

'Baltica'



Tom Plocher

Synonyms: 'Hasansky Sladky', 'Hasanski Sladki' 'Hasan (Xasan) Sweet' 'Varajane Sinine' (1, 2).

Pedigree: Dalnyvostochyni #60 x *Vitis amurensis* (1, 2).

Origin: Hasan (Xasan), Primorsky Krai, Russia (1, 2). Developed by amateur breeder, A. K. Bous. Jaan Kivistik at the Rapina Agricultural College in Estonia, evaluated it for many years (2).

Release: Circa late 1950's or early 1960's (1, 2).

Type: Interspecific hybrid (including *V. amurensis*, *V. labrusca*, *V. riparia* and *V. vinifera*) (1).

Color: Blue

Berry: Small to medium sized berries (1, 2). Average berry weight is 2 g (2).

Cluster: Medium in size, weighing an average of 90 g (range 70-120 g) (1); long and slightly loose (2).

Viticultural Characteristics: Hart (1) reported strong but not excessive vigor and a procumbent growth habit.

Disease/Pests: 'Baltica' is quite disease resistant (1, 2), except for a moderate susceptibility to late season (post-harvest) powdery mildew (2).

Wine Quality and Characteristics: Hart (1) stated that 'Baltica' makes a fruity red wine. Plocher and Parke (2) added that the juice is clear, not red and in hot summer climates such as Minnesota, has just a slight hint of foxiness. 'Baltica' is best suited to light red wines (1) or rosé (2). Carbonic maceration (1) or semi-carbonic maceration and a yeast which encourages fruitiness, helps to yield decent wines. (2) The end result, according to Plocher and Parke (2) is a brilliantly colored carmine red wine with light body and an aroma of cherries and cherry blossoms, with no foxiness. They noted that the wines produced from 'Baltica' in very cool climates differ from those produced in hot summer places such as Minnesota. The cool climate wines are darker, fuller, and more complex.

Season: Early (1, 2).

'Baltica'

Cold Hardiness: Very hardy (below -20° F) (1, 2).

Use: Wine. Best suited to areas with very short or very cool growing seasons. Hart (1) noted that commercial production is possible, but flavor will keep it from mimicking vinifera wine styles. He added that it has potential as a backyard grape in areas with limiting climate.

Notes: It is one of a very few grape varieties that ripens sufficiently for winemaking in the extremely short growing seasons of Latvia and Estonia, Norway and Sweden (2).

Literature Cited

1. Hart, M., Mount Ashwabay Vineyard and Orchard, Bayfield, WI. *Personal communication* (2008).
2. Plocher, T., and B. Parke, *authors of Northern Winework*. *Personal communication* (2008).