

Wine is bottled poetry.

Robert Louis Stevenson

Wine is the nightingale of drinks.

Voltaire

German wine is very popular in my country today, as it is all over the world.

Riesling especially so, which even in Italy is seen as the finest and most durable white wine in the world.

Gian Luca Mazella, wine journalist, Rome

German wines, whether it is the inimitable Riesling or the delicate Pinot Noir, are enjoyable and wonderful with all types of food with their refreshing acidity and focused, linear style.

Jeannie Cho Lee, MW, Hong Kong

German wines are the antithesis of those produced in America...

Thank god for German wine!

Paul Grieco, Restaurant Hearth, New York

Consumers' and opinion makers' fanaticism for dry wine and against the threat of global gustatory uniformity, gives German vintners an opportunity to flourish with that dazzling stylistic diversity of which they are uniquely capable.

Jancis Robinson, The Oxford Companion to Wine

A miracle has happened in Germany. A generation ago there were good German wines but you had to search hard to find some. Today they are available in abundance in every price range.

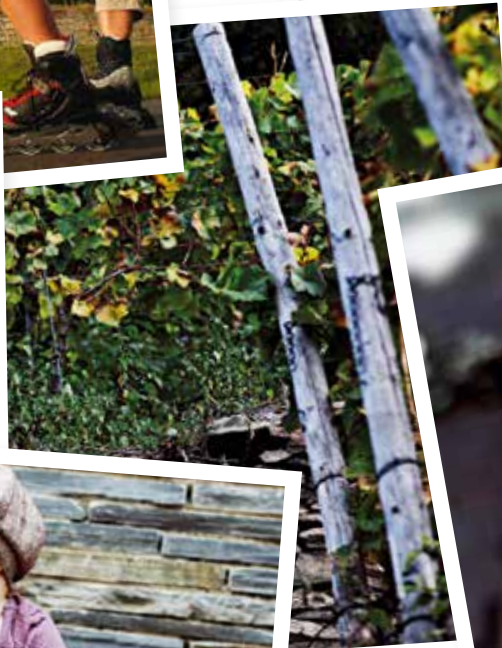
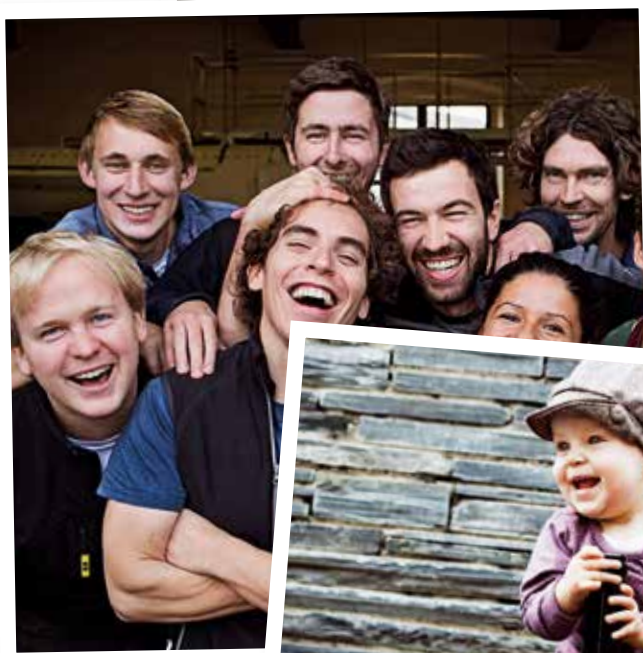
Stuart Pigott, author and wine critic

It's a pity that one cannot stroke wine.

Kurt Tucholsky

I do indeed feel deep humility in view of the greatness of Riesling and the work of several generations of vintners which has revealed this to us.

David Schildknecht, The Wine Advocate, USA



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Curious what 'Öchsle' means? See the sidebar on page 82.

Welcome to Wine Nation Germany

*Then and Now: Weingut Lubentiushof
in Niederfell, Mosel*

Germany has increasingly become a magnet for wine lovers around the world. For many of them, their passion of the palate starts by filling in the blank spots on their mental map of the nation. So what awaits as they begin their journey of discovery into German wines? Enough wonders, surprises and remarkable experiences to last a lifetime. Like its European neighbors, Germany's wine culture stretches back for millennia, but with its own unique set of influences. Wine is an inseparable part of German culture, earning odes from no less than the national poet Goethe, himself a famous wine aficionado. Wine culture is a living treasure here, not just something to be displayed behind glass in a museum. Because from New York to Paris to Tokyo, German wine is being asked for and poured. Top restaurants consider it a badge of honor to feature a carefully curated selection of wine from across Germany. German wines are being recommended by chefs on many of television's most popular cooking shows. There is little worry that the winegrowing profession will die out for lack of new talent. To the

**WINE FROM
GERMAN VINEYARDS:
EXPERIENCE AND
ENJOY**

contrary, some winemakers have attained a certain rock star status among their fans. International wine writers and critics routinely laud the quality and flexibility of German wines. They offer a perfect pairing for virtually any style of cuisine! But Germans themselves have a more familial relationship with wine, treating it not just as something for special occasions, but rather as the perfect excuse to sit down with friends, including in the country's many traditional indoor and outdoor wine bars. Wine festivals are a common occurrence, and not just in the classic winegrowing regions. Germans seize gladly on any chance to celebrate and relax. And, perhaps not entirely unrelatedly, Germans are also the world's most prolific drinkers of sparkling wine. Winemakers are well aware, and almost every estate offers at least one sparkling wine made in the traditional method.

DIVERSITY

Germany's 13 winegrowing regions are marked by an almost unparalleled diversity of grape varieties. Few other places in the world can boast the nearly 100 different varieties cultivated in either Rheinhessen or the Pfalz alone. While the wide range of options available to German vintners includes "international" ambassadors such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc, these are unlikely to supplant the traditional classics, especially Riesling and varieties of the Pinot family. Germany is in fact home to the world's largest planting of both Riesling and Weißburgunder (Pinot Blanc). Only Italy has more Pinot Gris plantings, and Germany ranks third for Pinot Noir. Producers and connoisseurs have come to appreciate one clear truth: German wines shine in international comparisons. Not that it is all strictly an internal affair. Many young winegrowers have consciously opted to work and study elsewhere in the world, bringing a healthy dose of best practices from other winemaking cultures to supplement Germany's renowned system of vinicultural and viticultural training at programs such as Geisenheim University.

As befits a land of science and research, Germany has also seen tremendous success by its viticultural schools and research institutions in creating new varietal crossings. Some of these like Müller-Thurgau are now so ubiquitous that they are unremarkable, while other relatively young 'PiWi' (fungus-resistance) varieties remain unfamiliar even to domestic wine connoisseurs. Their futures are hugely promising, however, given that such forward-looking work resonates strongly with sustainability-minded consumers.





CLIMATE, TERROIR AND WATERWAYS

Sleek, elegant white wines are the calling cards of Germany's winemakers, because conditions are surprisingly ideal here at the northernmost reaches

of the world's winegrowing zone. Vineyards in Germany's winegrowing regions often permit exceptionally long hang time for the fruit, allowing the grapes to ripen more fully and develop wonderful aromas. And despite the low alcohol levels, the grapes perpetually display wonderful concentration with a delicious exchange of acidity and aromas. The long ripening period shapes the taste of the reds as well. And they in particular have benefited from the steady rise in temperatures of recent years. German wines are, odd as it is to say, one of the winners of climate change. Albeit with many caveats – the rise in extreme weather (torrential rain and hail) and forays by new warmer-weather pests continue to present winemakers with significant challenges. So just which bottles we will still be drinking 50 years from now remains to be seen. But there is little reason to think the end is nigh. Germany's domestic viticulture has actually mastered massive changes numerous times over the two millennia of its existence. Wine culture, one might even say, lives precisely through and from change.

There is only one immutable element to how wine is grown in 'Germania': its foundation, namely the soils in which the vines grow. The taste of terroir has always been a calling card for German wine, with names like "Nierstein" and "Hochheim" virtually synonymous with nation's finest for centuries now. Among the first thing any newcomer to German wine learns is the regional differences in soil, such as the predominance of slate on the Mittelrhein and Mosel, keuper in Franken and volcanic rock in the Kaiserstuhl. This information is essential to appreciating which taste profiles are likely to fit one's own palate. There is a modern trend toward refraining from the use of site names on labels unless the wine truly reflects a specific terroir character. Consumers appreciate this added marker that they are purchasing a wine of distinction, character and origin. Many of Germany's winegrowing regions are named for rivers, which reminds us that for a country like Germany, viticulture was long mainly possible in river valleys, where the water helped moderate the climate. These locations themselves have become icons of German winemaking. The incredibly steep vineyards along the Mosel, Rhein and Neckar rivers count among some of the most impressive and recognizable wonders of the German cultural landscape.



WINE TOURISM

Germany's wine regions understandably also count among the most popular vacation destinations. They offer a rare confluence of beautiful hillside vineyards, river valleys and rolling terrain, dotted by picturesque villages with warm hospitality and their own distinct culinary traditions. Many winegrowers now also offer accommodations directly at their estates and plan splashy events to draw visitors. Another positive trend: the rise of stylish "vinotheks." Because these serve as part tasting room, part event space and part communal meeting place, they are a wonderfully practical way to blend traditional wine culture with the kind of modern experiential twist that makes even young families with children feel included.

Winery buildings

Weingut Max Müller I, Volkach, Franken

Weingut Abril, Baden

Winzerhof Gierer, Nonnenhorn, Württemberg

Winzerkeller Sommerach, Franken



Lunch break during harvest

FAMILIES, COOPERATIVES AND WINERIES

Many of Germany's winegrowing estates have been in family hands for generations. In some strongly traditional areas, the vine-

yards were historically divided in equal portions among the children of winemakers when they died. While fair, over time this practice tended to shrink the individual holdings to the point where it no longer made sense to maintain one's own winery. A system of winegrower collectives arose to meet this need, allowing a centrally engaged cellar master to produce top quality wine from the grapes of the collective's members. Grape cultivators without their own winery or marketing apparatus have the option of delivering their grapes and wines to the cooperative winery, which not only produces the wines but has the reach to place their products on retail shelves within Germany and in many cases abroad.

WINE AS A CORNERSTONE OF LIFE

Young consumers have proven very open to the charms of German wine. They are fans of attractively lively wines, trendy seccos and “Blanc de Noirs” of the kind that young winegrowers in particular often seem to produce. Wine is hip and a fascinating topic of conversation. It’s fun to share tips on who’s making especially fine bottles, perhaps over a meal cooked together with friends. A dynamic community of bloggers and wine fans drives the discussion in forums around the internet, passionately debating vintages, production philosophies and larger trends such as sustainability and organic winegrowing. Producers and the larger wine-drinking public are also increasingly waking up to these latter two topics. With so many thousands of winemakers in German’s winegrowing regions, there is an inexhaustible range of wines and vintages waiting to be discovered year after year.





HOW DOES ONE BECOME A VINTNER?

one in the production of good wine. The actual nuts-and-bolts of winegrowing are complicated and require a real education. It should also be noted that the share of female vintners has been steadily rising for years. This is clearly an equal opportunity profession!

Germany's research and teaching institutions for the wine industry enjoy a strong international reputation. Graduates of Geisenheim University's renowned winemaking and wine marketing programs can be found at many estates great and small. The same applies to another well-regarded institution, the Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences. Polytechnic universities in Bingen, Kaiserslautern and Ludwigshafen also work together with the government-run Dienstleistungszentrum Ländlicher Raum in Neustadt an der Weinstraße to offer a degree in "Viticulture and Oenology."

So what's the best job in the world? Winemaker, of course! The papers are full of stories of celebrities who have fulfilled their long-held dreams of buying a winegrowing estate. But that's only step

*Impressions
from the
wine cellar*



GOOD WINE STARTS IN THE MIND

A modern German winegrower has to master many disciplines: farmer and grape cultivator, geologist, biologist, engineer, meteorologist, enologist, cellar master, marketing expert, quality manager, attorney, entertainer and, in recent years, expert for sustainable business — all in one person. A winemaker like this knows exactly what sort of wine she wants to make; while much is in the hands of mother nature, it would be foolish to abdicate complete responsibility. A serious winemaker will often have expanded her wine knowledge through practical internships in other countries. Even during training, young rising winegrowers have shown a knack for actively pursuing dialog, using tastings and experimentation to explore the differences between the wines of their homeland and those of other nations. This approach helps build an appreciation for the bigger picture and situates the wines within the framework of international competition.



EXCELLENT NETWORKS

And the relationships built during the course of studies continue well past the receipt of one's diploma. This is perhaps most clearly evident in the numerous groups that have formed between young winemakers to broaden their horizons and market their wines. One of the first was the "Leiwener Jungwinzer," some of whom at this point have long exceeded the maximal age requirement of 30 years old. The "Fünf Freunde in der Südpfalz" were another media darling; their wines were and are prized by those in the know. Other groups include "Message in a Bottle," "Junges Schwaben," "Next Generation" and the "Südpfalz Connexion." Many of these collaborations culminate in a joint wine or wine type, such as the "Rheingauer Leichtsinn," a summery-fresh sparkler; or they agitate on behalf of a specific variety, such as "Frank & Frei," which has come together in Franken to reshape Müller-Thurgau's stodgy image. "Generation Riesling" has proven one of the highest-profile efforts to bring together young winemakers from all German winegrowing regions. The group convenes to present each new vintage and exhibit communally at trade fairs. The overall effect is to show the young, fresh faces at work in the German winegrowing regions – and, despite the name, not just Riesling. www.generation-riesling.de

FACEBOOK, TWITTER & CO.

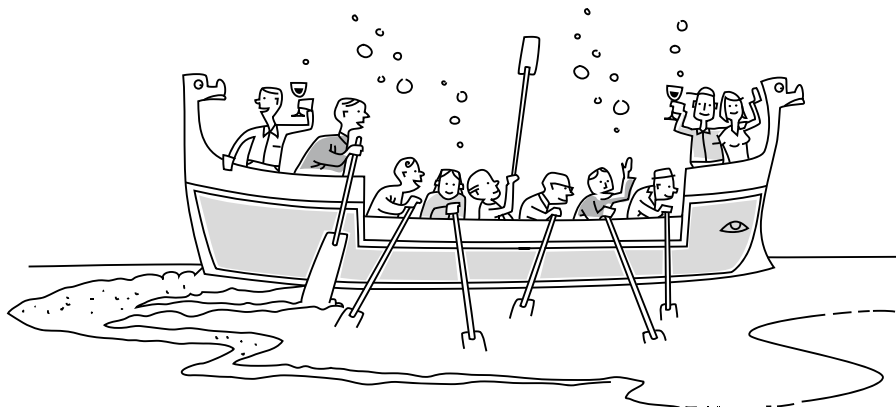
Germany's vintners have also long since found their way onto social networks such as Facebook, Twitter & Co. There are also many wine blogs where fans and experts come together to discuss German wine. These continue to have an increasingly influential impact on how German wines are communicated and recommended around the world.

A Brief History of German Wine



BEFORE THE ROMANS

The ancient Teutons drank mead; wine made from grapes was not known then. But at least alcoholic fermentation was! The intoxicating effect was in any event known to our ancestors, even if they did not yet grasp its exact cause.



THE ROMANS

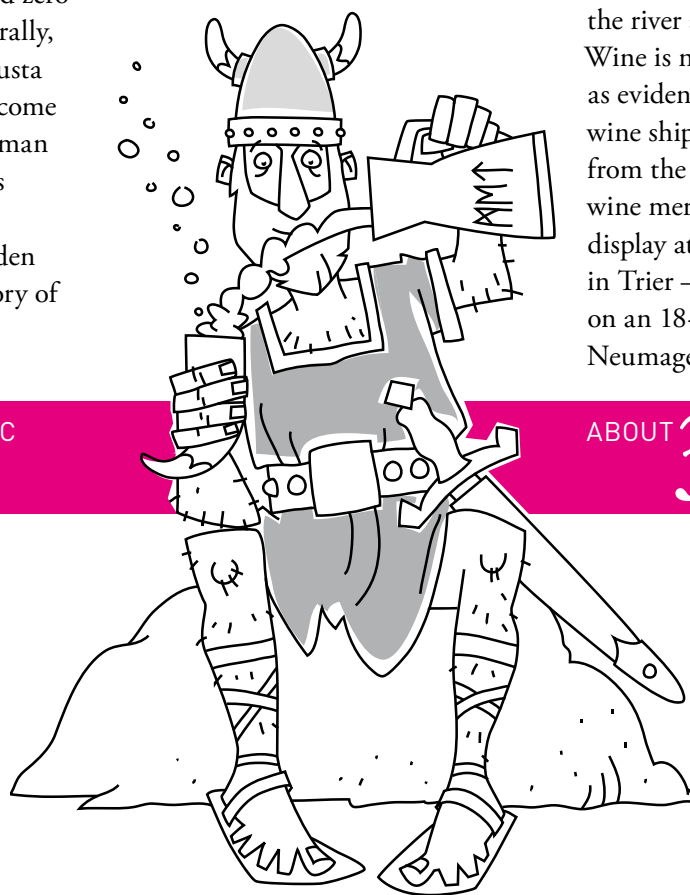
The grapevine arrived in Germania with the Roman conquest, first on the Mosel and later on the Rhine. The Mosel was ground zero both politically and viticulturally, with Trier – then called Augusta Treverorum – destined to become the capital of the western Roman Empire. Ancient wine presses unearthed in towns such as Piesport, Brauneberg and Erden bear witness to the long history of cultivation here.

“HAIL, MOSELLA”

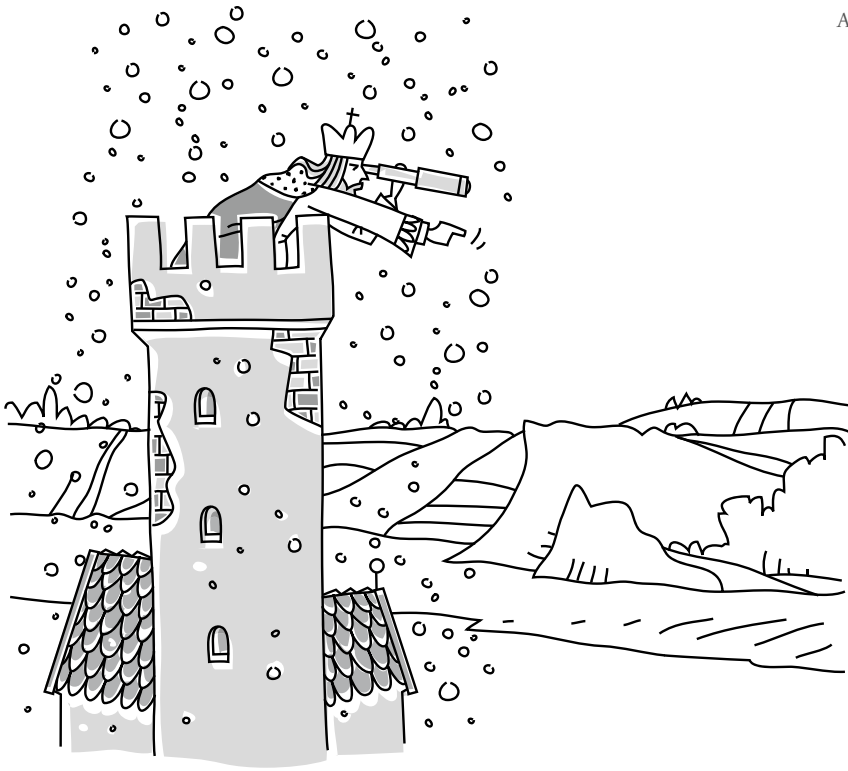
Roman consul and poet Decimius Magnus Ausonius composes “Mosella,” a 483-hexameter ode to the river and its steep vineyards. Wine is now transported by barge, as evidenced by the “Neumagen wine ship,” a stone sculpture from the tomb of a 3rd century wine merchant. The original is on display at the Rhineland Museum in Trier – but tourists can travel on an 18-meter-long replica in Neumagen-Dhron.

