
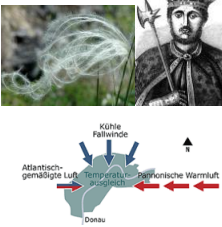



Overview

- Facts and Stories
- Geography and Climate
- Main Grape Varieties




- Vinea Wachau Association and their Codex Wachau



Facts

- first written record of “Wahowa” in 830 AD
- 25 mile-long valley with about 5,000 historic monuments (registered as UNESCO World Heritage since 2000)
- every known architectural style from the medieval to modern period
- 150 species of birds live here
- habitat of unique feather grass (*stipa pennata*)
- **outside the DAC classification system (to date)**
- 3% of total Austrian production on 1,350 ha [3,335 acres]



Stories/Histories

- viticulture was introduced by Celtic tribes and continued by the Romans; later monasteries replanted abandoned sites
- in 1192, Richard the Lionheart was held captive here on his return from the Crusades for insulting a local duke; allegedly paid 35,000kg silver in ransom
- German epic poem *Nibelungenlied* set in the Wachau valley [written in the 1200s]
- emerged politically as frontier region, or *margravate*
- part of Duchy of Bavaria (8th-10th c.); House of Habsburg (1273-1806); Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867-1918)

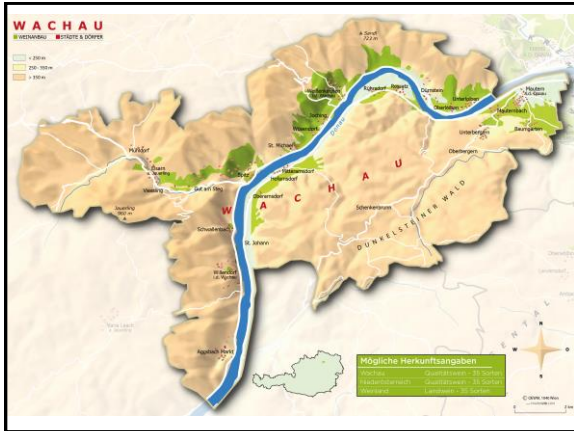








Climate and Geography

- Wachau is western-most of 8 sub-zones of the wine region Lower Austria (*Niederösterreich*)
- Lower Austria has three distinct climate influences: cool northerly winds, warm easterly Pannonian winds, and western winds of chilly Alpine air + moderating Danube river
- mostly granite and loess soils
- steep, mostly south-facing and terraced slopes





Main Grape Varieties:
Riesling & Grüner Veltliner

- “Top Wachau Rieslings can have the steely cut of the Saar in a mouth-filling structure that is every bit as full as an Alsace Grand Cru,”
- “GV was the traditional Wachau grape—at their best green-tinged, high-spirited almost peppery performances [that]...can age as long as fine white burgundies,”

says Jancis Robinson, *The World Atlas of Wine*, 7th ed.

Vinea Wachau Association

- *Vinea Wachau Nobilis Districtus* founded in 1983
- name coined by Leuthold von I Kuenring (1243-1313)
- about 200 members of *Vinea Wachau* agree on specific quality standards for dry white wines, and a
- three-tiered classification system, the *Codex Wachau*: **Steinfeder**, **Federspiel** and **Smaragd** designations, based on must weight/alcohol content of wine
- emphasis on terroir driven wines: Rieden map of individual vineyards



Vinea Wachau members agree to:

- source all their grapes from the Wachau area
- abstain from chaptalization
- abstain from water removing technology, such as reverse osmosis or cyro-extraction
- avoid adding aromas via oak barrels, wood chips or powdered tannins
- avoid spinning cone technology

*All of the above applies to dry white Wachau wines only!

Steinfeder

- named after a type of feather grass (*stipa capillata*) indigenous to the region
- light, fragrant wines with up to 11.5% alc.
- usually from grapes that were picked early
- most of it is consumed in Austria [think German Kabinett trocken]



Federspiel

- named after bird used for prey in falconry, a sport with a long tradition in Wachau
- alcohol level between 11.5% and 12.5%
- food-friendly wines
- “good in first five years” (Jancis Robinson)





Smaragd

- Named after a type of green lizard that lives in Wachau vineyards
- 12.5% alc.+
- from grapes at highest level of ripeness and quality
- suitable for aging, most expensive category [think VDP *Grosses Gewächs*]

Beyond Wachau...

