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## O&A with IZABELLA ZWACK, HUNGARIAN WINEMAKER & BRAND AMBASSADOR FOR ZWACK

dant of the Royal Habsburg physician who developed really quite lovely, it has a very complex aroma and taste. Unicum, an herbal digestif whose mysterious recipe is still WE: It's delicious; can you tell us what is in it? traditional Hungarian liqueurs, and wine under the Dobogo label. very nice but I'm sorry, I really can't tell you. The energetic vintner and Zwack brand ambassador chatted with WE: You own a winery in the Tokaj region of Hungary. It's called Wine Enthusiast while on the road between her homes in Budapest Dobogo; can you tell us what this word means? Hungary and Italy.

Wine Enthusiast: How did you become interested in making wine?

Izabella Zwack: I was raised in the town of Bolgheri in the Tuscany region of Italy. We were surrounded by vines and vineyards. It was hard to not be interested in wine while I was growing up. As you know, Bolgheri is in the Maremma, near the Mediterranean. Many of the vineyards are only a few kilometers from the sea. This unique climate and position are what makes the wines from this area so special.

WE: Are you the first winemaker in your family?

"[UNICUM] IS A WELL GUARDED FAMILY SECRET. ONLY MY MOTHER AND I KNOW THE INGREDIENTS. YOU'RE VERY NICE BUT I'M SORRY, I REALLY CAN'T TELL YOU."

AB: It must be in my blood. My sixth generation great-grandfather Humphrey Bogart—you know, Casablanca. was the Royal Physician to the Habsburg Emperor in 1790. He formu- WE: What's next for Izabella Zwack? and the Zwack family's Unicum herbal liquor was born.

WE: Tell us about Unicum.

IZ: It's a bitter, or digestif, that is comprised of over 40 different herbs.

zabella Zwack is a winemaker and sixth generation descen- We sell it in the U.S. market under our family name—Zwack. It's

protected by the Zwack family. Founded by József Zwack IZ: (Laughing) It's a well-guarded family secret. Only my mother, in 1790, Zwack Unicum Company (zwack.hu) produces a variety of Anne and I know the ingredients and the proportions. You're both

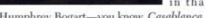
and Bolgheri, discussing her passion for wine in her home countries of IZ: It's an onomatopoeic word that resembles the sound that horse hoofs make on cobblestone streets. I bought the winery a few years ago and brought in a Hungarian winemaker named Atilla

> Domokos. We make traditional Tokaj Aszu wines as well as some other dry and sweet wines. We're right off the main square in the town of Tokaj. It's a wonderful location

> WE: What other wines besides the traditional Tokaj Aszu are you making at Dobogo?

> IZ: We're making a dry white wine from Furmint grapes and some "late harvest" style wines we call Mylitta and Alma. They are both sweet wines made with botrytised grapes. We've also just started making a wine from Pinot Noir grapes. I had to get special permission from the regional authorities to plant vines to grow red grapes.

WE: Your family has just purchased a café in the town of Bolgheri. Can you tell us about that? IZ: Yes, It's called Caffé della Posta and it's in the center of the village. It's a lovely spot where the locals and visitors meet for a coffee, a glass of wine, a snack, a meal or even an ice cream cone. It's really quite special-it's almost like Rick's Café Americain in that famous movie with



lated a tonic to help with the Emperor's upset stomach. With his first IZ: Oh, let me see, quite a lot. Besides running the winery, my father taste the Emperor declared, "Das ist ein Unikum" or "this is unique" has entrusted my brother Sandor and I with more and more of the day-to-day running of the family business in Budapest. We're both very happy to do that. It takes up a lot of my time, but I love it.

-MIKE DESIMONE AND JEFF JENSSEN

