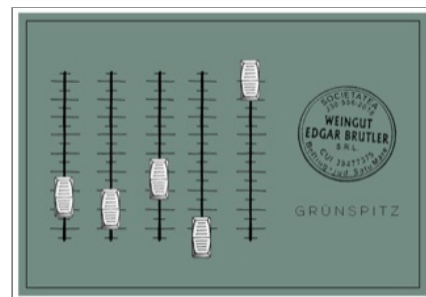


2019 Edgar Brutler Grünspitz

Crișana, Romania

Transylvania has always been a bit of white whale for us. I don't think you can get further away from what we think of as Europe while still being in Europe. This is where horse carts often outnumber cars and self-sufficient agriculture is the norm. Literally translating to "beyond the forest," it also has an unbroken winegrowing tradition going back at least 2000+ years. Dionysus is believed to be born in Thrace (modern day Romania). It's a surreal place where the language is Balkan Romance, the food is Hungarian with some key distinctions, and where the imprints of both the Middle Ages and Communism are frozen in time. Today, Romania is 5th under vine in Europe, but many estimate that the average vineyard holding is 0.2 hectares, and just over 30% of the country's vineyards are farmed in 10 hectares or more. Romania is essentially a net importer. In a feeble attempt to change these export figures, we'd like to introduce our first Romanian producer: Weingut Edgar Brutler. Edgar's family was a part of the Swabian migration (hence Weingut) to Transylvania and arrived in the 1850s from Stuttgart. Edgar originally started down a musical path with violin at 6 followed by guitar at 16. He then studied oenology at Geisenheim because of the Romanian family vineyard. As Edgar puts it, "I was born there, my family lived there, my family worked these vineyards and walked these roads and paths." Music still plays a big part in his life and an image of sound board levels adorn the label of the Grünspitz. Founding Weingut Edgar Brutler in 2018, his focus is on organic farming, native grapes, old vine field blends, and making wines based on smelling, tasting, and feeling rather than numbers and analytics.



VINEYARDS

The village of Beltiug is in Satu Mare County in the Crișana region. This northwestern corner of Romania has a temperate continental climate, not as much Adriatic influences as Miniș in the south, but surprisingly warm for what we think of as Northern Romania. The soil is really thick loam (20-30 meters) and plantings date back as far as 1926 and as recent as last year. Edgar's grandfather planted their original 4 hectares. The traditional grapes of the area are Fetească Regală/Königliche Mädchentraube, Fetească Albă, Welschriesling, Mustoasa de Măderat, Furmint, Kékfrankos/Blaufränkisch, and their signature grape of Grünspitz. He has new plantings of Baras and Juhfark in the works. There are a number of unidentifiable grapes in the older field blends as well. Farming is without herbicides, chemical-synthetic sprays and mineral fertilizers. Spacing is 1 meter so everything is labor intensive and must be done by hand.

WINE MAKING

Given his formal education at Geisenheim and working at larger more technical wineries, Edgar has a firm grasp of the science and the predetermined recipes needed for those kinds of wines. It's also incredibly useful information when stripping everything away and has allowed him to open up his mind, take risks, and activate the same part of his brain that brings him joy from music. Except for his pét-nat where he measures density to ensure bottles aren't exploding, he's not picking, pressing or doing anything based on the numbers. All wines are spontaneously fermented in a 200 year old cellar, unfiltered, and the only addition is SO2 (10-20ppm) at bottling and many are without any additions at all. He's also adamant about the control and feedback from using a basket press. Especially for the Grünspitz where a long and high pressure pressing is essential in managing the tannins and extraction. There's no cell phone reception or internet in the cellar. Deep and quiet.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

Apart from a small vineyard they left at the first project, their 12 year old .8 hectare vineyard is the only other vineyard of Grünspitz in the world. It was once grown in the field blends of the area, but it was Edgar's grandfather that decided to bring it back to life. They've taken cuttings to Austria for DNA analysis to confirm. The grape is late ripening, small berried, and has thick skins. It needs a long pressing with high pressure to manage the tannins and extra time in bottle to come together. Bottled after 15 months in stainless steel with zero additions, it's rustic at first, but opens up into one of the more unique whites we've come across.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Edgar Brutler
APPELLATION: Crișana
VINTAGE: 2019
GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Grünspitz
CLIMATE: Continental (hot summers & cold winters)
SOILS: Clay, loam, sand
MACERATION & AGING: Aged 15 months in stainless steel
ALCOHOL: 11.5%
RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.87 g/l
ACIDITY: 6.23 g/l



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PO Box 1270 | Los Altos, California 94023 | USA
www.DanchAndGranger.com
info@DanchAndGranger.com