

2020 Bott Frigyes Riesling

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 unfiltered 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

While this is undeniably Rhine Riesling (aka Rizling Rýnsky), it's clearly a long way from the Rhine Valley. There's high acidity and a little kiss of residual sugar, but beyond that this is very much dictated by another place. The winemaking is extremely straightforward. Whole bunch pressed, fermented in oak and then aged for 10 months in 500L barrels. Bottled unfiltered and unfiltered with minimal sulfites. There's no extended maceration despite having some great weight and texture, and there's some sweetness on the nose, but nothing on the palate. This is like paying extra for the rough cut on top tier lumber because you want the rustic look while also getting the highest quality. For those that love Riesling this will be a fun head scratcher, and for everyone else it will be delicious on its own merits.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Južnoslovenská

GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Riesling

CLIMATE: Continental (hot summers & cold winters)

SOILS: clay on top of volcanic bedrock

MACERATION & AGING: Whole bunch pressed, fermented in oak and then aged for 10 months in 500L barrels.

ALCOHOL: 13.7%

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 3.7 g/l

ACIDITY: 7.2 g/l



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