

Királyudvar

In the Court of the King



Királyudvar's "Percze Path"

When Anthony Hwang loaded his family in the car and drove northeast from Budapest in 1997, he could hardly have imagined where the road would lead.

The trip was inspired by a Tokaji Aszú that a sommelier had recommended the previous evening. The wine made such an impression that Tony felt he *had* to learn more about it. For what Tony craved most in wine, this bottle offered in spades—a profound identity and razor-sharp balance.

Resurrecting a Legend

Tokaj was once one of the world's most prestigious wine regions; its top Aszú and Esszencia dessert wines were among the world's most coveted and expensive. Yet two world wars devastated Tokaji's traditional European markets and the decline continued under Communist rule.

But after the Iron Curtain's fall, a few lone souls struggled

to preserve the Tokaji legacy. The most prominent was Istvan Szepsy, whom Tony was determined to meet.

Tony was floored by the wines he tasted. He was moved by not only what was in the glass, but by the realization that, with investment and steady purpose, the region could again produce some of the world's most unique and intriguing wines.

Royal Connections

Just a few months after his visit, Tony purchased what was perhaps the region's crown jewel, Királyudvar (*Kee-RYE-oohd-var*)—which for centuries had supplied Imperial wine to the Hapsburgs. Szepsy became a partner, helping Tony to rehabilitate the vineyards, while the château itself was rebuilt.

But with time, Szepsy departed and Tony assumed the reins full-time. By that point, Tony also owned the Loire Valley's greatest Vouvray producer, Domaine Huët. The deep well of institutional knowledge there began to inform many decisions at Királyudvar, particularly a conversion to biodynamic viticulture.

Today, Tony has rekindled the legacy of this providential wine region. But he's not stopping there, having recognized, for example, that the local varieties, with their viscous intensity and bright acidity, could produce world-class dry, demi-sec, and sparkling wines too.

THE WINES

PESZGŐ "HENYE"—Inspired by Huët's revered Pétillant, Tony launched this fascinating sparkling wine in 2007.

FURMINT SEC—Introduced in '05, this innovative dry wine balances Furmint's viscous intensity and bright acidity.

"CUVÉE ILONA"—Another Tony Hwang innovation— named for his wife Evelyn—Ilona is a versatile botrytized wine of the highest order.

"CUVÉE PATRÍCIA"—Made only in special years, this stunning dessert wine is made from the locally rare Yellow Muscat and named for Tony's daughter who suggested producing this wine.

ASZÚ 6 PUTTONYOS—The estate's classic Aszú wine shows tremendous richness. Balance is maintained by knife-edged acidity.

ASZÚ 6 PUTTONYOS "LAPIS"—The Lapis vineyard is one of Tokaji's *Grand Cru* vineyard sites. Its dessert wine, produced only in exceptional years, can surpass even the greatest Sauternes.

ESSZENCIA—Made solely from the free run juice from the Aszú, Esszencia is the wine of the kings, believed to bestow great longevity on those lucky enough to sip this nectar.



The Magic of Aszú

Tokaji's historical importance, going back to the 1600s, derives from its legendary Aszú dessert wines. Botrytized grapes are collected individually and pressed gently under their own weight (free run droplets are set aside for Esszencia). The Aszú berries are then crushed and, in most cases, macerated with the juice from ripe, but non-botrytized, grapes before moving to barrel for fermentation and 3+ years of aging. Depending on the producer, the barrels may be topped or not to produce wines with hints of oxidation.