

Hungary: HU-03

Tokaj Pendits

Abaújszántó • Tokaj Wine Region

Family Winery • Founded by Márta Wille-Baumkauff



Description of the winery

1991
Founded

10k
Bottles /year

8.5 ha
Own vineyards

Their story in one paragraph

A family biodynamic estate at the northern edge of Tokaj, founded on a single audacious dream. A hungarian woman with no winemaking background who became the pioneer of biodynamic viticulture in Hungary, and the first Demeter-certified winery in the country.

Location and origins

Pendits is based in Abaújszántó, the historic "gateway" town at the northern edge of the Tokaj-Hegyalja wine region. The estate was founded in 1991 by Márta Wille-Baumkauff, who fulfilled a long-held dream of making wine in Tokaj despite having no professional background in viticulture. With her German husband (who died in 2000) and their three sons, she acquired the renowned cellars of Flórián Bilicki. Today the estate farms roughly 8 hectares across historic crus including Pendits, Krakó, Bea and Báthory. Her son Stefan who learned biodynamics at Nikolaihof in Austria is now winemaker.

Distinctive position

Pendits is one of the pioneers of biodynamic winemaking in Hungary. The estate began organic cultivation in 2005, became the first certified organic winery in Tokaj in 2008, and the first Demeter-certified biodynamic winery in Hungary in 2011. The vineyards lie within the UNESCO World Heritage site of Tokaj. The prize plot (south-facing Pendits vineyard) was already listed among the first growths in the definitive 1867 Tokaj-Hegyalja Album. Soil work is still done with horses; the family follows the Maria Thun biodynamic calendar and gathers wild plants for teas.

Wines and markets

The portfolio reflects classic Tokaj: dry Furmint and Hárslevelű, late-harvest wines, Szamorodni, and Tokaji Aszú, with very low yields producing concentrated, terroir-driven wines. Pendits is a member of the Renaissance des Appellations - the biodynamic association founded by Nicolas Joly. The family worked with no consultant, instead consulting friends including Nikolaihof, Domaine Marcel Deiss and Nicolas Joly directly. Wines are exported across Europe and beyond (Slovakia, Poland, Switzerland, Austria, Germany, the UK, France, South Africa and Brazil).

Hungary: HU-03

Tokaj Pendits

Abaújszántó • Tokaj Wine Region

Family Winery • Founded by Márta Wille-Baumkauff

Examples of promotional practices

Pendits builds its storytelling around three pillars: a personal founding dream, biodynamic pioneering, and authentic terroir. The communication is consistent, emotionally resonant, and reinforced by strong external press.

Used "I had a dream..." a founding story told in the first person

Márta opens the brand narrative with vulnerability: a Hungarian woman with no wine background, no local roots, pursuing what "must have seemed like a completely crazy idea." This personal, courageous origin story differentiates Pendits from inherited family estates and gives the brand a human face.

Used Pioneer positioning, backed by verifiable firsts

First certified organic estate in Tokaj (2008), first Demeter-certified biodynamic winery in Hungary (2011).

Used Earned external storytelling and elite networks

Membership in Renaissance des Appellations (founded by Nicolas Joly) and frequent coverage in wine and sustainability media position Pendits as a reference point for biodynamic winemaking.

Short commentary

Pendits Winery has achieved what most wineries struggle to do: combine a compelling human protagonist, a verifiable pioneering position and deeply authentic practices. Crucially, these are not separate messages, but form a single, coherent narrative. The founding story is the brand's greatest asset. In a region full of inherited estates that claim centuries of family tradition, Pendits does the opposite. It leads with its lack of tradition. Márta was an outsider with no roots or training, a fact she openly acknowledges. This vulnerability is far more memorable than a heritage claim because it is human, specific and emotionally true. It also reframes biodynamics as not just a marketing choice, but the natural progression of someone who approached wine without preconceptions. The biodynamic identity is unusually credible. While many wineries claim to be sustainable, few plough with horses, gather wild nettles for teas and bottle on fruit days according to the Maria Thun calendar. One visiting critic described Pendits as "the only 100% biodynamic producer in Tokaj" and as someone who "does not work her vineyard, she works for her vineyard".

Hungary: HU-03

Tokaj Pendits

Abaújszántó • Tokaj Wine Region

Family Winery • Founded by Márta Wille-Baumkauff

"Márta is one of the most genuine and humble winemakers I have ever met. She has no interest in competitions or medals. She simply aspires to make quality wine, governed by the vineyard... she is the only 100% biodynamic producer in Tokaj, and 100% self-taught."

- visiting wine critic, The Grand Crew

Lessons learned - key takeaways

1 The absence of tradition can be a stronger story than tradition itself

In a region of inherited estates, Pendits leads with the opposite: an outsider with no roots and no training who started from a dream. Vulnerability and courage are more memorable than heritage — because they are human, specific, and emotionally true. A founder's honest "I had no idea what I was doing" can outperform any claim of centuries-old lineage.

2 A verifiable "first" is the most defensible differentiator

"First certified organic in Tokaj (2008)" and "first Demeter in Hungary (2011)" are dated, documented facts no competitor can claim. A pioneer position backed by certification dates is worth more than any quantity of superlative adjectives.

3 When the practice is real, the practice is the story

Horse ploughing, hand-gathered herbal teas, bottling on fruit days — these are not marketing details but the daily reality of the work. When sustainability is genuinely lived rather than declared, describing the practice is the storytelling. Authenticity cannot be faked, and consumers increasingly know the difference.

