

13 Slovenian Wine Style & Quality Pursuits



Vino 20 YEARS

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Since 2000, the wine sector has embraced “style” as an all-powerful concept in wine marketing, to the detriment of “good old-fashioned quality” we had sworn by before. And yet, no one has served up a clear definition of style or quality respectively? In comparisons between 13 contemporary Slovenian wines, of local and international varieties, whose context and content will be defined in advance, we aim to display how winemakers have approached these notions in order to prove to the national and international public what they want, wish, think and know.

Keynote speaker:

Dušan Brejc



BSc. in Agronomy (UL, Slovenia), with specializations in oenology (UB Dijon, 1986/7) and marketing (JICA Osaka, 1997). His first professional decade was spent in winemaking, his second one in the international marketing & sales of wine, spirits and soft drinks. Since 2003 till 2021 he was the managing director of the Wine Association of Slovenia Ltd.

Judge at domestic and international wine competitions, including as an O.I.V. delegate-tasting expert. Holder of the title Ambasciatore (emerito) bestowed by the Italian Città del Vino, and recipient of the prestigious award Concours Mondial de Bruxelles Benchmark Taster (2018). Wine writer & educator of many years. A member of the Honorable Wine Convention of St. Urban in Ljubljana.

Slovenia

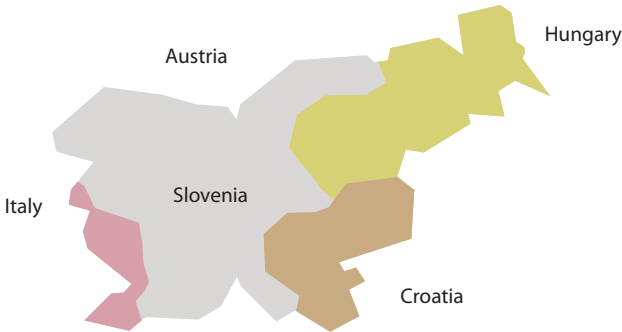
Slovenia is an old, traditional wine-producing country where wine had already been made by the Celts around 3rd to 4th century BC, and later developed further by the Romans. International varieties, such as Pinot Noir, Riesling, Pinot Gris, Chardonnay... were first introduced in 1822. Slovenia is the country with the oldest officially recorded vine on the planet. The ancient vine grows in Maribor and is proven to be more than 400 years old.



In the eye of the geographer, Slovenia is a very attractive and versatile country. It lies on the border of four big geographical units: the Adriatic Sea, the Alps, the Pannonian Plain and the Dinarides. Therefore, the land is mainly hilly and mountainous. Most of the vineyards are on the slopes, with only some 10% on the flatlands. The climate in Slovenia is generally a mixture of the Alpine climate with mild, humid summers and cold but not chilling winters, which then bumps into the Pannonian Plain with its hot, dry summers and severe winters. Each climate thus spices up the other.

Slovenia is officially divided into three winegrowing regions and nine winegrowing districts according to climate, soils, wine styles, tradition...

Registered vineyard area	15,400 ha
Total vineyard area	20,000 ha
Grape growers	30,000
Registered producers	2,529
Annual production	70 mio l
White vs. red	70:30
Most planted varieties	Welschriesling, Refosco, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc



Podravje region, named by the river Drava, lies in the northeast and includes the Štajerska Slovenija and the Prekmurje districts.
Posavje region, named by the river Sava, lies in the southeast and includes the Bizeljsko-Sremič, the Bela krajina and the Dolenjska districts.
Primorska region (littoral region) lies to the southwest and encompasses the Goriška brda or Brda, the Vipavska dolina (Vipava Valley), the Kras and the Slovenska Istra districts.

Districts are further divided into sub-districts all the way down to villages and vineyard sites. These names, especially the name of the vineyard site, can also be found on the label.

Flight 1

Double blind warm-up wine
is “the drama king”...

Klet Brda
Bagueri Chardonnay
2019



District	Goriška brda
Vineyard age	10–30 years
Vineyard size	
Elevation	50–250 m
Climate	sub-Mediterranean, mixing warm sea air and cool Alpine winds
Vines/ha	4,000–5,000
Soil	loam and sandstone
Harvest	September 2019
Vinification	In the cellar, the best grapes underwent pressing and fermentation in French barrique barrels. Following fermentation and malolactic fermentation, the wine was then aged for 12 months in these barrels. Subsequently, the finest barrels were combined and further matured in 6000-litre oak barrels.
Alcohol	13,5% abv
Residual sugar	2.5 g/l
Acidity	5.52 g/l
pH	3.37
Bottles	13,000
Closure type	cork
Web	www.klet-brda.si



