Winemaker: Aleks Simcic
Generation: 2nd

Edi Simčič

Malvazija

Edi Simčič has achieved near legendary status as the standard-bearer for emerging-market wineries from the Old World. The work of Aleks Simčič, son of Edi and chief winemaker, is redefining what is possible and expected from Slovenia. Fermented in French oak, this spectacular Malvazija (bianca) is age-worthy for a decade. A rich, oily palate offers up layer upon layer of apricots, wildflowers, toasted honeycomb, juniper berry, and mint.

WINEMAKER BIOGRAPHY

Creating wines that challenge convention and boggle the senses, father and son Edi and Aleks Simcic are among the happiest, talented, and most intuitive winemakers we know. Their farm sits on land that once belonged to Italy, and they may draw upon the French example, but their style is all their own.

ENOLOGIST

Aleks Simčič

TASTING NOTES

Color	Golden
Nose	Ripe peach, acacia, dandelion flower, dried herbs and caramel
Palate	Full-bodied, with a rich, oily texture and well-structured acidity
Finish	Lingering and complex, with salty components

VINEYARD & VINIFICATION

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Vineyard Location	Goriska Brda, Primorska
Vineyard Size	0.4 ha
Varietals List	100% Malvazija
Farming Practices	Organically farmed (non-certified) including dry-farmed; grapes picked by hand; vegan
Elevation	60-95 m
Soils	Ponca (mineral-rich flysch also found in Friuli)
Maturation Summary	In combination barriques and 500L French barrels for 10 months and bottled for 6 months
Alcohol	13.0 %
Acidity	5.6 g/liter
Residual Sugar	1.4 g/liter
Annual Production	3,300 bottles

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EDI SIMČIČ

When it comes to the wines of Edi and Aleks Simčič, several descriptors spring immediately to mind: unrivalled, world-class, controversial... and by all standards, unique. Unlike so many of the stainless-aged Italians, even the whites of Simčič are fermented and aged for long periods in oak, often earning comparisons to high-end French wine. Multiple critics rank the estate among the very best in Eastern Europe and, as humble as they are, their name is quite well known to all the top producers in next-door Friuli. In terms of low yields, no one has higher standards than Edi Simčič. Toward that end, Aleks and his family don't even own a sorting table. Working as a team, grandfather Edi, son Aleks, and grandson Jure make 3 passes per varietal per harvest, selecting each individual berry through sunlight. It's no wonder their wines average just 700 grams per vine - closer to a half-bottle per plant than one bottle!

Today, the family works side by side on 12 hectares of tiny, non-contiguous crus spread out over hillsides in the tuckaway villages of Vipolže, Kozana and Fojana. Altitude varies, going from 90 meters up to 300, and exposition runs from south to west. In the cellar, all wines are fermented and aged in French oak barriques – a minimum of 10 months for the whites, and up to 4 years for reds. Needless to say, keeping tabs on every barrel and every vintage is a monumental task! One of our favorite sights is Aleks in the cellar, displaying his enormous, handwritten spreadsheets used to track each barrel and its variations. Every time he shows us, Aleks breaks into a broad grin - somewhere in between the world's most peaceful farmer and a mad scientist extraordinaire.

For those unfamiliar with the area, traveling to Slovenia can be a magical experience. Goriška Brda has a dreamy, timeless quality to it: hamlets are nestled into the green hillsides rising toward the Alps, creating a gorgeous, tiered landscape. Although further north, the quality of light is distinctly Mediterranean. Artists and artisans can be found everywhere, including keen-eyed, intelligent winemakers who are nonetheless down to earth, and world-class chefs in rustic settings. (With everything produced just a few paces away, the term "farm to table" scarcely begins to cover it.) Truly, this little corner of the world one is of EU's best kept secrets.

REGION

PRIMORSKA

Primorska, the westernmost of Slovenia's 3 wine regions, is the only one with a Mediterranean climate and generally leads the country in terms of both quality and reputation. Located in the SW corner, it shares a border with Italy and its name translates simply as "coastal" or "littoral". The region is divided into 4 districts (from north to south): Goriška Brda, Vipava, Karst, and Slovenian Istra. Of these, Goriška Brda is both the smallest and most acclaimed due to its immediate proximity to the world-famous (Italian) subzones of Collio and Colli Orientali del Friuli.

Among the wine growing regions in Slovenia, Primorska has maintained the highest number of indigenous varieties, including Malvazija (Malvasia), Rebula (Ribolla Gialla), Refošk (Refosco), and Teran (Terrano). In addition, many other well-known grapes flourish in the region, including Beli Pinot (Pinot Blanc), Sivi Pinot (Pinot Gris), Chardonnay, Sauvignon (Blanc), Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot. These have been planted for generations and have long been woven into the local culture and economy.

Vineyards in Primorska stretch from sea level near Trieste to an inland altitude of around 600 meters. Along with Vipava, subalpine Goriška Brda mainly produces whites, while most of the red wine hails from Karst and Slovenian Istra, closer to the sea. Soils are varied, but include flysch, marl, limestone and dolomite. (Much of the region was prehistorically underwater.) With an abundance of hot, sunny days, influence from the Adriatic, and brisk winds coming down from the Alps, wines are often focused, structured, and complex.

GORISKA BRDA

The tiny Goriška Brda subzone, comprised of 45 villages and weighing in at just over 72 square kilometers, is sometimes referred to as Slovenia's "Little Tuscany". It's a gorgeous area of rolling hills covered in forests, hilltop hamlets, and olive and fruit groves. Also, it has the highest number of awards per hectare of all the Slovenian wine districts, with cultural and enological ties to both Italy and Austria. While the Italian influence can be felt throughout the greater Primorska region, Brda itself was physically joined with Collio once, forming a single, Slovenian-speaking region - until they were divided after World War II by a militarized Yugoslav-Italian border.

Tucked at the foot of the Julian Alps, Brda lies proximate to snow-capped peaks, but is also close the Adriatic and enjoys a largely Mediterranean climate. Summers are moderately hot, and the district receives even higher rainfall than the coast. It lies on the right bank of the Soča (Isonzo) river, NW of the Italian town of Gorizia, after which it is named. ("Brda" simply means hills). Prone to erosion, the primary soils in Brda are sandstone, marl, and flysch (also called 'ponca' or 'opoka' on either side of the border), whose loose weave often makes terracing necessary.

Vineyards in Brda stretch to an altitude of 600 meters, with higher-altitude wines praised for their elegance and higher acidity. The area's signature grape, Rebula (aka Ribolla Gialla), to cite one example, is a golden, thick-skinned variety that thrives in the hot afternoon sun, digging its roots deep into the poor soils of the highest, lowest-yielding terraces.

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