

ROYAL TOKAJI 2005 BETSEK

SINGLE-VINEYARD

FIRST GROWTH, 6 PUTTONYOS

Winemaker:	Károly Áts
Varietal Composition:	Furmint, Hárslevelű and Muscat
Vineyard Size:	15 hectares (37 acres), 1 hectare (2.47 acres) fallow
Vine Age:	Planted 1972-1977
Elevation:	Average of 140 meters (460 feet)
Density:	3,000 vines/hectare (1,215 vines/acre)
Harvest Dates:	October
Barrel Aging:	3.5 years in old Hungarian oak
Bottled:	May 7, 2009
Bottle aging:	18 months
Production:	276 cases (6/500ml)
Alcohol:	9.5%
Total Acidity:	11.8g/L
Residual Sugar:	190g/L



THE BETSEK VINEYARD

The largest of Royal Tokaji's first growth vineyards, Betsek (bet-SHEK) is named after an old Magyar family. Shaped like a crescent moon and facing southeast, it is situated to the east of the Nyúlászó and Szt. Tamás vineyards in what is known as the basin of the first growths. The Betsek terroir totals 89 hectares (219.9 acres), of which Royal Tokaji owns 15 hectares (37 acres), all of which are planted to vines except 1 hectare which lies fallow. The area where the vineyard is located is typically cold — lower portions of the vineyard have been known to freeze in the spring. The black volcanic topsoil contributes to the mineral and lovely black pepper characters in the wine. Being at the bottom of the valley, the vineyard imparts a much more earthy character to the wine than the other first growths.

THE 2005 VINTAGE

The winter was mild but very long; therefore budbreak did not progress as we had expected. At the beginning of May we had a terrible hailstorm, and the village suffered from heavy flooding resulting from 100 to 127 millimeters (four to five inches) of rainfall in an hour. There was a cold, rainy period during blossoming so fruit set was very poor. It was obvious by this time that we would not have a large crop. The weather was rainy and cold during the summer, and most of us nearly lost all hope of having proper grapes for the vintage. Autumn, however, changed our expectations. We had wonderfully dry, hot weather in September and October. It could not bring back the lost crop but did change the quality of the existing crop to a far better level. Berries had concentrated aromas and nice, very clean, fruity flavors because of the low yields and hot autumn temperatures. Acidity, which was sharp at the end of August, lost its rough edge, so the structure of our wines is very promising. This lovely Indian summer developed high-quality aszú berries in reasonable volume. It is clear that these wines will have a very complex character with long aging potential.

TASTING NOTES

Medium old-gold color. Complex nose of spices with a hint of minerality which repeats itself on the palate. Apricot and honey predominate.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

Royal Tokaji's Aszú wines are wonderful as an apéritif or digestif, with cigars and petits fours. Given their bright acidity, these wines also pair well with a wide variety of foods, including foie gras, fruit tarts, chocolate desserts and a variety of cheeses. Serve slightly chilled at 12 to 15 degrees Celsius (54 to 59 degrees Fahrenheit) in a small port glass or a glass of similar size.

