

## Buy Czurda Riesling, and you can always be sure of consistent quality

*Some years ago, a special wine was born in the Pannonhalma wine region. This wine was welcomed by consumers and the trade alike, as the style it represents is unique in Hungary. Dr. Henrik Czurda created this wine that is used as a reference in the WSET courses of the Hungarian Wine College. We asked Henrik how this year has gone and discussed his plans.*



**1.** In just a few years, you have created unique examples of German-style Rieslings in your home country, which are recognized by the industry year after year. How satisfied are you with your recent results?

I am very satisfied with the results so far. There have been many successes in the recent past. One of my main goals was to make a truly excellent, premium-quality wine. I have achieved this, as both my 2020 vintage wines, **CZURDA Sweet Temptation** and **CZURDA If you like it dry**, received 92-point Robert Parker ratings, and the Austrian restaurant guide Falstaff gave both the 2020 and 2021 dry versions 90-point ratings in the TOP VALUE category under €25, compared with other European Rieslings. The same vintage was also voted the best dry white wine from Pannonhalma at the **WineLovers Wine Awards** this year, making it the 11th-best Hungarian white wine. These successes show the consistently high quality of Czurda wines. This is thanks to the gift of the terroir and, of course, to the excellent winemaker who prepares the wines to my specifications with expertise and love. There is also the weather factor, which has been great up to now.



## **2.** What did you expect, and how did this year turn out?

We had a good start to the year with excellent material in the summer until September. Unfortunately, two and a half weeks of rain in September were very bad for us. At first, we thought we could leave the grapes on the vine until October, but that didn't work because there were signs of rot in places because of the relentless water intrusion, and we had to harvest. The quality of the grapes is excellent, but the early harvest prevented the sugars and aromas from fully developing to ensure the characteristic flavor of Czurda Riesling. We have to admit the missing month hurt us, and it was impossible to create the usual Czurda style from the resulting must.



### **3. Does this mean there will be no Czurda Riesling this year?**

No, unfortunately, there will not be a 2022 batch. I cannot allow consumers who are used to a high-quality, premium product to be disappointed by the production of a base wine made in a challenging vintage. Consumers would not understand why, after the recent top wines, they should receive a simple wine with undoubtedly a more neutral character under the same name, albeit still of good quality. It is vital that people who buy Czurda Riesling know what they will have in their glass and not have to fear that the name will provide something different from year to year. Czurda Riesling will always be made from a high-quality, ripe, raw material with exceptional aging potential because of its high acidity and sugar content, with notes of ripe fruit and mineral elegance.



#### **4. What are your plans for the finished wine?**

There are several possibilities. We could decide not to bring anything to market and miss a year completely, or the raw material could be sold as it makes a good base wine but doesn't meet the standard we demand. However, we will choose a different solution. In any given year, the weather may mean that the grapes must be harvested earlier, so we must consider that, which means we must do some smart thinking for the long term. We looked at the characteristics of this wine and what we could do with it. It's a much fresher wine than usual, with lower sugar levels, and it doesn't have that broad, dried fruit aroma, but it has higher acidity. So, it's an excellent base for sparkling wine.



#### **5. That sounds intriguing and exciting! Tell us more about your idea.**

I'm taking advantage of this opportunity to learn the sparkling wine-making genre to add to my repertoire and grow my product base. I think it's important to keep learning and innovating. First, we made a Rhine Riesling with residual sugar, and then, two years later, we created a dry version. This was also an experiment, and it went so well that the first one was successful enough to be included in Winelovers' 100 Best Hungarian Wines. Now, we are going to do another experiment and make a nice sparkling dry wine. I am not following fashion but making a smart decision to make the best use of the raw material that nature has given me. I really hope we can create the same quality as with Rieslings. We will work with Methode traditionnelle, and it will most probably be a brut sparkling wine. I also plan to make

the second fermentation and aging longer than the Hungarian regulations require so that the perlage is pleasant and not too aggressive.



**6. Knowing your approach to quality, we expect this sparkling wine to be excellent! How about getting into the best restaurants and Michelin-starred venues?**

I am particularly proud of my success to date. With Czurda Riesling, we have already managed to create a premium product that has caught the attention of highly-skilled sommeliers and is now, indeed, in several prestigious places, including the two Michelin-starred [Platan Gourmet Restaurant](#) and the [Stand Restaurant](#), the one-star restaurant [Essência](#) and [Costes](#), the Michelin nominated [Laurel](#) and [Pajta](#), in several Michelin-starred Swiss restaurants and, of course, in other excellent restaurants like [Trattoria Pomo D'oro](#) and [Bobo Restaurant](#). I am very grateful that they have put their trust in me from the beginning, and I consider it my duty to ensure continuity for them so they can still order from the existing 2021 batches and retain them on the wine list in the outgoing year. I have no intention of getting rid of the bottles in any case; I want to keep them for those who really care.



## 7. How about aging?

Czurda Rieslings have long aging potential. They only get better over the years! Robert Parker has identified the ideal drink dates for the sweet version to be from 2022 to 2050 and for the dry version from 2026 to 2037.

The wines are also available for purchase in the [Winelovers Webshop](#) and at [borbolt.hu](#).

