

2012 Gracin Kontra

Dalmatia, Croatia

The Gracin winery in Primošten was founded in 2000, by Leo Gracin and his father, Ante. Wine comes into being through farming, art and craft, but Leo, who holds a Ph.D in enology, is first and foremost a scientist. We think of Leo, a professor of enology at the University of Zagreb, as a teacher who is obsessed with making great wine. Although his connection with Primošten is originally familial, Leo has chosen to make wine here because he believes in its uniqueness, and potential for producing special wine. The culture, climate and landscape of Primošten are so distinct that the vineyards there have been officially nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Sixty kilometers west of Split and 25 kilometers east of Šibenik, and at roughly 30 hectares the smallest appellation in Croatia, the islet of Primošten peers over the rocky coastline of Dalmatia, uniquely exposed to the elements: continual sun, marine atmosphere, stony soil, ferocious winds. In Primošten, winds are so fierce that a unique technology was developed in defense: tirada, six-meter-square stone-walled boxes which block the gales and support the small head-trained vines. Tirada take about 500 hours and \$3,600 to produce, by the few people who know how, using stones dug out of the vineyards' nutrient-poor soil. Vines grown inside tirada yield suitable grapes only after four seasons.

VINEYARDS

The environment is ideally suited to babiĉ, an indigenous varietal (as well as common Croatian surname!) that is ancient cousin to Zinfandel — which itself is originally Croatian. Naturally high in acidity, babiĉ benefits from the warming effect of the Adriatic and the stones' ability to retain heat generated by almost ceaseless sun. It thrives in these near drought conditions. Cooled only by the winds, the hardy grape produces wine that is fresh but quite 'sauvage'. Gracin's stumpy, pugnacious babiĉ vines grow the way babiĉ has here for centuries: in land that appears as a checkerboard of stone, called "stone lace" by the locals.

WINE MAKING

Leo's approach to vinification is openminded and diverse, though exceedingly gentle. He works with both indigenous and cultured yeasts. Wines are slowly fermented and aged in combinations of stainless steel tanks and both Slavonian and French barriques, with light filtration. These varied techniques yield a number of expressions derivative of the varietal and vintage, from which the wines emerge properly structured, balanced and full of character. What little apparent new wood is detectable upon release is dwarfed by the character of the maturing wine within 5 years of the vintage. The most thrilling aspect of the wines is a powerful sense of the sea. This is "friškina", as unmistakable an imprint of Dalmatia's coast as "garrigue" is of southern France.



"Friškina" is the inimitable whole picture of water, salt, fish and plant life that the ocean provides, and in a wine can whisper or scream depending on the producer. Gracin's "friškina" is a subtle but concentrated element, and provides a cooling effect on the ripe, potent babiĉ. In the glass the wines merge a robust, even Zinfandel-like character with distinctly bracing lines of flavor and acidity that could come from nowhere else on Earth.

NOTES & PAIRINGS

This unique red wine came into being through friendship of two renowned winemakers and their idea to blend the two seemingly incompatible grapes. "A marriage of opposites" so to speak, Kontra contains precious flavors of the sweetest Babiĉ grape from the sun-drenched terraces of Primošten, and the forceful Plavac Mali the root of which has been traversing Dingaĉ slopes for centuries...a unity in spite of it all...A strictly Dalmatian phenomenon with Leo Gracin and Vedran Kiridžija behind it.

ANALYTICS & PRONUNCIATION

PRODUCER: Gracin

APPELLATION: Dalmatia

VINTAGE: 2012

GRAPE COMPOSITION: Babiĉ and Plavac Mali

CLIMATE: Mediterranean

SOILS: Cretaceous limestone, gravels and Dolomite

MACERATION & AGING: Babiĉ is aged in neutral wood, Dingaĉ in stainless steel.

ALCOHOL: 14.2%

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 4.1 g/l

ACIDITY: 5.8 g/l



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

BLUE DANUBE
WINE COMPANY