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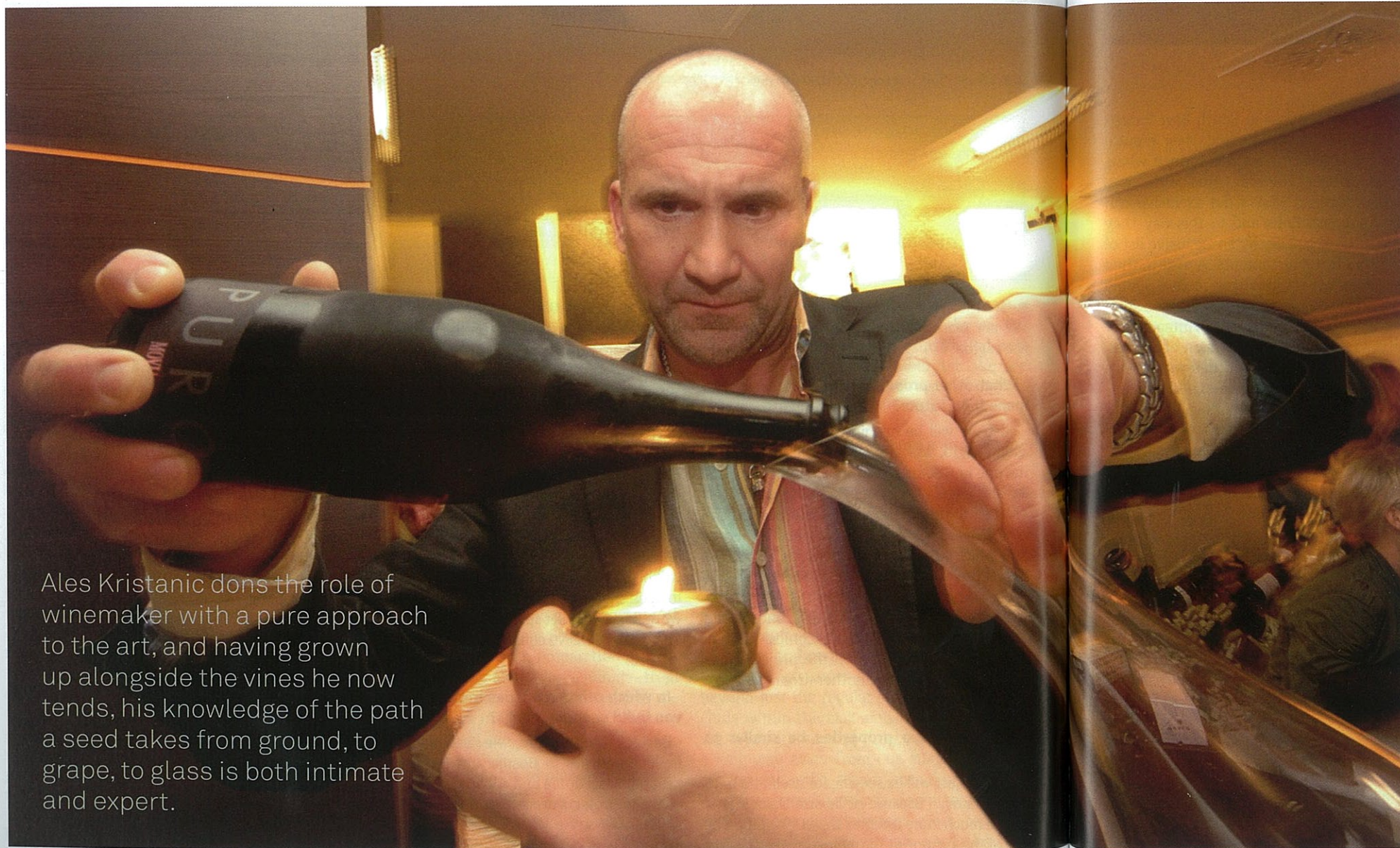
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Movia

Goriska-Brda, Slovenia



Ales Kristanic dons the role of winemaker with a pure approach to the art, and having grown up alongside the vines he now tends, his knowledge of the path a seed takes from ground, to grape, to glass is both intimate and expert.

Wines from exclusive Slovenian vineyards are starting to earn respect in the elite circles of connoisseurs, most of who never realised this small country had such varying influences – mountains to the north, a bit of Mediterranean to the south, the Pannonian plain in the east and rolling hills in between. Capturing one of the micro-climates created in this country of diversities is the Kristanic family vineyard, whose Movia wines are greeted with acclaim the more they are discovered.