BEFORE **50** BC

ABOUT **371** AD



The oldest wine cellar in Germany belongs to the Vereinigte Hospizien Trier and was built in 330.



CHARLEMAGNE

Viticulture is primarily practiced by monasteries, with significant support from the ruler of the Frankish Empire. By 850, the Imperial and Royal Monastery at Lorsch (Hessische Bergstraße) is said to possess roughly 900 vineyards. From his winter quarters in Ingelheim, the Emperor observes how snow melts earlier on the southern slopes of the Rheingau than elsewhere and recognizes the potential of the opposite side of the Rhine for viticulture. He is often considered to be the founder of the so-called *Strausswirtschaften* – traditional seasonal wine bars:

AROUND **800**

winegrowers were given the right – still in force today – to offer their own wines and food and to indicate this seasonal offering by hanging a wreath of flowers on the gate.

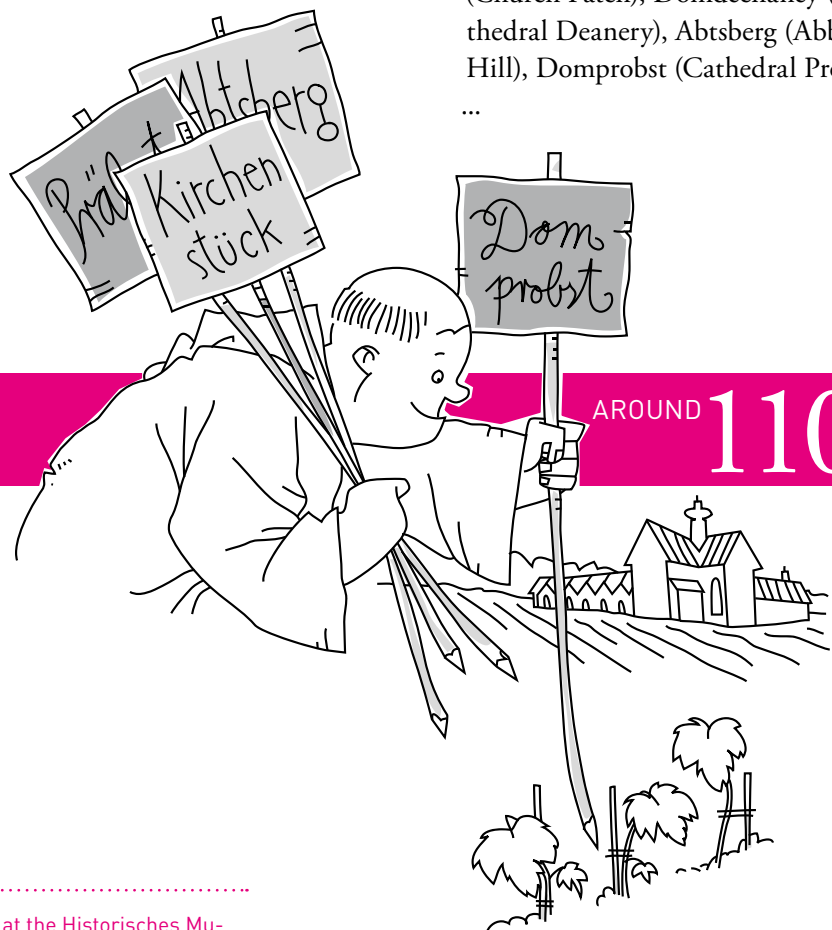


The world's oldest still-liquid wine can be seen at the Historisches Museum der Pfalz (Historical Museum of the Palatinate) in Speyer. The glass bottle with its yellowish contents was found in 1867 in a grave from the early 4th century.

MONKS, NUNS, CHURCH DIGNITARIES

The foundation of monasteries such as Kloster Eberbach in the Rheingau region by the Cistercians (1136), the Benedictine Abbey of St. Hildegard near Rüdesheim by Saint Hildegard of Bingen or the Augustinian Convent in Marienthal on the Ahr River (1137) are of great importance for viticulture. Today, the names of these vineyard sites remind that monks first planted them and the Church owned them: Prälat (Prelate), Kirchenstück (Church Patch), Domdechaney (Cathedral Deanery), Abtsberg (Abbot's Hill), Domprobst (Cathedral Provost)

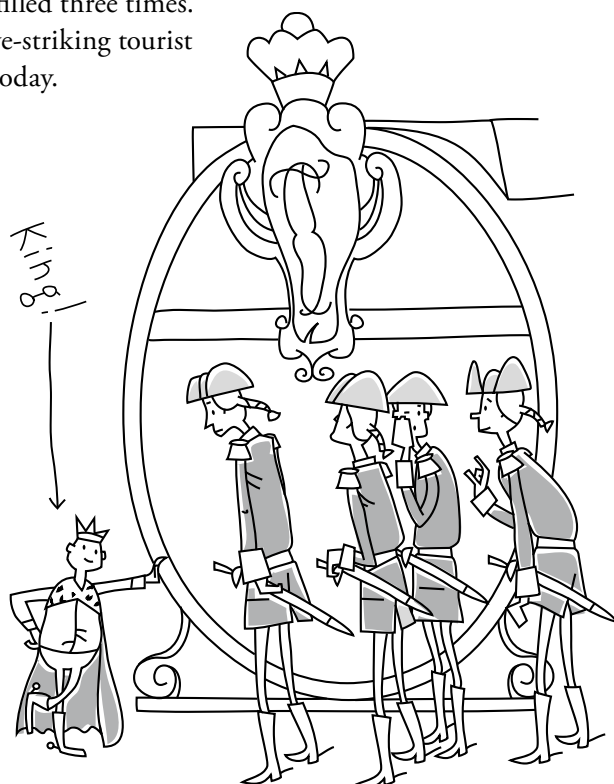
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AROUND **1100**

THINK BIG

The amount of land under vine in Germany reaches its peak in the early 17th century, but the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) permanently lays waste to many vineyards. The rulers in its aftermath clearly like to think big. How else can you explain the Heidelberger Riesenfass, a giant wine barrel? Built in 1751, it holds up to 220,000 liters of wine - so much that it was only ever filled three times. It remains an awe-striking tourist attraction even today.

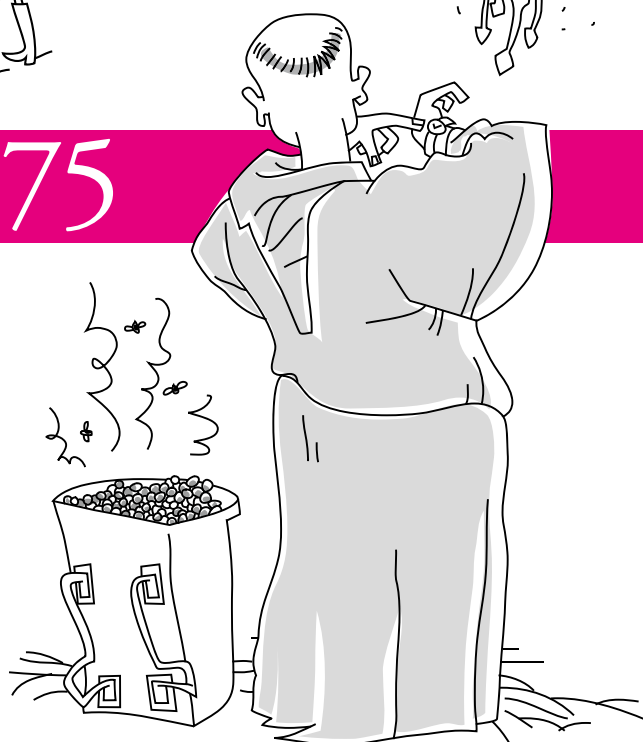


THE MOUNTED SPÄTLESE MESSENGER

The joys of late harvest (Spätlese) wine were discovered by accident. The monks at the Johannisberg in the Rheingau needed permission from the prince bishop of Fulda before harvesting, but the messenger bearing that letter was delayed for 14 days. By the time it arrived, the berries were already affected by noble rot. "Such wine have I not tasted before," marveled the cellar master. The cause of the delay is disputed, but it is clear that Spätlese remains one of the most important types of German wine. Incidentally, the term "Kabinett" can also be traced back to the monks, who stored their finest wines in a part of the cellar known as the Cabinet.



17th-18th CENTURY 1775





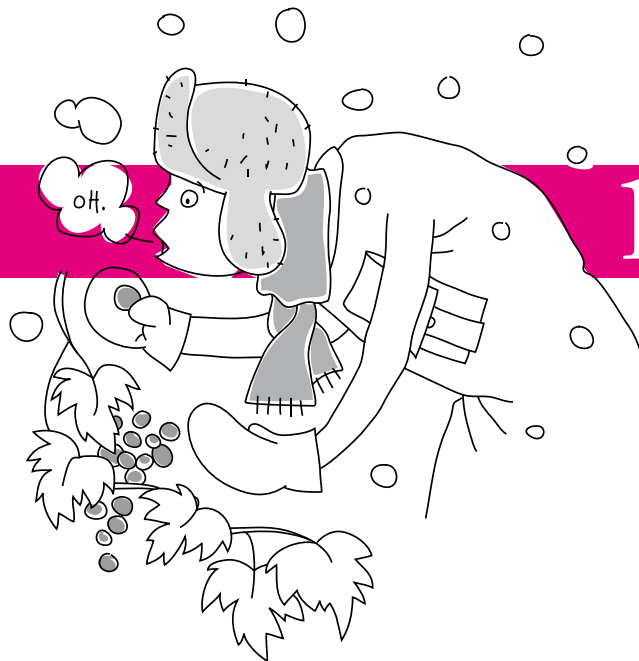
ELECTOR CLEMENS WENCESLAUS OF SAXONY

The Elector and Archbishop of Trier, a noted wine connoisseur, plays a crucial role in shaping the Mosel wine region. He decrees that in order to improve quality all “bad” vines had to be replaced by Riesling vines within seven years. This results in one of the largest Riesling-growing areas in the world.

BIRTH OF THE ICE WINE

Ice wine (Eiswein) is born in Dromersheim, a district of Bingen on the Rhine. It is believed that the first ice wine in Germany was picked there on February 11, 1830. Given the poor quality of the 1829 harvest, the wine growers had simply left the grapes hanging. They then changed their mind in winter, sensing a potential source of cattle feed. What they instead noticed was that the frozen grapes now had a very sweet and tasty juice with a high must weight. They pressed the grapes and ice wine was born.

1787



1830

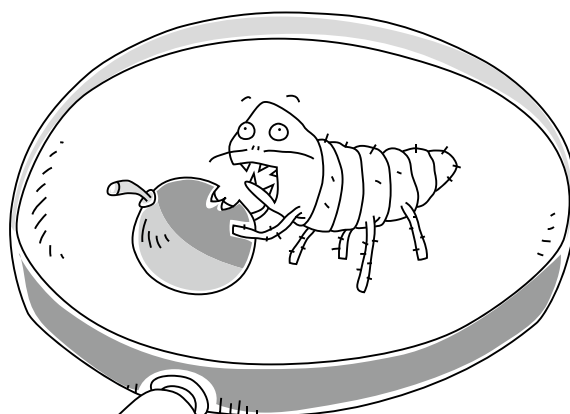


PHYLLOXERA STRIKES

The vine pest comes to Europe from North America, wreaking viticultural havoc throughout the continent. France sees large swaths of its winegrowing areas ruined, and by 1865 phylloxera has arrived in Bonn, Saxony, Baden and on the Mosel. Desperate vintners try in vain to combat the pest with petroleum and other means. Finally, in 1872, it is discovered that American vines are resistant. American rootstock is soon grafted on most European vines, with only a very few ungrafted parcels remaining. To this day the phylloxera louse has never been completely eradicated.

UNITY IS STRENGTH

18 vintners from the Ahr region join together as the "Winzer Verein zu Mayschoß" (Mayschoß Winegrowers Association), the first such organization in Germany. Cooperatives can today be found in all wine regions, with grapes from approx. one-third of German vineyards. They are of special importance in Württemberg and Baden, where there are many part-time growers.

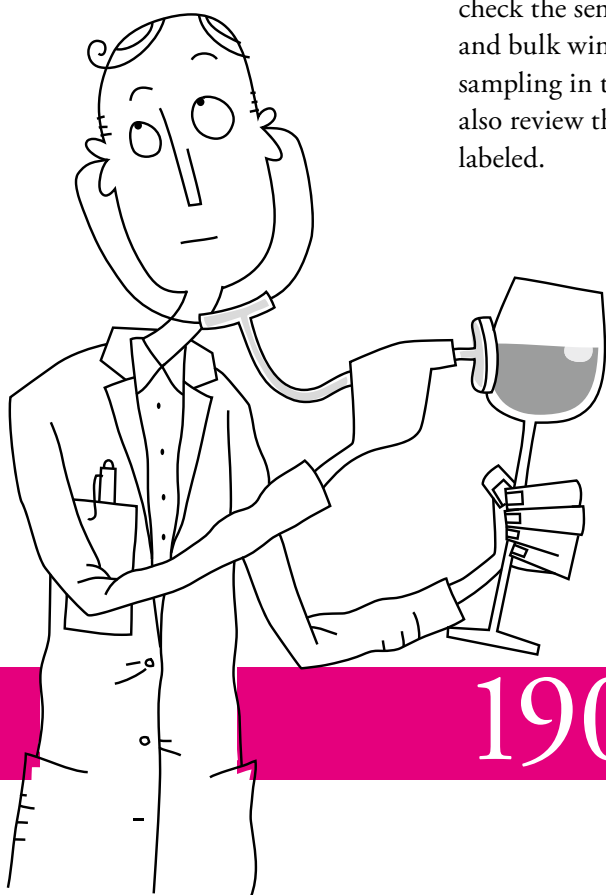


1868

FROM 1872

CONTROL IS BETTER

Since the Middle Ages, some rather draconian measures have been taken to punish wine adulterators: in 1471, one vintner was entombed in a wall for adding water to his wine. The first royal decree against counterfeiting of wine was issued in 1498. In 1903, the then governmental district Pfalz (Palatinate) created the first post of a wine expert as a controller. Today, wine inspectors can be found in all areas of wine production. They monitor the production conditions and regulatory compliance and check the sensory quality of bottled and bulk wines through random sampling in the vineyards. They also review that bottles are correctly labeled.



QUEEN FOR GERMANY

Elisabeth Gies, née Kuhn, from Diedesfeld in the Pfalz is crowned the first German Wine Queen. That means this title is as old as the Federal Republic of Germany. Today, the German Wine Queen is a knowledgeable and popular ambassador for German wine at home and abroad. She certainly travels a lot: there are several hundred dates in her diary every year.

www.deutscheweinkoenigin.de

1903

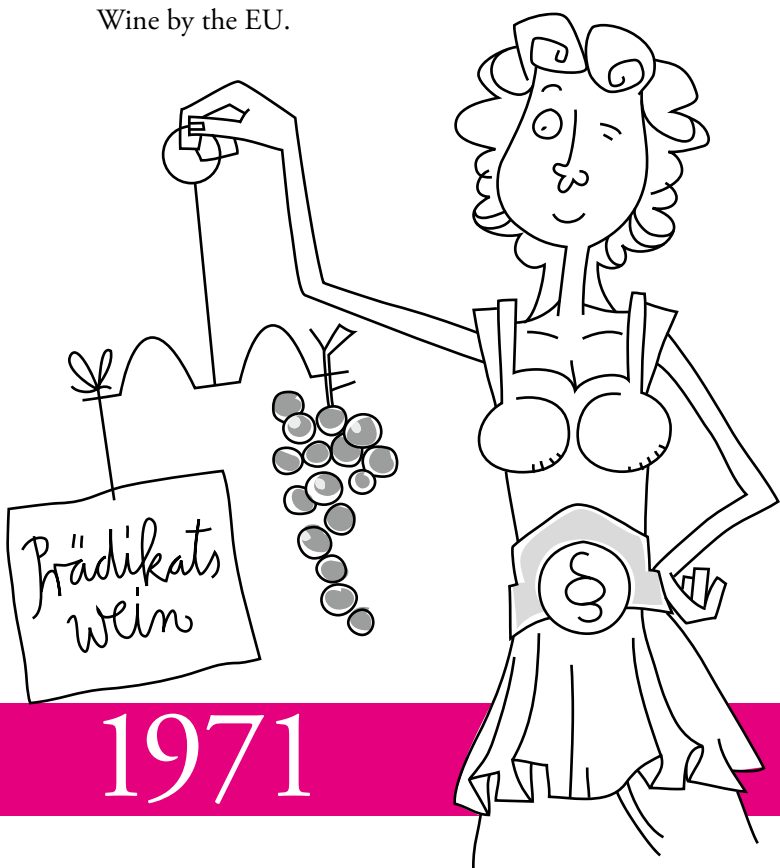
1949

AN INSTITUTE FOR WINE.....

1949 was also the year of founding for the "Deutsche Weinwerbung GmbH," the predecessor to the German Wine Institute. Intended as a hub for information on grape varieties, wine regions, current events and publications, the Wine Institute has established many satellite offices around the world in its quest to promote German wines domestically and abroad. Based in Bodenheim, the institute also operates www.germanwines.de.

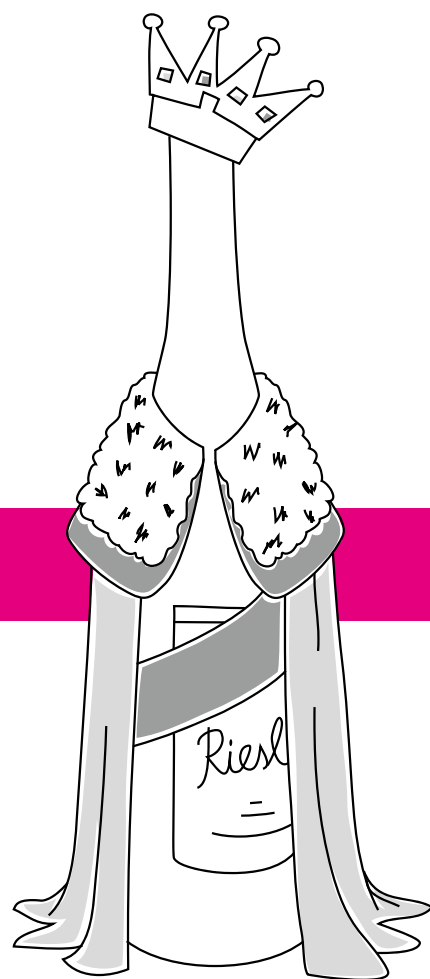
NEW LAWS

The Wine Act of 1971 provides the basis for modern German viticulture. Its definitions of winegrowing regions, appellations of vineyard sites and rules for large growing blocks are still largely valid. It has since been updated with clearly defined classifications for special topics such as Qualitätswein and Prädikatswein. The law was originally created in response to the establishment of the Common Market Organization for Wine by the EU.



