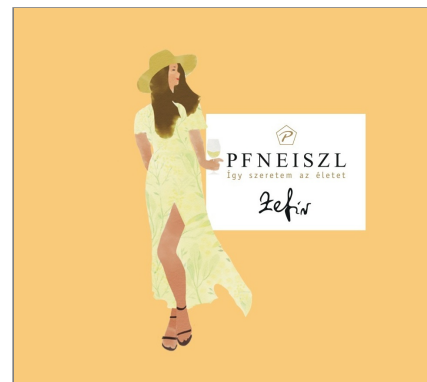


2021 Pfneisl Skin Contact Zefir

Sopron, Hungary

The young and charming sisters Birgit and Katrin Pfneisl, partners in Pfneiszl Winery are responsible for the equally charming Kékfrankos (AKA Blaufränkisch). Birgit is responsible for the vineyards and winemaking, Katrin marketing and sales. Born and raised in Austria, their grandparents fled their vineyards in Sopron to escape Communism and settled just across the border in Kleinmutschen, Burgenland, where the “z” was dropped from their surname. In 93’ the Pfneisl family re-acquired their Hungarian vineyards. Having since established Weingut Pfneisl, one of Austria’s premier red wine estates, Birgit and Katrin’s father Franz Pfneisl and his brothers, decided to give these ancestral vineyards to the sisters. After completing her University studies, Birgit set out to work far away from home. She made wine in Italy, Australia, New Zealand, South America and the US before returning home with dreams of an organic estate. Starting with the inaugural 04’ vintage, the Pfneiszl vineyards were farmed organically, in 09’ they were certified Organic. In addition to the fine Kékfrankos, Birgit makes the delightful frizzante Sparkelina, a stylish Merlot, and a range of thoughtful cuvees.



VINEYARDS

Sopron is an old Hungarian wine village just west of the southern tip of Lake Fertő (Neusiedler See). The prized vineyards around it are mostly Austrian, though what is Hungarian is ideal. Most of the Pfneiszl vineyards are in the dry farmed, slate and sand stone site of Kräftner. This south east facing slope was replanted about 12 years ago, healthy plots of old vines were left intact. Varieties include, numerous clones of Kékfrankos, some as old as 35 years, Merlot, Zenit (a local white grape), and small amounts of Sangiovese, Malbec, Zinfandel and Shiraz. Birgit employs a wide range of organic techniques ranging from standard practices like native crop cover to less conventional methods like insect pheromones. Birgit’s decision to pursue organic farming was at first controversial. Idealistic in nature, organic farming in reality is challenging and risky. So far, Birgit’s idealism and intuition are paying off.

WINE MAKING

Grapes are sorted and de-stemmed at the winery. Fermentation is conducted exclusively with native yeast. The Classic line of wines are fermented and aged in stainless steel while premium wines are aged in a combination of new and used oak, mostly of Hungarian or French stock. Malolactic fermentation is encouraged to finish though not demanded and a small amounts if residual sugar are permitted if a wine does not ferment completely dry. Most wines are lightly filtered.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

The aromatics of Zefir often trigger a strong olfactory memory of my 8th grade white flower heavy prom corsage, but the acidity, weight and light skin contact tie the whole thing together. This is a little known grape in Hungary (200 hectares total) and is likely the only 100% version exported to the US. It was created in Hungary in the early 1950s during the Soviet dictated COOP era. The name itself is also emblematic of this heyday of the Eastern Bloc. A number of other crossings like Zenit, Zengő, Zeus, and Zéta were also created in the early 1950s by Ferenc Király. All of these “Z” grapes were inspired by the Greek God of the wind and the messenger of Spring "Zephyr." At the time, it was thought that the crossing of Zefir was Hárslevelű and Leányka. Others believed that instead of Leányka, the other parent was Fetească Albă. Regardless, recent DNA has disproved both claims and the full parentage is unknown. Nevertheless, with 10 days of maceration in open vats, full MLF and bottled unfiltered, the extra skin contact tames the extremely high acidity (most of it goes into sparkling wines elsewhere in the country) and still holds onto the explosion of white flowers.



ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Sopron

GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Zefir

CLIMATE: Continental

SOILS: Heavy loam soil

MACERATION & AGING: 10 days of maceration in open vats.

ALCOHOL: 10.5%

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1 g/l

ACIDITY: 5.3 g/l

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