



PIVNICA ČAJKOV

Wines from under the Sitno Volcano

Landscape of traditions and contrasts on the northern border of Central Europe



Queen Mom 2023 | Fetească Alba | Skin-contact white

Window to the winemaker's soul

I remember times when this grape was a household name in Čajkov. Not everybody had the courage to grow it – it can be as whimsical as a queen, in the vineyard as in the winery. In the modern times, many started to see tradition as backwardness, and 90% of the local Alba plots disappeared, in favour of “sexier” international grapes.

Thanks to my grandmother, the lady pictured on the label, I decided to gradually save the few old vineyards that remained – like the wild Sádowie site with an unknown mix of old savage clones on poor soil that gives birth to this wine – from neglect.

This wine is so personal and *essential* for me as a winemaker: my dear “Manka” spent the last 10 years of her life bedridden after a stroke, with me as her caretaker, which allowed me to learn so much about her values, traditions and memories. And I realised that my calling is to buy and save old abandoned vineyards, to preserve this unique heritage. To cherish the precious and fragile things our ancestors give us, sometimes without even knowing.

Vineyard: Sádowie (western part), mainly Betina vineyard, Čajkov

Total surface: 0,5 Ha | **Altitude:** 270–280m ASL | **Aspect:** South | **Farming:** organic not-certified

Soil: pyroclastic tuff with volcanic glass and ashes, very porous and well drained

Year planted: 1970–1990 | **Density of plantation:** 4000 vines/ha | **Rootstock:** unknown

Trellising system: High Cordon | **Yield:** max. 1 kg/plant

Harvest & Winemaking

End of September. Harvested by hand into small crates (18–20 kg) in order to keep the grapes as intact as possible.

The grapes are gently destemmed, crushed and then macerated on skins for 2–3 weeks in open top vats, with only the gentlest of punchdowns to avoid over-extraction. The wine then slowly aged in oak barrels for 18 months, until April 2025. Unfined, unfiltered, no additives except for 25 ppm of sulphur added at bottling. 12.5% ABV

Aromas, Flavours & Indulgent Pairings

Earthy, bold yet nuanced skin-contact wine with notes of warm spice and cold rocks, reflecting the vintage. Beautiful structure and present tannins, ending on a tangy note of peach tea and lip smacking acidity.

I personally love to drink it with a well-fed greasy goose, oven or ember-roasted and served with artisanal sourdough bread and pickles... Fatty, full-flavoured dishes like this are a match made in heaven for Queen Mom's fiery tannins and sappy finish!