

RURAL SETTLEMENTS PATH
FIELDWORK AND MINI-RESEARCH
ZICHY CASTLE (MANSION) IN DIOSIG



Located 35 km from Oradea, *Diosig*, on the Ier Valley, has always been the capital of wine in Bihor County. The vine has been growing in these areas for over 600 years. The quality of the land gives the opportunity to produce very good wines. Since the middle of the 19th century, when the area developed very much through the Zichy family, *Bakator* variety has been the here.

Zichy Castle is built in Classical style as a single-storey building which is compassed with a closed yard. The corners of the building are orientated to the quarters and the wings are perpendicular to north-east, south-east, south-west, north-west (the main wings front to north-west and south-east, and the side wings front to north-east and south-west). Downstairs there are 44 halls, 4 bigger and 4 smaller corridors, 8 entrances (3 main entrances and 5 side doors), 52 doors, 75 windows (71 external and 4 internal windows).

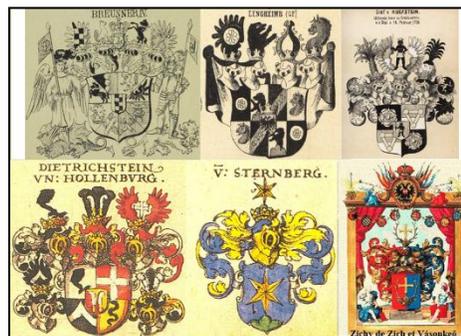


The castle has turned into an informational and interactive exhibition center that aims at introducing in the tourism routes the natural values of the Ier Valley. The rehabilitation of the arboretum park situated near the building is also a desired objective.

It is included in the cultural patrimony of Bihor County.

HISTORY

Diosig got under Austrian authority in 1686. The first Austrian owner was general Donath Johann Heissler von Heitershein between 1692-1697. The castle, however was built by the Dutch general Jan Frans van Gronsveld en Bronckhorst-Batenburg (who owned *Diosig* between 1697-1719) in 1701-1703, with the attachment of the two reformed parishes functioning in those times. Despite the war of independence lead by Rákóczi Ferenc II the accommodation of the castle in *Diosig* is still hurtles in the year of 1704. Between 1705-1719, *Diosig* was owned by Maximilian Ludwig Breunner von Asparn (1643–1716) also, then went under his daughters' inheritance (the Lengheimb and the Kueffstein families). By the year 1719, the castle is ruined having a cellar under it (which can hold 5000 buckets of wine) and a dungeon. In 1719 it was enlarged. Between 1728-1735, Johann Frantz Gottfried von Dietrichstein (1617-1755), the president of Habsburgic Economy Chamber of Košice, is the one who sets back the old unity between the lordship of *Diosig-Săcueni*. The lordship is divided into two parts again in 1783 by its heirs: the *Diosig* side got into the hands of Adam František Arnošt z Šternberk (1711-1789) and his son (Adam Šternberk, 1751-1811). In 1810, the lordship of *Diosig* was leased out, then in 1822 was bought definitively by the Graf von Zichy de Zich et Vásonkeő family's branch from



Rusovce: by turns, Zichy Ferenc/Franz V and his sons, Kázmér and Ferenc VII and the last's son Ferenc IX and his sons Ágoston/August, Tivadar/Theodor, József/Joseph owned the lordship. The great lordship was very famous about its grape plantation and winery (the huge wooden barrel was around 62,000 litres), which Zichy Ferenc IX and his cellarer, Philip Victor Krämer had developed into a high level. The first *Viticultural Vocational School* supported by the Hungarian government opened in *Diosig* in 1870. Until 1920, it was an aristocratic castle. Based on the law of the Romanian agrarian reform in 1920, the widespread, blooming lordship went into liquidation. Count Zichy Tivadar sold it to the Romanian state on the condition that the *Viticultural Vocational School* could move in together with its boarding-school, which worked so from 1930 until 1965. On 30th August 1940 the Hungarian Army was received in the castle, then in October 1944 the headquarters of the LXXIInd German Legion organized the

German-Hungarian defense of Oradea in this place (that is why bombs reached the building). After World War II, the Vocational School started to function again (the Hungarian class of it moved to Cimbrud in 1953, then in 1965 the whole institution moved to Șimleul Silvaniei). So, until 1965 it was used as a school for future vineyard owners and afterwards as a local Agriculture Department.

In the castle there is a former Roman-Catholic church, and in the yard area a cellar dating back to 1860, and beneath it 9 built cellars dating from the early 19th century. Its surroundings include an area around 1 ha where lays an arboretum.

