

# Brochure 2022

**auric**  
slavonian oak products



# OUR BRAND STORY

**OUR BARREL MAKING PROCESS** begins in a centuries old Slavonian oak forest, part of the green-hued gentle hills of Slavonia, nurtured by many generations of our predecessors. From these lush and occasionally fog-laden but every so often sun drenched timbers **auric barrels** chooses the best trees, using sustainably grown and well-managed practices. The oak timber used for our barrels is hand-picked the moment the tree is old enough to provide the highest quality lumber, ensuring the good health and well-being of our forest. The sunlit slopes covered in sessile oak and lavish lowlands dotted with pedunculate oak are harvested for fine grained logs, which are easily traceable, so as to meet the most diverse and discerning needs of our wine-making clientele. We can confidently vouch for our timber source and take the time to acclimatize our timber for proper stave seasoning, perfecting what nature has already taken its gentle time to deliver. Stave aging is controlled by our master coopers and the surrounding micro-climate, which keeps our wood at the same climatic conditions it was grown allowing for low stress levels giving our barrels unmatched consistency and quality.



From the nearby forest where the timbers are harvested, **auric barrels** has built a state-of-the-art cooperage, where the logs are cut and meticulously crafted into barrels and finally toasted to flavor the wine with barrel-specific terroir accents. From the selection of timbers to the final product development, our aim is to perfectly capture the essence of our Slavonian oak arboriculture and leave its indelible imprint on our barrels.





## OUR VALUES

**THE GREATEST VALUE** of auric barrels lies in our access to the dense high quality sessile and pedunculate Slavonian oaks coupled with our cutting-edge barrel making technology and craftsmanship. Unlike other coopers, who source their logs from other parts of Europe, we insist on cultivating our own forest, striving to ingrain Slavonian oak terroir attributes in our wine barrels. An abundance of properly matured, 120 year-old trees, grown in our privately held forest covering over 15,000 ha, allow us to build adequate lumber stocks, optimally acclimatized and aged for at least 24 months in the same climatic and environmental conditions the tree was harvested from. This approach is a direct outcome of eco-friendly and environmentally sustainable forest management that spans 250 years of dedicated cultivation and care. Only through private ownership can we achieve full control over our timber source guaranteeing a perpetual supply of staves to be crafted into the highest quality barrels for generations to come.

*Sessile oak  
on the hills,  
pedunculata oak  
in the lowlands.*

We operate in sync with nature, and only harvest the special wood it has to bare. For that reason, we can also offer small batches of specific harvest barrels in limited quantities, and can proudly bear the title of a *boutique* cooperage. The exquisite craftsmanship of our coopers, paired with leading-edge technology, facilitates the making of large-size oak vats and increases our toasting capabilities. The standardization of our process and digital data logging of test parameters assure the remarkable consistency of our barrels. By far our strongest suit is the consistent and perpetual supply of barrel staves that are grown and properly aged in the vicinity of our cooperage. Using our state-of-the-art digitalized technology we have transformed this advantage from forest mapping into barrel tracing which allows us to match the growth patterns of every piece of wood with the parameters of each type of barrel ordered.



*A combination of  
impressive know-how,  
natural potential and  
high-end technology*



auric barrels boast a unique alliance of exceptional natural potential offered by the century-old, well-maintained and lavish Slavonian oak forest, a high-tech and ultra-modern barrel manufacturing plant, and extensive know-how and understanding of not only barrel making but also of winemakers, and their needs and expectations.

