

>> **Villa Melnik (Melnik)** www.villamelnik.com

Zikatanov family 41°28'25" N 23°23'19" E

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The Zikatanovs are a family with a longstanding tradition of growing grapes and of winemaking. A few years back, Nikola decided to modernise the estate and together with his wife, Lyubka, replanted the vineyards and built the winery. They planted their vineyards with both indigenous and international grape varieties to lead the renaissance of the region. Their new, modern winery opened its doors in 2013, with state-of-the-art wine-making equipment and a dedicated highly-qualified staff, with local Head Winemaker, Romyana Stoilova, who graduated with a degree in oenology in Bordeaux. In 2015, Militza, Lyubka and Nikola's daughter joined the family business to help create the modern image of Melnik. The winery is built on three levels, and the cellars are dug into the sandy hill. The wine-making process is organized so that the flow of the wine moves by the force of gravity through the three levels of the building, thus allowing the wines to be treated gently. From 30 ha under cultivation, a number of different wines are made, from the entry level Family Tradition range, through the lightly oaked Bergolé range, to their top Aplauz range which includes some limited edition wines. The Bergolé Viognier/Chardonnay (60/40) spends 6 months in old oak, has good aromacy, but tends to retain oakyness in its youth. Syrah, with 10% Viognier, has good varietal flavours but lacks body. Bergolé straight Syrah has even more tarryness but still on the light side. The indigenous Melnik in this range is quite rustic but finishes long. In the Aplauz range, the Viognier has lovely apricot and peach flavours but again is somewhat dominated by the oak. Premium Reserve Syrah spends 18 months in oak and displays good fruit beneath the tannins although a little rustic, whilst Aplauz Premium Reserve Cabernet is much smoother with riper fruit. Finally, Melnik 55, is a new crossing of the Melnik grape with unctuous smooth fruit and a good degree of finesse. (NB)

Recommended Reds:

Aplauz Premium Reserve Syrah ★★☆☆ £C

Aplauz Premium Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon ★★☆☆ £C

Aplauz Melnik 55 ★★☆☆ £C

Bergolé Syrah ★★☆☆ £C

Bergolé Melnik ★★☆☆ £C

Bergolé Syrah and Viognier ★★☆☆ £B

Recommended Whites:

Aplauz Viognier ★★☆☆ £C

Bergolé Viognier/Syrah ★★☆☆ £B