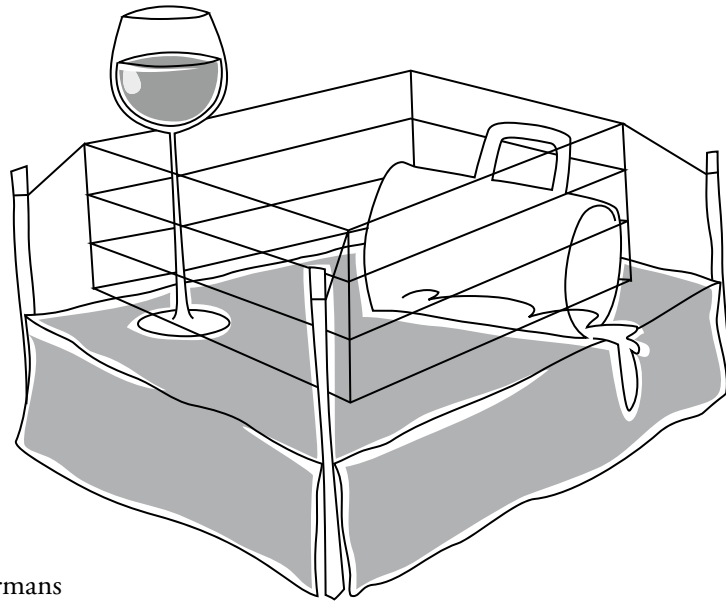
RIESLING RENAISSANCE

Riesling now claims 49 percent of all grapevines in Germany, making the nation the largest Riesling growing area in the world. Yet Riesling's reclamation of its status as the king of German wines is a relatively new trend. The world's growing demand for German Riesling is associated with a change by growers toward quality and the palate and preferences of modern consumers. Without question, it has become the bread-and-butter variety for an increasing number of winemakers.



NOW THERE ARE THIRTEEN

With the reunification of Germany the number of winegrowing regions increases to thirteen. The two 'newcomers' are Sachsen and Saale-Unstrut.



WINE BEATS BEER

For the first time, the Germans spend more money on wine than on beer. It is hardly a decisive victory: wine achieves a 32.3 share of average household alcoholic beverage budgets, just ahead of the 32.2 percent for beer. But in a country where beer consumption is much higher than the wine consumption, this is an historic moment. Wine has expanded its lead significantly in the intervening years.

LANDMARKS OF WINE CULTURE

The German Wine Institute launches its “Landmarks of Wine Culture” award, celebrating places which documenting the history and tradition of winegrowing in some notable way. These include old vineyards and wine museums as well as historical wine presses and traditional winegrowing communities.

2001

2010

RED WINE BOOM

The proportion of red wine varieties has been growing steadily since 1981, reaching its peak at 36.9 percent in 2006. The reason: increasing domestic demand for reds, leading vintners to choose Pinot Noir, Dornfelder and other red grape varieties when it comes time for replanting. Since that year the area planted with red varieties has decreased again slightly.

Grape Varieties

An Overview



Riesling: The Undisputed King

The joys of Riesling start from first sniff. Hints of apple, citrus, peach and apricot are all typical, with the pure fruit aromas combining with a distinctive fruit acidity to make Riesling into one of the world's greatest grape varieties. While the grape has experienced a true international renaissance in recent years, in many ways it is simply history repeating itself. After all, in the early 19th century German Riesling wines were among the most expensive wines in the world!

One can confidently speak of Germany as the home of Riesling. After all, Germany cultivates over 24,000 hectares of Riesling, representing roughly 49 percent of all the Riesling in the world. The Pfalz and the Mosel are the world's two largest Riesling-growing regions. One of the first authenticated documents mentioning the cultivation of Riesling in this country involves an invoice from a winery in Rüsselsheim to the Count of Katzenelnbogen for "six vines of Riesling planted in the vineyard," dated 13th March 1435. The Riesling banner was long borne by monastic viticulture, although since the Middle Ages this grape variety has continued to help shape world wine culture. The term "Johannisberg Riesling," once commonly used in the United States, derived from the Johannisberg vineyard in the Rheingau, the oldest surviving Riesling vineyard in the world. Riesling quickly spread across Germany's wine regions – particularly to river valleys, where the latent heat-storing capacity is especially well suited to this variety. German immigrants also carried Riesling to other countries in the world, including Australia, the USA and New Zealand.

Unlike most other grape varieties, Riesling's character strongly reflects the type of soil in which it is grown. Heavy clay soils promote citrusy aromas, while new red sandstone ensures a taste of apricot in the wine. Slate soils by contrast

tend to create pronounced mineral notes, in many cases reminiscent of flint. Riesling wines can also age beautifully. When mature, they often achieve a complex aroma pleasantly reminiscent of petrol that promises maximum enjoyment to the connoisseur.

A great grape like Riesling plays out its strengths in a number of variations: As a "Winzersekt" (winegrower's sparkling wine), as a light Kabinett wine, as a noble Spätlese (late harvest) or precious ice wine – styles range from dry and off-dry to noble sweet. Given this magnificent diversity of taste profiles, Riesling serves as an excellent pairing with food, such as fish and poultry dishes with light sauces or vegetable ragout. In its off-dry style, it is an ideal accompaniment to Asian cuisine. And then there are the sweet treasures: Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese. The incomparable, extremely durable pleasures have one thing in common: noble rot (*botrytis cinerea*) heightens the Riesling aromas to perfection. Riesling is particularly suitable for these sumptuous varieties as it matures slowly and late, and the noble fungus can spread around the grapes with all possible care. If the weather in the autumn plays along, leaving the grapes to hang in weather that is neither too cold nor too dry, then sweet delights abound.

The elixir from these individually hand-picked berries delivers concentrated flavors with bright Riesling acidity. The smell of dried fruit, honey, ripe pineapple and yellow peaches caresses the nose. These make delicious aperitifs – or wonderful partners to fruity desserts or strong cheeses. Riesling also makes an ice wine of great pleasure. Ice wines are concentrated, extremely refined wines with brilliant acidity, bright fruit flavors and grape sugar sweetness, often reaching must weights of up to 250° Oechsle. No wonder then that Riesling ice wines rate among the most precious treasures of wine around the world.



Spätburgunder: The Trendy Red

Pinot Noir (Spätburgunder) is widely considered the finest red wine variety in Germany. It only thrives in the best locations, where it develops its characteristic complex aromas, including cherry, subtle hints of smoke and almond and nuances of other elegant fruits, especially red berries.

With Pinot Noir planted on nearly 12,000 hectares of vineyard, Germany is now the world's third largest cultivating nation for Pinot Noir after France and the USA. While Germany's most important white grape variety, Riesling, enjoys huge success worldwide, its most significant red grape variety is still mainly a secret abroad. Since the demand for German Pinot Noir within Germany remains high, it is still hardly exported at all. Even connoisseurs abroad are therefore surprised that there is more Pinot Noir in Germany than for example in Australia, New Zealand and Austria combined.

Pinot Noir actually has a long history in Germany. It is said that it was King Charles III (with the lovely epithet "the Fat") of the Carolingian dynasty who in 884 brought the Pinot Noir from Burgundy to Lake Constance. In the centuries that followed the grape variety spread towards the north.

Pinot Noir is highly demanding in terms of climate and soil. The best locations are only just good enough for one of the finest representatives of red wine. As a so-called "cool climate" grape variety, Pinot Noir – like Riesling –

is virtually predestined for cultivation in Germany. The growing season in our latitudes is much longer in comparison with the southern wine-growing nations thus ensuring that these varieties express their individual terroir – the soil and climate in which they were grown – very clearly. Precisely this is what captivates wine lovers: Pinot Noirs from different German winegrowing regions are not interchangeable and aficionados can often tell by taste where the wine comes from.

There are two main variants of this fine, rich, mostly dry, red: one made from well-ripened grapes – velvety, low in tannin, ruby red and delicate – and the more modern type, with a high tannin content, less fruit acid and brighter color. Both types do very well with judicious aging in barrels. When separated quickly from the skins, Pinot Noir must turns into "Blanc de Noir," which, depending on the method of preparation, can be a pale pink to white and because of its spicy, yet wonderfully light taste, goes well with all kinds of food and is also a delicious aperitif. Pinot Noir can also be turned into a noble red sparkling wine or a sparkling Blanc de Noir.

With about 5,400 hectares, most of the German Pinot Noir is grown in Baden. However, this noble variety plays a role in almost every winegrowing region. The Pinot Noirs of the Ahr Valley in particular have drawn the most passionate enthusiasm on the international stage.



Red grapes

White grapes

Müller-Thurgau (Rivaner)

Created at the beginning of the 20th century in Geisenheim by Professor Hermann Müller from Thurgau in Switzerland, it was long assumed to be a cross between Riesling and Silvaner (hence “Rivaner”). However, this was disproved by genetic analysis some time ago: The real “parents” are Riesling and Madeleine Royale. The type: uncomplicated, easily accessible, mild acidity, subtle fruit with a typical hint of nutmeg. Müller-Thurgau is the second most widely planted grape in Germany, ripens early and delivers a fresh, summery draught to be enjoyed at any occasion and which delights as an aromatic sparkling wine too.

Dornfelder

Created in the 1950s by August Herold in Weinsberg, this variety is now one of the most popular red wines in Germany. Characterized by easily accessible aromas such as cherry, currants and other berry fruits, as well as warm gentle tannins and a deep dark red color. Dornfelder is straightforward to cultivate and ready to drink at a young age. Dornfelder has its strengths as a cuvée partner and as a barrique wine.

Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris)

Derives from the Pinot Noir. The sweeter version is labeled Ruländer, but Pinot Gris is today mostly produced as a dry wine which is very compatible with food and whose flavors are, among others, reminiscent of pears, almonds, nuts and pineapple. It has an impressive stylistic diversity: Besides the dry, fresh

Pinot Gris, which can be enjoyed on the terrace or at a picnic, and the already mentioned Ruländer variant, there is also the rich type matured in barriques, as well as noble sweet Pinot Gris. Like Pinot Blanc very well suited for sparkling wine.

Silvaner

Silvaner is a natural cross between Traminer and Österreichisch Weiss (literally ‘Austrian White’) and is one of the oldest grape varieties. The cultivation of Silvaner was first documented in this country in 1659, in Castell (Franken). Even today Franken retains the highest percentage of Silvaner among its plantings, but the world’s largest growing area by volume is located in Rheinhessen. Silvaner expresses its terroir almost as incisively as the Riesling, typically in aromas that resemble flowers and plants, or melons, yellow plums and apples.

With its delicate, earthy and fruity tones and easily digestible acid, Silvaner makes an excellent food match. The classic pairing is with asparagus, but it goes magically with fish as well.

Weißburgunder (Pinot Blanc)

Derives from the Pinot Noir and thrives excellently in places that are too hot for Riesling. Crisp, fresh, with a well-integrated acidity that makes it very popular with food. Smells and tastes of citrus fruit, pears, melons and green nuts. Well-suited for making sparkling wine or maturing in barrique barrels and can achieve impressive quality in top locations.

Portugieser

This simple, fresh wine is often produced as a Weißherbst. Portugieser has mild tannins and is the third most widely grown red grape in Germany. Despite its name, Portugieser is actually completely unknown in Portugal and in fact probably originated in Austria or Hungary. Typical aromas are red currant, raspberry and strawberry. When yields are reduced, Portugieser reds are amazingly dense and can easily mature in oak barrels.

Kerner

This white variety, a crossing between Trollinger and Riesling established in 1929 by August Herold, was named after the poet Justinus Kerner from Weinsberg.

Kerner is fresh and fruity, a juicy glass that serves as a perfect food companion when vinified as a full-bodied wine. As a sweet late vintage drop, it is an ideal summer terrace wine. It is also suitable as a base wine for sparklers and as a cuvée partner. Its aromas are often reminiscent of green apples, pears and white currants.

Trollinger

Württemberg's "bread and butter red wine" is light in color and body, round and fruity. The origin of this variety is located south of the Alps, where it is called Vernatsch. It probably came to Germany with the Romans. Its fragrant aromas remind of flowers and sour cherries. Tasty with a hearty snack with bacon, ham and cheese as well as typical Württemberg specialties. Serve lightly chilled.

Schwarzriesling (Pinot Meunier)

Despite its name this old cultured vine is not at all related to the Riesling, but stems from the Pinot family. The name Pinot Meunier (Meunier = miller) refers to the fine white hairs on the leaves which makes them look like they were dusted with flour. Pleasant as a fruity table wine, its aromas and complexity are reminiscent of Pinot Noir when vinified complexly. In France, Pinot Meunier is used in the production of champagne. In Germany, Schwarzriesling is used to produce a fine red wine, especially in Württemberg where the largest acreage is located.

Regent

Germany has a long history of breeding new grape varieties, typically in the search for heartier varieties better equipped for climate change or with resistance to disease. Naturally, the wines derived from new breeds should taste good, too! Regent, a new red grape variety bred from Silvaner, Riesling and Chambourcin, has achieved this in an impressive manner. It was only approved for cultivation in 1996 and provides dark, fruity and velvety red wine with aromas of black cherry and currant and a good tannin structure. Since the Regent is highly resistant to fungal diseases, it is frequently found in organic farming. The area under cultivation of Regent has grown from 70 to over 2,000 hectares in just one decade.

Lemberger

This variety probably comes from Austria, where it is known as Blaufränkisch. In Germany it enjoyed its heyday in Württemberg during the 19th century. Lemberger was the favorite wine of Federal President Theodor Heuss, a native of Württemberg. The smooth, dark, berry-fruity Lemberger is becoming increasingly popular as an uncomplicated everyday wine and also as a powerful barrique wine for special occasions. Its aromas are reminiscent of ripe black berries, plums and cherries, and Lemberger can have a strong tannin structure, depending on the style.

Bacchus

This variety was bred in the 1930s by crossing Silvaner and Riesling with Müller-Thurgau. In 2010, just under 2,000 vineyard hectares were planted with Bacchus vines; these are mainly located in Rheinhessen and Franken. Bacchus wines are often found in the Prädikatswein category with the appropriate residual sugar content. These wines are fruity and extract rich, with an independent bouquet that is sometimes similar to Scheurebe. Bacchus wines with a very high must weight and sufficient acidity can even resemble Riesling, with flowery aromas and a hint of nutmeg. With its finely spicy aroma, Bacchus goes well with Asian dishes and fruity desserts such as fruit salad.

Chardonnay

Chardonnay is one of the world's most beloved grape varieties and is increasingly being cultivated in Germany as well. It is typically matured in either stainless steel tanks or wooden barriques. Classic Chardonnay aromas include melon, exotic fruits, highly ripe gooseberry and tart apple. Young, light wines are excellent companions to fish and seafood, while more powerful and/or barrel-aged wines pair wonderfully with roast dishes and savory cheeses.

Scheurebe

Bred in Alzey in Rheinhessen by Georg Scheu in 1916 it is a crossing of Riesling and Silvaner. It is one of the most popular bouquet varieties. Characteristically it presents intense fragrances of black currant (cassis) and exotic fruit. Often fermented as a noble sweet, but increasingly also as a dry wine. Perfect with Asian food and cheese, also unbeatable as a stimulating, refreshing aperitif and al fresco sipping wine.

Gutedel

This grape variety has been cultivated for about 5,000 years and is thus regarded as the oldest cultured vine. In Germany, it is found almost exclusively in Baden's southernmost district, the Markgräflerland. Across the border in Switzerland, it is also called Chasselas. With its mild fruit acid Gutedel goes excellently with light dishes and is a wonderful summer wine. It can also be made into an appealing sparkling wine.

Traminer

Traditional aromatic wine with the characteristic scent of rose blossoms; other aromas include acacia blossoms, bitter oranges, exotic fruit and honey. The Pfalz town of Rhodt has a 400-year-old Gewürztraminer vineyard which still returns a yield every year. Gewürztraminer cultivation is currently undergoing a boom, and the wine is being vinified in all its variants. The creamy and luxuriant noble sweet varieties are among the finest of dessert wines and pair excellently with cheese.

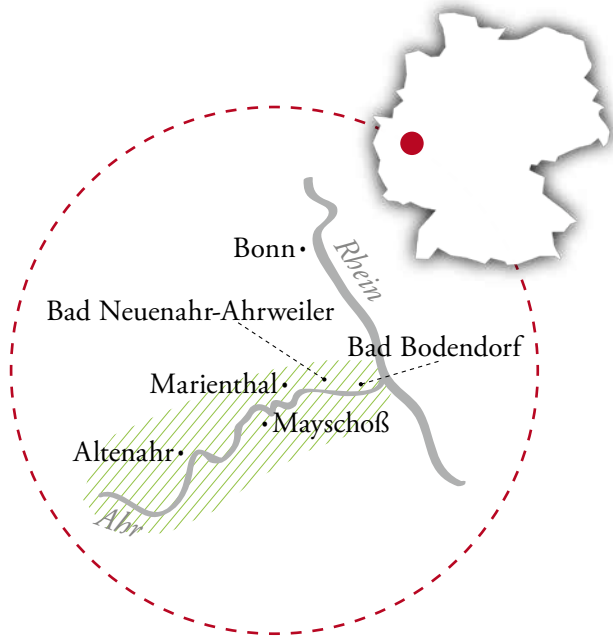
Sauvignon Blanc

This variety has seen massive growth around the world in recent decades and is now being planted on over 800 hectares in Germany alone. The strong success of German Sauvignon Blancs in recent international tastings continues to be a pleasant surprise. Sauvignon Blanc is known for its strong, unmistakable aromas of grass, herbs, gooseberry and green fruits. It pairs outstandingly with fish and seafood dishes as well as pasta with cream sauce.

Elbling

Elbling has been cultivated in Europe for roughly 2000 years and was probably called "Vitis Alba" – white grape – by the Romans. In Germany, it is now almost exclusively grown on the Mosel. Light and lively with fresh acidity – a wine for simple pleasures that also lends itself to great sparkling wine. There is no better thirst quencher for hot summer days than a dry Elbling!

German Winegrowing Regions



Vineyard area:

approx. 560 ha, 83% red wine

Most important grape varieties:

Spätburgunder, Frühburgunder, Riesling

Further information:

www.ahrwein.de



- Vinothek of the Jean Stodden red wine estate
- Mayschoß: Cradle of winegrowers' cooperatives
- Marienthal Monastery: Wine tasting in the vaulted cellar



Ahr – The Valley of the Reds

The Ahr is one of the smaller winegrowing regions, with only about 560 hectares of vineyards. What sets it apart: red varieties represent 83 percent of the grapes grown here, a higher proportion than in any other German winegrowing region. Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir), Portugieser and Frühburgunder predominate, while Riesling is the most important white variety.

The region takes its name from the Ahr River, which flows into the Rhine roughly 40 kilometers south of the former federal capital Bonn. The slopes of the picturesque Ahr Valley mostly face south, which lends itself well to winegrowing. Little rain falls here and throughout the year average temperatures remain quite low. Pinot Noir, a demanding variety by nature, grows well in the Ahr because the soil matches its needs. The Ahr Valley is part of the Rhenish Massif, which is notable for the heavy slate content of its soils. During the day that slate stores heat, only to release it again at night – like natural underfloor heating! The river also helps balance out climatic fluctuations.



*Red Wine Trail
along the Ahr Valley*



Scenic view of Ahrweiler's historic city center

The Ahr River has spent two million years carving its way through the slate mountains. The valley is narrow and the slopes are steep, especially at the Mittelahr, its geographic middle section. This wild and romantic valley is the most diverse botanical region of the Rhenish Massif and a habitat for rare animal species. Here the wild cat and the eagle owl bid each other good night.

PINOT NOIR IS UNCHALLENGED AS THE MOST POPULAR GRAPE VARIETY IN THE AHR.

