

2021 Maurer Kadarka

Subotica, Serbia

When we first visited Oszkár Maurer in 2015, he only had a few wines to show. Since then, he expanded his production into the Fruška Gora, opened a tasting room/restaurant, and redefined 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.

VINEYARDS

The Maurer family has been producing wine for four generations. They now farm 6 hectares in the Subotičko – Horgoškoj region in northern Serbia 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, Ezerjó, Kadarka and Kékfrankos. There's also few international varieties including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Pinot Noir. The region 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 Oszkár also has 9 hectares in the Srem region a little further south. 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. Called the "holy mountain" or "Serbian Athos", there were over 30 monasteries at one point, of which 16 still stand today. Needless to say, there is something special about this place and winegrowing is documented back to the 1200s. 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 the grape that brought us down into Serbia in the first place. The parent grapes are thought to be Papazkarasi originating from the border between Bulgaria and Turkey and Skardarsko which is native to the border area between Albania and Montenegro. Ottoman wars pushed Kadarka up into the Hungarian Kingdom and spread into modern Romania, Slovakia, and Croatia. At one point it made up around 60% of all red plantings but fell to below 1% by the end of Communism due to it not being fit for industrial farming. Oszkár and a handful of other growers like Heimann & Fiai, Bott Frigyes, Grál, Vaskapu, Sziegl, and others are bringing it back to life along with dozens of other pre-phyloxera clones. Maurer's version is a benchmark for us. It's essentially the youngest vines from years of massale selections from plantations dating from 1880-1912. Bush trained, very low yields (.5 kg), a touch of botrytis (which he embraces), destemmed, open vat fermented, two punchdowns a day, and then barreled down to 350 L used Hungarian oak for 12 months. Unfined, unfiltered, and with a small addition of SO₂ (25ppm) at bottling.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Subotica

GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Kadarka

CLIMATE: Mild and temperate

SOILS: Sand

MACERATION & AGING: Open vat fermented, and then barreled down to 350 L used Hungarian oak for 12 months

ALCOHOL: 12.2%

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 0.56 g/l

ACIDITY: 6.27 g/l



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