

## Molly's BOTTLE CLUB - September 2022

What is Pet-Nat? aka summer is ending and I need bubbles!

Well technically, *Pet Nat* (with or without the hyphen) is short for the French phrase '*pétillant naturel*' which refers to a wine that is made according to the ancestral method. What is ancestral method you ask? well -----

WARNING!! technical jargon ahead! This method is called ancestral because it was developed in the 16th century (ages ago!!). And it is the oldest way of making sparkling wine that we know of. I think it is the coolest thing that it is the result of a single, continuous fermentation. As in the fermenting juice is bottled while it is still fermenting (natural yeast is still consuming the grape sugars in the juice). Because fermentation still continues, the resulting CO2 is trapped in the bottle (CO2 is a byproduct of all fermentation) so viola! the trapped wine has bubbles in it.

Couple things before you nod off from all the boring facts being laid out - pet nats can be made from any kind of grape and the word *naturel* simply refers to the way bubbles came to be in the wine without any added sugar. Simply put, a super bad, chemical wine can still be a pet nat so don't be fooled into thinking that all pet nat's are in fact natural. These ones are of course - just saying! Also, please note that although the method seems simple, it is actually really technical and requires serious knowledge of your grapes and cellar. Bottle your fermenting juice too late and you'll end up with a flat wine. Bottle it too early and the mounting pressure can make the bottle explode.

All of this to say, natural pet nats are magical and amazing things that can bring so much joy!! they can also be super bubbly or not so much so be careful when opening these bottles - make sure the bottle is cold & open it over a sink with a glass nearby. Sediment is likely and actually contains great probiotics. But if it looks weird or gross, just don't pour out the bottom part of the bottle - it's all good! Point is to have fun and enjoy these yummy bubbles!!

## Kobal

from: Haloze appellation in Štajerska, Slovenia

winemaker/ farmer: Bojan & Sperla Kobal

facts & random info: vineyards are super steep and follow the curve of the hill (it's super cool and I'll show you some cool pictures if you wanna see!)

The Haloze hills are just south of Ptuj very close to Croatia.

Bojan and Sperla have come back home to these hills and the awesome but sleepy town of Ptuj (pronounced puh-too-E) to rebuild the vineyards and honor the winemaking traditions of the region.

They are rebuilding the vineyards and old structures while raising the next generation and building community. I adore them so go visit them soon and take me with you! Or just come with me in November!

## 'Bajta' Laski-Chardonnay

grape(s): 50% Laski (Welschriesling) / 50% Chardonnay

let's talk really quickly about Laski or Welschriesling - there are many names for this grape in Italy/ Germany/ E. Europe - in the former Yugoslavia, it is known as Laski. It is not a super known grape but brings all the gorgeous acidity to the table so yes please!

tasting notes: wowza! this is zesty, zingy, mouthwatering and DELICIOUS bubbly goodness! Cloudy yes - but bright acidity and bursting with bitter lemon-y pith, white flowers, granny smith apples and bartlett pears at the same time. So thirst quenching that you don't want to overthink it but so crazy that you are reminded this wine is alive!

As mentioned above - chill it down and do not shake before opening!

pairing ideas: best pairing so far = nectarines sliced over a bed of arugula with grilled halloumi and a light citrus dressing!!

garlic toast with anchovies was very popular on tasting day and I kinda think lemon-ricotta pasta would be LEGIT!!!

## 'Bajta' Blaufrankisch

grape(s): Blaufrankisch

unique, late-ripening and utterly distinct varietal is known by other names - 'blue frankisch' or blaufrankisch is the most common. Lemberger in Germany and Kékfrankos in Hungary are the other more known names. Grown in Austria, Hungary, super-northern Italy and northern Slovenia, this grape is thought to be one of the parents of gamay and zweiglet although the science is still out on that.

tasting notes: ripe, red fruits - think strawberries, raspberries and maybe slightly under-ripe, high mountain blackberries - with a backbone of spicy tannins and glorious minerality.

pairing ideas: one of the best reds for spicy dishes! grilled meat for those last of summer BBQ's. Ironically, it pairs very well with schnitzel. Honestly, the acidity helps cut fatty food so anything fried works here. And those gorgeous, peppery notes pair incredibly well with any dish made with Hungarian red gold-paprika (savory bread pudding with corn, scallions & paprika was bomb!!).