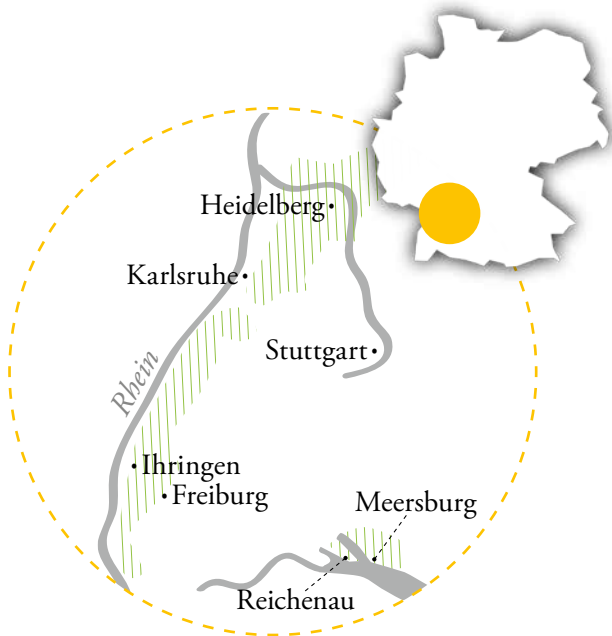
It only arrived in the region after the Thirty Years' War, although other vines had already been cultivated there by the Romans since the first century AD. Ahr red wines are elegant and complex and have good aging potential.



Wine festival on the Ahr

The first winegrowing cooperative in Germany, and one of the first anywhere in the world, was founded in Mayschoß in 1868. It arose from necessity: a series of bad harvests and oppressive duties meant that many winemaking families could no longer subsist from the products of their own winery alone. Some emigrated, others joined together to operate a collective wine cellar. It is an idea that still works well even today – not only in the Ahr region!

Baden – Sun-Ripened and Pinot Perfect



If you think the weather in Germany is mainly cold and uncomfortable, you should visit Baden! Located in the southwest of Germany, the growing region stretches from Tauberfranken in the north via Heidelberg along the Rhine down to Lake Constance. With almost 16,000 hectares under vine, it is the country's largest wine region.

Baden is characterized by a notably mild climate. This is mainly due to the Belfort Gap, a plateau between the rock formations of the southern Vosges mountains and the northern Jura mountains. Here, the mild Mediterranean air currents stream into the Upper Rhine Plain. For this reason, Baden is the only German wine region which is part of the EU wine-growing zone B, which is reserved for the warmer areas of Europe. Because of the Belfort Gap, it is said, Baden is Pinot country: Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris all thrive here.

One local speciality is the rose-coloured wine called Badisch Rotgold. This is not a distinct grape variety but rather a special cuvée made from Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir.

Vineyards in Baden, near Durbach





*Scenic view of the vineyards
at Oberbergen, Kaiserstuhl*



Baden is divided into nine districts: Bodensee, Markgräflerland, Tuniberg, Kaiserstuhl, Freiburg, Ortenau, Kraichgau, Badische Bergstraße and Tauberfranken. A diverse range of soil profiles spreads across them: from shell limestone and keuper in the Kraichgau and lime, clay and marl deposits on the banks of the Tauber to rich loess and clay soils with volcanic debris in the Kaiserstuhl, Tuniberg and Markgräflerland.

THE KAISERSTUHL GETS THE MOST SUNSHINE IN ALL OF GERMANY.

This volcanic cone between the Black Forest and Vosges mountains, with an average temperature of over 11 degrees Celsius, is undoubtedly one of the warmest places in the country. This leads to an endemic flora and fauna which is quite unusual for Germany: 36 orchid species are native to the Kaiserstuhl as well as 729 species of butterflies, the colorful bee-eater bird, long green lizards that measure up to 40 cm and the praying mantis. The name Kaiserstuhl ("Emperor's Seat") dates back to Emperor Otto III (980-1002), whose court was located in the "Gestühl," a section of Leiselheim. That link is still reflected in a local vineyard name even today.

Baden has made a name for itself far beyond its borders for its high concentration of gourmet restaurants. Few other regions of Germany boast as many restaurants with star chefs. Word has certainly spread to the French Alsace, and cross-border culinary tourism is on the rise, including from other parts of Germany and Switzerland.

Among the excellent white wines from Baden is the "Klingelberger," which is simply the traditional Ortenau name for Riesling. The name stems from the Klingelberg vineyard, part of the Schlossberg at Durbach where Margrave Carl Friedrich of Baden, master of the Staufenberg Castle winery, ordered Riesling planted in 1782. This decision to plant the vineyard with only one single variety was an innovation at that time.

Vineyard area:

Approx. 16,000 ha, 59% white wine

Most important grape varieties:

Spätburgunder, Müller-Thurgau, Grauburgunder, Weißburgunder, Riesling

Further information:

www.badischerwein.de



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- Weingut Abril Vogtsburg-Bischoffingen
- Vineum Bodensee
- Reichenau – where wine is cultivated in water
- The Great Vat in Heidelberg Castle
- Volcanic rock garden at the Winklerberg in Ihringen



Scenic view of idyllic Escherndorf



Vineyard area:

approx. 6,100 ha, 81% white wine

Most important grape varieties:

Müller-Thurgau, Silvaner, Bacchus

Further information:

www.frankenwein-aktuell.de



- Staatlicher Hofkeller Würzburg
- Sommerach am Main: In the realm of the senses
- Weingut Brennfleck in Sulzfeld am Main
- Vinothek of Max Müller | Weingut in Volkach
- Weingut am Stein in Würzburg
- Vinothek Iphofen
- Staatlicher Hofkeller Würzburg
- Bürgerspital zum Heiligen Geist winery
- Juliußspital in Würzburg
- Castell and Silvaner

The Hofkeller in Würzburg



Franken – Fine-Wine-Main



The section of Franconia that runs along the Main River is called “Mainfranken,” but many feel it ought to be renamed “Wine Franken” to reflect the wonderful tradition of Franconian wine produced along the Main River and its tributaries. The region’s wines are known far and wide for the distinctive Bocksbeutel, a flat, bulbous bottle. It is unclear how this unusual bottle shape came to be associated with this particular region, but excavations in the Franconian town of Wenigumstadt unearthed an ancient bottle of Celtic origin, dating back to 1400 BC, that had a similar flat, bulbous form. Is it the missing link? The Bocksbeutel is certainly quite practical: It doesn’t roll down slopes! Good for a picnic in the gently rolling hills of Franconia’s river valleys.

Franken is the only German winegrowing region located entirely within the borders of Bavaria, Germany’s southeastern-most federal state. The region’s roughly 6,000 hectares are mostly situated in the vicinity of the baroque town of Würzburg.

*Landscape near Castell*

THIS RECREATIONAL PARADISE ALSO FEATURES MANY PICTURESQUE TOWNS SUCH AS IPHOFEN AND CASTELL.

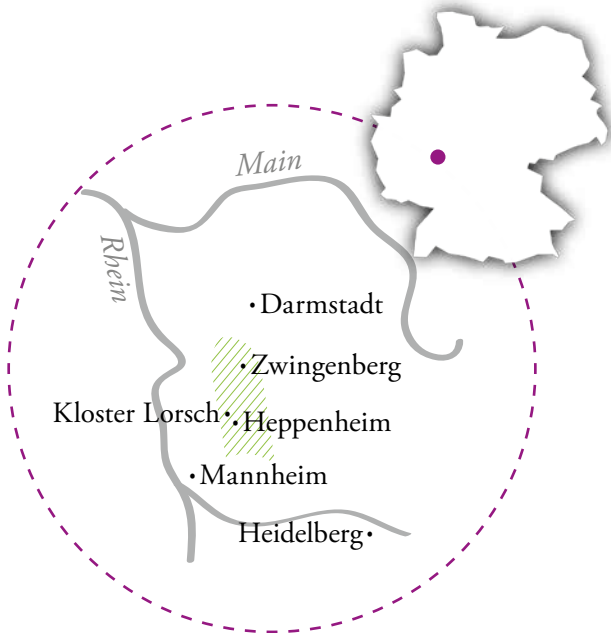
81 percent of the vines cultivated in Franken are white grape varieties. Silvaner is considered the classic Franconian variety, and no other region has a higher proportion of Silvaner. It was planted for the first time at the Schlossberg in Castell in April 1659. Its character is often compared to that of the inhabitants of Franken themselves: quiet and restrained, but of rock-solid power. Silvaner ripens two weeks earlier than Riesling and produces good yields but is susceptible to harsh winters. For this reason, it is not the most commonly grown grape variety in Franken. In order to achieve a certain stability of yield, many vineyards were planted with the more climate-resistant Müller-Thurgau. The white Bacchus, which can be matured into anything from simple sundowners to fancy Auslese is also very dear to the Franconian winemaker's heart. A red grape specialty from Franken is the Domina.

The climate in the Franken wine country is mostly continental, but the Main has a balancing effect: the

summers are hot and the winters cold. Mainfranken is protected from excessive cold and rain by the Rhön Mountains to the north and the Spessart to the west. And although there is little rain around Würzburg in summer, humidity is relatively high. The sparse precipitation has led to a high concentration of mineral content in the soil. It should come as no surprise that mineral, earthy undertones are among the main markers for classic Franken wines.

“Steinwein” has long synonymous with Franken wine. The term refers to the “Würzburg Stein,” one of Franken’s most famous vineyards — and coincidentally the oldest documented named vineyard site anywhere in Germany. A 1540s Steinwein is still stored today in the cellar of the Bürger-spital winery in Würzburg. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Germany’s national poet, was a noted connoisseur of Steinwein. On 17 June 1806 he wrote to his wife Christiane: “Please send me some Würzburg wine, no other wine tastes as nice and I will surely become surly if I miss my favorite drink.”

Hessische Bergstraße – Spring Meadows, Island of Wine



The 467 hectares under vine of this smallest German wine-growing region stretch mainly on the gentle slopes of the Odenwald hills along the Rhine. “This is where Germany starts to be Italy,” Joseph II proclaimed as he traveled from Frankfurt across the Bergstraße (Strata Montana) as the newly crowned Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire of German Nations in April 1766. Spring does indeed arrive here earlier than anywhere else in Germany. Figs and almonds, forsythia and magnolias all thrive at the Bergstraße just as well as vines. On a clear day you can see as far as the Pfälzer Wald (Palatinate Forest). This was certainly among the reasons why so many castles were constructed along the Bergstraße.

MOST TOWNS AND VILLAGES IN THIS AREA HAVE HISTORICAL CENTERS WITH PICTURESQUE FLAIR.

Add to this the partly terraced vineyards – this region is beautiful throughout the year, not just when the fruit trees are in bloom! The soils of the Hessische Bergstraße are characteristically dry, with shifting sands that warm easily and are low in nutrients as well as deep, fine-grained loess known for storing water well.

Riesling is the “King of the Bergstraße.” It makes up just under half of the vines planted here and thrives especially well on the Bergstraße because of the long growing seasons. The remaining 59 percent of vineyards

Almond blossoms along the Hessische Bergstraße





Heppenheim Stemmeler

Among wine fans, the Odenwald forest is known for its unusual “island.” This is of course not a real island, but rather a small winegrowing region called the Odenwald Wine Island that sits slightly separated from the rest of the Hessische Bergstraße. Its 62 hectares are located around the town of Groß-Umstadt, west of Darmstadt and relatively close to the Hessian metropolis of Frankfurt am Main. That city actually has its own vineyard, the Lohberg, but it is classified as part of the Rheingau region. Furthermore, Frankfurters are famously partial to a different kind of wine – “Ebbelwoi,” which is made from apples.

Vineyard area:

approx. 470 ha, 79% white wine

Most important grape varieties:

Riesling, Grauburgunder, Spätburgunder

Further information:

www.bergstraesser-wein.de



LANDMARK
of Wine Culture

- “Wine and Stone” adventure trail at Heppenheim
- Lorsch Monastery and the history of viticulture



in this region share different varieties, such as Müller-Thurgau, Gewürztraminer and the rare yellow Orleans. In recent years red grapes have also seen an increasing share of vineyard space. These include Pinot Noir, Pinot Madeleine and Saint Laurent.

The Romans were probably the first winegrowers in the region, having noted its mild climate. The Bergstraße was an important trade route, and they called it “Via Strata Montana.” The Geo-Naturpark Bergstraße-Odenwald is one of the 77 regions worldwide which have been admitted into the UNESCO Global Network of Geoparks. 500 million years of the history of the earth are visible on 2,230 square kilometers between Rhine, Main and Neckar. The Hessische Bergstraße with its location between the Upper Rhine Plain and the crystalline Odenwald is an important part of the Geopark.

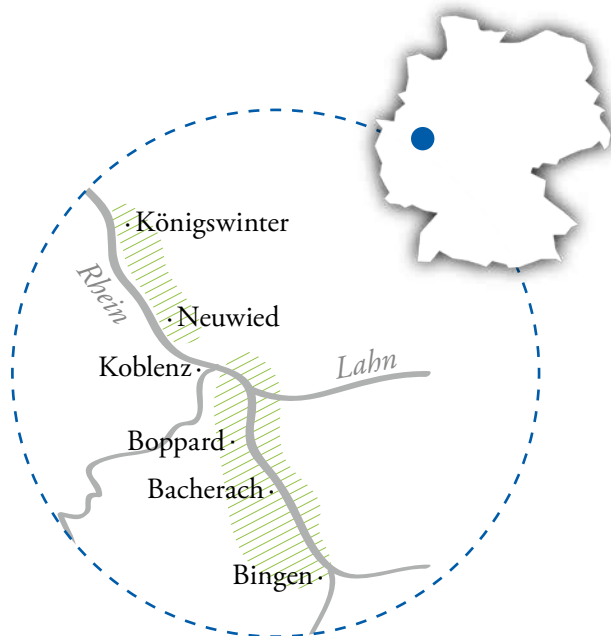
Scenic view of Heppenheim





Scenic view of Burg Gutenfels in Kaub

Mittelrhein – Loreley loves Riesling



Romantic hotel in Bacharach

Vineyard area:

approx. 470 ha, 85% white wine

Most important grape varieties:

Riesling, Spätburgunder, Müller-Thurgau

Further information:

www.mittelrhein-wein.com



- Boppard Hamm: the wine loop on the Rhine
- Bacharach: Heart of the Romantic Rhine

The Romantic Rhine has long played a prominent role in the imaginations of foreign tourists. Back in the 19th century, Victor Hugo and Mark Twain each raved about the spectacular scenery, while William Turner found inspiration for his many paintings. Unlike most Germans, it's not hard to find tourists from Japan or Korea who can sing the opening lines to Heinrich Heine's Loreley song by heart: "Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten..." For wine connoisseurs, the Mittelrhein starts and ends with Riesling. The cultivated area of the Mittelrhein measures 470 hectares, stretching along 110 kilometers of the Rhine from Bingen to the Siebengebirge at the gates of the former federal capital Bonn.

Anyone who has ever traveled along this route by train, ship or car will remember many medieval castles, picturesque towns... and omnipresent vineyards.

THIS ROMANTIC ROUTE BETWEEN BINGEN AND KOBLENZ WAS DECLARED A UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITE IN 2002!



Scenic view over the Pfalzgrafenstein

Drinking the wines may be romantic but producing them is certainly not. Most vineyards here are located on steep slopes that challenge winegrowers to the utmost. But the wines from the Mittelrhein region are worth the effort: the predominant slate soils yield hearty, mineral-rich wines with lively acidity.

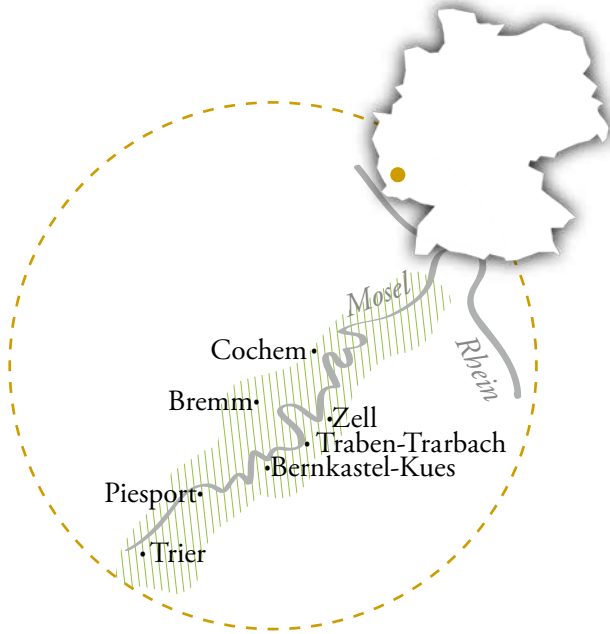
Mild breezes are frequent here, although the Hunsrück keeps the coldest flows away. As elsewhere, south-facing slopes are essential for producing top wines. These are found from the bend in the Rhine near Boppard to the Loreley primarily on the right bank of the Rhine; to the north of that stretch up to Rhens on both banks, and to the south of it down to Trechtingshausen especially on the left bank and in its side valleys. More than 300 hectares of the region's vineyards are planted with Riesling. Pinot Noir, Müller-Thurgau, Blauer Portugieser and Kerner from the Mittelrhein are typically enjoyed locally and therefore rarely find their way past its borders.

The impressive castles were once built as defensive structures or customs stations but lost this significance from the 15th century when firearms were invented. Many castles were abandoned. The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) and the War of the Palatinate Succession (1688-1692) caused a lot of destruction – the glory of the magnificent fortresses of the Mittelrhein seemed to be over. But many of the thick walls survived the centuries, were restored from public and/or private funds and are today a symbol of the Romantic Rhine – together with the vineyards, of course!



The town of Bacharach has several distinctive steep slopes. According to an old saying the best wines are grown in Bacharach, and Pope Pius II had a barrel of Bacharach wine delivered to Rome every year. But there is also a very flat vineyard. It is situated on a 680 by 150 meter island in the Rhine and is called "Heyles'en Werth" after its former owner Hans Heyles. Today the island is cultivated by a winemaking family from Bacharach. Unlike their vintner colleagues with steep slopes, they need muscular arms to go along with strong legs... as the island can only be reached by rowboat!

Mosel – Romans, Riesling and Steep Slate Slopes



The Mosel is second perhaps only to Father Rhine when it comes to most famous German wine rivers. Known as ‘La Moselle’ as it wends through France and ‘Musel’ for its stretch through Luxembourg, the magnificently meandering river becomes the ‘Mosel’ at Perl, from whence it travels 250 kilometers across German soil to meet the Rhine at Koblenz. This is the oldest German winegrowing region, with odes in its honor composed by the Roman poet Ausonius, and it covers a total of almost 8,800 hectares of vineyards, with viticulturally notable tributaries Saar and Ruwer. The wind along the Mosel comes mainly from the southwest. River and soil both store warmth during the day and release it at night. The steep rocky slopes along the Mosel mean the sun’s rays hit the ground almost vertically, especially at the Bremmer Calmont, the steepest vineyard in Europe. This gives rise to a very mild microclimate that sustains life for numerous plants and animals that would otherwise perish if forced to live or grow just a few kilometers away in the Eifel or Hunsrück Mountains: the kingfisher, Apollo butterfly, green lizard, stonecrop and rustyback fern have all made a home for themselves here.

Steep vineyards in Kröv



Vineyard area:

approx. 8,800 ha, 91% white wine

Most important grape varieties:

Riesling, Müller-Thurgau, Elbling

Further information:

www.weinland-mosel.de



- Weingut Lubentiusshof in Niederfell an der Mosel
- The Roman wine presses of Piesport
- Vineyard sundials at the Mosel
- Winery of the Vereinigte Hospitien in Trier
- Traben-Trarbach
- Bremmer Calmont

ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE SHOWS THE CELTS SETTLED AT THE MOSEL.

The Romans later had a profound impact on the region, especially its viticulture. In roughly 50 BC, Julius Caesar went to war against Gaul and traveled through the Mosel Valley on his way there. In 15 BC, the Romans founded Augusta Treverorum, today's Trier, which in the 4th century would become the seat of government of the Western Roman Empire and grew into the largest town north of the Alps.

