



INFORMATION 2021



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# PUKLAVEC FAMILY WINES

The Puklavec family's love for wine can be tracked back to 1934 in Slovenia. Martin Puklavec had a vision: to make the finest wines together. This philosophy continues to resonate through the family's wine making today. Puklavec Family Wines are driven by the core values of passion, hard work and dedication to quality. Vladimir Puklavec and his two daughters, Tatjana and Kristina all work together, alongside the other winegrowers, with the determination to continue the pursuit of their (grand)father's vision.



Puklavec Family Wines are produced in the heart of Ljutomer-Ormož, a wine area in the Podravje region, in the North-Eastern part of Slovenia. This area provides the perfect microclimate conditions for grape growing.

The result are elegant wines, crafted with an uncompromising and passionate attention to detail, beautifully balanced and as expressive as the landscape of our vineyards.

Vladimir Puklavec



# 1. PUKLAVEC FAMILY WINES

## 1.1 History of Puklavec Family Wines

### Care and quality in a communist period

Puklavec Family Wines is a family owned winery. The family Puklavec's history in the area goes back to 1934, when Martin Puklavec became General Manager of the Jeruzalem-Ormož winegrowers' cooperative of the time. Martin dedicated his efforts to improving cooperation between the winegrowers, and his effort paid off. After the Second World War, the communist period began. The winegrowers' land was expropriated, and all vineyards became state property. Martin Puklavec then took the role of director of the cooperative under state supervision, and in the 1950s he became the driving force behind the construction of the cellar in Jeruzalem-Ormož as it is known today. Despite the communist period, under Martin's leadership the quality of the vineyards and wines increased considerably, and exports flourish. In 1967, the Ormož cellar was completed, and a second cellar was built in Ljutomer. Before the construction of the cellar in Ormož, grapes were pressed and stored in more than 30 different wine sheds in the vineyards on the hills. Thus the building of these cellars was an enormous progression.

Martin Puklavec was a highly respected person in the cooperative, with a strong vision. In the context of the communist regime of the time, Martin's management of the cooperative and care for the quality of the vineyards and wines can be considered quite extraordinary. A former member of the cooperative, Tone Zafošnik, recalled Martin Puklavec: 'Martin was very important for the wine region. The cooperative was accepted because of his trustworthiness and because the people were paid well. Martin treated the winegrowers and cellar staff very well, and took very good care of the vineyards. Under his leadership, the cooperative became famous for the quality of its product and the soundness of its management.'



### Return of the Puklavec family

With Martin's death in 1969, the Puklavec influence in the wine region would come to an end until Martin's son Vladimir restored the vineyards and cellar to family hands in 2009. Vladimir resolved to join with the still extant cooperative to continue his father's mission, producing wines in an Old World wine region with New World ambition. 'We are continuing the family tradition, with the goal of making top quality wines in a region that is among the best wine regions in the world,' says the younger Puklavec. The Puklavec family intends to make the wine region and the wine cellar a name of international renown once again.



In the Podravje region, you will find the vineyards of Puklavec Family Wines, a family owned Slovenian winery. Because Puklavec Family Wines believes the best things in life should be shared with others, they are now bringing their wines to the international market. A forward-looking business, Puklavec Family Wines has great ambition to put the name of Slovenia on the map of the world's leading wine countries. The first step is made, by being the biggest exporting winery of Slovenia.

## 1.2 An Old World winegrower with New World ambitions

### Cooperation

Puklavec Family Wines is a forward-looking company with a clear mission. The wines of Puklavec Family Wines are made from grapes grown in their own vineyards (650 hectares) and in those of the best winegrowers in the Ljutomer-Ormož region. At present, the cooperative unites 400 farmers holding a total of 450 hectares of their own vineyards. With 142 employees at the cellar in Ormož and Ljutomer, the Puklavec family makes a significant contribution to employment in this relatively poor region of Slovenia.

Upon its founding in 2009, Puklavec Family Wines took over the cooperative's contracts in modified form. The cooperative element disappeared, so now Puklavec Family Wines functions, in essence, as a trading house that purchases grapes from the farmers. As a result, the farmers are now paid approximately 60% more per kilo than before. At the same time, they are expected to produce better grapes at a much lower yield. While before, 3-4 kgs of yield per vine was normal, today that yield is approximately 2 kgs. And while the old contracts insisted on a purchasing obligation, grapes of low quality can now be rejected.