## Staffelter Hof

from: Kröv, Mosel, Germany

winemaker/ farmer: Jan Matthias Klein

facts & random info: Staffelter Hof first appears in historical texts in 862 AD making it one of the oldest in the world and certainly in the Mosel.

Jan returned to the family vineyard after stints all over the world and began the work of converting the family vineyards to organics with many biodynamic practices. It is rare to be even organic let alone biodynamic in the Mosel - even rarer to choose to do the vineyard work by hand. Most people hire a helicopter to spray the steep, steep vineyards. Good think the Klein family has so much property - it avoids any spray from the neighboring vineyards getting accidentally on their vines.

In 2018 Jan hired Yamile Abad to be his cellar master and assistant winemaker. Yamile is a young woman born and raised in Peru with a winemaking degree from the Universidad Juan Agustin Maza in Argentina and the presence of a young Latina woman making wine in one of the most homogeneous and male-dominated wine cultures in Europe is a powerful statement. Equally remarkable is how such progressivism stands comfortably side-by-side with a profound philosophy of land conservation. Jan is a vital member of the Klitzekleine Ring, a group of about a dozen winemakers around Traben-Trarbach dedicated to saving steep slope Mosel vineyards that would otherwise be abandoned. He's also a super fun, goofy fellow who makes fun wines in a serious region - there's room for both, I think!

Last story to explain the wolf on the label:

Centuries ago, a donkey was originally the laborer of the steep slopes in Kröv until a wolf killed it. Legend has it that the monks caught the wolf and made it do the vineyard work after it killed the donkey. Wolf "Magnus" is still the mascot of the winery today (hence the labels and names).

## Kiss, Kiss Maddie's Lips

grape(s): Fruhburgunder

this grape is believed to be a mutation of Pinot Noir. The story says that Pinot Noir came into Germany from France and mutated sometime after that. Since the Pinot family is prone to mutation, it would make sense that in a cooler environment, it mutated to ripen earlier.

Either way, it is one of the first varietals to bud and enjoys a long ripening season with an early harvest. Important in a climate like the northern parts of Germany where it grows!

tasting notes: fresh red berries - tayberry, thimbleberry, ripe Italian plums with lots of minerality & earthiness. Aggressive bubbles at the beginning fade into a backdrop while your mouth tingles with fruit and freshness!!

pairing ideas: this baby is so light and fresh, it's a day sipper if there ever was one!! Pair it with a lovely arugula salad with some late summer peaches, feta & a light vinaigrette - you'll be in heaven.

The acidity and freshness will pair nicely with some grilled pork or chicken too - maybe add a grilled plum or two!

## Ruby Soho

grape(s): Regent

first created in 1967, Regent is a resistant varietal that counts Chambourcin, Silvaner & Muller-Thurgau in its parentage. With its thick skins, it is very resistant to mildew - a problem common to the cooler climates, humid in the Mosel. The juice of the grape is also light red which is rare and with the thick skins brings a lot more structure to the resulting wine.

a side note on resistant varietals: it is something I see more and more during my travels as the wine world seeks to address climate change. And although I used to be very skeptical, preferring the older & more traditional varietals, I'm learning that they can produce pretty fun even utterly delicious wines! Plus they eliminate the need for the toxic sprays that are often used to combat mildew so that's a big plus!! So I'm keeping

an open mind and actually getting pretty excited about some of them!! I'll be tasting more at the fairs this winter so we'll talk more, I'm sure!

tasting notes: Red currants and bright red cherries jumped out at me almost immediately! Tingly acidity is balanced by weighty tannin and minerality from those deep, deep roots.

it's a paradox - bright, fresh, low alcohol but with tannin, structure and minerality! guess I'll have another sip and ponder on it!

pairing ideas: in my opinion, this is the perfect bubble to drink with grilled or roasted red meat - the acidity and bubbles cleanse the palate but the structure keeps it in balance.

Traditional pairings would be hard sheeps milk cheeses, hard salumi, oxtail ragu. I liked it on my deck with grilled veg and tomato rich eggplant parm!