

Both Tokaj and Somló are appellations of impossibly diverse volcanic origin and home to the indigenous varieties Furmint and Hárslevelű. Somló is also home to the rustic Juhfark grape and the most serious Olaszrizling (Welschriesling) we've yet encountered. With hundreds of years of wine culture, we hope you are as struck by these captivating and delicious expressions of place and people as we have been. Extremely limited in quantity, this is their US debut.

SOMLÓ

Little appellation, big WINES - Millions of years ago, Somló, Hungary's smallest appellation, was an underwater volcano. Now dormant, its southerly slopes of ancient sea sediment and basalt are home to some of Hungary's steepest, most densely planted vineyards. Minutely divided, these rarely trellised parcels of vines are workable only by hand. The cellars and size of the production are also the smallest in Hungary, and again worked exclusively by hand. Somló's exclusively white wines are typically made from Hárslevelű (Linden Leaf), Furmint, Olaszrizling, or the local rarity Juhfark (Sheep's Tail).

Volcanic soil permeates every sip and the two producers below are the most distinctive we've ever tasted; aromas lean towards dried fruits, dried herbs and rare spices, heady, dense, gripping, chock full of smoky minerality and longevity. For US fans of this sort of thing, they make an unforgettable and rare treat.



Fekete Béla

“The Grand Old Man” of Somló, Fekete Béla, is Somló embodied. To know his wines is to know Somló. Like Spiegelberg, his presence there began as a hobby. While on a trip to buy grapes for his garage production, a farmer offered to sell Fekete his vineyards as he was getting too old to work them himself and Fekete accepted. There must be truth to the pro-ported health giving properties of Somló: at 86, Fekete still tends his 4 hectares of beloved Fehérvári-cru. Care of the vines is his first interest, all work is by hand and the vines are cultivated with little or no synthetic treatments. Careful hand harvesting and sorting is followed by spontaneous fermentation in old, 1200 liter, casks of Hungarian oak, and 2 years aging before bottling. The wines are honest, engaging and highly expressive of the region. Appropriate to open the day they are released, they will likely last for decades and only deepen in their exotic, particularly mineral aroma and texture.

Spiegelberg

In a past life, German/Hungarian István Spiegelberg was a disco DJ and then test driver for BMW. Making a bit of wine in Somló was just a hobby. A few years ago, István traded in the fast lane for the farm. His home/cellar among his 2 hectares of vines has no running water or electricity. István, a self-described “minimal interventionist,” spends most of his times in his vineyards and cellar. Grapes are hand-harvested, mainly by him, then fermented in 500 liter used Hungarian oak barrels with native yeast. All wines age at least 12 to 16 months in large oak barrels to the soothing sounds of Gregorian chamber music. The wines taste almost the same from barrel as bottle. Raw, powerful wines with fractal like depth, impassioned and resonant.

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