The Upper Mosel, a stretch of the river running from the border triangle of France, Germany and Luxembourg to the confluence with the Saar at Konz, features shell limestone and keuper soils —an excellent basis for the Pinot varieties and the domestic Elbling. Slate predominates from Schweich to Koblenz, where the Mosel has slowly and persistently carved a gorge into the Rhenish Massif. Many vineyard names on the Mosel end in “-lay,” indicating that the vines are planted on slate. There is solid history behind this; the ancient Celtic term for slate, “ley,” has survived the ages in this way.

The river is known for its spectacular, often terraced slopes on both right and left banks as well as its many curves and turns. Riesling thrives especially well in the slate soils of the Middle Mosel and Lower Mosel, where it is forced to dig deep to find the minerals and nutrition it needs in this barren substrate. Mineral elegance, an almost playful finesse and an often delicate residual sweetness characterize Mosel Riesling.



The most expensive sale of a vineyard to date took place in 1900, when the mayor of Bernkastel sold 4,300 square meters of the vineyard named “Doctor” to a certain Carl Wegeler – for 100 gold marks per vine. In today's money that would be about 600 to 700 Euro per vine. The investment has proven its worth over the long term, as the vineyard is now one of the most famous in the world and the finest in the region. Its peculiar name derives from the fact that in 1630 Archbishop Bohemund of Trier took ill but unexpectedly recovered after a few sips of wine. In gratitude he awarded the title of Doctor to the vineyard.

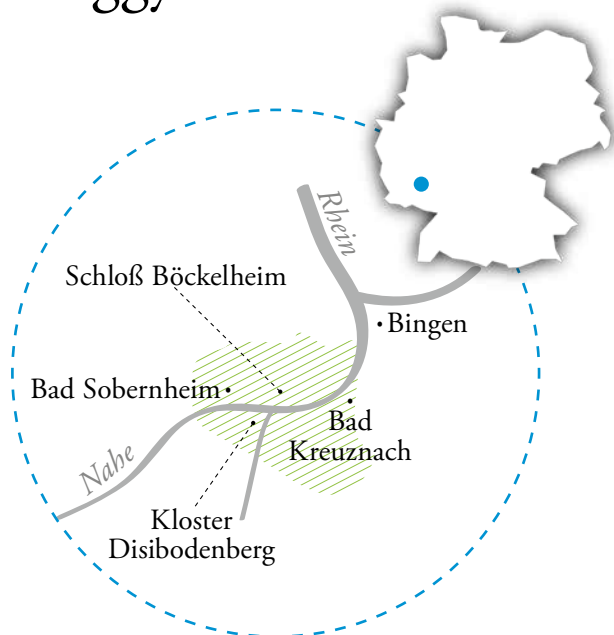


*Bow in the Mosel at Bremm
(Bremmer Calmont)*



Vineyards on the Rotenfels

Nahe – Slow River, Craggy Cliffs



Precious stones are small, but brilliant. This description also fits the nearly 4,200 hectares of the Nahe region, which is sometimes called a “treasure chest” in its own right. Many excellent wines from varieties such as Riesling, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Kerner, Müller-Thurgau and others can be found here. Quite a few Nahe vintners rate among Germany’s top producers.

The Nahe River arises near Nohfelden-Selbach in the Saarland and flows into the Rhine near Bingen. The sixty kilometers of river starting at the river mouth are part of the growing region. This includes the valleys of the tributaries Alsenz and Glan.

The Hunsrück shelters this quiet, idyllic area from rain. The sun shines for approximately 1,750 hours per year. The temperature of the steep cliffs can reach up to 60 degrees Celsius in the summer – the vines don’t mind, as they enjoy having warm feet during the growth period!

NO OTHER REGION OFFERS SO MANY DIFFERENT TYPES OF SOIL IN SUCH A SMALL SPACE.

The Nahe area is located at the intersection of the Rhenish Massif, the Mainz Basin and the hilly landscape of the Saar. Volcanic rock, slate, red slate, quartzite, clay, loess, red sandstone and basalt can be found here, to name but a few. It is a versatile testing ground for vintners and a veritable playground for wine connoisseurs. Riesling is grown on about 27 percent of the growing area. Among

Klostermühle in Odernheim



Like almost every German winegrowing region, the Nahe has its own wine route. The Nahe vintners have put their own local twist on it by collaborating with the German Gemstone Route. The pairing is logical; the gemstone capital of Germany, Idar-Oberstein, is close by. Each year a new special decorative bottle is designed. Each of these “Edelschliff” (‘noble cut’) bottles is furnished with a precious stone on the outside— sodalite in 2018 — and a liquid gem on the inside: a limited edition wine from the Nahe!

the red varieties Dornfelder and Portugieser dominate the field, but Pinot Noir is also grown here. It is truly a remarkable cross-section of German wine.

Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) lived and worked on the Disibodenberg at the Nahe. Her holistic approach to medicine, still considered relevant today, assigned a very important role to wine. In 2010, the Disibodenberg was honoured by the German Wine Institute as a “Landmark of Wine Culture.” As viticulture on the Disibodenberg dates back to at least the 11th century, the oldest vines in Germany are located here.

Open Air Museum in Bad Sobernheim



Wines from the Nahe were once referred to as “Rhine wine.” The character of Nahe Riesling is indeed reminiscent of wines from the Rhine and the Mosel, yet it also has its own distinctive “Nahe touch.” The Nahe was defined as an independent winegrowing region by the revised Wine Law of 1971.

Vineyard area:

approx. 4,200 ha, 75% white wine

Most important grape varieties:

Riesling, Müller-Thurgau, Dornfelder

Further information:

www.weinland-nahe.de

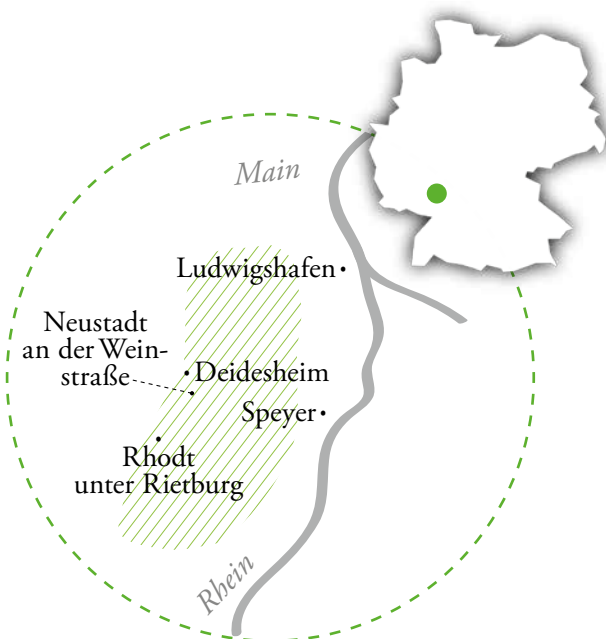


HÖHEPUNKT
der Weinkultur

- Monastery ruins of Disibodenberg
- Schlossböckelheimer Kupfergrube
- Open-Air Museum Bad Sobernheim

*Rhodt unter Rietburg*

Pfalz – Unforgettable Discoveries on the German Wine Road



The beautiful Pfalz, marked by a gentle climate, is bounded on all sides by nature and wine. The largest contiguous forest area in Germany, the Pfälzerwald (Palatinate Forest), stands to the west, while Rheinhessen lies to the north, Baden across the Rhine River to the east and Alsace to the south. Vines grow in the southeast of this region in the foothills of the Pfälzerwald. Many vines, in fact: 23,500 hectares of vineyards here make the Pfalz the second largest wine growing region in Germany. There are 144 winegrowing communities in the region, most bordering the Deutsche Weinstraße (German Wine Road). Opened in 1935, it is the oldest German wine tourism route and stretches roughly 85 kilometers from Bockenheim in the north to Schweigen on the French border, terminating at the German Wine Gate.

The weather is often lovely here, and from higher elevations you can enjoy the beautiful views across the Rhine plains to the imperial cathedral in Speyer or to Heidelberg on the other side of the Rhine. The climate on the Weinstraße is almost Mediterranean and is hospitable to almonds, figs, lemons and olives. Each spring, almond blossoms immerse the Weinstraße in bright pink, marking the first festivals of the year in a region rich in wine festivals.



Vineyards in Ilbesheim

The Deutsche Weinstraße passes through many classic wine villages with half-timbered houses with grapevines that span the road. Each year on the last Sunday in August, the entire German Wine Road is reserved strictly for pedestrians and cyclists, turning into an 80-kilometer-long wine festival with more than 300,000 cyclists, walkers and skaters!

RIESLING IS THE FAVORITE CHILD OF PFALZ WINEGROWERS, WHO TYPICALLY PRODUCE IT FULL-BODIED AND JUICY.

Roughly 5,800 hectares of the Pfalz are cultivated with Riesling, a volume unmatched anywhere in the world. The second most common variety is Dornfelder, known and loved here as an easy-going red. Many other grape varieties thrive here as well. Where such wines correspond to the classic Pfalz profile, especially historical regional varieties such as Weißburgunder, Grauburgunder, Spätburgunder and, of course, Riesling, they may be marketed under the label DC Pfalz, which stands for Districtus Controllatus and indicates that wine was produced for regional typicity.

The Pfalz winegrowing region can be roughly divided into two subsections: the northern part, extending roughly from Neustadt an der Weinstraße to the Zellertal near Worms, is called the Mittelhaardt. Its soils are tendentially light and highly water permeable, and so the vines here must be deep rooted. Riesling is an important variety in this sub-region. At the Südliche Weinstraße (Southern Wine Route) from Neustadt to Schweigen in the south, the vines grow on heavier clay soils. There, in addition to Riesling and red wines, very good wines are made from Pinot varieties. Statistically speaking, there are 600 vines for every inhabitant of this Südpfalz subregion!

Incidentally, the largest wine festival in the world is celebrated in the Pfalz: the Dürkheimer Wurstmarkt (Sausage Market). This festival was originally opened for pilgrims in the 15th century. Even today, sausage is plentiful at this market, as are bread and wine. The festival was officially called the “Wurstmarkt” for the first time in 1832.



Vineyard area:

approx. 23,600 ha, 65% white wine

Most important grape varieties:

Riesling, Dornfelder, Müller-Thurgau, Spätburgunder, Grauburgunder

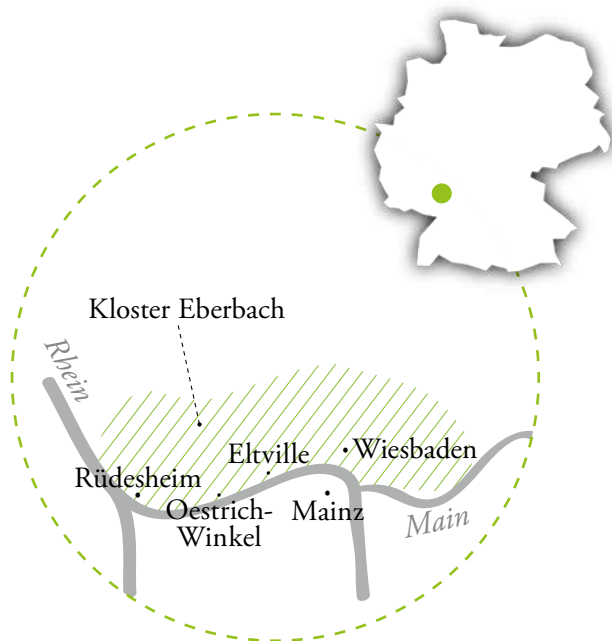
Further information:

www.pfalz.de/wein-und-genuss



- Classic modernism in Kindenheim
- The Roman vineyard in Ungstein
- Rhodt unter Rietburg
- Deidesheim: small wine village – great politics
- Wine Museum in Speyer

Rheingau – Historic Hillsides on the Rhine



The Rheingau extends from west of Frankfurt along the Rhine, which in this region twists and turns based on nature's whims. For most of its path from Alps to the sea, the Rhine flows south to north, but here near Mainz it makes a sharp bend, almost exactly at a latitude of 50 degrees north. It then flows from east to west past fabled villages such as Eltville, Oestrich-Winkel and Rüdesheim to Assmannshausen. The slopes of the Rheingau face due south, enjoying as much as 1,600 hours of sunshine per year. The Taunus Mountains to the north provide natural protection against cold winds and shield against excessive rainfall.

RIESLING IS THE UNDISPUTED KING AMONG THE GRAPE VARIETIES.

This demanding, late-ripening variety feels particularly at home here, developing a characteristic mineral touch and fresh fruit acidity. Spätburgunder, like Riesling, is counted among the noble grapes and thrives especially well around Assmannshausen. The Rheingau is a very popular tourist destination, with ancient monasteries and castles nestled idyllically amidst the wine landscape. The Rheingau Riesling Route leads through 120 kilometers of picturesque wine villages, where wine taverns and seasonal wine bars invite you to stop for a glass of Rheingau wine, in many cases directly at the winery. There are



Kloster Eberbach



Vineyards near Assmannshausen



It's not uncommon even today to hear someone in England order a glass of "Hock," meaning a German white wine from the Rhine. The term refers to Hochheim am Main, a village located in the Rheingau. The love affair between Britain and Hochheim wines probably blossomed after Queen Victoria visited the town in 1845. She deemed its wines not just delicious, but also good for the health, giving rise to the saying "a bottle of Hock keeps off the doc!" Even a century ago wines from the Rheingau were among the most expensive on wine lists throughout the world, and especially in England.

plentiful cultural and historical attractions as well, such as the Oestrich wine loading crane from 1744. It is the last remaining one of its kind on the Rhine and was once essential for loading barrels of Rheingau wines onto river ships to destinations throughout the world. Any visit to the Rheingau's highlights, including the Niederwald monument and Johannisberg Castle, are inherently also visits to historical centers of viticulture. This includes Kloster Eberbach, a former Cistercian abbey that is now one of the best-preserved medieval monastery complexes in Germany. The Johannisberg is not only famous for the castle of the same name which was created from the ruins of a monastery but also historically as the place where Spätlese (late harvest) wine has its origin.

Rheingau wineries and restaurateurs offer a range of world-class wine and culinary experiences throughout the year: the Gourmet and Wine Festival in March, the Gourmet Weeks in late April, the Rheingau Music Festival during summer and the Glorious Rheingau Days in November. The traditional wine auctions at Kloster Eberbach are also worth a visit.

Vineyard area:

approx. 3,200 ha, 86% white wine

Most important grape varieties:

Riesling, Spätburgunder

Further information:

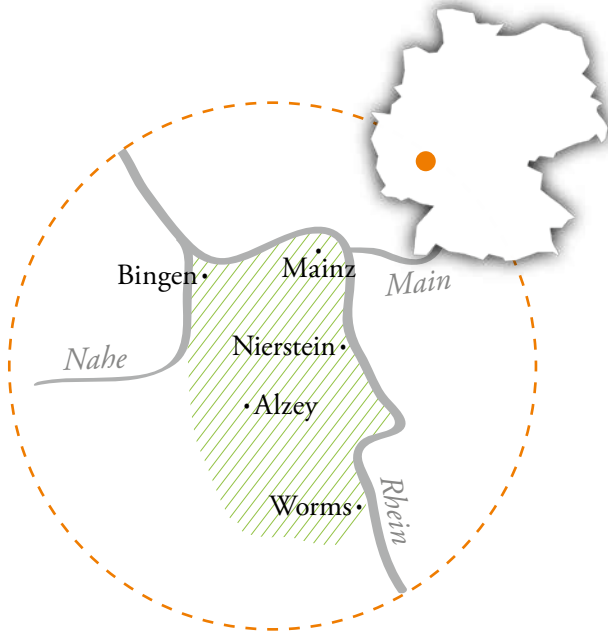
www.kulturland-rheingau.de



LANDMARK
of Wine Culture

- Kloster Eberbach
- Johannisberg Castle and the invention of Spätlese
- Oestrich-Winkel

Rheinhessen – Wine Discoveries at Every Turn



Nowhere has the revival of German wine over the past two decades been felt as strongly as in its largest German wine region, Rheinhessen. Both the quality and image of the region's wines have risen meteorically, borne in no small part by a young, well-educated generation of winegrowers willing to invest the necessary time and expertise in their vineyards and cellars to achieve outstanding quality. Their efforts have earned this 26,800-hectare wine region a reputation for being among Germany's most dynamic.

THE GENTLE COUNTRYSIDE OF RHEINHESSEN IS KNOWN AS THE "LAND OF A THOUSAND HILLS."

A green, undulating sea of vines with picturesque villages nestled amongst them lies in the triangle formed by Mainz, Worms, Alzey and Bingen. Long a stronghold for agriculture, Rheinhessen is the least wooded area in Germany.

Rheinhessen is protected from cold winds and strong rainfall by the hills of the Hunsrück, Taunus, Odenwald and Nordpfalz Bergland. The area is accordingly one of Germany's driest and warmest— a plus for growing grapes and other fruit.

Scenic view over Bechtholsheim





Mainz, the state capital of Rheinland-Pfalz, is also the capital of Rheinhessen. In 2008, the city joined an illustrious circle – the Great Wine Capitals Global Network. It is composed of ten towns from the major wine regions of the world. Besides Mainz these are Adelaide, Bilbao, Bordeaux, Lausanne, Mendoza, Porto, San Francisco, Valparaiso and Verona. The organisation's aim is to promote tourism and wine culture. The earth is a wine planet – and Germany and Rheinhessen are part of it.

The soils of Rheinhessen are primarily shaped by quartzite, porphyry, slate and volcanic rock as well as characteristic deposits from the Tertiary Period. These minerals are then complemented by a much older, geographically remarkable red slate soil that famously rises in the eastern part of the region at the “Roter Hang” (“Red Slope”) near Nierstein and in the west in a sub-region called the Rhine-Hesse Switzerland. Many different grape varieties thrive in Rheinhessen's diverse soils and microclimates, with some individual vintners harvesting and producing 30 or more different wines per year.

White varieties outnumber red by 71 to 29 percent. Silvaner is the region's traditional workhorse variety, and Rheinhessen in fact has the largest acreage of Silvaner anywhere in the globe. Riesling, Müller-Thurgau and

Pinot varieties are also grown here. Red varieties of note include Dornfelder, Pinot Noir and Portugieser. “Winzersekt,” sparkling wine produced in a traditional manner according to strict quality criteria, has grown into a top seller in the 30 years since the classification was introduced. The region is also marked by little huts known as Trulli (singular: Trullo). There are 30 – 40 of these small round vineyard huts with domed roofs dotting Rheinhessen vineyards. They are often painted brilliant white and lend their surroundings an almost Mediterranean feel. Originally intended as housing or shelters for vintners and vineyard workers, they have survived the passage of time because they are built of stone, reflecting the scarcity of wood in Rheinhessen.

