

## **Bencze 'Virgo' 2019**

**Producer:** István Bencze

**Provenance:** Lake Balaton, Western Hungary

**Farming:** Biodynamic (Demeter certified)

**Grape(s):** 100% Pinot Noir

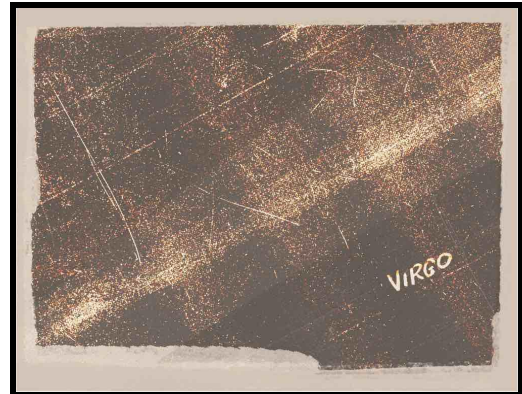
**Vineyard:** 10 ha Kilencsfél vineyard is between 118 to 136 meters altitude with soils of clay, loess on the lower parts and basalt further up the hill

**Fermentation/ Aging:** whole cluster pressed into barrel for 6-8 months of aging under floor without battonage.

**Fining/ Filtration:** none

**Sulfite:** none added

**Misc:** István credits Bedel's Coteaux Champagnois as the inspiration for 'Virgo' which takes its name the fact that it was Harvested when the Moon stood in the Virgo constellation



### **The Producer:**

Educated in computer sciences and mathematics, IT entrepreneur István Bencze is a surprising choice for Hungary's biodynamic, zero zero (zero added sulfite) rockstar but it is a strange world after all. During a formative period in Florence, he worked remotely for the Budapest-based IT company he founded all while exploring the riches of Italian gastronomy. The pleasure of discovering new foods and wine rekindled a passion for plants left dormant since a childhood helping his grandmother tend her vegetable garden and the 5 or 6 grape vines that grew there. He decided he wanted to reimagine Hungarian wine and though he had originally thought to settle in Tokaj or Somlo, the stillness of Lake Balaton captured his imagination. He purchased and renovated an early 19th century estate with historic vineyards that had been left in a state of disrepair. His goal was to grow holistically from the beginning but his wines, though spontaneously fermented, were sulfured and filtered until he met fellow Hungarian Zsolt Suto of Strekov 1075 located across the border in Slovakia. Zsolt convinced him to step away from sulfite and filtration and by the end of 2017, István knew he couldn't have it any other way.

### **The Vineyard**

The Swiss clone of Pinot Noir was planted in 1999 on the slopes of the Kilencésfél vineyard, István's largest contiguous vineyard with a surface area of 10 hectares. Situated between two slopes at an altitude of 118-136 meters above sea level. On the upper slopes the soils are predominated by basalt stones transitioning to clay and loess further down hill. The Pinot Noir is harvested early at a potential alcohol between 10.5-11%, the same level of ripeness he would target for sparkling wine production.

### **The Cellar**

The grapes are hand harvested and whole cluster pressed without any crushing using a pneumatic Scharfenberger press yielding white juice. The wine ferments in neutral barrels and ages. Headroom is left in the barrel to allow the wine to age biologically under a veil of flor without any battonage or racking for 6-8 months. During this time István does not monitor the wine saying "I don't open the barrels, I don't know too much about its private life." The wine is blended and then bottled without fining, filtration or any added sulfite.

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