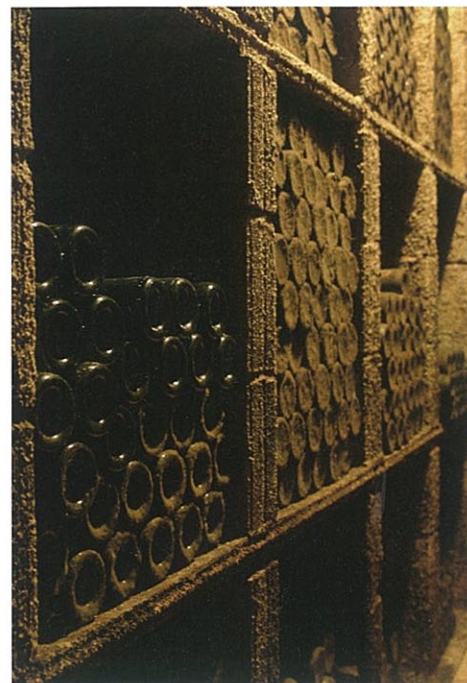
That the Kristanic's vineyards found itself on the Wine&Spirit's list of top 100 wineries in the world comes as little surprise to the followers of Slovenian wine, who trumpet their unique discovery to a new class of wine lovers seeking out their own 'private' finds on the growing world market. The Kristanic's Movia vineyards have been in the family since 1820 and straddle the present-day Slovenian-Italian border. In an area known as the Goriska-Brda district in Slovenia, once it crosses the border it takes the Italian name, the Collio Goriziano of the famed Friuli-Venezia Giulia wine growing region. The hills of Goriska-Brda face down to the sea, bringing the region sunny exposure, a long warm summer and mild winters – all perfect conditions for the types of vines grown here. As greater numbers of shipments find their way into specialty wine shops, a mystique is developing around the Goriska-Brda region.

With eight generations of winemaking in the Kristanic family, the mantle of tradition has been passed to father Mirko and son Ales, winemakers who balance a master's approach to

the science of viticulture with an intuitive connection to the spirit of the land. Their product is as much themselves as the liquid they bottle, reds and whites reacting to different shades of their and the land's personality. Increasingly the face of Movia, Ales Kristanic dons the role of winemaker with a pure approach to the art, and having grown up alongside the vines he now tends, his knowledge of the path a seed takes from ground, to grape, to glass is both intimate and expert.

At the Kristanic vineyards, it seems appropriate that they use the biodynamic approach to winemaking. Sometimes confused with organic growing techniques, biodynamic vineyards incorporate more holistic tendencies, in which the entire 'farm' is treated as a living system, the sum of its parts contributing in a continuous path towards a grand outcome: the nurtured grape. Biodynamic farming was developed by philosopher-scientist Rudolph Steiner in the early 20th century, and though fervent in the systems put in place at their own vineyards, adherents are less inclined to bring an orthodoxy of Steinerism, rather they, as the philosophy

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rightly supports, develop a feeling for their own farm's sustainable ecosystem, developing their own soil preparations to work in harmony with the land and climate.

Kristanic grows several grape varieties on the estate; whites such as pinot grigio, sauvignon blanc and ribillo gialla, while reds venture towards merlot, cabernet sauvignon and pinot nero, the Italian name for pinot noir. The wines have a robust quality; they are deep in flavour, though lively with a sense of a winemaker's continual experimentation and striving for perfection. Grapes at Movia are harvested late, and in a full ripe state, their trip from vine to initial processing is less than two hours. Though their standards for mainstay wines have been perfected through practice, Ales likes to 'play' with some of his vintages, lengthening the time the wine sits on its pits and skins, processing

them without filtration or added sulphur, the result a select few wines heavy in sediment that age well.

And age well they have. Vintage wines from Movia cellars have received standing ovations in crowds of the most discerning experts, though prices for even hard-to-find bottles have remained below those of more famous vintners. Through design or passion, Kristanic releases his most prized wines only when he sees fit, recognising the seasonal effect each year possesses. The 23 hectares of vineyards at Movia produces about 12,500 cases of wine annually, and with only 20 percent remaining on the home market, the bulk of their wines end up in exclusive restaurants and specialty shops in Germany, Italy, Switzerland, France, and more and more to a highly receptive US market, where in-the-know wine lovers follow closely release and availability.

Finding Movia wines in South East Europe may require a bit of searching, their reputation in the highest circles was formed when, in 1958, former Yugoslav president Josip Broz Tito declared Movia the exclusive cellar for state functions and to this day they are snapped up quickly by an exclusive list of the region's finest restaurants. A visit to their house wine bar in Ljubljana, called simply Movia, allows for a tasting poured by a sommelier knowledgeable in each vintage; they are served in Movia's own design of glasses, again the Kristanic's love for their wine is evident in all parts of the Movia experience.

Tasting Movia's wines, whether it be a full-bodied, fully aged pinot nero or a fresher chardonnay, opens the door to a passionate love affair with fine wine, each drop the product of dedication and emotion cultivated at the Kristanic vineyards. ■

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