Vineyard area:

approx. 26,800 ha, 71% white wine

Most important grape varieties:

Riesling, Müller-Thurgau, Dornfelder, Silvaner, Grauburgunder, Spätburgunder, Weißburgunder

Further information:

www.rheinhessen.de



- Kloster Engelthal in Wasem
- The Liebfrauenstift-Kirchenstück in Worms
- The Niersteiner Glöck
- The Kupferberg Visitors' Center in Mainz

Roter Hang, Nierstein

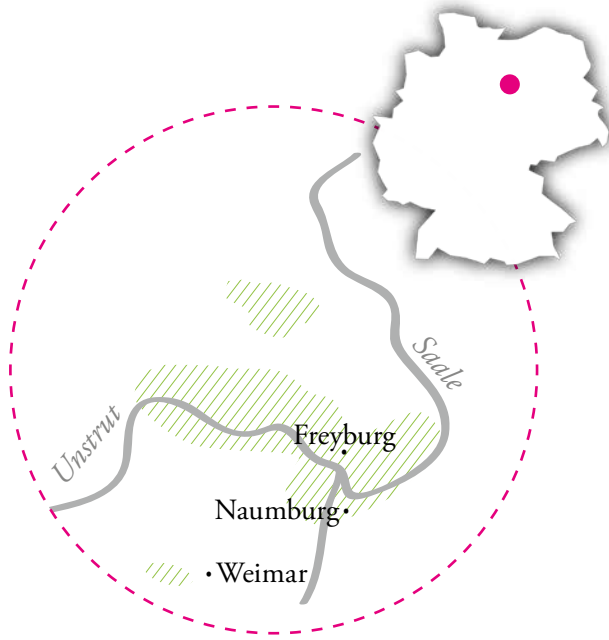




Trullo near Flonheim



Schloss Neuenburg, Freyburg

**Vineyard area:**

approx. 790 ha, 74% white wine

Most important grape varieties:

Müller-Thurgau, Weissburgunder, Riesling

Further information:

www.weinbauverband-saale-unstrut.de



LANDMARK
of Wine Culture

- Rotkäppchen sparkling wine cellars
- The vineyard huts
- The "Stone Picture Book" at Naumburg

Saale-Unstrut – Sumptuous Wines, Singular Landscapes

The vineyards of the Saale-Unstrut winegrowing region are located in southern Sachsen-Anhalt near Freyburg and Naumburg, in northern Thüringen around Bad Kösen and on roughly 790 hectares of land in Brandenburg, to the southwest of Berlin. One small exclave, the Werderaner Wachtelberg, lies just eight kilometers west of Potsdam, at a latitude of approx. 51 degrees north. Its six hectares represent the northernmost vineyard in Europe approved by the EU for the production of quality wine.

The Saale and Unstrut rivers run through an old cultural landscape characterized by steep terraces, stone walls, orchards and river meadows. Wine has been cultivated here for over a millennium.

THE BEAUTY OF THE LANDSCAPE HAS DRAWN PEOPLE SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL.

The Bronze Age Sky Disk of Nebra, unearthed in 1999, offers evidence of the age of this cultural landscape. It is considered the oldest celestial representation in the world.



*Medieval:
Naumburger
Cathedral*



Wine bar in Freyburg

The first verified mention of winegrowing on the Saale and Unstrut rivers dates back to 998 and deed documents from Emperor Otto III that cite viticulture as part of a donation. Average temperatures in this region are relatively low, and vines require protected vineyards to grow here. Vintners of yore observed heat islands in places like river valleys and used those insights to find microclimates that allow the grapes to flourish beautifully. These climatic conditions inherently lead to a natural reduction in yields, and so harvests along the Saale and Unstrut average a mere 50 hectoliters per hectare.

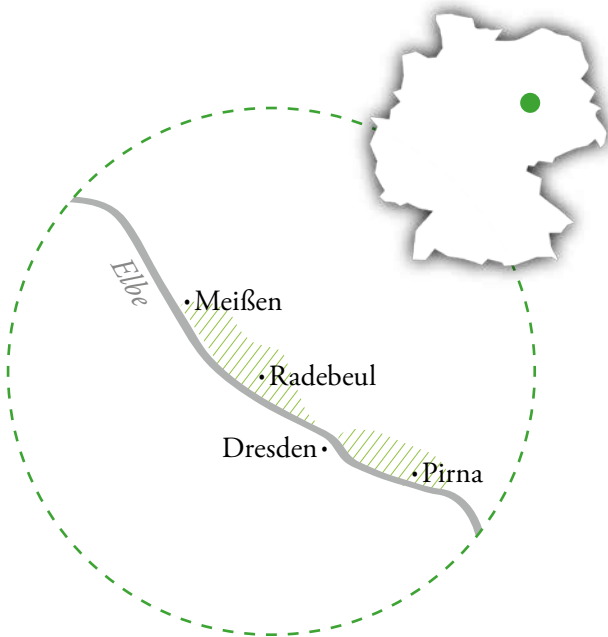
Müller-Thurgau is the most common grape variety cultivated on the Saale and Unstrut, with the relatively low yields lending the wines an enhanced finesse. The same is also true for the next two most popular varieties, Weißburgunder (Pinot Blanc) and Silvaner. Delicate and lively with fresh acidity – this describes best the character of the fine wines from the Saale, the Unstrut and the Wachtelberg. Be sure to try the wines locally, as they rarely leave the region, especially the rare red wines.



The “Romantic Road” and the “Skywalk” run along the Saale-Unstrut Wine Route. Castles and palaces such as the Neuenburg and the Rudelsburg, historical edifices like Naumburg Cathedral and mystical places such as excavation site of the Sky Disk of Nebra are all part of the cultural history of the country. Freyburg on the Unstrut is considered the region’s unofficial wine capital. It is host to the region’s largest wine festival, held every year on the second weekend in September. A wide swath of visitors come to explore this wine-growing region and its wines, vineyards, wine taverns and seasonal wine bars, taking advantage of the well-developed network of cycle paths, walking tracks and waterways. The largest part of the winegrowing region is located in the Saale-Unstrut-Triasland conservation area.

*Meißen*

Sachsen – Cool Climate Saxony, Winemaking Visionaries



The Sachsen region is located to the north and south of Dresden, roughly between Meißen and Pirna. With about 500 hectares it is one of the three smallest wine-growing regions in Germany and the most easterly. Poland is only a stone's throw away.

The continental climate, which means warm summers and cold winters, defines winegrowing in Sachsen. The alternation of mild day and cool night temperatures is very good for the vines. The Sachsen wines – mainly Müller-Thurgau, Riesling and Pinot Blanc – prove this impressively with their delicacy.

It is believed that a bishop named Benno planted the first vines near Meißen in the eleventh century. Saxon viticulture was documented in 1161, which is why Sachsen celebrated its 850th anniversary of winegrowing in 2011. While scholars may still debate the exact dates, every vintage of Sachsen wine is worth celebrating!



Vineyard chapel, Dresden-Pillnitz

THE BLUE RIBBON OF THE ELBE RUNS THROUGH A LOVELY LANDSCAPE DOMINATED BY VINEYARD TERRACES AND HISTORIC VILLAGES.

Dresden, a city long noted for its urban beauty, sits like a gemstone at the center of this winegrowing region. The landscape is marked with dry stone walls that are not only picturesque but also important for the region's flora and fauna. They help bound the steep slopes and form the region's characteristic terraces, while also offering a habitat to rare plants and animals.

White grape varieties predominate in Sachsen, outnumbering red varieties by 82 to 18 percent. Less than one percent of all German wines come from Sachsen, and Sachsen wines are rarely found outside their home market. All the more reason to visit and enjoy the wines locally!

One native specialty merits special mention: Goldriesling, which is cultivated on just 27 hectares of vineyard. Goldriesling is light and fresh, typically drunk young and brings a delicate spicy note. Pastor Sebastian Kneipp, an early evangelist of healthy living, recommended this wine to accompany his health treatments in the 19th century. Another good reason to try it!

Vineyard area:

500 ha, 82% white wine

Most important grape varieties:

Müller-Thurgau, Riesling, Weissburgunder, Grauburgunder

Further information:

www.weinbauverband-sachsen.de



- Schloss Wackerbarth
- Hoflößnitz and the club-shaped bottle



Schloss Wackerbarth



Hoflößnitz

The Franconians have their famous Bocksbeutel bottle, while the Saxons have the club-shaped Keule. It resembles a bowling pin and was invented in 1931 at the Viticultural Research and Teaching Institute of Hoflößnitz, near Dresden. With a museum, wine bar and vineyard, Hoflößnitz remains a fascinating center of Saxon wine culture.

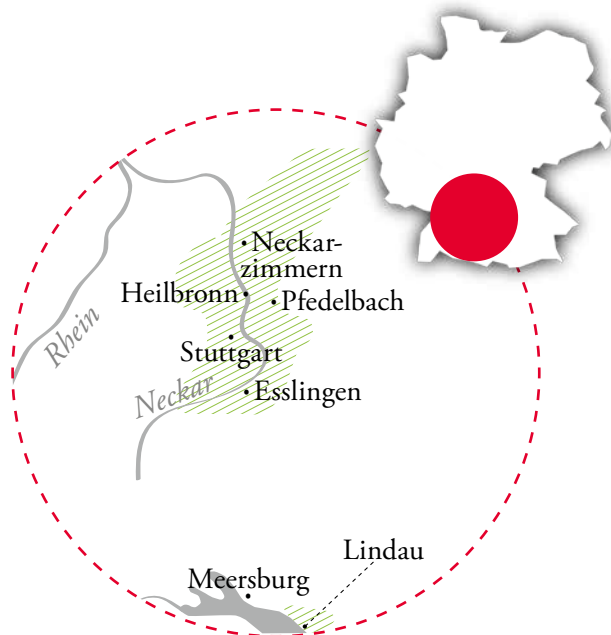


Württemberg – Cultured Hills of Reds and Whites

The federal state of Baden-Württemberg is home to two different winegrowing regions, Baden and Württemberg. Each has its own highly distinctive character.

With around 11,500 hectares under vine, Württemberg is the fourth-largest German winegrowing region. With 68 percent of all plantings, red grapes are the dominant force here. First and foremost comes amicable Trollinger, but other favorites of Württemberg vintners include Pinot Meunier (Schwarzriesling), Lemberger and Pinot Noir (Spätburgunder). Riesling is grown on roughly 2,000 hectares, making it the most important white wine variety in Württemberg.

The winegrowing area of Württemberg is located on the Neckar River and on its tributaries Rems, Enz, Tauber, Kocher and Jagst. There is also a Württemberg wine enclave on the Bavarian banks of Lake Constance near Lindau.



Vineyard area:

approx. 11,500 ha, 68% red wine

Most important grape varieties:

Trollinger, Riesling, Lemberger, Schwarzriesling, Spätburgunder

Further information:

www.wwg.de



LANDMARK
of Wine Culture

- Winzerhof Gierer in Nonnenhorn
- Weingut Wilhelm Kern in the Remstal
- Sparkling wine manufacturer Kessler in Esslingen
- Hornberg castle in Neckarzimmern
- Pfedelbach and the barrel of the prince





Steep vineyards of Lauffen

Romantic timbered buildings in Niederhall

THE HILLY LANDSCAPE ALONG WÜRTTEMBERG'S RIVERS BEARS WITNESS TO ITS GEOLOGICAL HISTORY.

Many of the hills here have a distinct cone shape, an indication that they are of volcanic origin. The town of Weinsberg is just five kilometers east of Heilbronn and is home to the prestigious State Education and Research Institute for Viticulture and Pomology. It has served as the incubator for important grape varieties such as Kerner and Dornfelder.

Wine was long considered a “staple food” in Württemberg, not unlike beer in Bavaria. Up through the First World War the smallest measure of wine available in a pub was a half-liter “Schoppen.” Most wine produced in Württemberg is consumed locally, frequently in cozy countryside wine taverns known as Besenwirtschaften. These are run by the winemakers themselves and only open during the summer season.

Wine cooperatives have a long and strong history in Württemberg. Many vintners, or vine dressers as they are called here in Württemberg, are part-time winegrowers who deliver their grapes to cooperatives. Of course, there are also many independent wineries in the region that market their wines themselves.

One local specialty is called Schillerwein. Unlike other rosé wines, Schillerwein is made from a mixture of red and white grapes mixed together prior to fermentation. The term “Schillerwein” is not related to the great Württemberg poet Friedrich Schiller, but rather has its origins in the Middle Ages.

Sommeliers, wine connoisseurs and residents of regions where wine is grown know that every style of wine has its own traditional glass. Even so, Württemberg's favorite vessel for wine drinking stands out: a glass mug. Found primarily in traditional wine taverns, it is Germany's only classic wine glass without a stem — but does have a convenient handle on its side. Württembergers drink more wine per capita than residents of all the other regions in Germany.

*Storage racks at Sekthaus Keller*

The Biography of Wine



Wine and people have something in common: their biography shapes them as individuals. Grape variety and geographic origin – the soil and climate for the vineyard in which they grow – are certainly important factors, but so too is the work the winemaker performs in the cellar. If we accept, as most connoisseurs do, that wine is alive, then we can also discuss the stages of its life in almost human terms: childhood in the vineyard is followed by a youth spent in the cellar. Grown up, the wine is bottled and moves out, to live with the consumer; in some happy cases, the wine is even given time and space to mature in a cellar and become a senior. It is a tale quickly told, but the details of each stage merit more attention.

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE VINEYARD

Every gardener knows that some plants need sun while others prefer shade. Different grape varieties thrive in a diverse range of settings as well. In Germany, one of the northernmost winegrowing countries in the world, river valleys have proven near-ideal locations for viticulture. Why? When steep river banks face south or southwest, the sun hits the ground at an optimal angle. The water reflects the sun's rays onto the vines from below, while the water itself also balances out temperature fluctuations. In places where slate rock is exposed, such as on the Mosel, the rocks also store the heat of the day. By releasing this heat back out into the cool autumn nights, the fruit gains extra time to hang on the vine and develop the fruity aromas that are so beguiling in the finished wines.

GROWTH HAS TO BE TRAINED

Grapevines originated as forest plants that climbed up trees. Even today, vines benefit from assistance in the form of wire trellises or even just individual stakes. Each grapevine sprouts anew every year. Counterintuitively, the winegrower actually snips away most of the shoots, leaving only one or two to actually produce grapes. This is because the quality of the wine strongly reflects how many grapes a vine must nourish. In general, fewer is better – allowing the plant to concentrate its resources on the few grape clusters remaining. Depending on the type of training, each vine typically supplies one to two kilograms of grapes. Vintners typically refer to “yields,” quoted in hectoliters per hectare, as a shorthand view into this important variable in the biography of wine. Many quality-conscious winegrowers work actively to keep yields low, by thinning out surplus grapes or splitting them in the middle before they reach maturity.

A VINEYARD NEEDS TO BE CULTIVATED

Keeping grapes healthy involves a tremendous amount of work. Some vintners plant grass or other plants in-between the rows of vines to prevent erosion and to supply natural fertilizers. Vineyards are by nature a monoculture, leaving them susceptible to pests and diseases. A variety of active maintenance measures are necessary. Pheromone treatments are often used to keep pests at bay. The leaves on the vines themselves are trimmed back to promote better air circulation and increase sun penetration, crucial to helping the grapes to dry faster after rain. Even in winter there is much to do in the vineyards, as the canes must be pruned after harvest to encourage the vine to form new shoots in spring.

HARVEST TIME AT LAST

Roughly 100 days must pass from flowering in May or June until harvest in September or October. Ideally, this ripening period will occur in weather that is neither too hot nor too cold, and neither too wet nor too dry. It is a delicate time when sugar, acid and many other elements are developing within the ripening grapes. Harvest should come when the sugar and acid reach an optimal ratio. Finding that moment is as much an art as a science. Experienced vintners taste a few grapes each day and measure the volume of sugar in the must with a refractometer in an effort to capture the proper moment. Much can ride on a few simple decisions: can the winegrower risk waiting another day or two? The sugar content in the grape also determines the final quality classification for the wine.

The harvest holds a mythic spot in the mind of every wine lover. There are many cherished images of harvest workers traversing the steep slopes, picking the grapes by hand and carrying them from the vineyard in baskets borne by strong backs. Some modern vineyards use harvesting machines on flatter sites to shake the ripe grapes from the vines as gently as possible. Either way, time is of the essence as the grapes make their way to the cellar! There the berries are separated from the stems and then pressed. This destemming is crucial to preventing bitter substances in the stems from getting into the wine.

THE SKIN DETERMINES THE COLOR

Why do “white” grapes result in white wine and “red” grapes (mostly) in red wine? Actually, the white wine grapes look green and the red wine grapes look blue. While the pure juice from most grapes is colorless, the skins of the berries contain pigments, especially the blue grapes. In order to get the red color into the wine, the vintner leaves the juice to stand for a while with the solid components of the grapes, known as the mash. Fermentation eventually sets in and the pigments are extracted from the grape skins by the alcohol that is produced. This can take up to several weeks, after which the mash is pressed and the red wine is stored in barrels for further aging. Separating the must from the mash after only a few hours produces a rosé wine. White grapes by contrast are pressed immediately and separated from the mash. If you apply this same method to red grapes, you end up with a light-colored wine known as a “Blanc de Noir” (“White from Black”).

What is a barrique? It is a small (225 liter) traditional barrel, usually made of oak. Originally used in France, it promotes the development of richer flavors and structures, especially in red wines. Wines aged in barrique often gain toasted or spicy notes. Recent decades have seen German wineries maturing both red and white wines in barrique, often to outstanding results. Other wines are typically aged in stainless steel tanks or in traditional large oak barrels. These wines show little to no wood character.

Some countries have a long tradition of grand celebrations of each vintage's young wines as soon as they have finished fermentation. Many growing areas in Germany take a different approach by releasing the wines before fermentation is even complete. Known variably as Federweißer, Roter Rauscher, Sauser, Brauser or Bitzler, depending on the region, this cloudy, still fermenting must is lively and sparkling with roughly five percent alcohol by volume and plenty

of natural sugar. The bottles must be sealed in a way that still allows the carbon dioxide to escape. A glass of sweet and deliciously fizzy Federweißer goes famously well with warm onion tart! The young wines are sold direct from wineries as well as in many supermarkets and wine festival stands. The Federal State of Rheinland-Pfalz, already the nation's leader in wine production, typically sees more than two million liters of fermenting wine consumed each year!

FERMEN- TATION

The time for fermentation has arrived. Yeasts convert the natural sugar in the grape must into alcohol, triggering a bubbling process as heat and carbon dioxide are released as byproducts! Slow and gentle fermentation at low temperatures are essential in order to preserve the fresh and fruity aromas. As a result, most modern fermentation tanks are outfitted with a temperature control system. While many yeasts occur naturally, they are also unpredictable and can produce undesirable flavor substances. To better control the fermentation process, many winemakers add selected strains of cultivated yeast. Other producers take the opposite approach, embracing the risks and rewards associated with naturally occurring vineyard yeasts. While this process, known as 'spontaneous fermentation,' offers less control, it can also produce wines of great character.