- *Vinea Wachau* shares with the German VDP the pursuit of high quality dry wines, but one is distinctly regional, the other national
- Vinea Wachau inspired the Mittelrhein Charta: Handstreich <12% Felsenspiel 12-13% Meisterstück 13%+
- *Domäne Wachau* is a reputable wine co-op for affordable Wachau wines

High-end producers:
Nikolaihof, FX Pichler, Prager



F.X. Pichler, Riesling Unendlich Smaragd 2013 (~US \$150.00)



Any questions?



PDO Apricots and PGI Brandy









The PGI Brandy: Wachauer Marillenbrand

Produced from Wachauer Marille (Wachauer Apricots), at a distillery located within the defined PDO region

Fruit is usually pitted before fermentation

Pot still distillation is required

Clear, colorless, and very fragrant

Maximum 4 g/L of sugar

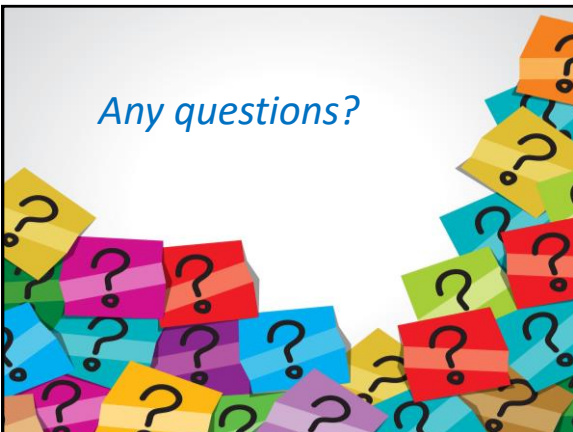
Bottled at a minimum of 38% abv



There is also a PGI apricot liqueur:
Wachauer Marillenlikör



Any questions?



All That Sparkles



Valerie Caruso, DWS, CWE, FWS

Austrian Sekt

- Introduced in 1842
- Mostly from Weinviertel
- Austrian Sekt Committee: 2013
- Quality pyramid for PDO Sekt in 2015



Photo: Austrian National Library, Property of W. Süsskind

More Sekt Fun 'Fakts'

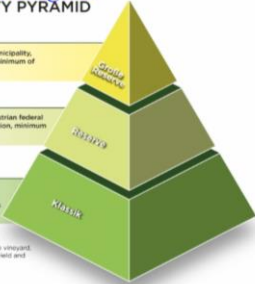
- Poysdorf is 48° latitude
- 22 October is Austrian Sekt Day
- 35 permitted grape varieties
- 3.5 atmospheres, minimum
- About 12 million bottles produced



Map: <http://www.gutenberg.org>

Sekt geschützte Ursprungsbezeichnung (Sekt g.U.)

THREE-TIER QUALITY PYRAMID OF AUSTRIAN SEKT



Grand Reserve
Grapes harvested and pressed in a single municipality, exclusively traditional bottle fermentation, minimum of 30 months maturation on the lees

Reserve
Grapes harvested and pressed in a single Austrian federal state, exclusively traditional bottle fermentation, minimum 18 months maturation on the lees

Klassik
Grapes harvested in one Austrian federal state, all methods suitable for sparkling wine production allowed, minimum 9 months maturation on the lees

Each level encompasses further quality assurance standards. The focus here includes the work in the vineyard, harvesting, hand picking, packing height, rate of yield and gentle pressing.

