

2009 Kabaj Rebula

Goriška Brda, Slovenia

On the Northeastern Italian border, 15 miles from the Adriatic, and at the foothills of the Alps lies the Goriška Brda, or the better known 'Collio' in Italian. Hardened remains of an ancient seabed, the soils are rich in marl and flysch and offer an infinite range of vineyard exposures and microclimates. Sadly, when Slovenia became part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the late 1940's, wine production became a state run quantity over quality industry. Since gaining Independence in 1991, private production has resumed, indigenous grapes replanted, and terroir rediscovered. In the late 1980's Katja Kabaj met former French Legionnaire and Bordeaux trained enologist Jean Michel Morel. They married and settled in Katja's family village of Šlovrenc. Living in Slovenia also introduced Jean-Michel to fellow winemaker and neighbor Jasko Gravner. Deeply inspired by Gravner's ancient Qvevri wines, Jean-Michel studied in Georgia, became 1 of 25 producers in the Xeloba Kartuli Association, and now buries his own 3500L Qvevri vessels.

VINEYARDS

Approximately 4800 acres of vineyards are planted in the Goriška Brda, much of it to the local white varieties, Rebula (Ribolla Gialla in Italy), and Sauvignonasse (formerly known as Tocai Friulano). Many French varieties introduced to the region centuries ago also flourish, most notably: Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Blanc, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Kabaj maintains 29 of these acres delegated to 2 primary sites, Šlovrenc and Belo. 70% are planted to white varieties with an average vineyard age of 30 years and a yield of 1.5 kilos per vine. Single Guyot trellising is preferred, but older head-pruned plantings also remain. The primary fertilizer is horse manure.

WINE MAKING

Fermentation is typically conducted in large oak tanks with native yeast, macerated (fermented with the skins) between 1 and 30 days, and once barreled down, malolactic fermentation in barrique follows. Kabaj does not make "fresh wine." Everything, white or red, spends at least 12 months (Amfora is an exception) in their large vaulted cellar room. Jean spends a tremendous amount of his time here. Tasting, planning and ultimately blending. In the deepest point of the cellar, past the barrels, is an exposed wall of natural limestone with a spring whose colors inspire the earthy greens and browns of the Kabaj labels. In addition to artistic inspiration the spring serves a real purpose, of keeping the cellar appropriately humid and ideal for aging wine.



NOTES & PAIRINGS

Rebula has been grown in Brda since the 13th century. Translating to "re-boil," it references the wine's proclivity to going through the secondary, malolactic fermentation. The grapes were hand harvested in late September from the Belo-Vhr and Neblo-Vhr vineyards, de-stemmed, and fermented on the skins for 30 days with wild yeast. Distinctively spicy and orange hued, it has aromas more reminiscent of red wine, including cherry and pepper. 2009 was an exceptional vintage with warmer temperatures than in '08 without sacrificing acidity. A perfect pairing with pork, delicate fish, and the earthiness of mushrooms.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Kabaj (Ka-Bye)

APPELLATION: Goriška Brda (Gor-eesh-Ka Bur-duh)

VINTAGE: 2009

GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Rebula (Re-bohla)

CLIMATE: Mild Sub-Mediterranean

SOILS: Marl and flysch

EXPOSURE: Southern

MACERATION: 30 Days, 2400L Neutral Conoidal Oak

AGING: 12 Months 225L French Oak, 4 months in bottle

ALCOHOL: 12.8% abv

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.5 g/l

ACIDITY: 4.61 g/l



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