

2024 Toreta Pošip Special

Island of Korčula, Croatia

If you drive out to the end of the Pelješac Peninsula in Southern Dalmatia you can take short ferry ride to the island of Korčula. Lush with pine forests and Mediterranean herbs, wine has been the backbone of the island's economy since before the Greeks. Interestingly and despite being so close to Dubrovnik you will see a relief of St. Mark's Lion (the lion of Venice) on the old city gate. For roughly 400 years up until the early 1800's Korčula was a part of the Venetian Empire. The architecture and food still harken back to that era. There is even a stone statue with inscriptions for regulating the production of wine from 1407. The Toreta story begins with Frano Banicević's great grandfather who not only founded the winery, but dutifully wrote down everything about winemaking and working in the vineyard as well. Today, Frano is picking up where his great grandfather left off. A young winemaker who had his first son during the 2013 harvest, he is pushing himself to better understand the land and build something his son will be proud of. Toreta is also the local name for small round stone shelters built to protect workers from the fierce winds and elements. There are only five of these old structures left on the Island and all of them are on the Toreta property. Although many varieties of grapes are grown on the island (Plavac Mali, Plavac Sivi, Maraština, etc...), this is ground zero for Pošip. This is where the grape was first discovered and where the first appellation for it was designated in 1967. When asked if he is a modern winemaker, Frano responded, "I like [working with] Pošip and Korčula is the home of this grape. So I guess I'm more of a traditionalist." It is truly a unique and delicious wine that is so loved that it's often difficult to get any off of the island.

VINEYARDS

Originally covered with nearly 4000 hectares of grapes, once Phylloxera hit the late 1800's, that number dropped to currently around 450 hectares. During the pre Phylloxera days, 70% was devoted to red grapes. That has now shifted to over 70% white grapes dominated by Pošip. Frano farms roughly 5 hectares in the Smokvica area just below the winery. As you approach the vineyards from the town perched high above, you can see the Adriatic just over the hill. Humidity is an issue, so having the right exposure and protection from these coastal winds is crucial. Pošip is also high in sugar, early ripening, and thin skinned, so avoiding sunburn is equally crucial. The yields are typically around 1.5 kilo per vine and the soil is predominately red and iron rich.

WINE MAKING

Though a young producer with access to far more modern tools than his great grandfather, Frano's approach in the cellar is respectfully restrained. Pošip is by nature a heady grape and Frano works to accentuate the subtleties.



The vintage is hand harvested and fermented entirely in stainless steel and macerated on the skins between 2-6 hours. When the native yeast populations exist, he lets the fermentation go, but will use selected yeasts to guarantee dryness. He's clean and organized in the cellar, but by no means dogmatic.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

The "Special" bottling is from younger vines and spends less time on the skins (2 hours or so). It is an impossibly light and fresh Pošip considering the grape is capable of reaching very high sugar levels. Being able to coax out ripe flavors without the heat and weight is a testament to Frano's winemaking. As the lobster on the label indicates this wine is ideal to drink with just about anything pulled from the sea. Locals pair it with shrimp and tomato pasta, grilled eggplant with capers and creamy pastas with wild fennel. As with all of Frano's wines it is defined by the elemental combination of Mediterranean herbs, thick pine forest, sunshine and sea breeze.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Toreta
APPELLATION: Island of Korčula (Kor-CHEW-la)
GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Pošip (Poe-ship)
CLIMATE: Mediterranean
SOILS: Red iron rich soil
EXPOSURE: Southern
MACERATION & AGING: 2 hours maceration. Cold control fermentation. Selected yeasts. 3 months on the lees after fermentation. Aging in stainless steel for 8 month.
ALCOHOL: 13.2%



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