

STONE, VINE & SUN

WINE MERCHANTS

# ZANUT

## Slovenian Rhapsody: Zanut Wines

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# Slovenian Rhapsody: Zanut Wines

Last November, in true treasure-hunting SVS spirit, I went to Ljubljana for the 20th Slovenian wine festival, a chance to taste wine from all over this small country (about the size of Wales, with a population of two million). It was a revelation: whilst some of the red wines are problematic, the standard of the whites (which make up over 2/3 of Slovenian production), was breathtaking. Even within a tasting where there were so many stimulating whites - intense, dry and ageworthy - one man's wines stood out for me: those of Borut Kocijančič at Zanut.

The seven hectares of the family-owned Zanut vineyards, mostly terraced and all grassed, lie across the rolling hills of Brda near the village of Neblo in the far west of Slovenia; only a few kilometres from the Italian border, and just north of the Italian city of Gorizia (Goriska). Soils, rich in minerals, are composed of clay, slate and sandstone. As one would expect, given the location, the grape varieties grown - see below - are very similar to those grown across the border in Friuli.

As the prices imply, these are no ordinary wines. The products of one of the top growers in Goriska Brda, the country's highest rated wine district, they fully deserve to be enjoyed by British wine drinkers. As tastings of older vintages confirmed, they keep well too.

## Zanut, Rebula, Goriska Brda, 2015, 12.5%

**Bottle £15.50      Case with 10% off £167.40      Code ZAN115**

Rebula is the Slovenian name for the Italian Ribolla Gialla grape, but it's more widely grown in Slovenia than in Friuli. Here it offers fascinating aromas of smoke and sandalwood with a floral note. It's dry, concentrated, lightly savoury and very long. Surprisingly full-bodied, it's a wine to drink with food, especially chicken or white fish in a sauce. Now-2019

## Zanut, Zakaj, Goriska Brda, 2015, 13.5%

**Bottle £15.95      Case with 10% off £172.26      Code ZAN215**

Zakaj, translated from Slovenina, means "why". The grape is what the Slovenians call Tocai Friulano, otherwise now known as Friulano or Sauvignonasse, originally a Bordeaux variety. This smells a little like Sauvignon Blanc (though the grape is not related) and has a certain herbaceous freshness, but it's otherwise very different to SB, with subtle flavours of pineapple (and other tropical fruit) and nuts. Fat, silkily-textured, and classy, this is a wonderful glass of wine. Now-2019

## Zanut, Sivi Pinot, Goriska Brda, 2015, 14%

**Bottle £16.50      Case with 10% off £178.20      Code ZAN315**

Sivi Pinot is the local name for Pinot Gris: as Jancis Robinson's monumental Wine Grapes attests, it "has a real Slovenian identity". This, from two small parcels, is superb: mid-gold, satisfyingly rich yet bone dry, and delivering complex nuances of stone fruit, honey, lavender and spice. It's one of the best dry Pinot Gris / Grigios I have ever tasted, right up with the finest of Alsace and Friuli - and the finish is remarkable. You could drink it with roast pork or turkey. Now-2020

## Zanut, Sauvignon, Goriska Brda, 2015, 13%

**Bottle £19.95      Case with 10% off £215.46      Code ZAN415**

This unoaked Sauvignon Blanc, from the estate's highest vineyards, has the intensity and drive of the very best Sauvignons from anywhere in the world. The scent is amazing: fresh pineapple, lime and white flowers. Densely textured, it nevertheless has verve and freshness, with delicious pineapple and pink grapefruit character. Borut attributes its success to his use of three different clones of Sauvignon, one unique to the estate: this is the sort of winemaker claim which it is very hard to take at face value, but when the wine is this good, one has to accept his justification! To judge by a number of earlier vintages going back to 2011, this will age well too, becoming more honeyed and creamy, like a fine white Bordeaux. Now-2021

## Zanut, Jama, Goriska Brda, 2012, 15%

**Bottle £27.95      Case with 10% off £301.86      Code ZAN515**

Call it Simon's folly if you like, but I could not resist shipping a little Jama (pronounced "Yama"), a single vineyard wine from Friulano = Sauvignonasse, only produced in the best vintages - and just 930 bottles in 2012. Very late picked - on the 23rd-24th October - the grapes were then left in tank to ferment on their skins for twenty days. That gives a deep yellow colour to the wine, and satisfying density and complexity. Floral (blossom), fruity (exotic fruits, dried fruit and Seville oranges) and spice flavours are all present; and the wine is hugely aromatic, powerful and structured, with a nip of tannin from the skins. Whilst the overall effect is perhaps comparable to an amphora-aged, natural wine there are no hints of the wine faults which so often mar natural wines. It's also like a great Savennières, dry, mineral, savoury and long-lived. Whilst this can be drunk with a wide range of dishes, from the finest veal to lobster, it can also be enjoyed on its own, or just with some hard cheese. Now-2021

**Zanut Whites      £183.33      Code ZAN18**

**A case including three bottles of the first four wines listed (so excluding Jama), with a discount of 10% on the bottle prices.**