



Indian Wine Academy

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Wineries of Slovenia (Part II)- Vipava Valley and Goriška Brda

June 16: With the borders adjoining Austria and Italy, Slovenia has been the only country in Central Europe that remained aligned to the Western Europe with the cross viticulture and culture of this beautiful green country even when it was a part of autocratic Yugoslavia, writes Subhash Arora who visited 10 wineries last month, and shares the soul of 6 Slovenian vineyards in Part II of the two-part series

MOVIA

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For many wine aficionados inside Slovenia and a majority outside, **Ceglo** based **Movia** in **Dobrovo** is Slovenia and Slovenia is Movia. The 6th generation family owner **Ales Kristančič** is considered a wine genius by some and eccentric by others. Most think of him as unpredictable. But nobody denies his innovative and unorthodox style of winemaking and his experimenting with new ideas. His histrionics can make you go wild with laughter.



The tasting room in the porch outside the building that looks like a villa faces one of the most beautiful vineyard landscapes in Slovenia and is a perfect setting for wine tasting. As we enter and exchange greetings with his charming wife **Vesna Kristančič** she tells us that he is in the winery and will show up soon. Her favourite (and ours) music is playing on a juke box in the adjoining sitting room as she proceeds to uncork a bottle of sparkling wine labelled **Puro** 2006 with no cage. She has an ice bucket full of water in front. She pops the cork as she dips the inverted bottle instantly into water. The blob of sediments is ejected

into water. She quickly straightens the bottle and pours the bubbly into our glasses which have an unusually long stem and a bowl like a compressed Bordeaux wine glass-designed by Movia. The wine has been disgorged right in front of our eyes.



This unique innovation of Ales has resulted in the Puro- a Rebula and Chardonnay blend, with only 5mg of sulphites as compared to 60-80 mg for other sparkling wines, we are told. Since it is disgorged only before

drinking, every bottle has a much longer shelf life. As Vesna explains, the bottles are supplied on a thick, cylindrical cardboard holder and during transportation and storage the bottles must be kept inverted.

Movia has been owned by Kristančič family since 1820. Thanks to Ales Movia is considered one of the best producers of Slovenia. He owns 22 hA vineyards about 8 hA of which are in Italy. Elevating from grape growing to wine making, 90,000 to 130,000 bottles are produced every year. Italy his best market though he sells all over EU, US, Japan and other countries. He is an avid fan of Natural wines. **Lunar** is one such wine-his most recent creation. Made from Rebula it is orange in colour, aged for 9-12 months in barrels buried 25 feet underground without intervention. Like Puro it's also bottled on lees and has to be decanted to remove the sediments.

Another interesting wine that has a unique personality is **Veliko** –the Red is an unusual, deep-flavoured blend of Merlot, Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon. The whites are made in an unusually oxidative style. Sauvignon Blanc, for instance is subjected to two years of aging in oak casks- an approach being followed by many top Slovenian producers.



While we taste, Ales joins and chats with us for almost an hour by the end of which we are splitting with laughter. He is enamoured by India-as is his wife Vesna. With his unique style and innovative approach he should have a niche market in India for his wines which are being lapped up by Sommeliers and wine connoisseurs in US, who are bored with regular wines and looking for something unique and different. Movia provides several interesting options in regular, organic, orange or natural wines.