

2011 Eszterbauer *Tüke* Bikavér (Bulls Blood)

Szekszárd, Hungary

After emigrating from Bavaria by 1746, the Eszterbauer family established its vinous roots in the Southern Hungarian wine region of Szekszárd. Located south of Budapest, north of Croatia, and latitudinally between France's Bordeaux and Loire Valley, the ancient loess hills of Szekszárd have been planted to vineyards since before the Celts. It is most famous for its dark spicy red blends, ominously labeled Bikavér or "Bulls Blood." The modern Eszterbauer winery is about honoring the ancient traditions of the region and family. Despite the maddening difficulty the big berried, thin skinned Kadarka gives grape growers, János Eszterbauer makes it his main focus, because it is the most important indigenous variety, and what his grandfather grew, what he grows, and what his children will grow. The exact origin of the grape is unknown but it is believed to have been brought to Szekszárd from modern day Bulgaria by Turks. This strong connection to family and tradition is depicted by the 1930's black and white pictures of his family in the cellar and the vineyards that serve as the labels for their expansive line of wines. In addition to multiple varietal bottlings of Kadarka, Kadarka plays a dominant role in the house rosé, and Bikavér named "Tüke."

VINEYARDS

Eszterbauer owns 8 hectares of vineyards, but fully farms a total of 22, spanning more than 7 sites over about 4 km from north to south. Soils are mainly windblown loess mixed with 30% chalk. The north/south ridge defining Szekszárd is a buckle of sedimentary soil caused by tectonic activity long ago. Szekszárd is a protected wine region consisting of 2700 hectares spread over 30 km. Aspects vary but most planted sites are south east facing. 9 separate clones of Kadarka are planted in the Eszterbauer vineyards. The fruit from their oldest vineyards is the base for "Nagyapám" (Grandfather), argued by many to be Hungary's finest Kadarka.

WINE MAKING

János Eszterbauer is aided by winemaker Laci Palinkas. Grapes are hand harvested and quickly transported to the winery. Sorting is meticulous, as are the vinification and maturation of wine at Eszterbauer. All wines are fermented at controlled temperature. Whites and rose with neutral commercial yeast in stainless steel while reds undergo a gentle cold soak and are always fermented with native yeast. Depending on vintage, stainless steel, wood tank, or in 500, or 225 liter oak barrels are all options. It is important not to over-extract the delicate Kadarka variety otherwise it can become bitter and loses the evocative perfume characteristic of the grape.



NOTES & PAIRINGS

The Tüke, or "local" featured on the front of Eszterbauer Szekszárdi Bikavér is the great-grandfather of proprietor János Eszterbauer and was a hostage of the Communist dictatorship. Upon his release in 1919, he helped found the reputable "Szekszárd's Cellar Alliance." The Bikavér tradition is connected to the red grape Kadarka which came to dominate the hills of Szekszárd after phylloxera wiped out most of the original white varieties. Susceptible to frost and rot, it was largely replaced with Kékfrankos and Bordeaux varieties during the Communist period. Today only 60 hectares of Kadarka are left in the region. This richly perfumed Kékfrankos and Kadarka heavy Bikavér pays humble homage to Tüke and this traditional wine. Imagine cool climate Châteauneuf-du-Pape, exotic and with power while remaining light on its feet. Excellent with braised fowl, traditional goulash or Middle Eastern lamb dishes.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Eszterbauer (*Ester-bow-er*)

APPELLATION: Szekszárd (*Sek-Sard*)

VINTAGE: 2011

GRAPE COMPOSITION: Kékfrankos 44%, Cabernet sauvignon 24%, Cabernet franc 18%, Merlot 8%, Kadarka 6%

CLIMATE: Cool continental with dry warm summers

SOILS: Loess and chalk

EXPOSURE: Southern

AGING: 12 months in Hungarian Oak

ALCOHOL: 14%

TOTAL ACIDITY: 5.2 g/l

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1.2 g/l



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