### Production

The choice to acquire two cellars was made in order to achieve sufficient scale. Total capacity is 11 million liters; Puklavec Family Wines strives for a production of 4 million liters per year. There is a clear vision behind this approach. About 55% of the region's vineyards are controlled by Puklavec Family Wines; a total of some 2000 hectares. The business is split into one facility for premium wines in Ormož, and another for liter wines and simple, basic wines in Ljutomer. From this perspective, the scale can be seen as an advantage; Puklavec Family Wines is large enough to



make investments, and moreover, its share in the production of the region's wines is so significant the company will have a major impact on the image and general quality of the Podravje's wines.

Puklavec Family Wines produces primarily white wines. The production method is focused on environmentally friendly technologies, a holistic approach to vineyard care and a comprehensive knowledge of

individual vineyards. The underlying assumption in the creation of their wines is that the wine is the result of a natural process, one in which intervention should only take place when necessary. Because the steep hills and terraced vineyards make mechanical harvesting impossible, all grapes are picked by hand. After the grapes are destemmed and pressed, the must is chilled immediately to a temperature of 10°C/50 F. This production process allows Puklavec Family Wines to make wines with outstanding crispness and refreshing fruit characteristics.

### Upping the quality – technological advances

Puklavec Family Wines has a new bottling machine which can handle 5000 bottles per hour, a new fermentation hall and the most modern wine presses, all of which are intended to ensure absolute quality. Puklavec Family Wines has a primary goal to continually improve its quality and optimize every step of the winemaking process.

### The Ormož cellar

From an engineering standpoint, the cellar in Ormož is a marvel: a cylindrical underground passage dug into a hillside along the Drava River, with a storage capacity of 6.5 million liters. The cellar has seven floors, and is designed so the grape juice can 'fall' from one tank into another without the use of pumps. A staircase of 170 steps leads from the top floor of the cellar to the lowest level, 80 feet underground. This ancient method (which can now be found in the



New World wine regions as well) keeps the wine stored underground at a constant and optimal temperature. It is one of the most meticulous ways of 'transporting' wine within the cellar. Thanks to technological advances and the ongoing improvements, the cellar is being continually modernized. The new facilities make it possible to process the juice without oxidation and ferment it at low temperatures, both of which make a major contribution to the quality of the wine.

### The nursery

With the takeover of the vineyards in 2009, Puklavec Family Wines also acquired a grape cutting nursery. The nursery was born when an outbreak of phylloxera occurred in the hills of Jeruzalem in 1887 and 1888 (as it did elsewhere in Europe). Half of the vineyards were lost. The only solution was grafting the European grape cuttings to American rootstock, which was resistant to the disease. The new business of grape stock nursery emerged, which is still very active today. The nursery produces 240,000 new grape rootstock plants every year. Most are still grafted to American rootstock, but in 2009 the first Slovenian clone was produced, a major breakthrough. And so the work continues: from small beginnings to the ultimate conclusion.



### Archive wines

In the wine cellar in Ormož you will find the biggest Slovenian white wine archive, with more than 250.000 bottles of exclusive white wine. It is here where the treasures of the past are kept, which hold wines dating as far back as 1956. The moment that you enter the archive cellar, you feel as if you are a part of something exceptional – the soft light, the striking scents and the old, dust-covered bottles all contribute to this unique atmosphere.

### An impulse for the wine region

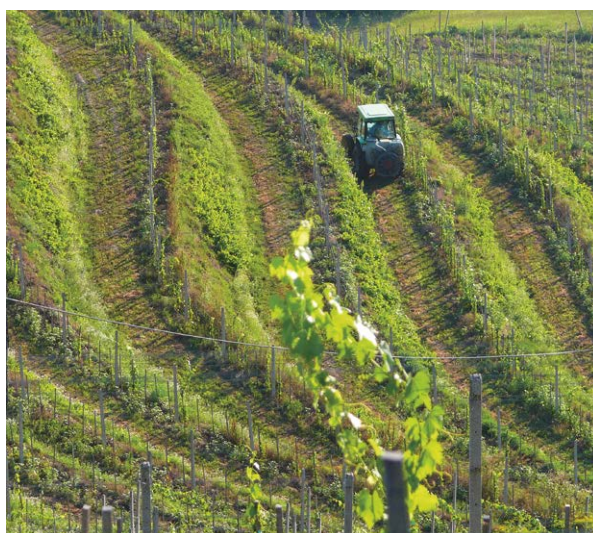
An interview with the mayor of Ormož highlighted how the area has welcomed the return of the Puklavec family: 'Slovenia is an up-and-coming country, and the region is benefitting from the many wine cellars here,' he says. 'The efforts of the Puklavec family are continuing the tradition of winegrowing in a modern and innovative way, and consequently are very important for the development of this area.'



