

2022 Maurer Sott White

Fruška Gora, 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, Ezerjő, 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 a first from Oszkár and very much reflective of his desire to find his own way through the wine world. There's already a very similar product called "Bermet" in Serbia. It's essentially a predecessor to Vermouth. While likely originating somewhere in India or China, the mixing of wormwood, herbs, spices and some sort of distillate started in the East and made its way West. The modern day versions are overly fortified and generally not of a quality Oszkár wishes to associate. There's also a very old style of wine in neighboring Hungary called "Ürmösbor," literally translating to "wormwoodish." This style dates back in the 15th century over two hundred years before Vermouth came to Turin in Italy. Wormwood is also the German word "Wermut" which is where the French and Italian pronunciations come from as well. All that being said, Oszkár didn't want to create a Serbian Ürmösbor either. In comes "Sott," a name that has zero history behind it, but was instead the first letters to the Harry Styles song "Sign of the Times" that he was listening to trying to find a name. It is not fortified, but is instead 100% late harvest Furmint, mostly dehydrated with some botrytis macerated with wormwood, herbs and spices all foraged from the hills of the Fruška Gora. All barrel fermented and aged, it's incredibly unique, oddly familiar at times, and without added liquor, still very much alive in the bottle.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Fruška Gora

GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Furmint

CLIMATE: Mild and temperate

SOILS: Volcanic

MACERATION & AGING: Late harvest Furmint with some botrytis macerated with wormwood, herbs and spices. Barrel fermented.

ALCOHOL: 14%



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