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## Record total hammer price at fifth Great Tokaj Wine Auction

The Great Tokaj Wine Auction on Saturday 22nd April closed with a final total of 116 000 EUR (36 083 500 HUF), an increase of 20 % on the record to date. All lots but one were sold. Nóra Winkler, auctioneer since the first Auction, noted, "When we started the first Auction, we had high expectations – and we are exceedingly happy where we have come to and where we are going!"

It is encouraging to see increasing interest in the sweet wines which made the region so famous. The Szepsy Tokaji Aszú 6 puttonyos 2011 went for a record 38 710 Euros, that is over 140 Euros a 0.5 l bottle. The London-based company already has buyers for the 270 bottles from Sweden to Hong Kong. Exciting bidding took the 2013 Aszú collection (commercially unavailable) by up-and-coming young winemakers Tokaj Generation Y up by a quarter. Dry wines also show a marked increase on estimates and starting prices. Good examples which were sold at significant increases are Kikelet's Váti-dűlő Hárslevelű 2016, Samuel Tinon's Szent Tamás Furmint 2016, Szent Benedek Birtokbor 2006 and Tokaj Hétszőlő Hárslevelű 2016.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Great Tokaj Wine Auction

Anticipation was tangible in the auction room as bidders raised their paddles to secure their exclusive lots. All contemporary Tokaji wines, the overwhelming majority of these limited wines were single-vineyard and/or the main Tokaj varieties, Furmint and Hárslevelű. The highest proportion of lots ever sold (over 95%) indicates growing interest in the distinct terroirs and confidence in the rapid increase in overall quality since the end of cooperative state agriculture 25 years ago. As reference winemaker István Szepsy explained in his opening address, "Quality is based on knowledge, and we are already at the next level. Consciousness of the region's characteristics, varieties, terroir, aszú berry development can always attain higher reaches. And this assists in positioning our wines. A wine's value moves a region forward, and there is a clear need to establish the value. The Auction plays a very important role in this repositioning."

**Buyers at the Auction** held in the Tokaj Cultural and Conference Centre, included wine merchants and private buyers from Hungary and abroad, in person and by phone. Wojciech Bońkowski, wine writer and editor of Polish wine magazine Winicjatywa, came with the first crowd-funding initiative to buy wine for readers of their popular magazine and was delighted with his purchase of Kvaszinger's 2016 Furmint from Meszes vineyard saying, "I'll definitely bid at the Auction next year. I've got a taste for it – and it's really exciting!"

**Participating wineries** range from individuals and small emerging family wineries to larger, more established estates, some owned by companies with impressive international portfolios: Barta, Demetervin, Disznókő, Grand Tokaj, Kvaszinger, Holdvölgy, Kikelet, Márton Birtok, Myrtus, Pajzos Tokaj, Samuel Tinon, Szent Benedek, Szepsy, Tokaj Hétszőlő. Lots range from dry Furmint and Hárslevelűs to varietal Aszús and Esszencia, plus two selections: Tokaji Aszú by Tokaj Generation Y and Tállya Horizon, dry wines from Tállya Wines producers.

The Confrérie is all about community and vice-president Samuel Tinon embraces this, offering 10 % of his Aszú Esszencia lot sale to the nursery and primary school in his village Olaszliszka. So, income from the Auction only supports the Confrérie's work but also producers' immediate environment.

**The pre-Auction blind tasting** in the Tokaj Wine Museum provided a playful way to explore the wines and challenge preconceptions about producers' wines, thus refining tasting abilities. The 24 lots offered by both established and up-and-coming winemakers gave a great opportunity to discover new vineyards and wineries and so explore the various styles of contemporary Tokaji. Thus the weekend event is the perfect chance to get the real, up-to-date picture of what is happening in production, producers and the market in the Tokaj Wine Region.

