

ROYAL TOKAJI 1999 ESSENCIA

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| Winemaker: | Károly Áts |
| Varietal Composition: | Furmint, Hárslevelű, Muscat |
| Harvest Dates: | Early October to late November |
| Aging: | 6 years in glass jars |
| Bottled: | Early August 2005 |
| Production: | 1,200 bottles (1/500ml) |
| Bottles Imported: | 600 |
| Alcohol: | 2.9% |
| Total Acidity: | 18.0g/L |
| Residual Sugar: | 600g/L |



THE ROYAL TOKAJI 1999 ESSENCIA

The first vintage of the true Royal Tokaji Essencia since the celebrated 1993, the 1999 Essencia is offered in a stately brass-hinged wooden box carved from Hungarian oak, lined with velvet and containing a hedonistic first: the indulgent Royal Tokaji Hungarian crystal sipping spoon. The spoon was designed exclusively for Royal Tokaji, enabling 33 sips per bottle—or 66 if you share your spoonful with a loved one. The back label bears the number of each bottle produced.

ESSENCIA IS THE RICHEST AND RAREST OF ALL TOKAJI WINES

The methods and traditions of producing Tokaji wines have changed little since the 17th century. Two hundred pounds of Furmint, Hárslevelű and Muscat berries infected with “Botrytis cinera,” or “noble rot,” are individually harvested from bunches with at least three trips through each vineyard, and collected in 20-liter wooden tubs called puttonyos. It is produced using only the free-run juice that slowly oozes from the puttonyos as the “aszú,” the “botrytis-infected grapes,” await crushing—no base wine is added. This juice—produced from the gentle pressure of the grapes’ own weight—is sticky and pours like honey. Because sugar levels can be as high as 85%, the juice ferments extremely slowly—it took the 1999 Essencia six years in Royal Tokaji’s cellars to reach only 2.9% alcohol. Essencia is an immortal wine and may last for 200 years or more.

ESSENCIA THROUGH THE AGES

Pope Benedict XVI was given bottle Number 1 of the Royal Tokaji 1993 Essencia, thus reviving the ancient tradition of each Pope keeping a bottle of Essencia by his bedside to see him through any illness. To renew the custom of Russian Czars enjoying Essencia, a practice that started with Peter the Great in the 1600s, President Putin was given a few bottles of the Royal Tokaji 1999 Essencia in September 2006.

THE 1999 VINTAGE

There were two hailstorms in the Tokaj region in August; as a result, the remaining grapes developed great intensity and concentration. The hallmark of the 1999 vintage is unbelievable acidity wrapped in perfectly balanced fruit.

TASTING NOTES

“New, it has whiplash flavors and off-the-chart acidity that can catch in your throat. As it mellows, it casts an almighty deposit, it turns a wonderful bright mahogany color and weaves an astonishing tapestry of flavors of apricots, quinces, marmalade, butterscotch... ‘So different from other wines’ said one critic, ‘that it is like seeing a new primary color.’ Does it have the aphrodisiac, even life-saving, properties often ascribed to it? Do let me know...” – *Hugh Johnson*