

Burja 'Zelen' 2018

Producer - Primoz Lavrencic

Provenance: Vipava, Western Slovenia

Farming: Biodynamic, 9 ha

Grape(s): 100% Zelen - local, historic variety

Vineyard(s): Single vineyard planted entirely to Zelen with flysch soils at 280 m elevation with vines between 5-10 years of age.

Fermentation/ Aging: Hand harvested grapes are destemmed and crushed into steel tanks for skin fermentation. After 7 days the must is pressed away from the skins back into steel for 24 hours to settle. Finally the wine is transferred to tulip shaped concrete tanks for 7 months aging with periodic stirring.

Fining/ Filtration: none

Sulfite: none added.



The Producer:

Third generation winegrower Primoz Lavrencic left the family business in 2008 to forge his own viticultural destiny. His winery, named 'Burja' for the Northerly wind of the Vipava Valley, is a vehicle for preservation and innovation alike. Primoz views his place in the world through the wide, wide lens of history. The juncture of Slovenian tradition and millions of years of geological development are of critical importance to Primoz's decision making. His 5 distinct vineyards, typified by varying compositions of flysch, are farmed according to biodynamic practices. The deep, subterranean cellar is a theater for highly technical winemaking without pumping or additions focusing on concrete tanks, old barrels and skin maceration. The wines of Burja are critical navigational points, showing a thoughtful melding of past and present and offering Slovenian winemakers an aspirational vision of the future.

The Vineyard:

Located at the topmost plateau of the slope at 280 meters elevation, the vineyard Golavna is quite special. Unlike Primoz's other vineyards, Golavna is planted entirely to a single variety, a local grape called Zelen that has become a signifier of authenticity in post-Yugoslav Vipava. Ignored by the Yugoslav Federation because of low yields, Zelen barely escaped extinction and has returned to prominence on the coattails of Slovenian independence. Now a point of pride among local growers, the grape, whose name means 'green' in Slovenian, is the last Primoz picks in early October.

The Winery:

When Primoz began working with Zelen he was told by all the locals that the grape had to be pressed, had to be in steel and needed a lot of sulfite additions. Primoz went about unlearning the co-called wisdom of the day and in 2014 started employing tulip-shaped concrete vessels for aging, laying the groundwork for his present day cellar strategy.

Hand harvested grapes are destemmed and crushed into steel fermentors for 7 days maceration with periodic punchdowns. After a week, the must is pressed and then settled for 24 hours before gravity transfer into tulip-shaped concrete tanks. No pumps are used in Primoz's cellar! The lees are stirred during aging starting at a weekly frequency, slowing to twice per month after Christmas and then once per month after Easter. After 7 months aging, the base wines are racked to steel for one month of settling, then bottled without added sulfite, fining or filtration.

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