Solely Slavonian oaks

**70%** Sessile oak  
*Quercus Petraea*

**30%** Pedunculate oak  
*Quercus Robur*

**15.000 ha**  
of privately owned forest

Average age of trees before harvesting

**120-140** years

**40-65** cm  
log diameter

**1** m<sup>3</sup> = **0.2** m<sup>3</sup> = **2**  
oak log                      staves                      barrels

## Types of barrels

### Standard

Stave aging  
24-36 months

••• 3-5 growth rings/cm  
1 cm

### Excellence

Stave aging  
24-36 months

••••• 3-5 growth rings/cm  
1 cm

### Premium

Stave aging  
24-36 months

••••• 5-7 growth rings/cm  
1 cm

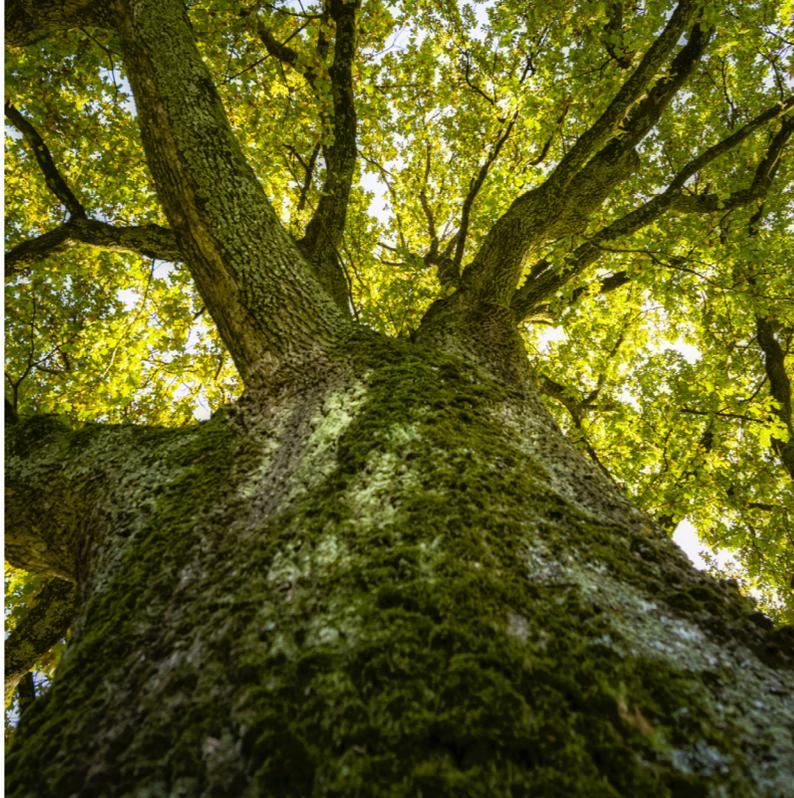
### Premium+

Stave aging  
36 months

••••••• >7 growth rings/cm  
1 cm

## Toast levels





## THE STORY BEHIND SLAVONIAN OAK AND ITS LINKAGE WITH CROATIA

**ALTHOUGH** the Republic of Croatia is lesser-known as a barrel making region, its present-day territory is covered in thick oak forests, hosting Slavonian oak exploited by other countries for centuries. Slavonia, (not Slovenia or Slovakia which are independent states in other parts of Europe) is a region in Croatia famous for its lowlands and forests with a high density of pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), mistakenly attributed solely to countries in Eastern Europe on account of its large-scale foreign exploitation in the past. Owing to its impressive growth rate and larger trunk size, this oak has high oxygenation rates, which is why these oak barrels are typically found in older Italian wineries. Slavonia is a low-lying and fertile region with a hilly micro-location at its heart, heavily populated with lavish sessile oak forests, on well-aired and sunlit slopes up to 650 m above sea level. These slow-growing sessile oak forests were mostly privately owned and sustainably managed for centuries, keeping the Slavonian version of sessile oak from overexploitation. For over 100 years the tight-grained staves of Slavonian sessile oak have been exported to more prominent barrel making countries as an equally ranked to French oak.

## THE GREEN GOLD OF SLAVONIA

Where the fertile plain touches the slopes of Krndija and Papuk, on the border of the Drava and Sava river basins, the treetops of our forests shine with green – this green gold of Slavonia...

In this sea of greenness, our streams, ponds, lakes, and rivers glisten with a silver shine, white paths and roads meander, the roofs of our houses radiate with red. The forest has been here since time immemorial, armies and refugees have passed through it, it has been conquered and subdued, it has retreated before axes and fires, but – it remains! They say that a Slavonian cannot do without his forest, it is his nurturer and defender, it is the wood of his cradle, hearth, and tombstone cross. We have loved the forest because it has fed us with its fruits, we have reared our pigs on its acorns, we picked delicious mushrooms, hunted game and birds in it. But, we also feared the forest for its might and mystery, for fairies and wolves dwelling in its depths...