Without any aristocratic heirs, the ancient building was reclaimed by the mayor's office after 1989. After 12 years of pleading the mayor's office finally got hold of it. In 2007, at the less valuable part of the park's (former greengrocer yard) thermal water was drilled.



RURAL SETTLEMENTS PATH

WINEMAKING PATH

DIOSIG – THE CAPITAL OF WINE IN BIHOR COUNTY

It is said that wine is as old as mankind. History confirms this. Even according to the Bible, the first vineyards were planted by the forefather Noah himself up on sacred Mount Ararat and he made the first wine. Georgians named the grape drink “gvino” and this term was adjusted in many languages of the world to the words known to us, such as *vino*, *vini*, *wine*, and *wein*. Throughout this long period that lasted a few thousand years, wine spread across the world. Grape vines are grown and wine produced wherever permitted by climatic conditions.



Winemaking has well defined areas, and within these areas wines under controlled origin can be produced. The vineyard represents the winemaking unit whose spreading area meets all the common characteristics of climate and the sum total of all the microclimates across the area, soil types and soil varieties, as well as winemaking and wine culture technologies. The winery has a long tradition of winemaking and wines produced in a particular vineyard enjoy a good reputation.



The winemaking center comprises a smaller and a generally more compressed area. The climate and soil unit and the wine center technology are thus better highlighted. As a rule, a vineyard has two or more wine centers, but there are independent wine centers that are located outside vineyards. For wines with designation of controlled origin, the wine takes the name of the vineyard or that of the wine center.

The winemaking field is part of a wine centre and is the smallest unit of the winemaking habitat. It is situated on a particular land form, has the same microclimate and the products obtained will therefore hold the same quality.

A LEGENDARY WINE



Diosig is part of a famous wine region of north-western Romania. The village of Diosig has the characteristics of the hilly area. Here vineyards are worked as they were hundreds of years old, keeping the stages with holiness. For the wine to be good, they say, it is important that the grapes be good, and the must (from the Latin *vinum mustum*, “young wine”) as far as possible go through the free fall into barrels, so that it is not mechanically stressed. The basements of the house in Diosig hide two century old cellars, ideal for storing wine (most of them are dug in the ground).

In Diosig on two streets, called the ‘Szépasszony’ (Beautiful Woman) and ‘Tessék’ (Here you are), there are the most famous and old cellars in the area, where hosts and their neighbours used to drink wine until they fell under the bench. In the village, the gates of the households are decorated with leaves of vine, but also with words of spirit, obviously about wine, such as that “*Good wine is ...good health.*”



In the 19th century, Diosig’s most famous wine was the Bakator wine. It became so famous that Count Széchényi István considered it one of his favorite wines, and Count Zichy Ferenc used to say: “There are two varieties of wine in the Diosig: Bakater and all the others.” These famous grapes are resistant to diseases and can be harvested in late fall. Bakator wine is the one who gave to vineyard from Ier Valley the honor to be famous.

Passionate winegrower, in 1870, Count Zichy founded in Diosig the first school of viticulture in Hungary, where students could learn the mysteries of the craft by practising in the nobleman’s vineyards. Bakator wine from the Zichy vineyard estate was served even at the Royal Court in Austria, and 200 bottles were ordered and delivered in 1871 to the Emperor of China.



Farmers from Diosig aim to revive the wine production tradition in their area and to better exploit its viticultural features.

The one who has managed to bring *Bakator* back to Diosig is a local viticulturist. In 2013, Lorand Heit found a vineyard of this sort in the Oaş Country. It now has got more than 5,000 grape vines on an area of more than one ha, near Diosig.

“Thanks to the small, inherited vineyard of the Heit family in Bihardiószeg, we grow grapes, living in the hope of resurrecting the culture of drinking Bakator wine. After the Phylloxera epidemic in the late 19th century, our family planted Bakator grapes back to its original crop land, 150 years later. Our main goal is to follow our ancestor’s guidance on their ancient land.”

“In my childhood I heard a lot about the Bakator vine variety, but I never tasted wine made from the Bakator. Excited by this fact, I decided to bring to life in my home area this very rare and precious variety.” (Lorand Heit)



THE WINE FESTIVAL

The wine festival in Diosig begins with a secular ritual. According to tradition, people will gather at the monument of Saint Orbán (Urban), patron of vineyards, grapes and viticulturists, one of the Catholic ice saints, whose feast on May 25th marks the beginning of the summer.

According to tradition, if the vineyards have gone well over the winter, the producers and the festival guests will circle around the monument and worship Saint Urban, sprinkling the monument with the best quality wine in gratitude. But if the Saint did not take care of the crops, he would be beat en with rods, to be of great concern in the future.