4 A brand built on one founder must tell its succession story early

When a brand rests on a single charismatic founder's narrative, the handover to the next generation is both a risk and an opportunity. Telling the succession story before it is forced — the trained son continuing the self-taught mother's vision — future-proofs the brand and adds a second emotional chapter to the original dream.

Tokaj Pendits

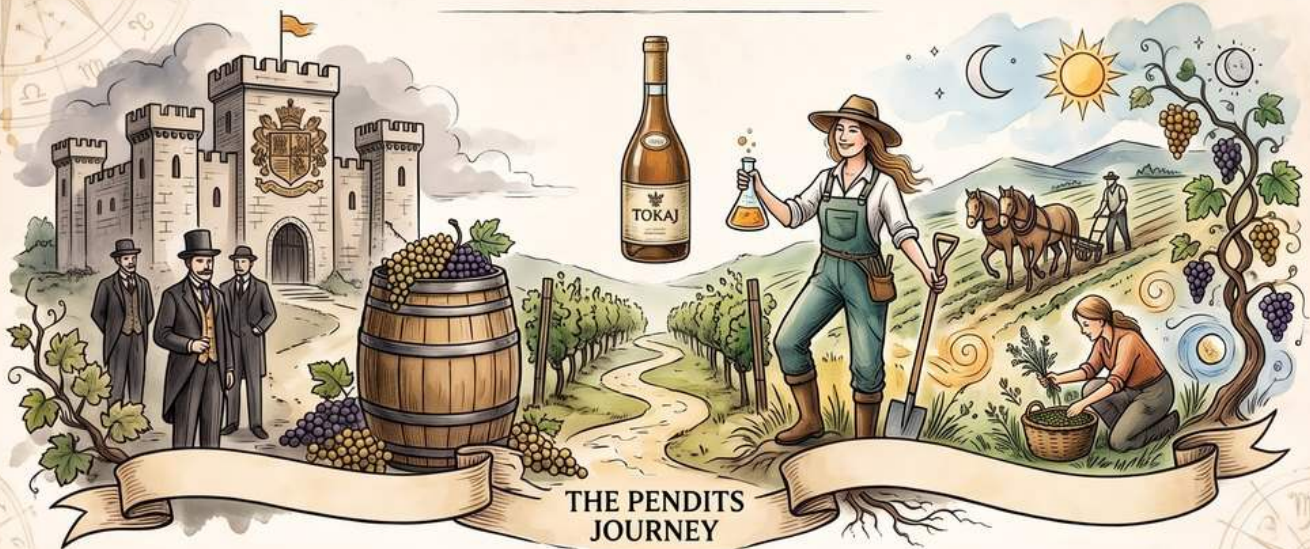
Abaújszántó • Tokaj Wine Region

Family Winery • Founded by Márta Wille-Baumkauff

Cross-regional applicability

Every lesson above is directly applicable to founder-led, sustainability-driven premium wineries across Czechia, Hungary, and Slovakia — particularly those built on a pioneer position and a single strong personal story.

Tokaj Pendits: The Alchemy of an Outsider's Dream



THE STORYTELLING PILLARS

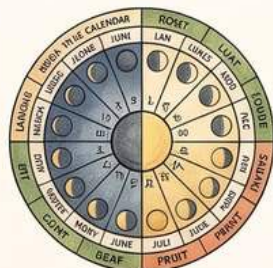


The Outsider Advantage

Embracing a lack of tradition makes the brand's founding dream human and memorable.

Radical Authenticity in Practice

Using horse-ploughing and hand-gathered herbal teas validates the brand's biodynamic claims.



Future-Proofing the Narrative

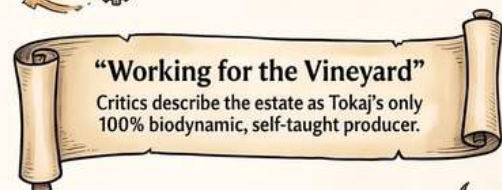
Integrating the trained next generation early ensures the founder's vision survives succession.

VERIFIABLE PIONEERING



Pioneer Positioning

Tangible "firsts" provide a defensible differentiator that marketing adjectives cannot match.



This Best Practice Guide was created as an output of project ID 22510339 **From Grapes to Stories: Storytelling at the Heart of Sustainable Wines in the Visegrad Region.**

The project is co-financed by the governments of Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia through Visegrad Grants from the International Visegrad Fund. The mission of the fund is to advance ideas for sustainable regional cooperation in central Europe.

www.visegradfund.org

• Visegrad Fund

The Best Practice Guide was created by:

-  Dušan Mladenović, <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5101-2181>, MUNI - Masaryk University, CZ
-  Renata Čuhlová, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5109-6693>, MUNI - Masaryk University, CZ
-  Erik Janšto, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4566-3452>, SUA - Slovak University of Agriculture, SK
-  Peter Šedík, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2495-5162>, SUA - Slovak University of Agriculture, SK
-  Dávid Harsányi, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3924-0664>, BGE - Budapest University of Economics and Business, HU
-  Titanilla Oravecz, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2582-3893>, BGE - Budapest University of Economics and Business, HU
-  Renata Skýpalová, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7161-7038>, AMBIS university, CZ



Privacy & data notice. All interviews conducted within this project were carried out with the informed consent of the participating winemakers. Personal information was processed in accordance with EU GDPR (Regulation 2016/679). Any individual featured in this publication has reviewed and approved the content concerning their winery. © 2026 STORY4WINE consortium. Reproduction permitted with attribution.