Even the writers of old, traveling through this area, were astonished by these vast forests, in which, they say, a squirrel could, jumping from tree to tree, traverse the entire Slavonia without ever touching the ground. One such description from the mid-18th century thus claims: *Inter densissimas, sibiue contiguas silvas Pagus hic Nassiczae dictus situs est* (This settlement, called Našice, is located amongst uninterrupted and very dense forests).

Centuries have passed, and the settlement still stands, like a pearl in a shell, cradled in the greenery of its public gardens and surrounding forests. Beeches and hornbeams, poplars, alders, field maples, and ashes, and above all, an upright and proud, Slavonian oak, which rises high toward the blue sky, sun, clouds, and storms.

When Europe realized the values of Slavonian oak in the mid-19th century, large-scale deforestation began in the Našice area too; barrel staves were made, and later steam sawmills, parquet, tannin, and furniture factories were built. In the forests of the Pejačević and Gutmann families, a network of railways was built by which the green gold of Slavonia was shipped into the world, and workers from around the world came and brought their knowledge, skills, other languages, and customs. They were accompanied by forestry experts, who nurtured and maintained our forests, so that we could still enjoy them today.

In this way, indirectly, the forest has changed and shaped us, has made us what we are today. And our oak? Here it is, all over Europe and the world; palaces and churches have been built on its strong beams, waltzes and polkas have been danced on its floors, the best wines have been aged in its barrels. Every day it is touched by millions of people who have no idea that it was warmed under the Slavonian sun, and in winter cooled by an icy north wind, which covers the forest with a white lace of diamond dust and frost. But we know... our oak carried the firmness of its native soil, the warmth of its sky, and it will last for centuries, as shall the earth from which it sprang, as shall the starry sky above the green gold of Slavonia.

*Silvija Lučevnjak*

# HISTORY OF BARREL MAKING

**THE HISTORY** of the use and quality of Slavonian oak can be traced several centuries. Slavonian oak can commonly be found in the windows, portals and flooring of Venetian Renaissance architecture. The history of barrel making, on the other hand, is more recent, and spans a little under to century. The advent of cooperage found the territory of the present-day Republic of Croatia within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and thus limited its sphere of influence accordingly.

*The most salient qualities of Slavonian oak are the fineness and delicacy of its composition, the upright growth and impressive height and width of its trees, causing it to stand out high above all others of its species whether grown in Europe or other continents.*

— UNION NASIC brochure, 1925.





**THE STORY** behind barrel making begins with Austro-Hungarian entrepreneurs, who founded a private company in 1886 to exploit the private forests of the local family of Count Pejacsevich Marcos – now owned by **auric barrels**. Ten years later, and teamed with new partners, the company grew into the thriving **NASIC** Oak Extract Factory, with five saw-mills in the Slavonian region, a flooring factory and a barrel factory in Djurdjenovac, not far from the current Auric cooperage. The premises were considerably damaged during World War I, but were repaired soon afterwards, fostering a boom in furniture, flooring and barrel making. After the creation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the newly formed **NASIC** company, exported its products on a large scale across Europe. The company's management was later entrusted to its headquarters in Geneva, ensuring the export of oak staves to France, Germany and other Western European countries in search of high quality Slavonian oak.

*Railway trains completely laden with goods produced by the Nasic company run through numerous countries and the great export trade to countries overseas occupies many large freight ships. Not only in the west, center and south of Europe is the 'Nasic' brand well-known and esteemed but also in foreign parts far across the ocean.*

— UNION NASIC brochure, 1925.





**ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES** were restricted by the destructive events during World War II, but nevertheless Slavonian pedunculate oak was exported mostly to Italy throughout the 20th century. Records of barrel making in Djurdjenovac by Djurdjenovac Wood Industry Conglomerate show exports of 35,000 - 500 L rum barrels for a deal between Yugoslavia and Cuba. After the fall of the Yugoslavia many of the old barrel master coopers remained in the newly formed independent Republic of Croatia many of which now work for **auric barrels**. In 2015, a German developer, well aware of the quality of Slavonian oak, in tandem with an innovative Croatian forester, set up a new Slavonian cooperage – the present-day **auric barrels**. The expertise of our master cooper, his craftsmanship honed according to the traditional method of making barrels by hand, progressive forest management in compliance with FSC standards, as well as the business know-how and capital from Germany, contributed to the rise of a current high-tech Slavonian oak cooperage, second to none in the production of high quality oak barrels from Slavonia, Croatia.