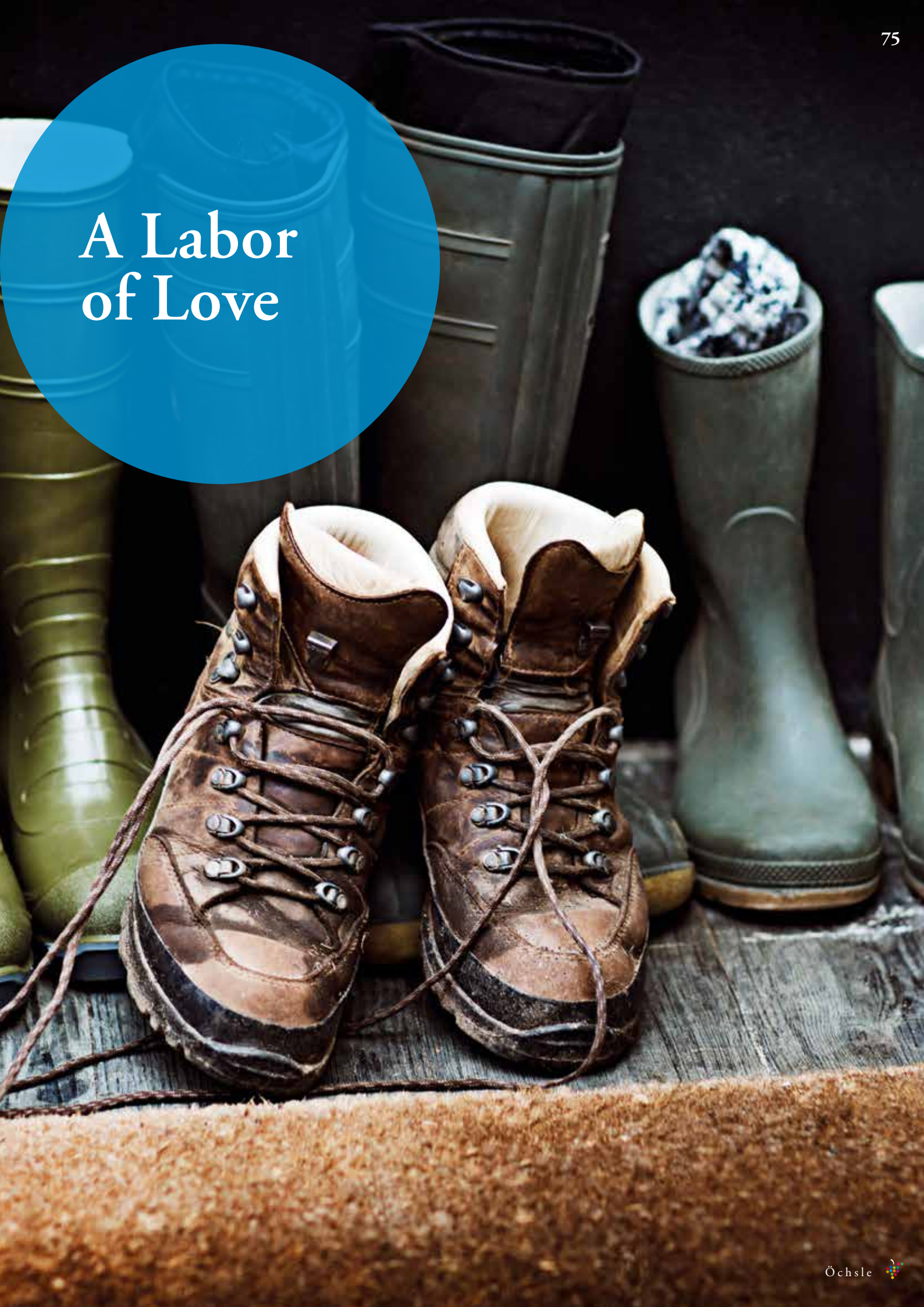
THE YOUTH IN THE CELLAR

Fermentation marks the start of the wine's 'youthful' age. Winemakers often leave their white wines sitting on the spent yeast cells, known as the lees, for an extended period to promote a creamier, more complex taste. Afterward the lees are separated out and the wine is given more time to develop. Some wines, particularly reds, are filled into small new oak barrels (barriques), which over time impart additional structure and desirable flavors. While some wines are offered for sale just a few weeks after harvest, others may spend many months or even years in the winemaker's cellar. The taste profiles can range from young, fresh and fruity to complex, deep and fully matured!

BOTTLING AND SEALING

Bottling is the moment when a wine enters into the world as a young adult. The vintner's active work is now done! But even in the bottle, the wine itself is still developing and undergoing processes that alter its taste. The primary factor here is oxidation, caused by interaction with oxygen. To minimize this, bottles should be sealed as airtight as possible. In some cases, though, a little oxygen can enhance complexity, especially for red wines! Natural cork has long been considered the ideal closure, as it guarantees a tight seal yet leaves a certain degree of permeability. A number of alternative closures have also emerged, including screw caps and glass stoppers that promise to keep the bottle absolutely airtight. The maturation of a wine is an exciting thing, and there are few pleasures quite as rich as savoring a decades-old wine that has aged elegantly. But make no mistake: young wines with their fresh character and bright fruit aromas have plenty of admirers as well.

A Labor of Love



There's an old saying among winegrowers that "quality is grown in the vineyard." Every winemaker is painfully aware that you can indeed ruin a good wine in the cellar but you can never really improve a bad harvest. Each vintage comes only once, and nature grants no second chances. Luck is instead made through hard work throughout the year, indoors and out.



DECEMBER – FEBRUARY

While the freshly-picked grapes are fermenting and maturing in the cellar calm prevails in the vineyard. A few berries might still be on the vines waiting for the first frost to be harvested for ice wine. The vines have finished their growth cycle, and they mostly do not mind the frosts. In January, depending on the weather, the vintner starts to prune the vines: the old shoots are cut off. Proper pruning will determine how the vines will sprout and how much they will yield. This work in the vineyard can take several weeks.



MARCH – JUNE

The canes from which the new shoots will grow are bent and attached to the wire frame. For this it has to be warm enough. In April, budding starts and the vines grow their first leaves. The vintner works the soil and sows the green covering plants between the rows of vines. In May, the shoots grow. Now night frosts are dangerous as they pose a risk of freezing to death! The formation of flowers starts, the so-called vine blossom. Botanically the inflorescence has the shape of panicle with many small blossoms. First steps for plant protection may now be necessary. Redundant shoots are removed. Most of the vines bloom in mid-June, in these times of global warming sometimes even earlier. Unfavourable, wet weather during flowering leads to inadequate fertilisation (coulure) which means not all the grapes of the bunch will mature. The flower itself is not very noticeable. Depending on the vintage the time elapsed from bloom to harvest is 100 to 120 days.



JULY – SEPTEMBER

Leaf pruning is now required to ensure that the canopy fosters a peak supply of nutrients. Too much foliage hinders air circulation in the vine rows and prevents the sunshine from reaching the grapes, which they need to ripen. Unnecessary lateral shoots are also removed. Warm and humid weather often brings the risk of fungal diseases. Vines are fast growing plants that can grow as much as three meters per year!

Ripening of the red grapes is heralded by a change in color. Surplus grapes are thinned out (known as a “green harvest”) to improve overall quality; the remaining grapes then benefit from the full strength of the vine. Harvest begins on early-maturing varieties by late August, often for use in preparation of the vintage’s first Federweißer (see page 74).

The grapes achieve peak ripeness in September. The wine-grower tracks the ripening process closely, seeking to achieve the optimal ratio of sweetness and acidity (physiological maturity). The main harvest usually starts with Müller-Thurgau in mid to late September. But humans are not the only ones who appreciate the taste of fresh grapes. Hungry birds must be kept at bay as well.



OCTOBER – NOVEMBER

October is harvest month, especially for Riesling and Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir)! The leaves on the vines change color to yellow or red. Both cellar and vineyards are intense hubs of labor. Good quality relies on the grapes being harvested perfectly ripe, healthy and dry, so all involved pray for the proverbial sunny and dry “golden” October. In some years, bad weather dictates that the harvest must take place very quickly. Diseased or rotten berries are often cut or picked from the bunch by hand. It is not unusual for a harvest to be conducted in multiple phases. While flat vineyards can be harvested by machine, grapes on hilly and steep slopes can only be picked by hand.



Global warming is not without influence on the wine. The average temperature during the growing season has increased, in the Rheingau, for example, by about one degree Celsius during the last 20 years. To date German wine-growers are still on the winning side of climate change. The years in which they had to fear for the full matu-

rity of the grapes – as was still the case up to the nineteen eighties – are over. They can now wait for the optimal harvest date. Red wines in particular have benefited from the warmer temperatures. The risk that the white wines get too rich in alcohol and lose their characteristic hot-blooded fruitiness can be met by a modified vine training

system. But there are also negative consequences of global warming, such as the increased migration of previously unknown pests from warmer regions (e.g. cicadas) and the increase in extreme weather events like torrential rain, heavy hail and pronounced dry or wet periods.

Organic wine

Strictly speaking, organic wine is made solely from organically cultivated grapes. To qualify for organic certification, winegrowers are required to follow strict regulations when working in the vineyard. This includes a ban on mineral fertilizers and many pesticides. Only agents specifically certified for organic viticulture are permitted. The impact of organic growing reaches beyond just the individual winegrowing estates. As organic methods have proven effective, they have been embraced by the mainstream. The planting of green cover crops between rows of vines is a good example. While once fairly rare, it is now common to see it practiced even at many conventional estates. The conversion from conventional to organic farming takes three years. Roughly 5,000 hectares, representing nearly five percent of German vineyards, are currently certified for organic farming, and that number is steadily growing!

The largest association of organic winegrowers, Ecovin, was founded in 1985 and now has over 230 members farming roughly 2,400 hectares. Other important associations have formed as well, including Demeter, Naturland and Bioland. Biodynamic cultivation is a special form of organic viticulture, drawing on the theories of Rudolf Steiner, the founder of the Waldorf educational system and a champion of anthroposophy. It calls for special preparations to be added to the soil to boost its strength and encourages close observance of the celestial influences of the planets and moon.

As modern science has shown that healthy soil life makes vines more resistant and wines more complex, even conventionally operated vineyards now try to limit their use of synthetic agents to the greatest degree possible. Where pesticides were once common against the dreaded Grapevine Moth (*Lobesia botrana*), the majority of winegrowers now deploy environmentally friendly pheromone traps to fight the pest. It confuses the males by simulating an overabundance of females, ultimately preventing them from reproducing.

Disease-resistant grape varieties are another popular point of experimentation. These hybrids have been bred to be less susceptible to certain diseases, therefore making pesticide treatment unnecessary. The resistant varieties are especially interesting for organic winegrowers. The most successful of these new hybrids is a red variety called Regent, which today is cultivated on more than 2,000 hectares. But wine connoisseurs often want to know the answer to the real question: Do organic wines taste better than others? The Ecovin association has responded: "In general, Ecovin wines do not taste any different from wines of the same quality from conventional cultivation." They do however meet the demand for a product that has been made in harmony with nature as much as possible.

Springtime reawakening in the vineyard



The Label

Deciphering What's Inside

trocken halbtrocken lieblich süß
 Winzer Weingut Genossenschaft Kellerei
 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015
Classic Erstes und großes Gewächs Landwein Deutscher Wein
 Kabinett Spätlese Beerenauslese Trockenbeerenauslese
 & rel. Auslese

The required labels, front and back, are more than just marketing. They tell you what is in the bottle. Because wine labels contain essential consumer information, lawmakers have clearly defined what must, may and may not appear on the label and in what form. The goal is to promote clarity and prevent consumers from being misled.

MANDATORY INFORMATION

A certain core of information must appear on every label in all European wine-growing countries. This data includes the quality category (for example, *Deutscher Wein*, *Landwein*, *Qualitätswein* or *Prädikatswein*) and, where applicable, the predicate level (*Kabinett*, *Spätlese*, etc.), the alcohol content (in % vol.) and the nominal volume.

The labels for *Qualitätswein* and *Prädikatswein* must cite their official quality control test number. If such wines or their sparkling cousins come from a specific winegrowing region of origin, then this must also be stated. For *Landwein*, the name of the relevant *Landwein* region must be displayed. Furthermore, the bottler must be indicated and, since 2006, the presence of sulfites in the wine must be noted on the label.

QUALITÄTSWEIN

The *Qualitätswein* ('Quality Wine') designation is reserved for wines from one of Germany's 13 specified winegrowing regions of origin that satisfy a rigorous set of quality parameters. Each *Qualitätswein* must undergo an analytical and sensory evaluation, with its official quality control test number clearly stated on the label. Its grapes must also be sourced 100 percent from the specified region. The most common category is *Qualitätswein bestimmter Anbauregion* ('Quality Wine from a Specific Winegrowing Region'), typically abbreviated as 'QbA.' Certification as QbA involves extra specifications in terms of minimum must weight (see page 82) and the related minimum potential alcohol content.

Testing for 'Qualitätswein' is conducted in each region by an officially appointed independent testing commission. The wines are judged by experts in a blind sensory examination. They must be flawless and typical for the variety and area, and the official quality control test number is assigned only to wines that achieve a certain score and which successfully pass a chemical analysis. This serves as a crucial guarantor that the quality is actually in the glass, not just in the reputation of a particular vineyard site or producer.

PRÄDIKATSWEIN

Prädikat means ‘rating,’ and this category is reserved for wines that satisfy even more stringent requirements than for Qualitätswein and thus qualify for one of six ripeness categories. It is often mentioned in connection with a grape variety, such as “Riesling Spätlese” or “Müller-Thurgau Kabinett”. In ascending order of ripeness at the time of harvest, the classifications are:

KABINETT

Light and elegant wine with a low alcohol content

SPÄTLESE

Elegant and powerful wine with pronounced fruit aromas

AUSLESE

Mostly sweet, delicately fruity wines made from fully ripe grapes

BEEREN-AUSLESE

Made from overripe grapes which, due to the noble rot (*Botrytis cinerea*), have a higher concentration of sugar in the must; sweet type of wine, known for its longevity. Harvesting of Beerenauslese is not possible every year.

TROCKEN-BEEREN-AUSLESE

Very elegant, sweet wines of extreme longevity made from shriveled raisin-like berries, very high natural sugar content, with aromas reminiscent of honey and exotic fruit and an almost nectar-like consistency

EISWEIN

Eiswein occurs only in exceptional years, when healthy grapes are left hanging on the vines into winter. The berries are then harvested and pressed still frozen when temperatures fall to -7° C or below. Because of its very high natural sugar content, Eiswein can be cellared for decades

What exactly is must weight?

The riper the grape, the more sugar its juice contains. Measuring the must weight (i.e. the sugar content) provides the vintner insights into the ripeness of the grapes. In Germany, this measurement is expressed in “degrees Oechsle,” whereby one degree Oechsle means that a liter of must is 1 gram heavier than a liter of water. In some years, Trockenbeerenauslesen can measure over 200 degrees Oechsle! Most of the natural sugar is converted into alcohol during fermentation. The riper the grapes, the more alcohol that can be formed. Any sugar remaining in the wine after fermentation is called ‘residual sugar.’ The name Oechsle derives from goldsmith and inventor Christian Ferdinand Oechsle (1774-1852) of Pforzheim, who developed an instrument called the refractometer to measure must weights.

CLASSIC / SELECTION

This pair of terms was introduced with the 2000 vintage. ‘Classic’ wines are *Qualitätswein* made from traditional grape varieties typical for their region of origin and promise a harmoniously dry style. Vineyard names are intentionally forbidden on Classic wines to simplify the label.

‘Selection’ is reserved for single vineyard varietal *Qualitätswein* produced from hand-harvested grapes (max. yield: 60 hectoliters per hectare) and produced in a dry style. These bottles bear a special seal or logo.

ERSTES GEWÄCHS / GROSSES GEWÄCHS

Premium wines from the Rheingau region that pass a strict set of conditions and sensory examinations may feature the term *Erstes Gewächs* (Premium Cru) on the label. Such wines may only be produced from certain specifically designated parcels and are subject to stringent quality guidelines such as low yields, manual harvest and pruning. *Erstes Gewächs* wines are furthermore only produced from Riesling and Spätburgunder. Given the restriction of max. 13 g/l of residual sugar, they are typically classified as dry.

Elsewhere in Germany, similar bottles of premium dry wines may qualify as *Großes Gewächs* (Grand Cru), typically shorted to the initials ‘GG’ on the label. Unlike *Erstes Gewächs*, GG wines may be made from a range of different varieties depending on the specific growing region. This classification is not mandatory according to wine law, but rather reflects the model promoted by Verband Deutscher Prädikatsweingüter (VDP), a leading association of premium German winemakers.

LANDWEIN

In Germany *Landwein* (‘Country Wine’) is an uncomplicated wine, typical for its geographical origin, which is always declared on the label. *Landwein* must always be dry or semi-dry. In Germany a total of 26 *Landwein* regions are defined by law – including more recent entries such as Schleswig-Holstein, which includes the ten hectares of vines currently being cultivated on the island of Sylt, in Germany’s far north.

DEUTSCHER WEIN

Deutscher Wein without further indication of origin is a simple table wine made exclusively from German grapes using approved vineyards and grape varieties. Unlike many other European wine nations, this basic quality of wine represents only a small amount of the country’s overall production. Together with *Landwein* it makes up just five percent of German wine production.

There are approx. 2,600 vineyard sites in Germany's official winegrowing regions. Each is recorded in an official cadaster known as the Weinbergsrolle ('vineyard roll'). Sizes vary considerably. The smallest individual classified site of Germany is the Walporzheimer Gärkammer on the Ahr, which comprises less than one hectare. At 85 hectares, the prestigious Würzburger Stein is Germany's largest single site. Wine connoisseurs can often infer a certain amount of information about a wine from its appellation, particularly when it reveals information about the soil type (e.g. Vulkanfelsen – volcanic rock, Sandgrube – sand pit, Kalkofen – lime kiln). Incidentally, the term "lay," which is quite often found in the vineyard appellations on the Mosel (Rosenlay, Sonnenlay, Laurentiuslay), comes from the Celtic and means slate or slate rock. Vineyard appellations sometimes provide hints about the previous ownership (Klostergarten – monastery garden, Grafenberg – count's mountain, Kirchenstück – church parcel). A complete graphical overview of all vineyards, including aerial photographs, is published in the Deutscher Weinatlas (Atlas of German Wines), available at www.germanwines.de

BOTTLER AND PRODUCER

Every bottle must declare who bottled it. This is not always identical to the grower of the grapes, as many wineries buy in grapes or must which they then vinify or process for sale under their own brand. In this case, for example, the winery would be the bottler. Cooperatives and winegrowing estates are usually the producers for their own bottles, as they typically process grapes from their own cultivation. Even here, however, vintners do sometimes buy in additional grapes.

OTHER INFORMATION ON THE LABEL

What does the buyer look for first on the label? Probably the vintage and grape variety. Both are almost always stated on the label, although neither is in fact obligatory. Where they are provided, this indicates that least 85 percent of the grapes were harvested in the declared year and come from the named variety. One odd exception: Eiswein is sometimes picked in January of the new year, but will list a vintage referring to the year in which the grapes were ripened.

VINEYARD SITES

It is also allowed but not required to designate the vineyard site where the grapes were grown. Unlike in the past, winegrowers nowadays typically only name a site on the label if the wine owes its particular characteristics to that vineyard. The site name is comprised of the name of the village or town and the name of the vineyard, such as Forster Ungeheuer or Bernkasteler Doctor.

DIFFERENCES IN TASTE

Contrary to popular belief, grape variety does not determine a wine's taste profile. Riesling, for example, can be produced to be bone dry or lusciously sweet, or anywhere in-between.

Other factors do however impact a wine's style, including the ripeness of the grapes at harvest and whether and to what extent the winemaker intervenes during fermentation.

The label helps fill in the informational gap. Dry and semi-dry wines are nearly always indicated on the label. Where no indication is given, one can expect the wine to be either sweet or nobly sweet.

Dryness classifications are defined by law, based on the amount of residual sugar in the wine:

TROCKEN	Trocken – dry for wines with a residual sugar content of up to a maximum of 9 grams per liter	HALB-TROCKEN	Halbtrocken – semi-dry for wines with a residual sugar content of up to a maximum of 18 grams per liter
LIEBLICH	Lieblisch – semi-sweet for wines with a residual sugar content of up to a maximum of 45 grams per liter	SÜSS	Süß – sweet for wines with a residual sugar content of more than 45 grams per liter

One cube of sugar weighs about 3 grams. Our tongue can detect a concentration of about 5 grams of sugar in one liter of water (try it!). Cola contains about 106 grams of sugar per liter. Noble sweet specialties like Eiswein and Trockenbeeren-auslese may have a natural residual sugar content of more than 200 grams per liter..

A wine's taste also reflects its fruit acid content, because the acid attenuates the taste of the sweetness. This is why wines officially labeled as semi-sweet according to their residual sugar content might still taste off-dry. It has become customary to call such wines “feinherb” – elegantly dry. Unlike many of the other designations for German wine, “feinherb” has no legal limits and is open to the stylistic interpretations of the winemaker.

Since sparkling wines contain carbon dioxide which absorbs the sense of sweetness as well as the fruit acid in the wine, the limits for their levels of dryness are slightly different. See the next section, “Germany Sparkles.”

Germany Sparkles

Germans consume more sparkling wine than any other nation, just over 3.5 liters per capita in 2017. They understand the joy of celebrating with a glass of Sekt, as sparkling wine is known, for occasions big and small. And naturally, as a result, German winegrowers are specialists in producing sparklers.