### 1.3 Location and climate

#### Location of the vineyards

The vineyards of Puklavec Family Wines are nestled in the hills of Ljutomer-Ormož, where the outstanding terroir offers the basis for a wide range of promising wines. The beneficial climate and extremely good soil composition are indispensable in making the unique and fruity wines of Puklavec Family Wines which are all handpicked. The terraced hillside vineyards, the best conditions for making fresh and fruity white wines, allows Puklavec Family Wines to get the most out of the climate. The wines of Puklavec Family Wines are grown on a total of 1100 hectares of vineyard, 650 of which are owned by Puklavec Family Wines. The vineyards are spread out across multiple hillsides in the region at altitudes ranging from 820 to 1,148 feet. Average harvest per vine is 2 kg, or 40 hectolitres per hectare.



#### Climate

The Podravje region has a temperate climate with hot summers and cold winters, a result of the proximity to Pannonic steppes, the Alps and the Adriatic Sea. The vineyards are at the same latitude as the famous French wine areas Bordeaux and Burgundy. Here in Podravje, the sun shines an average of over two thousand hours per year. And because most of the vineyards are situated on steep slopes, they get almost all of that sunshine. Average precipitation is between 900 and 1000 mm per year, with approximately 550 mm in the growing period from April to September.

#### Soil

The original soil consists of carbonate-rich rocky soil, with marlstone and calcium-rich sandstone predominating. The hilly area around Jeruzalem is characterized by a changing soil composition. At the top of the hills and on the steep slopes, the ground is largely sandy and soft, while at lower elevations and on the less steep slopes, the ground contains more clay, making it lighter and comparatively barren. This means production on these soils is lower, but of higher quality. Grass is planted in all of the vineyards, not only to help prevent erosion but to also make vineyard management more environmentally friendly.

### An extraordinary area steeped in history

The beneficial winegrowing conditions of Ljutomer-Ormož are not the only thing that make the area famous. It is a breathtakingly beautiful and historic region. As you drive out from Ormož towards the 'wine hills', you will have no idea of the spectacular scenery that awaits. You first pass through a landscape topped with flat fields, mainly used for farming and livestock, with not a vine to be seen. But then, the hills suddenly rise as if from nowhere, and you find yourself surrounded by vineyards in a sparsely populated area that simply breathes an air of peace and tranquillity.

At 1,115 feet above sea level, the town of Jeruzalem is the highest point in the hills around Ljutomer-Ormož. Legend has it that crusaders passed this way on their journey to the Biblical Jerusalem, and on one of the most beautiful hillsides in the area, after enjoying the hospitality and the wines of friendly locals, they decided never to leave, rechristening the village Jeruzalem. To this day, it remains one of the most prominent locales in the area. The town of Jeruzalem is proud of its sacred name, stunning views and pilgrim church. The hill offers a spectacular view of the surrounding vineyards, their carefully sculpted terraces meandering from hill to hill in characteristic shapes.



### Red wine from Macedonia

Known for its characteristically cool climate, the Ljutomer-Ormož region is best suited to producing fresh, fruity white wines. In order to produce full-bodied red wine, we searched for another region to grow red grape varieties. We found the perfect spot in the sunny hills of Negotino in Macedonia. Red wines from Macedonia are not yet widely known, but they have great potential. On our vineyards we grow Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and the local Vranec grapes. Having built a small but brand new wine cellar, we are able to produce fruity, yet mature, accessible red wines that benefit from the growing conditions and unique terroir of Macedonia. The climate of warm, dry summers and relatively cold winters create the perfect conditions, while the area's geological profile of light, sandy soils – with their high content of limestone, calcium and iron – contributes to the spicy, tempered taste and rich colour of our red wines.