### Excitement as Tokaji lovers gathered to celebrate Tokaj Spring

Curious guests from different countries came to discover the budding life in the historic Tokaj Wine Region which is



# Confrérie de Tokaj

emerging with great vibrancy after a period of hibernation lasting through half the 20<sup>th</sup> century. A 14th-century cellar, a 21<sup>st</sup>-century theatre, museums, mansions and, of course, the vineyards were among the venues where people strengthened links at the exclusive three-day Tokaj Spring event. It is playing a leading role with events that draws Tokaj(i) lovers together, bringing them closer to the land, the winemakers and their wines.

The main pillars of the weekend were the Great Tokaj Wine Auction, Tokaj Fair, intronization of new members, gala and wine dinners, and a cultural day exploring the mansions of Tolcsva. Guests appreciated this unique opportunity to explore the Tokaj Wine Region from within, in close contact with winemakers. This is a complex programme which supports the Confrérie's aim to present Tokaj and its wines and to participate actively in the region's evolution.

## 1st Tokaj Fair

An exciting new addition to the programme was Tokaj Fair, the largest ever Tokaj tasting in the Tokaj Wine Region which included three masterclasses. Sharing their wines were forty wineries of all sizes, including those belonging to producer associations Tokaj Renaissance and Mád Circle. The well-attended masterclasses were a tasting of dry Furmint 2013 sold at previous Confrérie Auctions led by wine educator Gabriella Mészáros AIWS and the Tokaj Renaissance presentation of their 2013 Aszú wines by Ronn Wiegand MW/MS. Delighted by the overall increasing quality of Tokaji wines, Ronn noted these unique wines are still exceptional value, drawing comparisons with Napa Valley's rise. President of Tokaj Renaissance Sarolta Bardos said, "Producers are delighted about holding the Aszú vintage presentation in Tokaj for the first time. This is where it belongs, and visitors – professional and amateur alike – will better understand the wines by being here in our region." Riedel also held a Furmint glass masterclass.

## Exploring the stately homes of Tolcsva

The village of Tolcsva in the centre of the wine region has seen several impressive renovations in recent years and Tokaj Spring came to explore in Sunday's events. Visitors enjoyed wine tastings, jazz, tours, talks and colourful brunch at the Szirmay-Waldott mansion museum which gives insight into aristocratic family life around 1900 and the Helia-D Herbal House which explores herbs in beauty products. New Confrérie member István Matyasovszki invited guests to his Kincsem Mansion which is in a splendid setting with an incredible view over the region and floodplain at its feet. These chilled-out events in imposing venues built in the golden age of Tokaj were the perfect way to close the weekend together and show some recent major investments and developments here.

**The next Tokaj Spring will be held from Friday 20<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2018** thanks to mayor of Tokaj and new Confrérie member, György Posta, who extends the invitation for the Confrérie to organize the event at the same superb venues next year. The Tokaj Fair on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> April 2018, the Great Tokaj Wine Auction on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2018.

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**Tokaj Spring – 3-day event celebrating and developing the rejuvenation in this historic wine region** classified in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and declared a closed appellation in the world (placing it among the first in the world) in 1737, the Tokaj Wine Region was designated part of the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage in 2002. The Auction shows clearly that it is stepping into its next stage of rejuvenation after the major restructuring and changes in the 1990s. The Confrérie's Tokaj Spring aims to bring guests close to winemakers, to explore the terroirs and their wines, to strengthen the community of Tokaj lovers. All set on the strong foundation of friendship and veneration of the region and its wines.

## Confrérie de Tokaj

All members share love and respect for Tokaj and its wines, an appreciation of the region's unique volcanic/loess terroirs and a curiosity to deepen their understanding. The pride of becoming a Confrérie member was tangible, as was their commitment to the Confrérie mission to introduce the pleasure of Tokaji wines to contribute to friendship and understanding between people. **The Confrérie de Tokaj** aims to give public access to the enormous intellectual and spiritual history that envelops Tokaji wine. Learn more: [www.tokajborlovagrend.hu/en/the-confrerie-de-tokaj/](http://www.tokajborlovagrend.hu/en/the-confrerie-de-tokaj/)