

2022 réka.koncz A Change of Heart

Mátra, Hungary

This is one of those leaps of faith that make the wine world worth it. I had seen these wines popping up here and there in Copenhagen and then a contact from Hungary said he visited and was blown away. As it turns out, Annamária was heading to California with her husband Sven in a few months. Catherine and I ended up taking them around to meet and taste with Evan at Ruth Lewandowski, Tracey at Donkey and Goat, Ryan and Megan at Rhyme, and Duncan and Nathan at Arnot-Roberts. It was surreal to host a winemaker in CA with no real idea about their wines but instead just who they are. Annamária is both soft spoken and careful with her words, a nice counterpoint to the headstrong and risk heavy nature of her viticulture and winemaking. She has a degree in Horticultural Engineering in Debrecen (Hungary) and a Masters in Agriculture (microbiology/yeast evaluation) in Copenhagen, Denmark. After a series of internships and living in the natural wine centric community in Copenhagen, she realized she had something really special right where she grew up. Her hometown is called Vásárosnamény near the Ukrainian border in Eastern Hungary. She came back to purchase 3 hectares of old vines near the village of Barabás. Since her first release in 2016, she is the only commercial producer in a once highly regarded but currently forgotten region. A part of the Bükk region, the climate and soils are similar to Tokaj which is about a 1.5 hours drive due west.



VINEYARDS

Walking in her vineyard up a long dirt road with thick forests on both sides is surreal but also seeing stakes and dilapidated old vines growing in the thick woods as well. She has 40-100 year old vines of Királyleányka, Hárslevelű, Sárga Muskotály (yellow muscat), Rajnai Rizling (Rhine Riesling) and Furmint. Many with 6-10 foot arms sprawling out with multiple birds nests burrowed in. The place is buzzing with birds, bugs, and even some openings to badger dens. Then you reach an obelisk with the colors of the Hungarian flag. This is the border with Ukraine and within eyesight, you can also see occupied guard towers on the next few hills over. The biological and geopolitical diversity here is palpable. The soil here is intensely volcanic. Vitreous rhyolite lava, perlite (similar to Tarcal in Tokaj), and plagioclase rhyolite (high in silicate) form most of the layers. Closer to the surface it's dominated by loamy loess. The wines are not lacking in aromatics or acidity and are perfect for handling both sparkling production as well as mild to more intense skin maceration.

WINE MAKING

As for winemaking, she has a wooden basket press and mostly larger 1000L top plastic fermenters and a few pristine used barrels she purchased from Tokaji Hétszölő. Grapes are usually destemmed, foot crushing is standard, and punchdowns are the main techniques. Wines are typically fermented and aged in plastic until bottling.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

On our last visit we were treated to a vertical of this wine. Despite how ethereal and delicate it is, age suits it very well. It is 100% sourced from a certified organic grower in the Mátra appellation (Nagyréde). The soil and site are super close to Losonci, so a thin layer of brown top soil over dense volcanic andesite. 50% is gently crushed with a short 4-5 days of maceration with the stems. This lot continues fermentation in fiberglass and plastic. The other 50% is very similar to the hamburger method – Crushed and destemmed berries layered with whole uncrushed bunches with enough juice to support 14 days together. It's then basket pressed and blended. On the Hungarian label, she's not allowed to call this "Kékfrankos" because it lacks a protected origin. She just calls it "Kék...nkos." In any case, the color looks more like a Kadarka/light Gamay at first glance, but its brightness is matched with some texture and structure. Both meditative and ideal for happy hour. Unlike any other Kékfrankos in the portfolio.



ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

APPELLATION: Mátra

GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Kékfrankos

CLIMATE: Continental

SOILS: brown soil over andesite

MACERATION & AGING: Half is macerated for 4-5 days with stems and fermented in fiberglass and plastic. Half is crushed and destemmed and layered with whole uncrushed bunches for 14 days then basket pressed and blended.

ALCOHOL: 13%

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.3 g/l

ACIDITY: 5.9 g/l

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