PIVNICA ČAJKOV

Wines from under the Sitno Volcano
Landscape of traditions and contrasts on the northern border of Central Europe



Queen Mom 2024 | 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**: 4,000 vines/ha | **Rootstock**: unknown
Trellising system: High Cordon | **Yield**: max. 1 kg/plant

Harvest & Winemaking

September 13, 2024. 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 7 days in open top vats, with only the gentlest of punchdowns to avoid over-extraction. The wine then slowly aged in oak barrels for almost 18 months, until February 2026 when it was blended with a bit of reserve wine for extra oomph. Unfined, unfiltered, no additives except for 25 ppm of sulphur added at bottling. 13% ABV

Aromas, Flavours & Indulgent Pairings

Nuanced skin-contact wine with notes of fresh herbs, green tea and peach jam, reflecting the vintage. Beautiful structure with silky tannins and distinct acidic backbone. I personally love to drink it with a well-fed goose, oven or ember-roasted and served with artisanal sourdough bread and pickles... Full-flavoured dishes like this are a match made in heaven for Queen Mom's honeyed tannins and sappy finish.

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