

ROYAL TOKAJI 2000 ESSENCIA

Winemaker:	Károly Áts
Varietal Composition:	Primarily Furmint with some Hárslevelű and a small percentage of Muscat
Aging:	7 years in 265-gallon stainless-steel tanks
Bottled:	September 2007
Production:	2,050 bottles (1/375ml)
Bottles Imported:	200
Alcohol:	2.0%
Total Acidity:	21.4g/L
Residual Sugar:	620g/L



Essencia is the world's most concentrated wine, made from the essence of the ripest aszú grapes. The second vintage of the true Royal Tokaji Essencia since the celebrated 1993, the 2000 Essencia is offered in a stately brass-hinged wooden box carved from Hungarian oak, lined with velvet and containing the indulgent Royal Tokaji Hungarian crystal sipping spoon. The spoon was designed exclusively for Royal Tokaji, enabling 25 sips per bottle — or 50 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. Essencia 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 percent, the juice ferments extremely slowly — it took the 2000 Essencia seven years in Royal Tokaji's cellars to reach only 2 percent 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 2000 VINTAGE

The millennium magic shone on Tokaj. We have never witnessed two great consecutive vintages as 1999 and 2000. Winter was short, with little rainfall and blossoming starting very early. Compared to previous vintages, the vines' progress was two weeks ahead at flowering. This advanced rate of development increased to a month, and the grapes reached the ripening stage in mid-August for the Muscat and early September for Furmint and Hárslevelű. Thanks to the hot, dry weather all summer, berries were fully ripe by the time they began to shrivel. Three-quarters of the aszú berries had sugar levels of more than 70 percent, which is extremely high. They also exhibited excellent aromas with relatively low acidity, but the wines have been charming since the first time they were tasted.

TASTING NOTES

Honey, apricot and hints of butterscotch contribute to the wonderful balance of citrusy acids which prevent the wine from being dominated by extremely high sugar levels.

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