

2020 Maurer Blaufrankisch

Fruška Gora, Serbia

When we first visited Oszkár Maurer in 2015, he only had a few wines to show. Since then, we've witnessed plans like expanding his production into the Fruška Gora, opening a tasting room/restaurant, and redefining what many of these nearly forgotten grapes taste like, while always keeping a close eye on the traditions of both his grandparents and the region's 2000+ years of documented winemaking history. His aesthetic and philosophy are starting to permeate everything above and beyond the vineyards and cellar. The Maurer family has been producing wine for four generations. They now farm 6 hectares in the wine region of Szabadka directly south of the Hungarian-Serbian border, and another 10 acres in the Fruška Gora mountain district in Syrmia, 40 miles away from Belgrade and bordered by the Danube River to the north.

VINEYARDS

Technically Maurer is in the Subotičko – Horgoškoj region in northern Serbia, but it was formerly a part of Hungary's Csongrád up until 1920. The population is mostly Hungarian and viticulture knows no borders. Names of grapes and places are therefore constantly changing from Serbian to Hungarian and vice-versa. Oszkár farms about 6 hectares here including the oldest known Kadarka vineyard in the world planted in 1880 in addition to other plantings in 1912 and older plots of Kövidinka from 1925. The rest of the plantings include grapes like Olaszrizling, Slankamenka, Ezerjő, Kadarka and Kékfrankos. There's also few international varieties including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Pinot Noir. Oszkár also has 9 hectares in the Srem region a little further south. Hungarians called this area Szerém, the Croats Srijem (part of it still spills into Croatia), and the Romans Syrmia. The main feature, apart from the Danube River, is the Fruška Gora Mountain. Once an island in the Pannonian Sea, the soil is volcanic with a marine layer. Some call it the "holy mountain" or "Serbian Athos" because at one point there were over 30 monasteries of which 16 still stand today. Needless to say, there is something special about this place and winegrowing is documented back to the 1200s. Planting in broad strokes, the Subotičko is largely defined by sandy soils and old vines, and the Szerémség by volcanic soils heavily influenced by the Danube River. Everything is farmed organically with zero absorbable chemicals. High density stake trained vines are the most typical and cover crops are natural. Everything is worked by hand or with the help of horses. Harvest is managed with local labor and the help of family and friends.

WINE MAKING

Everything is handpicked in small bins and all fermentations are spontaneous (primary and secondary). The use of older oak, small and large format is paramount. There are no additives to any of the wines apart from SO2 at bottling for select wines. Maurer basically has two tiers: Rege and Maurer. The Rege wines have low SO2 (25-40ppm) and the Maurer line is zero compromise with zero additions of any kind. Wines are typically only racked once before bottling and everything is bottled unfiltered.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

This is a rare bit of something extra. Normally all of the Blaufrankisch goes into the Crazy Lud Red. This vintage was so healthy and productive that there was little leftover that didn't make the final blend. Sourced from vineyards in the Fruška Gora, this was open vat fermented with 12 days of skin contact followed by 12 months in smaller format oak barrels. Apart from a variety of Kadarka and the Crazy Lud Red, there isn't much red to go around. It's also a grape that can be readily found in Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, and even in Slovakia and Croatia. This is a rare opportunity both in this being available and in the limited amount we have to see Oszkár's handling of it.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Fruška Gora

GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Blaufrankisch

CLIMATE: Mild and temperate

SOILS: Volcanic bedrock

MACERATION & AGING: 12 days maceration in open vats, 12 months aged in small oak barrels

ALCOHOL: 13.6%

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 0.5 g/l

ACIDITY: 5.92 g/l



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