimum. There's one hectare each of Kadarka and Cabernet Sauvignon and the rest is a mix of Hárslevelű, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. He's working on new plantings of Kadarka, Kékfrankos, Olaszrizling and Rajnai (Rhine) Rizling. Géza also purchases some organically farmed Grüner Veltliner from Mohács and some Biodynamically farmed Kékfrankos from Szekszárd. 2019 is his first commercial vintage at just under four thousand bottles in total production.

### WINE MAKING

Géza has been following, visiting, tasting and gaining a lot of inspiration from the natural wine movements in both Slovakia and Austria. Organic and or Biodynamic viticulture is paramount, and in the cellar everything is done by hand. Relying mostly on hand destemmed and whole cluster spontaneous fermentation, zero machinery, and gravity, they use a mix of Hungarian and French oak and some steel (mostly for settling/aging). Bottled unfined/unfiltered, there are zero additions apart from 10-20 ppm of SO2 at bottling and many wines are without any. The 2020 vintage is completely without additions.

### NOTES & PAIRINGS

Kert translates to "garden," so this is basically a "Gemischter Satz" with a little extra for good measure. 60% is 10 day whole cluster semi-carbonic Kékfrankos blended with 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot which are both open vat fermented for 12 days. The final 5% is direct pressed Kadarka and Hárslevelű. This has more grip than the previous vintage, but the aromatic lift from the Kadarka and Hárslevelű make it more of a crunchy grip than a drying one. The final blend was aged in fibertank and oak barrels for 8 months. Bottled unfiltered, unclarified and without added SO2. 2780 bottles produced.

### ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Pécs
GRAPE COMPOSITION: Kékfrankos, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot
CLIMATE: Humid Continental
SOILS: loess, clay, and forest loam
MACERATION & AGING: 60% is 10 day whole cluster semi-carbonic Kékfrankos blended with 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot which are both open vat fermented for 12 days.
ALCOHOL: 12.6%
RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.2 g/l
ACIDITY: 6.7 g/l

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