Sekt is produced by a process called second fermentation which produces the carbon dioxide that remains in the product and gives the wine its characteristic bubbles. Most branded sekt is fermented as cuvées from different base wines in large pressure tanks to ensure more uniform lots. The bottling then takes place only after completion of the fermentation process.

HOW DO THE BUBBLES GET INTO THE SEKT?

The quality of a Sekt is primarily determined by its base wine and secondarily by the selected production process. Winemakers tend to prefer smaller, more individual lots created using the classical method, where second fermentation takes place in the bottle. The individual bottles are then ‘riddled,’ i.e. turned and slowly raised until the yeast settles into the neck of the bottle. At that point the yeast is removed without allowing the Sekt to escape, a process known as “disgorgement.”

‘Winzersekt’ is a term created 30 years ago in Rheinhessen. It signifies sparkling wine vinified directly at the producer’s own estate using the traditional method and only the producer’s own grapes. In cases where the grapes also come from a designated winegrowing region, the bottle will bear the abbreviation ‘b.A.’ for bestimmter Anbaugebiet. Under certain conditions the term Crémant

is also approved for use in Germany: it indicates whole cluster pressing of the grapes, traditional method fermentation in the bottle, an indication of the growing region and the strict use of only grapes from certain approved varieties. Some winemakers have even given themselves over entirely to the production of Sekt.

FIZZY FUN: SPARKLING SECCO

‘Secco’ are semi-sparkling wines of a slightly lower internal pressure, either with their own or added carbon dioxide. The term derives from Italy’s famous Prosecco and has come to be used as a generic term; the official name is Deutscher Perlwein. Seccos are summery fruity refreshments meant to be enjoyed in the here and now. They are easier to produce than proper Sekt and are no longer subject to the German sparkling wine tax, meaning they are also generally cheaper than Sekt. This has helped boost their popularity among Germans.

THE PIKKOLO

The “Pikkolo,” a small (200 ml) Sekt bottle, is a German specialty – there’s always time for a Pikkolo, many Germans say! It is a registered trademark of the Henkell winery from the 1930s and was used for the company’s dry Henkell Sekt. At that time, young apprentices in the hotel and food service trade were also called Pikkolo, and a cartoon figure called “Pikkolo” even served as the Henkell mascot. Today, the term is commonly used for miniature Sekt bottles from other makers as well.

The Wonders of Wine Country





Germany's 13 winegrowing regions offer more than just outstanding wines. Wines are a natural product, grown in natural settings that are often nothing short of beautiful. Pick a program that suits your fancy – from relaxing agritourism directly at a winegrowing estate to action-packed sports expeditions with wine as a reward. Whatever your choice, nothing beats discovering the countryside and its people, all while recharging your spirits with an exciting or relaxing holiday.

RAILS & SKATES

There are lots of different ways to navigate a winegrowing region. One of the most fun (and exerting) for visitors to the Nahe or the Pfalz is a human-powered railway vehicle called a Draisine, which can be rented at various stations. Inline skaters will appreciate the “Rhine-on-Skates” event held in Rheingau and Mittelrhein during August: for one entire day, the 135-kilometer main road through the UNESCO World Heritage Site is given over to skaters; the route runs from Rüdesheim to Koblenz.

BICYCLE TOURS

The banks of the rivers in all wine regions are ideal for exploration by bicycle. Active cyclists can get to know the romantic winegrowing areas along the Main River by pedaling the over 600km of cycle paths from its source to the mouth. The Mosel is another noted cyclist's paradise, with over 1,000 km of dedicated bike paths, including the option to have luggage transported separately. The Wine Roads through the idyllic Tauber, Jagst, Kocher and Rems Valleys in Württemberg and the Bocksbeutelstraße in Franken also offer plenty of variety for the eye and the calves all year round.



WALKING & CLIMBING

You can enjoy wonderful walks almost anywhere where vines are planted. Any visitor to the Rheingau or Mittelrhein should consider a stretch of the 320-km Rheinsteig trail. The section between St. Goar and Bacharach, for example, leads through impressive vineyards and delivers breathtaking views of the Rhine Valley. The Ahr boasts a scenic Red Wine Trail from Altenahr to Bad Bodendorf, while many kilometers of walking trails traverse the Kaiserstuhl and Tuniberg in Baden. Those looking to test their endurance can try some of Europe's steepest vineyards, including the 378-meter-high Bremmer Calmont on the Mosel or the Rotenfels on the Nahe – although the latter is for experienced climbers only!



IN THE AIR

High-flyers have plenty of options in Germany's winegrowing regions. Those craving thrills can book a tandem paragliding flight in Bad Ems on the Lahn, in the Mittelrhein region. A gentler ride is available through the many hot-air balloon tours that can be seen floating in fair weather above the gently undulating vineyards of places like Rheinhessen, the Südpfalz, Baden and Hessische Bergstraße.

WATER SPORTS

Those who prefer boats to bikes will love the 217-km "Wasserwander-route Mosel" (Water Exploration Trail), with boat rental stations and more than 60 berths to take a break on shore as needed. Water skiing on the Mosel is even possible at Bullay, wetsuit included. The Saale and Unstrut Rivers are known for their beautiful navigable waters, while the Glan, a Nahe tributary, and the Lahn are suitable for canoeing and kayaking.

HOOVES OR MOTORBIKE

The world always looks different from the back of a horse: visitors to the Südpfalz can enjoy a mounted wine-and-woods tour – or just rent a scooter and explore the vineyards like that! Guided motorbike tours are also offered on the Mosel, while Baden is filled with beautiful routes dotted by chances to enjoy culinary delicacies.

GOLF

For those who never travel without their clubs, the Pfalz is an ideal destination. The Deutsche Weinstraße golf course situated in the middle of vineyards near Dackenheim even has holes named after grape varieties.



VINEYARD ACCOMODATIONS

Sometimes a winery visit can turn into an extensive wine tasting – leading to the obvious question is: where can we stay overnight? At many wineries, the answer is simple: here! Many estates maintain guest rooms or fully equipped apartments, perfect for those looking to spend a few days away while enjoying the charms of rural life. Vintners are always coming up with something new for their guests: carriage rides and guided walks through the vineyards, bicycle tours with luggage transport, wine tastings with seasonal cuisine, cooking courses, theater performances and concerts. A stay at the vineyard is never boring!

Work-free days are precious. So why lose time searching? Germany's winegrowing regions have registered over 500 tourist guides with expert wine knowledge and offer a wide range of wine-related activities – from vineyard walks to culinary wine tastings. Most tour guides are volunteers, and all have undergone special training and take pleasure in presenting their region.

Further information: www.tourismus.deutscheweine.de



VISITING THE WINERY

Not infrequently tables and benches are put up in the winery courtyards during the summer and autumn months: The winery becomes a temporary wine tavern (in German: *Straußwirtschaft* or *Besenwirtschaft*). These establishments are typical in Germany and go back to Charlemagne who allowed the wine makers to offer their own wines and snacks for a few months in the year. As a sign that the winebar was open a bouquet (*Strauß*) or a broom (*Besen*) was attached to the gate. A visit to such a winebar on a warm summer evening is a good thing and a great opportunity to try the wines from the wide range of the producer. In addition there are typical regional specialties made from fresh produce. What more could the heart and palate want?

VISITING THE VINTNER

Shopping at a winery is always an adventure! No wonder then that many winegrowers, cooperatives and wineries have expanded their sales rooms into modern vinoteques, with architecturally exciting designs, real lounges where wine can be enjoyed in a wonderfully relaxed atmosphere. Gone are the days of rustic but uncomfortable chairs or bar stools, plastic vine leaves, old vats and crocheted tablecloths. Many of these stylishly decorated rooms have been awarded architectural prizes. More than just wine can be bought here: wine jelly, gourmet food, chocolate, grape seed oil, vinegar, fruit brandy, liqueurs, glasses and other accessories are all usually on sale. Many wineries also offer cellar tours to their visitors, perpetually a thrill for true wine connoisseurs even after the hundredth time! Modern wineries often have romantic old cellars with large, carved wooden barrels alongside impressive high-tech equipment: pneumatic grape presses to process the grapes very gently, gleaming stainless steel tanks with computer-controlled cooling, air-conditioned barrique cellars and fully automatic bottling systems. Many harness the force of gravity cleverly to avoid unnecessary pumping or mechanical stress on the grapes or must. These considerable financial investments all have a single goal: better quality and satisfied customers!



WHAT IS A RIESLING LOUNGE, ANYWAY?

We think of it as a Tasting Room 2.0! A Riesling Lounge provides a relaxed atmosphere for fans to sip top wines (including, but not limited to, Rieslings) from each of Germany's winegrowing regions. The lounges are run in a variety of Germany's major cities with the support of the German Wine Institute. www.deutscheweine.de/tourismus/riesling-lounges



Learning to Taste

Beyond Basic Appreciation





TRUST YOUR NOSE

There is no surer way to enhance your enjoyment of wine than by increasing your understanding. And the best path to connoisseurship is experience. When tasting wine, the simple questions are usually also the most insightful: does this wine taste good to me, and if so, why? How is it different from other wines that I enjoy or dislike? There's absolutely nothing wrong with saying: "This one tastes delicious," but deeper appreciation is usually built on more objective descriptions. Yes, professional wine tasters rely on specialist jargon ("nose" for "fragrance", "body" for a strong sensation in the mouth, and so on), but even novices can focus on similarities between the wine in the glass and other tastes or smells: "This wine reminds me of fresh apples." Sharing your observations with others is an excellent way to identify what you are experiencing and understanding not just which wines fit your palate, but why. It also helps make the joys of wine into a more social experience.

Tip: Organize a small wine tasting for your friends. You'll only need four or five different wines. Consider selecting a central theme, such as "Riesling" – perhaps you can compare several Riesling wines from different regions. Or compare several varieties, such as Spätburgunder, Portugieser and Dornfelder, all from one growing area. Blind tastings are another way to spice up even familiar bottles, since participants do not know in advance which wine they are tasting and are forced to focus solely on what is in the glass. Simply wrap the bottles in aluminum foil or pour into glasses ahead of time. For those looking to expand their knowledge, try a vertical tasting of two or three vintages of the same wine from one vintner. It's an excellent way to experience first-hand the effects of maturation and appreciate the freshness of youth versus the complexity of maturity.



WINE TASTING BASICS

To taste but not to drink – ay, there’s the rub! Serious wine lovers learn to taste a wine without drinking the full glass. Professional tasters in particular take only a small sip into their mouths, which they then aerate actively to draw out the full range of aromas and then spit back out. This is essential, because our enjoyment of wine is based more on smell than taste.

1. The eye

Look at the color in the glass, preferably in daylight and against a light background. Is its color bright. Tilt the glass at an angle to check for more clues. Mature reds have brown edges, while young ones have purple.

2. The nose

Sniff deep into the glass while slowly swirling its content. This helps draw out the aromas. Does it smell pleasantly fresh, clear and pure? Do you recognize fruit aromas or floral scents? Young white wines are often reminiscent of citrus fruit, apples or peaches. Mature white wines can

smell of yellow fruits, beeswax and leather. Red wines smell more like red fruits such as cherries, strawberries, blackberries and plums.

3. The mouth

Swirl your sample sip back and forth in your mouth. Draw in air through your mouth – that infamous “slurping” practiced by wine experts – to transport the aromas and flavors to the olfactory organs. The sensation in the mouth should be intense, fresh, juicy and lively. How long do you feel the taste after swallowing or spitting out of the test drink? The longer the “finish,” the better!

Recognizing and naming aromas – an amusing challenge for any wine lover, and one which requires some practice. The aroma wheel is an excellent learning tool. It lists two sets of typical aromas for wines, one for whites and one for reds. Are you detecting strawberry, raspberry or even lychee in the nose? Or perhaps leather, coffee or licorice on the palate? An aroma wheel helps you put a name to the input your nose is giving you! www.germanwines.de



INTO THE CELLAR

German wines are known for their excellent aging potential, meaning they tend to develop positively in the bottle over time. Not every bottle has storage potential; it depends on factors such as grape variety, style of wine and vintage. But in general the tannins in German reds and the acidity and sweetness of German whites make them excellent candidates for cellaring.

What happens when a wine matures?

The maturation process lends wines greater harmony and complexity. Certain aromas can only develop after time and exposure to the oxygen remaining in the bottle, which causes certain molecules to combine. At a visual level, these chemical changes manifest themselves in the color. It typically becomes more intense for white wines, while red wines tend to lighten slightly, such as changing from blackish-red to brownish or brick-colored.

Storing wine correctly

Wines should be stored horizontally in a room protected from light, vibrations and strong smells. A constant temperature of about 12 degrees Celsius is ideal. People without a cellar can store their wines in the bedroom, as these are rarely too warm. Wine bottles with closures other than natural cork can be stored in an upright position as horizontal storage is designed to prevent corks from drying out and becoming permeable to air.

How long can German wines be stored?

The higher the quality of the wine, the more suitable it is for long-term storage. Spätlese and Auslese wines from Riesling and Pinot varieties of good vintages and vineyard sites can be stored for five to eight years without a problem, as can good red wines. Nobly sweet wines may require several decades to achieve their full potential. Rule of thumb: alcohol, acidity, sweetness and tannins all act as preservatives, so the more of them in a wine, the greater its potential for maturity! Tip: To give a wine as a gift – for example from the year of birth on somebody's 18th birthday – noble Trockenbeerenauslese and Eiswein are most suitable! Sparkling wines do not improve by cellaring and are best enjoyed directly after purchase.



Wine doesn't need to be complicated. Learning by doing is good.

But a few simple rules of thumb can enhance your enjoyment from the start.

Look for...

... the right temperature

Few people beyond wine professionals measure the precise temperature of their wines, but getting your wine at least close to the optimal temperature matters. Sekt, white wine and rosés should be put into the refrigerator at least two hours before serving – even if it is poured a bit too cold, it will warm to room temperature quickly in the glass. In hot weather, a chiller for the bottle is practical, as are pre-frozen cooling collars. These are also helpful for cooling down warm wine. Red wine should be served at room temperature – here too, rather a bit too cool than too warm.

- robust, full-bodied red wine
16° to 18° Celsius
- young, fruity red wine
14° to 16° Celsius
- more mature, stronger white wine
11° to 13° Celsius
- young, light white wine, rosé
9° to 11° Celsius
 - sweet wine
9° to 11° Celsius
 - sparkling wine
4° to 7° Celsius

... the right corkscrew

Ever discover too late that you forgot to bring a corkscrew to your picnic? Getting that cork out of the bottle is a strenuous job if you don't have the right tool. A Swiss Army knife can help in a pinch, but there's no replacing the classic waiter's knife, which uses leverage, or models that are placed on the bottle and simply unscrew the cork. Or look for the increasing number of bottles that are sealed with a screw cap or glass stopper – no tools required!

... the right glass

It should have a stem and a tulip-shaped bowl. For red wine, the bowl should be larger and more voluminous. The thinner-walled the glass, the more elegant and intense the flavor. Fill the glass only up to its widest point. This allows the fragrance to unfold in the bowl, and by swirling the glass you can encourage the aeration of the aromas. The color of the wine is easier to observe if the glass is clear and not shaded.

... the perfect companion

In this case we don't mean friends, even if they are also an important factor of the enjoyment. We mean food

and drink that showcase the wine and prepare your body and palate for prime enjoyment: a good mineral water, some fresh bread and, of course, the right food. But that is a separate chapter.

... the right accessories to fit the situation

For example, a carafe for decanting, which is done to separate a mature red wine from the deposit that forms naturally at the bottom of the bottle. It is a tricky and careful process, intended to prevent the deposit from being disturbed. Some wines present better when given contact with air, and rapid decanting can help with this as well. Not every wine has to be decanted, but it rarely does any harm. Sometimes small crystals called tartrates can be found in the bottle and/or in the glass. These crystalline deposits do not influence the quality or the taste of the wine. They are formed when the minerals come into contact with tartaric acid. Rather a sign of good quality!

German Wines and International Cuisine

Many perfect pairings





From a carafe of simple wine at a summer festival to a complex red enjoyed before a roaring fireplace in winter, German wines are wonderful on their own. But Riesling, Spätburgunder and other German specialties also pair magnificently with a wide range of cuisine from all over the world.

It is well known that German wines are a perfect match for Asian cuisine. This holds true even if you account for the fact that ‘Asian cuisine’ covers a huge spectrum – from Thai fare dominated by coconut milk to the extremely spicy dishes from the Chinese province of Szechuan, from the pure flavors of Japanese cuisine to the mild to spicy curries of Indian food... the wines from each of the German winegrowing regions offer delicious companions to them all!

AROMATICS AND SPICE

Consider tasting a dry Muskateller with dishes containing fresh ginger. Or an aromatic Scheurebe with a curry made with coconut milk. If you're looking to impress, swap in mature bottles of those same wines. But beware: powerful wines should not be paired with extremely spicy food. Alcohol amplifies spiciness, which can become distracting. Lower alcohol wines with a noticeable residual sugar content go much

better with spicy dishes, as sugar has a soothing effect on spiciness. Salty dishes, which includes sushi dipped in soy sauce, prefer wines with a lively interplay between sweetness and acidity, such as Riesling. Given that one single estate might have a dry Kabinett, semi-dry Spätlese, Trockenbeerenauslese, Eiswein and Winzersekt, all from the same grape variety, it's easy to plan a multi-course dinner using bottles that showcase a single grape's diversity. It may be an eye-opener for some guests to discover that wines can develop in such substantially different ways.

SMALL EFFORT, SIGNIFICANT PLEASURE

There's no need to cook a big meal. A simple snack plate with three types of cheese and three different wines offers nine potential combinations... and plenty of material for conversation. A mild soft cheese, a spicy hard cheese and a blue cheese served with a Riesling, a Spätburgunder and perhaps even a Trockenbeerenauslese – and of course plenty of bread!



A SWEET ENDING

If your guests have a sweet tooth, consider the same tasting, only with chocolate. A good rule of thumb: Wines that are rich in acidity go well with chocolate with little to no cocoa content (e.g. Riesling with white chocolate); the higher the cocoa content of the chocolate, the richer in tannins a red wine may be. Flavored chocolates (with fruit or flowers) offer the chance to experiment with aromatic wine combinations (Gewürztraminer, Muskateller, Scheurebe). Sometimes they pair wonderfully, sometimes not at all. If you discover a great combination – remember it! There are few better ways to end an evening.



GERMAN WINE AND FOOD

STYLE/ AROMA	SUBTLE	INTENSE
LIGHT	KABINETT DRY	KABINETT DRY OR SEMI DRY
	Riesling Silvaner Elbling Weissburgunder	Müller-Thurgau Bacchus Scheurebe Gewürztraminer
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> poached fish poultry leafy salad with vinaigrette sauce veal cutlet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asian dishes wildfowl braised vegetables spicy pasta dishes
ROBUST	SPÄTLESE DRY / AUSLESE DRY	SPÄTLESE DRY
	Riesling Elbling Weissburgunder Silvaner	Grauburgunder Spätburgunder Lemberger Dornfelder
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rich freshwater fish mussels, lobster asparagus with sauce hollandaise strips of meat in cream sauce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> goose, duck game roast beef or lamb rich cheese

RULE OF THUMB: Light (low-fat) foods go with low alcohol wines; delicate flavors in the food call for subtle, elegant aromas in the wine. Fatty, heavy food with intense seasoning, on the other hand, should be served with a rich, powerful wine with pronounced fruity aromas, barrique wine or, in certain cases, with sweet wine. Marked sweet wines (Beerenauslese, Trockenbeerenauslese, Eiswein) are delicious exceptions. Experts recommend pairing them with desserts or strong cheeses (blue cheese). But theory is theory – don't be afraid to experiment on your own!