

Uncorked – The future of Tokaj?

Koppány Nádassy

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Abstract

Motivation

Tokaj Wine Region was once the place of production of the noblest wines of the world, but became a marginal wine region by the 20th century. There are many factors, which made this region faded away, but its uniqueness, the steadfast work of winemakers and market trends enable a brighter future for this wine region that has once enjoyed great acclaim. The fall of the Iron Curtain and the changes in consumer habits motivated the winemakers and the region to repositioning the variety Furmint on the local market and also on the export markets as well.

Objectives

The objective of this thesis is to demonstrate the alteration of the Tokaj Wine Region. This thesis aims to show this evolution in the context of the historical background, the overview of the viticulture and vinification and the market overview. At the end propose a possible product range, and cooperation which could make sense to wine-growers and producers to strenghten their market position.

Methodology

To accomplish this task I did research about the History of Tokaj Wine Region in the literatures available from the 19th century and also did a research over the internet. The majority of the texts were available in Hungarian language, but English texts were also accessible.

Since I currently work for one of the most prestigious wineries in Tokaj Wine Region, this thesis will be based mostly on my personal research and discussions with vineyard workers, winemakers and CEOs from the region. I will use my experiences from the Export Markets to localize the possibilities of the Furmint variety and the Wines from Tokaj in general.

Content

The thesis is divided into three sections, the first chapter describes the historical background, showing the origin of the wine region, the geological and geographical development. It presents that period, when the wine region was at its peak. This chapter explains the setback of the region from the destruction of Phylloxera to the Soviet mass-production. Finally this chapter illustrates the original nomenclature of the wine region, showing the varieties and styles.

In the second chapter the focus is on the present, describing the growers, the latest developments, which have been happening in the vineyards and in the winery. Showing the change of the mindset of the wine-growers and the producers, the goal is to produce high quality grape, from which first class styles can be produced. Furthermore this high quality wine should be filled into a unique, brand new bottle, and a viable cooperation between wine-growers and producers.

The third chapter is focusing on the future, discussing the market overview, with a possible portfolio pyramid, a new clone selection, and showing, that Furmint has strong recognitions from gastronomy professionals, which can be the new fundamentals of the region.

Conclusion

Tokaj Wine Region and within that, Furmint has a future, expressing the unique terroir of Tokaj and enabling it to be a unique and exceptional wine. The growers have to unite, work together and think together with the regulatory bodies. If they are able to achieve this and they keep developing the wine region, in 10 or 20 years they have a chance to be a part of an international premium wine region with an international premium variety.