

Matt Kramer on wine: Achieving a sense of 'somerwhereness'

Published: Saturday, August 28, 2010, 10:00 AM



[Special to The Oregonian](#)



The Oregonian
Királyudvar Tokaji Furmint Sec 2007

It cannot be said too often that nothing in fine wine is more important than originality. Originality is not, as some tasters might think, a function of winemaking. That's mere style. Rather, originality leaves you with what might be called a sense of "somerwhereness."

This week's wines have it, unmistakably so.

Királyudvar Tokaji Furmint Sec 2007 -- I've been waiting for years for this wine to come to Oregon. I first tasted the inaugural 2005 bottling when it was still in barrel at the Királyudvar winery in the [Tokaj region](#) in Hungary. It was a stunner. I've followed every vintage since. I can say that this just-released 2007 Királyudvar Tokaji Furmint Sec is the best yet.

Hungary's Tokaj zone has been famous for centuries for creating extraordinary sweet wines from the local furmint grape variety. But it had absolutely no history of creating a dry white wine from [furmint](#). That's a late-20th-century invention.

[Királyudvar](#) (the king's court) dates to the 11th century as a wine supplier to the Hungarian royal court. In the early 1700s, it became the property of the royal family and remained so for two centuries.

After World War I, the estate was transferred to the Tokaj Research Institute of Viticulture and Enology. After World War II, communism in Hungary suffocated the quality of all Tokaj wines, as everything was sent to Russia as a cheap, sweet commodity item.

Finally, in 1997, the ancient Királyudvar estate was purchased and restored by its new American owner, Anthony Hwang. Királyudvar wines now are a benchmark for the Tokaj region, the Tokaji Furmint Sec especially so. After all, there was no tradition for such a wine, so everyone who makes such a wine is a pioneer.

Királyudvar Tokaji Furmint Sec 2007 is one of the most extraordinary dry white wines you will taste this year, I promise you. Although labeled as furmint, this wine is actually a blend of two indigenous white grapes: furmint (80 percent) and hárslevelu. Impressively dense, it proffers a striking scent of flowers and minerals with just the barest whiff of honey allied with lemon. Thick-textured, there's a crisp acidity that makes this wine oh-so-drinkable, with that same minerals and flower quality coming through in the taste. And it's just 12.5 percent alcohol.

This is a magnificent dry white wine that can accompany all sorts of foods, from fish such as salmon to white meats such as chicken, pork and veal, as well as the most flavorful cheeses. If you try one new-to-you dry white wine this year, this is the one to get. \$19.95. (Distributor is Galaxy Wine Company.)

-- [Matt Kramer](#)