## 2. GENERAL INFORMATION ON SLOVENIA AS A WINE COUNTRY

### 2.1 Location and climate

#### Location

Slovenia is one of the smaller countries in the green heart of central Europe. In the north, it is bordered by Austria, with Hungary and Croatia to the east and southeast, and Italy and the Adriatic Sea to the west and southwest. The Slovenian landscape is characterized by the foothills of the Italian Alps to the northwest, which fall off rapidly to the east as they transition into a hilly landscape with wide valleys and rivers. The highest point in the country is Mount Triglav (9,956 ft), near the Italian border. Slovenia has only a few large cities, with the capital Ljubljana (population 282,000) and Maribor (population 116,000) being the only two with more than 100,000 inhabitants.



#### Climate

The climate in Slovenia is defined by Mediterranean, Alpine and continental influences. The coastal area has a Mediterranean climate, while inland a continental climate prevails characterized by mild to hot summers and cold winters. Inland, temperatures can vary from winter temperatures of -20°C/5 F in the mountainous areas, to 35°C/95 F in summer in the eastern plateaus and valleys.

### 2.2 History of Slovenia in a nutshell

After periods of Roman and Frankish domination and the Habsburg Empire, the Slovenian people were divided across different states after the First World War. The Habsburg Empire broke up into the republics of Austria and Hungary, and the long-sought independent 'Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes' was established. On December 1st 1918, Alexander Karadjordjevic was proclaimed king, and the kingdom was expanded to include Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. A period full of disputes and conflict between the various ethnic groups followed.

In 1929, the constitution was abolished and replaced by a royal dictatorship. King Alexander changes the country's name to Yugoslavia, and the Serbs became the dominant population group. On April 6th 1941, the Second World War came to Yugoslavia, and on April 17th the Yugoslav army surrendered unconditionally. In post-war Yugoslavia, Josip Broz (Tito) then came to power, who in 1945 proclaimed the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia was under the leadership of the Communist Party. In this period, all vineyards were expropriated and taken by the state. The communist regime was to last until 1990, when the first democratic elections were held. In these elections, 88.5% of the population voted for a sovereign and independent state of Slovenia. Slovenia has been independent since 1991 and has been a member of the European Union since 2004.

The history of viticulture in the western Balkans dates from time immemorial. When Yugoslavia was split in the 1990s, most Balkan countries suffered from the years of war that followed. It was only after the war had ended that reconstruction could begin, and this certainly also applied to winegrowing. At present, the winegrowers and winemakers are working hard to catch up, and the quality of the wines from these countries is increasing rapidly.

### 2.3 Wine production in Slovenia

Eastern Europe is still a relatively unknown player on the wine market. Nonetheless, the region is producing surprisingly good wines. One of these newcomers is Slovenia. Slovenia is one of the small republics that (together with Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) made up the former Yugoslavia.

Slovenia is the only former Yugoslav republic that escaped the wars of the 1990s virtually unscathed, and as a result, its winegrowing culture suffered much less than that of its fellow republics. And because of Slovenia's geographical proximity and longstanding cultural ties to Austria and northeastern Italy, its winegrowing is much further advanced than its western Balkan neighbours.



Although its total vineyard acreage of some 21,000 hectares makes Slovenia one of the smallest winegrowing countries in the world, wine production and trade have always been an important part of Slovenian culture. The land has a rich array of wines, and a long list of international prizes stands testament to their quality. In the Austro-Hungarian empire, the wines from what is now Slovenia were highly prized, and indeed, the annual wine fair held in the Slovenian capital, Ljubljana, was once an event of world stature.

Slovenia produces one million hectoliters of wine annually, with the bulk of that production intended for domestic consumption. Approximately 70% of the country's wine production is classified as quality wine. Slovenia has been a member of the European Union since 2004, and since then Slovenian wine laws must comply with European directives. Slovenia even has the oldest vine in the world, which is at least 400 years old. You can find the vine near the river in the citycentre of Maribor.