Notes

Flight 2

Primordial wine
meets the future

Pirc
Cviček, PTP
2022



Frelih
Cviček od fare, PTP
2022



District	Dolenjska	Dolenjska
Vineyard age	20 years	19–31 years
Vineyard size	14 ha	4.5 ha
Elevation	320 m	390–450 m
Climate	Continental	
Vines/ha	4,000	on average 5,000
Soil	marl	varied, marly to heavy loams
Harvest	September and October 2023	first half of September 2022
Vinification	Whites undergo classic fermentation in stainless vats. Blaufränkisch and Žametna Črnina are macerated in vinifiers for 1 to 3 days and subsequently aged in stainless-steel vats and polyester.	Hand-harvested grapes, cold maceration of red grape mash for up to 4 days at a temperature of up to 12 °C, followed by fermentation at 15–20 °C, while the clarified must of white varieties is fermented at 10–20 °C, co-fermentation (alcoholic and malolactic fermentation), with subsequent typization. Following alcoholic fermentation, the wine was left to age for 4–7 months on fine lees, with monthly battonage. Aging took place in stainless-steel vats. Sterile filtration at bottling.
Alcohol	10.0% abv	9.5% abv
Residual sugar	dry	1.9 g/l
Acidity	6.14 g/l	5.85 g/l
pH	3.27	3.27
Bottles	40,000	8,300
Closure type	screw cap	screw cap (stelkap)
Web	www.klet-pirc.si	www.frelih.si



Notes

Flight 3

Šipon/Furmint

style & quality debate

Verus

Furmint

2021



District	Štajerska Slovenija	Štajerska Slovenija
Vineyard age	20 years	13–65 years
Vineyard size	5 ha	9 ha
Elevation	320 m	330–390 m
Climate	Continental with Alpine and Pannonian influences	The climate is influenced by the Alps and the Adriatic Sea. Balmy days and cool nights affect the aroma, as do intense periods of heat and precipitation (600 l/m ² annually). The air retained in the basin terrace sites in Gorca heats up quickly. The changeable conditions exert a strong, invigorating stimulus on the vines and ensure that certain something in the wine.
Vines/ha	4,000	1,800
Soil	sandy and clayey	opok (calcareous marl)
Harvest	1 and 4 October 2021	from 28 September to 4 October 2021
Vinification	The grapes were picked into small 12 kg crates. The destemmed grapes underwent gentle and quick pressing. This was followed by débourage and the start of fermentation in a stainless-steel tank. 10% of the total must underwent fermentation in barriques, in which the lees were battonaged twice a week after fermentation until the end of December. In January, the wine from barriques and stainless-steel vats was blended. The wine was bottled in early March.	Spontaneous fermentation, ten months maturation in large used wooden barrels, followed by four months of maturation in steel tanks, no finings added, unfiltered.
Alcohol	13.15% abv	13.5% abv
Residual sugar	5.0 g/l	2.7 g/l
Acidity	6.06 g/l	7.6 g/l
pH	3.58	3.12
Bottles	15,000	5,287
Closure type	screw cap	cork
Web	www.verusvino.com	www.vinogross.com



Notes

Flight 4

New Age

Chardonnay lifestyle

Gjerkeš

Chardonnay

2018



District	Prekmurje	Vipavska dolina (Vipava Valley)
Vineyard age	32 years	Zgornje Jamence 29 years, Ravno brdo 3 years, Hrib 23 years
Vineyard size	1.5 ha	Zgornje Jamence 0.27 ha, Ravno brdo 0.62 ha - first yield a total of 15%, Hrib 0.41 ha
Elevation	300–330 m	Zgornje Jamence 265 m, Ravno brdo 264 m, Hrib 189 m
Climate	Pannonian Continental with some Mediterranean influences (hot days, cool and humid nights)	Combination of Mediterranean and Continental
Vines/ha	4000	Zgornje Jamence 4347 vines/ha, Ravno brdo 7352 vines/ha, Hrib 6578 vines/ha
Soil	sand, clay, marl	blend of flysch, terra rossa and brown clay
Harvest	13 September 2018	12 September 2020
Vinification	cold maceration of 12 hours. Controlled fermentation at 17–18 °C; left on fine lees for 5 months in stainless-steel tanks, and 1 month in new barrique barrels before being bottled. Filtered.	Spontaneous fermentation with 10% hand-picked and destemmed berries; fermentation in a wooden conical barrel whilst keeping the fermentation temperature steady and performing frequent stirring. After one year, transfer into stainless-steel tanks for slow spontaneous clarification (no clarifying agents and no filtration). • 10% of wines comes from spontaneous fermentation without berries in a stainless-steel tank whilst controlling the fermentation temperature. Transfer to 225-litre French barrels during mid-fermentation with regular stirring. After one year, moving the wine to a stainless-steel tank and blending it with the wine from the conical barrel.
Alcohol	11.5% abv	14.0% abv
Residual sugar	2.7 g/l	1.6 g/l
Acidity	6.33 g/l	4.3 g/l
pH	3.35	3.63
Bottles	1,300	1,700 bottles of 0.75 l and 100 bottles of 1.5 l
Closure type	Diam	cork
Web	www.gjerkes.com	www.sutor.si



