



WINE COMMITTEE
DINNER
WINES OF SLOVENIA

Tuesday 4th October 2022

Speaker: Professor Kathleen Burk

Chairman: Professor James Crabbe



MENU AND DINNER WINES

Istenič Special Cuvée No. 1 Brut NV, 12%



Marjan Simčič Opoka Chardonnay 2018, Goriška Brda,
Primorska, 14%

Crab and grapefruit salad with fennel, tarragon
mayonnaise, toasted sourdough



Movia Veliko Rdeče 2010, Goriška Brda, Primorska, 12.5%

Loin of venison with celeriac puree, roasted vegetables,
sautéed chanterelle mushrooms and juniper sauce



Weingut Tement Domaine Ciringa Desertno Vino Fosilni
Breg Sauvignon Blanc Beerenauslese 2017, Stajerska
[Styria] Slovenija, 15.5%

Almond and pear frangipane tart, amaretti cream



Coffee
Petits fours



SLOVENIA AND ITS WINES

Those of you who have visited Slovenia will know that it is a beautiful, friendly country of five million people, producing delicious food and wines. What many people, even those familiar with Slovenian wines, may not know is that wine was made in the Slovenian region by the Celts and Illyrian tribes since sometime between the 5th and 4th centuries BC, before the arrival of the Romans. By the Middle Ages, most of the region's wine production was controlled by the monasteries and other Christian institutions. There were a few privately-owned vineyards over the next centuries, but this pretty well came to an end after World War II. Thereafter production was limited by the state to co-ops which emphasised quantity over quality. In the 1970s, however, private sector wine producers began to emerge. In 1991 Slovenia became independent and in 2004 a member of EU. Unlike some of the other former countries of Yugoslavia, it turned as soon as possible to the West for help and contacts. The country was the first of the ex-Yugoslavia members to build a successful wine-producing industry with fully implemented and well-policed wine laws and a thriving wine culture; quality is high in all of the wine regions. By law, all wines must be analysed, tasted and scored to determine their quality levels before going to market.

Slovenia is surrounded by Italy, Austria, Hungary, Croatia and a small coastline on the Adriatic. Consequently, influences flowed back and forth across the borders. This was particularly notable between Italy and Slovenia – then Yugoslavia – after World War II. Many growers had vineyards on both sides of the border and moved freely between them, which was the case

with Movia and Marjan Simčič, and is now the case with Domaine Ciringa.

From the period when quality wines began to be produced, the best wines have tended to be varietals, whilst blends were more often used for basic wines. More recently, some of the top wineries in the Primorska region have been producing blends for their top wines. The international grape varieties are widely used, but what is more interesting are the good wines made from a number of indigenous or at least more local grapes.



Brda in Primorska region

APERITIF WINE

Istenič Special Cuvée No. 1 Brut NV, 12%

The blend of this sparkling wine is a combination of the international grapes Chardonnay (60%) and Pinot Noir (10%) plus the local grape Rumeni Plavec (30%). Rumeni means yellow, and the grape itself is ideal for a sparkling wine because of its high acidity. It is made in the small region of



Istenic Winery

Bizeljsko Sremič, which is well-known for the quality of its sparkling wines. The wine is made by the traditional method, with the second fermentation in the bottle, and it spends three years on the lees. It was the first winery in Slovenia, and indeed in the former Yugoslavia, to make sparkling wine by this method.



The area of Goriska Brda, where our starter and main course wines come from

DINNER WINES

Marjan Simčič Opoka Chardonnay 2018, Goriška Brda, Primorska, 14%

Goriška Brda (Gorizia Hills) borders the Italian Collio region in Friuli-Venezia-Giulia; indeed, Brda is Collio in Italian. Goriška is currently considered the top area of the most esteemed wine region in Slovenia, Primorska. In 1860 Jožef Simčič bought some pieces of land in Brda and planted some vines. Half of their vineyards are now in Slovenia and half in Italy, and their wine cellar, built in 1988 and 5 metres underground, is 200 metres from the border in the village of Ceglo. Brda was a good choice for them because some of the vineyards have what in Brda is called Opoka soil. This is a combination of clay and lime with lots of minerals, with especially high amounts of quartz, and not much organic matter. Vines have to work hard for their nutrients, and they respond extremely well to the soil. Marjan Simčič's top wines are his four Opoka wines. The Chardonnay grapes are

fermented in oak and left to macerate on the skins for four days; as a consequence it could, if they wished, be called an orange wine. The wine is then aged in oak for 23 months on the lees. The result is a wine that is round, intense and flinty.

Movia Veliko Rdeče 2010, Goriška Brda, Primorska, 12.5%

Veliko Rdeče is translated as 'lots of red', presumably because the wine is a combination of Merlot, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon. Movia, too, straddles the border and also has vineyards on both sides. The estate dates back to the 18th century, passing into the hands of the Kristančič family in 1820. Certified organic in 2004, they use biodynamic methods in the winemaking, including using indigenous yeasts. They use long maceration times, sometimes years, in old Slovenian oak and may age up to 6 years.

This is a very serious wine. It is a medium garnet in colour. It is dry with nice acidity, maintaining the structure of the wine without attacking the mouth. It is rich and balanced, has a long finish, and is delicious.

