

2015 Balla Geza Fetească Neagră

Minis, Romania

Although Romania is one of the biggest wine producing countries in Europe (10th under vine), the relatively small Minis appellation is working on re-claiming its once well deserved fame. It is hard to believe that this old wine region (written accounts of winemaking date back to 1023) in western Romania was once as famous as Hungary's Tokaj. Although almost completely forgotten by the 20th century, it used to be known for delicious silky reds and the "red aszú", a late harvest red wine made from the Cădarca grape. Founded in 1999 in the village of Păuliș, which was originally called "Wine Princess", Balla Géza is devoted to local grapes, restoring former prestige to the appellation as a whole, and putting Romania back on the international wine tourism map. Roughly 20 km from the historic town of Arad in South Western Transylvania, the Minis vineyard is the Northernmost point where the effects of the Adriatic can still be felt - a great climate for red wine production. The nearby Mureș River adds an additional microclimate as well as the granite, diorite (igneous) and mudstone (sedimentary) soils of the region. During Communism, Dr. Géza Balla worked for one of the large state owned wine cooperatives. During his tenure, he held winemaking positions, managerial positions and eventually became the CEO. He knew how things worked from the ground up. Although churning out mostly bulk style wines typical of the era, he was able to see where the best grapes were being grown. Fortunately, just after the 1989 fall of Communism, he was able to purchase some of the best land well below what they were truly worth. Professionally trained as both a horticulturist at the University of Horticulture of Cluj Napoca and with a Ph.D in viticulture from the University of Timisoara, he has researched and written books and articles on wine. He has a historical perspective for before, during and after Communism.

VINEYARDS

Balla Géza currently farms around 120 hectares focusing on traditional grapes from the Carpathian Basin. Whites ranging from Fetească Regală, Mustoasa de Măderat, Olaszrizling and Furmint to reds like Kadarka, Burgund Mare (aka Kékfrankos), and Fetească Neagră, and Kadarisszima (red Aszú!). The vineyards of the Minis are situated in a relatively narrow line in Transylvania about 20 km East from Arad, on the Western foothills of the Southern Carpathians. The soils are granite, diorite, and mudstone, and the influence of the River Mureș is strongly felt. Balla farms 80% red and 20% white wine on 120 hectares. The vines are trained on low cordons.

WINE MAKING

Wines are fermented spontaneously with temperature control. Whites undergo a slow reductive fermentation over two to three months.



Reds ferment at slightly higher temperatures in horizontal tanks before being transferred to oak barrels - a variation of small barrique and large vats. They mature for about two years before getting bottled and aged in bottle for about 6 months before release.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

Fetească Neagră (the "Black girl") is a native variety coming from the Eastern part of Transylvania. This red wine is made by natural fermentation, and was matured in barrels of 5000l. Intensely fruity aromas of sour cherry, blackcurrant and blueberry are mixed with spicy notes. Lovely flavors combined with a lively acidity and soft and round tannins.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Balla Geza
APPELLATION: Minis
VINTAGE: 2015
GRAPE COMPOSITION: 100% Fetească Neagră
CLIMATE: temperate-continental
MACERATION & AGING: Aged in barrels of 5000l
ALCOHOL: 12.8%
RESIDUAL SUGAR: 5.92 g/l
ACIDITY: 5.25 g/l



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