

## Keltis 'Mario Nature' 2018

**Producer** - Miha and Marijan Kelhar

**Provenance:** Bizeljsko, Slovenia

**Farming:** organic

**Grape(s):** Chardonnay and Rumeni Plavec - a local, high acid variety that typifies the sparkling wine tradition of Bizeljsko

**Vineyard(s):** Patchwork 30 year old vineyards that wrap the upper part of the hill growing in Ponca - a limestone rich marl with other deposits of sandstone and clay.

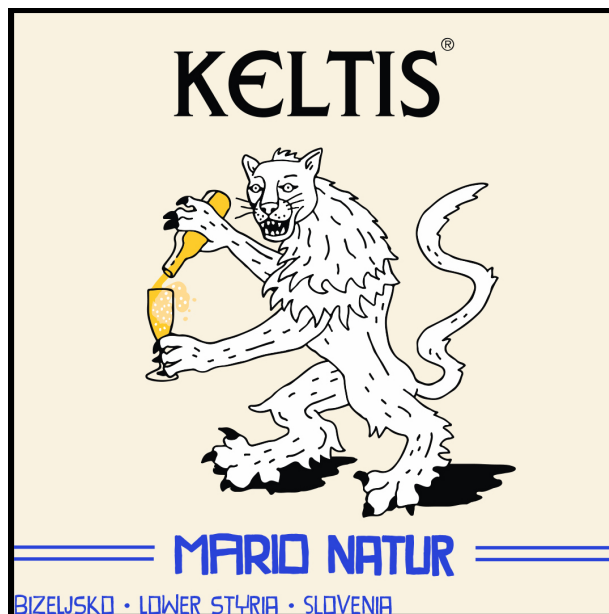
**Vintage:** 2018 - many of the Keltis wines are labeled as 'NV' because it is the easiest way to get the label approved. The sparkling wines use must from the successive vintage to induce a refermentation after a year of aging but are predominantly from the stated vintage.

**Fermentation/ Aging:** Both varieties separately fermented in steel, racked after ferment, settled for two weeks then blended into steel tank together for a year of aging. Refermentation is created using must from the following harvest to introduce new sugar and active yeast to create a pet-nat level pressure. Disgorged after 3-4 months in bottle.

**Fining/ Filtration:** none.

**Sulfur:** none added.

**Misc:** 'Mario' is Marijan's childhood nickname



### **The Producer:**

Father and son Marijan and Miha Kelhar are custodians of a centuries old family tradition of farming that began in 1776 when their ancestors built the oak wine cellar on the hill of Bizeljsko. Disrupted by communist rule and reborn 30 years ago, they began forays into natural winemaking, organic and biodynamic practices in the aughts when Miha started to take a more active role. Today, the family produces about 20,000 bottles, most of which they sell to the US with the assistance of Zev Rovine's former Yugoslav correspondent and winemaker Kreso Petrekovic. With each passing vintage they continue to experiment: "every year we try something new," Miha says "we are still learning, it's a long process."

### **The Vineyard:**

Like many former communist viticultural areas, collectivization and post-communist redistribution has resulted in a patchwork of holdings rather than a contiguous vineyard. The Keltis family's 4-5 hectares are spread across the face of the hill at the peak of the

Bizeljsko appellation in Slovenian Styria on Croatia's border. Vineyards wrap the hill and are designated not by heritage name but by little landmarks: "today we'll pick the chardonnay next to the old church" and so on. The soils here are the famed Ponca, a dense marl laced through with marine sediments with other deposits of clay, slate and sandstone scattered throughout.

Despite the rainy conditions and the persensity for hail, farming is organic, timed in accordance to lunar cycles and bolstered by their own cows' contribution to organic hummus and biodynamic preparation 500 (cow horn manure). Western winds help to combat disease among the plants.

**The Winery:**

Rumeni Plavec, a high acid variety typical to the region that forms the backbone of Bizeljsko's esteemed sparkling wine tradition is picked early, at the end of August. The grapes are destemmed and pressed into steel tank for spontaneous fermentation. Chardonnay is picked a little later and treated the same way. When the primary fermentations are finished the base wines are racked and settled for two weeks before being blended into steel tank for a year of aging. For the first 30 days the tanks are stirred first 2-3 times a day and then progressively less frequently. The following vintage, fresh Chardonnay must is added to reintroduce sugar and active yeast. The wine is bottled for refermentation without any fining, filtering or added sulfite. Disgorged after 3-4 months without any dosage.

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