## 2.4 Wine areas in Slovenia

Slovenia has three wine areas, with a total of fourteen recognized appellations of origin. The three wine areas are Primorska, Posavje and Podravje region. The Primorska region stretches from the Italian border to the city of Koper on the Adriatic Sea. Here, a Mediterranean climate prevails, and unlike else in Slovenia the wine produced in this region is predominantly red. The Posavje region lies within the Sava River Valley in southeastern Slovenia, a hilly stretch with a variety of different soil types and microclimates with cooler and warmer areas. Vineyards here are built on steep slopes. In the northeast, in the Drava River Valley, lies the region Podravje. It is the largest wine region in Slovenia, and it borders Croatia, Austria and Hungary. It is home to the country's finest white wines.

### Primorska region



- Coastal region stretching from the Italian border to the city of Koper on the Adriatic.
- Hilly area, with vineyards in the valleys.
- Mediterranean climate.
- Produces largely red wines (unlike the rest of Slovenia).
- Wines comparable to those of the neighbouring Italian region Friuli.
- Appellations of origin: Brda, Vipava, Kras, Koper.
- Grapes: Teran (Italian: Refosco), Rebula (Italian: Ribolla), Tocai Friulano, Pikolit, Malvasia, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Barbera.

### Posavje region



- Located in the Sava River Valley, in the south-east of Slovenia.
- Hilly area with many different types of soil and microclimates with cooler and warmer areas.
- Vineyards on steep slopes.
- Appellations of origin: Dolenjska, Bela Krajina, Bizeljsko-Sremic, Smarje-Vrstaj.
- Grapes: Laški Rizling (Welschriesling), Traminer (Gewürztraminer), Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Blanc, Šipon (Furmint) and Sylvaner.
- Wines are often blends.
- The Bela Krajina produces ice wine.

### Podravje region



- Located in the Drava River Valley, in the north-east of Slovenia
- Largest wine region in Slovenia, close to the Austrian border.
- Soil rich in minerals and lime.
- Produces the best white wines in Slovenia.
- Appellations of origin: Maribor, Radgona-Kapela, Srednje Slovenske Gorice, Haloze, Ljutomer-Ormož, Prekmurske Gorice.
- Grapes: Laški Rizling (Welschriesling), Chardonnay, Traminer (Gewürztraminer), Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Blanc, Šipon (Furmint) and Sylvaner.



## 3. GENERAL INFORMATION ON NORTH MACEDONIA AS A WINE COUNTRY

### 3.1 Wine areas in North Macedonia

Puklavec Family Wines found the perfect spot on the sunny hills of Negotino, Macedonia to grow outstanding red grape varieties. A mountainous area of mineral rich terroir, at an altitude between 250 and 280 meters.



#### The search for quality

At Puklavec Family Wines we constantly strive to deliver outstanding quality wines and value for money. With such a broad range of white wines from our native Slovenia, we wanted to add red wines to our portfolio and we found the perfect conditions for growing red grapes in North Macedonia! The Negotino region in North Macedonia is a mountainous area where the grapes benefit from sunshine from the early morning through to late afternoon. The climate of warm, dry summers and relatively cold winters provide optimal conditions for growing red grapes.



#### Full-bodied red wines

Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot grapes are grown here as well as the local Vranec grape. As you have come to expect from our dedication to detail, every grape is carefully handpicked. The soil here is ideal for growing red grapes, being perfectly balanced between clay, silt and sand particles that also contain beneficial organics. These wines are not only fruity and lively but also welcomingly gentle and smooth.

- All our grapes are still handpicked and handselected in the winery
- Production capacity is approximately 300.000 liters per year
- The hills of Negotino enjoy more than 2180 hours of sunshine a year
- The average temperature is 12.6° C



### 3. MARKET APPROACH AND SELECTION

The company's substantial investment in the production process and the vineyard management have enabled Puklavec Family Wines to produce wines of surpassing quality. Puklavec Family Wines offers a wide range for a variety of markets: for the retail market, on-premise accounts and specialized wine shops. Many award winning wines make Puklavec Family Wines a serious player in the market.

The company's goal is to place Puklavec Family Wines and Slovenia on the world wine map. The winery is pulling out all the stops to produce top quality wines, through the implementation of a serious and ambitious marketing strategy and approach and by utilizing a winemaker with international experience and a renowned wine consultant.

Over ten grape varieties, including Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Welschriesling, local specialty grape Šipon (Furmint), Traminer, Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc are used to produce different types of still and sparkling wines.





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