

2011 Bibich Lučica

Skradin, Croatia

The Bibich Winery is located in the hills of Skradin, 5 miles east of the idyllic port city of Šibenik along Croatia's island speckled coast. Across the Adriatic from Italy, it is roughly in line with the wine hills of Tuscany. The vineyards are around the tiny village of Plastovo, and clearly defined by the primitive looking rock pile/walls that are the result of clearing the fields for vines. What plots of soil can be found are just the broken down bits of the solid limestone hills. Although an incredibly picturesque part of Croatia, it was also hard hit during the Yugoslav wars of the early 90's. That was the past, enterprising young wine makers are now building a new future. Today it is impossible to talk about the Mediterranean wine region of Skradin without mentioning Alen Bibić. In many ways he deserves credit for putting Skradin back on the wine map. A life long native he learned to make wine from his grandfather. Today it is his mission to bring the wines of Skradin to international prominence. By doing so he hopes to sustain the long tradition of the indigenous white Debit and red Zinfandel relatives Babić, Plavina and Lasin unique to his home. Alen also has a taste for Grenache and Shiraz, of which he makes surprisingly Rhone-ish examples. Despite the quality of his wines and the acclaim they have received Alen believes that the surface is just being scratched.

VINEYARDS

Alen eats his lunch in the shade of the same tree he would as a child when helping his grandfather in the prized Lučica vineyard planted long ago. Head pruned old vine Debit, it is the source of the premier white wine of Bibich and named after the vineyard. Located in the hills around the tiny village of Plastovo, Lučica and Alen's many other small plots benefit from the dry, sunny conditions that demand little spraying against molds or pests. At night low pressure created by the nearby Adriatic also draws cool air from the easterly mountains which dramatically reduces temperatures and imparts a freshness to the wines. Most vineyards are head pruned and all are dry farmed. Yields range between 1 and 2 kilo per plant, and all harvesting is done by hand.

WINE MAKING

Grapes are delivered to the winery in small plastic crates. With the exception of the the fresh stainless steel fermented Debit, all Bibich wines are fermented with native yeast, sometimes in stainless steel, sometimes in barrique and usually aged in barrel for 12 months or more. Interestingly, Alen ages his white R5 Reserva and red R6 Riserva in American oak barrique. However, and despite the often overwhelming nature of this kind of wood, with Alen's wines it's more like a touch of salt to bring a dish to life. The integration is remarkable, unique in the region, and great with food.



NOTES & PAIRINGS

Lučica is Alen's homage to his grandfather. The fruit is sourced from the single vineyard of old growth Debit his grandfather planted himself. The name is also rumored to have come from Napoleon who rather enjoyed the local wines and would take payment, or "Debit", from the people in exchange for his protection. Debit is Alen's pride, and though he produces more costly wines there are none that speak to his connection with family and wine quite so perfectly as Lučica. Fermented and nurtured in American oak for more than a year, flavors are concentrated, it's warm without being hot, and impossibly unique. Once fully opened, the perfume of desert flowers, scorched rocks and candied citrus demand equally full flavored foods like fig stuffed pork loin or squid ink risotto. Will age very well and best served at cellar temperature.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Bibich
APPELLATION: Skradin
VINTAGE: 2011
GRAPE COMPOSITION: %100 Debit
CLIMATE: Warm Mediterranean
SOILS: Single vineyard Lučica. "Black and grey" sand and clay over a limestone base.
EXPOSURE: Varied
MACERATION & AGING: Native yeast fermentation. Aged 12 + American oak barrique.



To order or get more information call or fax +1 (650) 941-4699.
Blue Danube Wine Company
PO Box 1011 | Los Altos, California 94023 | USA
www.bluedanubewine.com

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