1886.

Neuschloß & Sohn, Schmidt and Marchetti founded a private company for the exploitation of Slavonian oak from the forests of Pejacsevich Marcos family (nowadays owned by auric barrels)

1910.

The NASIC company founded a barrel factory in Durdenovac (a half-hour walk from the present-day auric barrels)

1921.

The company established its enterprise called "Union des Usines et Des Exploitations Forestières de Nasic S.A." seated in Geneva to coordinate overseas and Western European exportation

2004.

Return of confiscated forests during II. World War II again owned by the Pejacsevich family

2011.

Today's owners of the auric group buy the forest from the Pejacsevich family

2015.

German investor and Croatian Arborist join forces to create Slavonia Cooperage and employ coopers from Durdenovac

1940s

Industrial activities slowed down due to World War II, and a change in the ownership structure ensued

mid 20<sup>TH</sup> cent.

Export of significant quantities of Slavonian oak to France and Italy

1980s

The Durdenovac Wood Industry Conglomerate delivered 35,000 Slavonian oak barrels of 500 L to Cuba for the aging of rum

2016.

The Slavonian Cooperage becomes the present-day auric barrels

2021.

Descendant of the Pejacsevich lineage, former forest owners, after more than 300 years becomes a sales representative of barrels made from logs planted and nurtured by his ancestors.



auric

# TRACEABILITY

A GREEN POLICY often means going back to roots and original practices. Responsible management of auric's forests, coupled with the proximity of the timber source and manufacturing facilities, have played their part in contributing to what is today commonly known as a traceability. The ability to microtarget the location where the tree was harvested, old and mature enough to make a good barrel, is a distinctive feature of the auric oak barrel. *GPS-tracked* timber arrives at the cooperage for milling and acclimatization. The logs are gradually dried and brought to a specific moisture content. They mature in the same controlled weather conditions the tree grew, under the watchful eye of our master coopers. After a period of 24 or 36 months, the staves are cut and selected according to adequate length, thickness and grain density, and are produced into a barrel. After which they are toasted using an open fire to one of the five possible toast levels. This valuable methodology, ranging from tree harvesting to the process of toasting, is electronically stored, allowing us to deliver the same barrel – albeit from a different tree – to the same customer. Auric's production process minimizes environmental impact. The energy put into timber transport is minimal, any post-milling scrap wood serves as additional fuel for toasting, oak acorns are gathered and grown into seedlings, and also used as feed for Black Slavonian pigs by local pork farmers.

The unique methodology for making barrels from 100% Slavonian oak trees rests on the following:

Trees sourced from a known micro-location – the Slavonian oak forest privately owned by auric barrels

Wood seasoning in identical climatic conditions – at low stress levels making lumber more durable

Timber transport with minimal energy consumption and without a carbon footprint – the cooperage is in the immediate vicinity of the forest

Strict selection of staves by grain tightness and color – allowing the creation of consistent and repeatable barrels in terms of aromatics and characteristics

The process of toasting using an open fire with digital parameters – aromatic structure traceability

Making barrels from 100% known Slavonian oak wood – authenticity guaranteed

Scrap wood recycling in the toasting process – augmenting identical aromatics





## BARREL QUALITY

**AURIC BARRELS** provide barrel cooperage of great versatility to suit the requirements of a variety of wines. Our customers can make their barrel choices according to three different parameters: grain density, stave seasoning duration (from 24 months and more) and five different levels of toasting.

Standard barrel capacities amount to 225 L, 228 L, 300 L, 400 L, 500 L, 600 L and 1000 L. **auric barrels** offer barrel production lines up to 10,000 L as well, and for special orders can produce tailor-made fermenters up to 40,000 L.

Oak is our most important and most valuable wood. However, if needed by other spirit producers, we can easily make barrels from other types of wood as well, such as acacia, cherry, chestnut and mulberry trees. In addition to standard barrel making, we can also cook and steam barrels to reduce the tannins and create a more delicate aromatic effect, especially for white wines.

**auric**

slavonian oak products