Weingut Tement Domaine Ciringa Desertno Vino Fosilni Breg Sauvignon Blanc Beerenauslese 2017, Stajerska [Styria] Slovenija, 15.5%

Weingut Tement is one of the top wine producers in Austria; the Weingut is located in the mountains of Südsteiermark, Southern Styria, particularly known for the excellence of their Sauvignon Blancs. A few years ago, the Tements were able to purchase the other, Slovenian, half of their top-rated Zieregg vineyard. As shown in the picture, the border now runs through the middle of the vineyard. It was re-planted in 2006 with native rootstock. The Fosilni Berg in the name translates

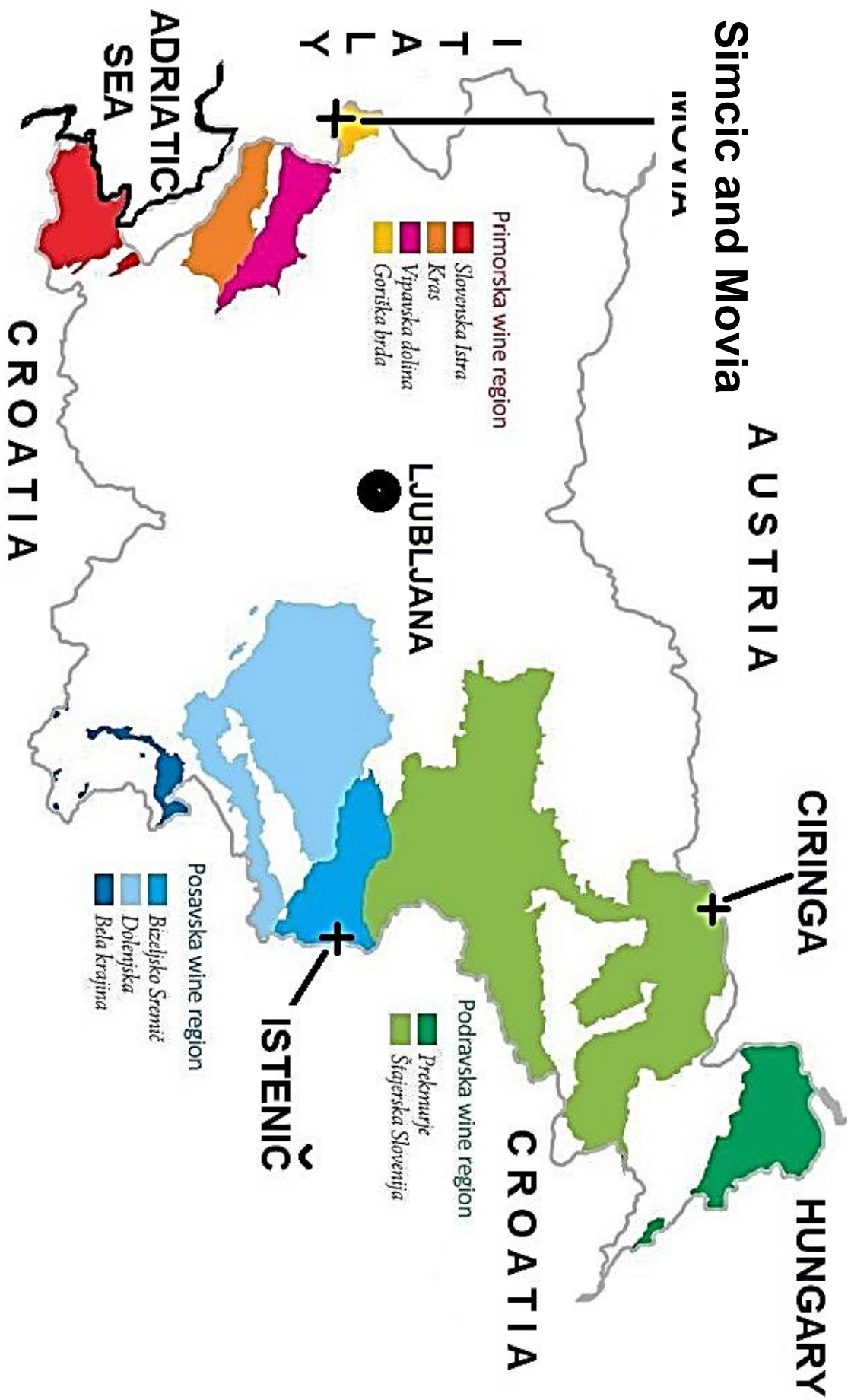
as 'Fossil Hill', enclosing the remains of a 20 million year old coral reef, resulting in a mineraly shell limestone soil. The botrytis-influenced grapes are picked by hand. The winery is strictly biodynamic: the juice naturally ferments with the aid of indigenous yeasts, and then macerates on the skins for 6 hours. 80% of it is aged in stainless steel tanks and 20% in large oak barrels for 6 months.

The wine is very sweet but with a saving acidity that keeps it from being flabby. It is fragrant, with a curious combination of white stone fruit, herbs and minerals on the palate; it has a long length. It provides a very satisfying end to a meal.



To the right of the red and white pole is Zieregg in Austria and to the left is Domaine Ciringa in Slovenia.

MAP OF SLOVENIAN WINE REGIONS



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