

2019 Heimann & Fiai Kékfrankos Bati Kereszt

Szekszárd, Hungary

The 2018 vintage marks the beginning of a dual Heimann family approach. Heimann and Fiai (Heimann and Sons) and Heimann Családi (Heimann Family). The Heimann family has been pioneering in bringing many clones of Kadarka (and some Kékfrankos as well) back to life from the verge of extinction during Communism. This is a grape that once covered over 60,000 hectares in Hungary was less than 400 hectares in the early 1990s. With 20+ years of lessons learned about which clones work best and where they should be planted, it's finally become time for Heimann & Fiai to focus exclusively on Kadarka and Kékfrankos. Along with conversion to organic farming, the winemaking also reflects a different approach geared towards freshness and aromatics. Multiple passes for picking, using more whole clusters, open vat fermentation, less extraction, and moving the wine manually in lieu of pumps. All fermentation are spontaneous, zero fining, coarsely filtered if at all, and a minimal use of SO₂ at bottling. They are also aging wines in clay in addition to Hungarian oak and stainless steel.



VINEYARDS

The Szekszárd appellation was originally established by the Celts, flourished under the Romans and survived Turkish occupation due to the high tax revenue the wines generated. Once the Turks were pushed out, modern day Serbians were being pushed north by said Turks and brought the Kadarka grape with them. The very wine savvy Swabians were also incentivized to resettle the area. Where the Serbians brought a key red grape, the Swabians brought superior winemaking skills. Their influence is still felt today. Case in point, the Heimann family is intensely proud of their Swabian roots and have been making wine here since 1758. Up until this point, the appellation was almost entirely white wine. Since then, Kékfrankos and a variety of Bordeaux varieties have taken firmly to the region. They survived under Communism while many of the native white and red grapes did not fair so well, namely Kadarka. Heimann farms roughly 23 hectares spread over the Baranya, Porkoláb and Iván Valleys in addition to some rare hillside plantings on Batti. The soil is overwhelmingly loess in Szekszárd, but you can also find Terra Rosa (iron rich soil also dominant in Istria, Croatia) if you get deep enough. If you're approaching the appellation from the Great Plain to the East, you first hit the River Danube and then the first hills are Szekszárd. It's a fairly dramatic change in the landscape and an obvious place for multiple exposures. Currently most plantings are Kékfrankos with smaller amounts of Merlot, Cab Franc, Tannat, Sagrantino (from Umbria!) and now more than ever replantings of Kadarka are underway.

WINE MAKING

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NOTES & PAIRINGS

This Kékfrankos is emblematic of a red line that runs through many Hungarian reds. It's aromatic, spicy, refreshing, and counterintuitively has grip where you might otherwise expect more of a carbonic softness. It's also light in terms of weight without having that picked-too-earliness quality. Because of all of this, it does require some food in a way that the estate (Birtok) wines arguably do not. The Bati Kereszt vineyard is north facing, surrounded by forest, and so cool here that the fruit is always 2-3 weeks later than any other site. Maceration ranges from 5-22 days, light pump-overs, delicate pressing and zero pumps. All marc is moved by hand. Aged in both tank and barrel for 8 months. The 2-3 g/l or residual sugar is not felt in the texture at all (tannins are dry), but more like the subtle natural sweetness you get from roasted beets or braised red cabbage.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Szekszárd (SekSard)

GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Kékfrankos

CLIMATE: Cool continental with dry warm summers

SOILS: Thick loess with red clay layers

EXPOSURE: North facing

MACERATION & AGING: Aged in both tank and barrel for 8 months.

ALCOHOL: 14%

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 2.8 g/l

ACIDITY: 5.1 g/l



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