Diagram: www.austriansekt.com/en/wine/quality.asp

Klassik

All methods
All styles/sweetness levels
9 months on lees
Max 12.5% abv
Grapes from Austria
Produced in Austria
No stated origin
Vintage permitted
Released after 22 October the following year






Diagram: www.austriansekt.com/en/wine/quality.asp

Reserve

Bottle fermentation
Brut Nature, Brut, Extra Brut only
18 months on lees
Single state grown/produced
Hand harvested
Whole cluster pressed
No blending of red & white
Released after 22 October 2nd year

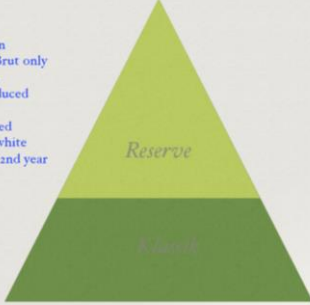

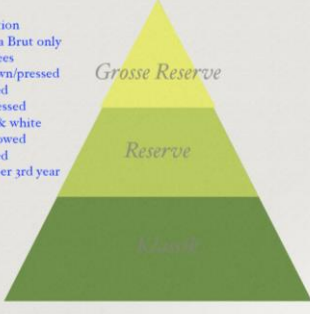




Diagram: www.austriansekt.com/en/wine/quality.asp

Grosse Reserve

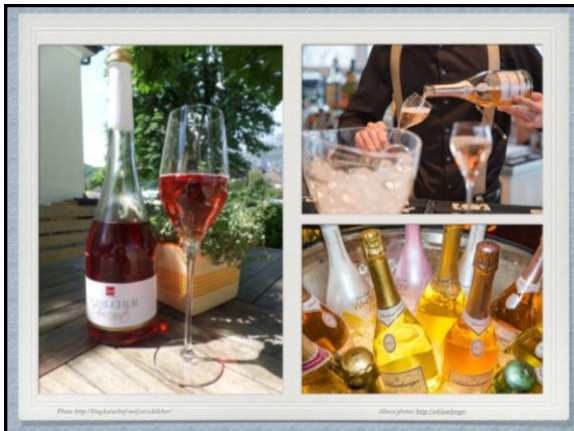
Bottle fermentation
 Brut Nature, Brut, Extra Brut only
 30 months on lees
 Single municipality grown/pressed
 Hand harvested
 Whole cluster pressed
 No blending of red & white
 Vineyard sites allowed
 Vintage allowed
 Released after 22 October 3rd year



THREE-PEAK QUALITY PYRAMID OF AUSTRIAN CHAMPAGNE



Diagrams: www.champagne.com/eng/quality.asp



Notable Producers

- **Weingut Bründlmayer**
 - www.bruendlmayer.at
- **Steininger**
 - www.weingut-steininger.at
- **Szigeti**
 - www.szigeti.at

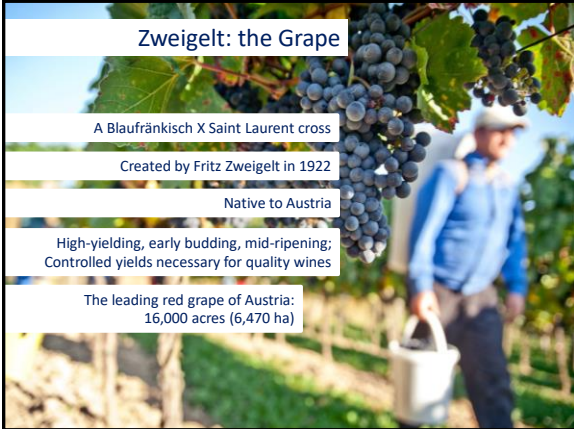












Zweigelt: the Grape

A Blaufränkisch X Saint Laurent cross

Created by Fritz Zweigelt in 1922

Native to Austria

High-yielding, early budding, mid-ripening;
Controlled yields necessary for quality wines

The leading red grape of Austria:
16,000 acres (6,470 ha)

Zweigelt: the Wine

Main aromas:
Red Cherry, Black Cherry, Blackberry, Blueberry

Oaked versions:
Plum, cinnamon, black pepper

Red-violet in color

Widely grown in cool climates where it makes
wines moderate in tannin & medium in body

Warm-climate versions can be quite a bit richer in
both body and tannins




Photo: <https://austrianwineusa.com>

*Here are my tasting notes for
Zweigelt:*

- E & M Berger Zweigelt, Lower Austria, 2014
- 12.5% abv
- 100% Zweigelt
- Bright cherry-red color
- Aromas of cherry, raspberry, blueberry
- Medium-plus acidity
- Medium tannin – but with a gritty “edge
- Flavors of red fruit (cranberry, raspberry), hint of herb
- Long, crisp finish