# 2019 Edgar Brutler Vinul Casei Alb

## *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. 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. Just over 30% of its vineyards are farmed in 10 hectares or more. Romania is essentially a net importer. In an attempt to change these 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 studied violin at 6 followed by guitar at 16 and then studied oenology at Geisenheim. As Edgar puts it, "I was born there, my family lived there, my family worked these vineyards and walked this roads and paths." 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

Edgar had formal winemaking education at Geisenheim and worked at larger wineries in Austria. There's 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. There's no cell phone reception or internet in the cellar. Deep and quiet.

### NOTES & PAIRINGS

If you can't find a solid village wine, then it's probably best to move on to the next village. Vinul Casei alb (white house wine) gives you every reason to stay and dig into this place. This is from a small field blend planted in 1926 consisting mostly of Grünspitz, Fetească Regală, and Welschriesling. A liter is the smallest possible vessel for this kind of wine. The village of Beltiug has over 300 private cellars and Edgar loves to stroll around, talk to people, and is inevitably offered some wine. There's something aromatic and distinct that's shared in all of these wines. As Edgar puts it, "while drinking it I want you to imagine how you are standing in a small private cellar while the winemaker tells you about his worries and joys. A moment when you can forget everything else – these are some of the favorite hours of my life. The label might seem very basic. Basic like the wines you could find and drink in Beltiug. But the emotional complexity of these wines is deeper and more extensive than you can imagine."

### ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Edgar Brutler
APPELLATION: Crișana
VINTAGE: 2019
GRAPE COMPOSITION: White Field Blend
CLIMATE: Continental (hot summers & cold winters)
SOILS: Clay, loam
ALCOHOL: 11.3%
RESIDUAL SUGAR: 0.45 g/l
ACIDITY: 5.4 g/l

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