

2009 Tinon Dry Szamorodni

Tokaj, Hungary

Although born in the sweet wine appellation of Sainte-Croix-du-Mont in France, Samuel Tinon has chosen Tokaj as the best place to grow wine and raise his three children. He's also quick to remind us all that Tokaj was the favored drink and muse for Leo Tolstói, Pablo Néruda, Honoré de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, Diderot, and Voltaire, so he's already in good company. As the first Frenchman to settle in Tokaj in the modern privatization era, he's also convinced that Tokaj possesses all the same greatness as Bordeaux, Champagne and Burgundy. For the past 500 years Tokaj has demonstrated distinctive terroirs, ideally suited grapes, and unique winemaking styles that according to Samuel, feels "privileged to be part of the active reconstruction of such a Great Wine area...the backbone of a very rich life." After consulting in Australia, Texas, Chile, Italy, traveling to the Jura and Jerez, and an additional 15 years just in Tokaj did he finally start his own production in 2000. What's so compelling about his approach to farming, winemaking and representing Tokaj as a whole is that according to Samuel, "it's hard to find a good balance between paradoxical parameters, like conservatism and modernity, action and inaction, convictions and doubts, choices with short/medium/long term, national and international. It is a permanent challenge with Nature and human relations. And it's full of discoveries." Keeping these sentiments in mind, his wines are among the most transportative, delicious and intellectual we've encountered. He also covers the entire range of traditional Tokaj from Dry Szamorodni, Sweet Szamorodni, Tokaji Aszú, and finally Eszencia. That said, what he makes in a given vintage is determined more by the conditions in the vineyard and the cellar than what the market wants. As Samuel says, "It is not I who is driving the wines, the wines are driving me!"

VINEYARDS

Setting up shop in the village of Olaszliszka just north of the village of Tokaj near the banks of the famous Bodrog River, Samuel farms roughly 5 hectares in this area (Határi vineyard) and an additional couple of hectares on the slopes of Mt. Tokaj. The soils on Határi have a 15 million year old volcanic base (tuffa, obsidian), broken up limestone and clay. With 10,000 plants per hectare (90% Furmint, 10% Hárslevelű), and some as old as 90 years, no herbicides or pesticides are used and no tractor usage. Everything is done by hand. As arguably the first classified vineyard appellation system in the world, there is over 500 years of trial and error at work in the region.



NOTES & PAIRINGS

Originally called Ordinárium (ordinary wine) in the 1600's, Főbor (prime wine) after that, and later, due to the immense popularity in the Polish market, Szamorodni (as comes off the vine) became the official name (itself a Polish word) in the early 1800's. The name refers to healthy, shriveled and botrytized grapes all being harvested and fermented together. Dry Szamorodni goes a few steps further by adding Claspodorum cellare (a special mold covering the entire cellar) and a native yeast veil (flor) that protects the wine in barrel. Not only are these yeasts specific to Tokaj's volcanic cellars, but the evaporation rate is also the reverse of Jerez in that alcohol evaporates without water loss so the wines actually lose .5% alcohol each year. Samuel Tinon made his first Szamorodni by mistake and luck: two barrels of 2001 Aszú that seemed destined to spoil and were marked "throw away" developed a veil of yeast over the summer and were changed into Szamorodni. After one night of maceration on the skins, primary fermentation of the wine took about three weeks. After 6 months on the lees, the first blending took place and the resulting wine spent 5 years in 220L barrels with both previously mentioned cellar micro-organisms at work. The final blend was made after these 5 years.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Tinon
APPELLATION: Tokaj
VINTAGE: 2009
GRAPE COMPOSITION: Furmint and Hárslevelű
CLIMATE: Cool Continental
SOILS: Volcanic base (Tuffa, obsidian) and clay
ALCOHOL: 13.8%
RESIDUAL SUGAR: 2.4 g/l
ACIDITY: 5.5 g/l



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