Notes

Flight 5

Pinot Noir

varietal exposure

Šturm

Pinot Klaret

2021



Gaube

Pinot Noir

2020



District	Bela krajina	Štajerska Slovenija
Vineyard age	30 years	10–20 years
Vineyard size	0.9 ha	1 ha
Elevation	259 m	380–450 m
Climate	Mediterranean-Continental	moderate Continental
Vines/ha		4,000
Soil	marl	marly loam
Harvest	early September 2021	end of September 2020
Vinification	Pinot is made using the white wine method, with no maceration.	Fermentation lasts for 10 days in contact with the grapeskins, followed by maturation: 25% in used barriques and 75% in stainless-steel tanks.
Alcohol	14.0% abv	12.5% abv
Residual sugar	1.8 g/l	2 g/l
Acidity	5.50 g/l	5.8 g/l
pH	3.33	3.1
Bottles	4,000	3,000
Closure type	cork	cork
Web	www.vinasturm.si	www.vino-gaube.si



Notes

Flight 5

Pinot Noir

varietal exposure

Dveri-Pax

Modri Pinot Vajgen

2015



Tilia Estate

Pinot Noir Estate

2020



District	Štajerska Slovenija	Vipavska dolina (Vipava Valley)
Vineyard age	22 years	12–25 years
Vineyard size	3.3 ha	3 ha
Elevation	220 m	108 m and 150 m
Climate	Continental	Vipava-type
Vines/ha	4,500	6,000
Soil	marl	marl and loam
Harvest	16 September 2015	from 25 August to 5 September 2020
Vinification	2 weeks of maceration, 24 months maturation in new and used French barriques. Unfiltered.	Maceration took place in stainless-steel tanks with 20% being whole clusters; pumping over for 9 days. Cooled at 20–23 °C, malolactic fermentation. Left to mature for 14 months in barriques with regular battonage over 4 months. 20% of the barrels are new. Bottled in March 2020.
Alcohol	13.5% abv	
Residual sugar	1.1 g/l	1.8 g /l
Acidity	5.83 g/l	5.9 g/l
pH	3.66	3.48
Bottles	10,400	6,500
Closure type	cork	Diam 10
Web	www.dveri-pax.com	www.tiliaestate.si



Notes

Flight 6

Looking for something
“different or interesting”?

Batič
Angel Barbera
2020



Marof,
Mačkovci Blaufränkisch
2018



District	Vipavska dolina (Vipava Valley)	Prekmurje
Vineyard age	Rimc 8 years, Livišče 19 years	17 years
Vineyard size	3 ha and 18 ha (only one part of it grows Barbera)	2 ha
Elevation	100 m and 180 m	320 m
Climate	Mediterranean	
Vines/ha	cca 5,000	4,500
Soil	Šmihel – opoka mixed with loam; Rimc – loam	quartz sand, quartz gravel, clay
Harvest	22 September and 26 September 2020	15 October 2018
Vinification	The grapes were hand-picked and then sorted into 15-kilogram crates. After a 15-day maceration, the wine was matured in 225-litre oak barrels, of which 50% new and 50% used. In the quest for the perfect harmony of flavors, Angel Barbera 2020 blends Barbera from the Rimc site (93%) with a hint of Merlot (7%) from the Šmihel site. Following 26 months of maturation, Angel Barbera 2020 is bottled without filtration and without clarification. Vintages that do not meet the house standards are not bottled.	Manual harvesting, destemming, 50 hl ice macerators, spontaneous fermentation begins after 5 days, with the juice racked only three times daily, maintaining a temperature of 25–27 °C, for a duration of 40 days. 70% of the wine aged for 30 months on the lees in a large barrel, new 500-litre Cavin barrels without toasting.
Alcohol	15% abv	14.0% abv
Residual sugar	2 g/l	1.3 g/l
Acidity	5.7 g/l	5.9 g/l
pH	3.57	3.70
Bottles	3,600	4,500
Closure type	cork	Diam
Web	www.batic.si	www.marof.eu



Notes



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