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INTERVIEW WITH
MARY J. BLIGE

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MAY 2021

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CROATIA'S LIGHT SIDE

Croatia is recognized by wine lovers for its mouthwatering white wines. Wildly popular both at home and in northern Europe, the country's aromatic bottlings have finally begun to sprout up on America's wine lists and at bottle shop shelves. Here are three grapes to keep an eye out for.

—Jeff Jensen

POŠIP

Believed indigenous to the island of Korčula, Pošip is now grown widely, and almost exclusively, along the Dalmatian Coast and the island of Hvar in microclimates influenced by the Adriatic Sea. Named for its resemblance to the *šip*, the curved side of a vineyard tool used historically in these areas, it produces luscious white wines that offer aromas of green fig and fresh apricot, and flavors of white peach, tangerine and toasted almonds. Stylistically, Pošip tends to fall on opposite ends of the spectrum. Some winemakers vinify in stainless steel to create crisp, clean versions, while other producers age in oak for several months for a rounder, full-bodied bottling.

Brands to know: Korta Katarina, Saints Hills, Zlatan Otok

GRAŠEVINA

The most planted variety in continental Croatia, versatile Graševina is used to make everything from crisp, fresh bottlings and full-bodied, oak-aged offerings to traditional-method sparklers and even sweet, late-harvest wines. The grape is genetically identical to Welschriesling, a white-wine variety grown across central and eastern Europe that has a reputation for fairly simple, high-acid wines. In Croatia, however, you can expect delightful aromas and flavors of elderberry flowers, green apple, white peach and chamomile.

Brands to know: Enjingi, Krauthaker, Vina Belje

MALVAZIJA ISTARSKA

One of the best-known grape varieties in Croatia, it's grown largely in Istria and nearby areas. It's one of the oldest varieties in the region, dating to at least 1385. It generally produces brilliant yellow wines with a greenish hue that boast aromas of green apple, almond blossom and acacia flower, bold fruit flavors and a bracing minerality on the finish. Young versions are great on their own for warm-weather sipping, while versions aged in oak or acacia barrels make an excellent match for Istrian and Northern Italian cuisine.

Brands to know: Benvenuti, Kozlović, Trapan