

2024 Bott Frigyes Kadarka

Južnoslovenská, Slovakia

After WWI, Hungary lost around 71% of its territory to Romania, Ukraine, Czechoslovakia (Slovakia), Yugoslavia (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia) and Austria. Over 3 million ethnic Hungarians found themselves outside of Hungary with significant outcome on the grapes and traditions that never stopped or are now coming back to life beyond the present day borders of Hungary. On the southern slopes of the Mužsla Hills in Slovakia surrounded by the river Garam, Danube and the Ipoly rivers, is one such example: Bott Frigyes. Even the neighboring village of Béla is where Judit and József Bodó of Bott Pince began their winemaking career (ethnically Hungarian but born in Slovakia) before moving to Tokaj. Long story short, a whole bunch of things all came together with Bott Frigyes coupled with great farming, honest winemaking, and delicious wines.

VINEYARDS

Bott and his son Frici cultivate 10 hectares of vineyards next to the River Garam, at 250 metres above sea level. They are growing Furmint, Hárslevelű (Lipovina in Slovakia), Juhfark, Kékfrankos, Kadarka (cuttings are incidentally from Balla Géza in Romania who is also ethnically Hungarian), Tramini, Pinot Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, Riesling, Sárfahér and Olaszrizling. The soil is clay on top of volcanic bedrock, which is also rich in limestone and minerals.

WINE MAKING

The winemaking is certainly structured in terms of technique, although all fermentations are native, there's zero temperature control, longer lees aging, natural settling, all oak barrel (some amphora), and bottling unfinned and unfiltered with a small amount of SO2 at bottling as the only addition. For the reds, they do use the "Hamburger" method which is essentially alternating layers of whole cluster (foot stomped), topped with whole cluster, then topped with a destemmed and hand crushed layer. This achieves a semi-carbonic quality to the wines without developing too much of the banana or bubble gum often associated with carbonic. For the skin contact whites, it's often no more than a week, and they are careful to keep it worked over to prevent VA and other flaws. The winemaking overall is tied to tradition but with a nod to modern hygiene in the cellar.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

This is the grape that originally brought us to the family. It's also the most dark-fruited, northern, and botrytis free Kadarka in the portfolio. Later ripening and thin skinned, it's ideally suited for the Hamburger method (layer of foot trodden juice, another layer of whole cluster, and topped off with a layer of hand destemmed berries). After 3-4 weeks held in these layers, it's pressed off to barrel for another 9 months of aging before being bottled unfinned and unfiltered. No shortage of acidity this far north, the ripeness of the skins leaves a lot of spice while the partial whole berry fermentation makes the aromatics pop. Super elegant without being overly polished.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Južnoslovenská

GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Kadarka

CLIMATE: Continental (hot summers & cold winters)

SOILS: clay on top of volcanic bedrock

MACERATION & AGING: Hamburger method (layer of foot trodden juice, another layer of whole cluster, and topped off with a layer of hand destemmed berries) for 3-4 weeks then aged in barrel for 9 months.

ALCOHOL: 13%



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