# The whole of Austria in a glass

## Tasting tour at Austrian Single Vineyard Summit

24 October 2021 | #Culture, #Austria, #Winetasting

Early September is the traditional time for the marathon tasting of single-vineyard wines at the Austrian Single Vineyard Summit held at Schloss Grafenegg. Now in its 11th year, it has grown to include an increasing number of wine-producing organisations from Austria's nine provinces: Kamptal, Kremstal, Traisental, Wagram, Wien and Carnuntum. Single vineyard wines from the Steirische Terroir & Kalkstein Weingebiet (STK) in Styria and the Burgenland Weinbaugebiet (BWB) were also poured several years ago, and last year Klosterneuburg joined the party. The latter's tasting takes place on the terrace of the magnificent Schloss Dornbach in the Point of Wachau.

### Plan your own wine discovery odyssey through Austria

If your idea of fun is to taste your way through around 500 wines in the course of a week, like mine is, then this is the place for you. Seriously though, the Single Vineyard Summit is an unique opportunity to get a thorough understanding of what Austrian wine is all about and discover its best varieties and most prestigious vineyard sites through their single-vineyard wines. Of course, you don't have to taste everything, and you have a lot of scope to organise your own itinerary and pick the producers you want to visit. Organisers have helpfully put together a few options to satisfy whatever you choose. The wines are brought to your tasting table by representatives from the wineries.

### Life is hard in the mountains!

Begin your journey of discovery by traversing the hills of Styria through Austrian Sauvignon Blanc, Blaufränkisch, Zweigelt, Cuvées, Lemberger and Blaufränkisch and tasting its native white varieties, Bel-Sylvaner, Sauvignon Blanc, Morillon aka Chardonnay, Weissburgunder, Gelbmuskateller, Traminer, Grüner Veltliner, Riesling, Traminer and Welschriesling. These have issued in terrene and baked in the Terroirs, as part of the way. Here you can discover local specialities like Ringspitzer and Zierfandler as well as Chardonnay from lime-rich soils such as Reed Knauwenberger and Tagelsteiner.

### Producers to try:

- **Styria**: Lackner-Tinnacher, Sattlerhof, Tement, Erwin Sabathi, Neumeister
- **Thermenregion**: Alois Gesellmann, Johann Apfahrer, Sauböhmen, Weinschroll
- **Landesweingut Kitzeck**, Weingut Hirsch

### A wine cruise along the Danube

Now meander upstream along the Danube. Starting off in Carnuntum, Try spicy Blaufränkisch from Reed Spitzerberg, juicy Zweigelt from Reed Hundsberg and blends from Reed Rosenberg. Set to grips with wines from Weingut Wien, Weingut Wien Cuvée Blaufränkisch and Weingut Wien Reed Wiener Gemischter Satz, as well as Riesling, Grüner Veltliner and Weissburgunder from iconic vineyard sites like Reed Himmelberg. Once you have tasted your way through Wien, head to the Kamptal and Kremstal. This is almost exclusively the Kingdom of Grüner Veltliner and Riesling, except for in Wagram where the local blue Roter Veltliner is also cultivated. Here, you can discover Kamptal Reserve Riesling and Grüner Veltliner along the cotter three tributaries, discover wines from historic vineyards such as Reed Pfarrergraben and Rothenhart in Traisental, Pfaffenberg, Hochäcker and Reed Steinmandl in Kremstal and Reed Goldberg and of Austrian Riesling's most iconic sites, Heiligenstein in Kamptal.

### Producers to try:

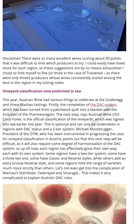
- **Carnuntum**: Weingut Grill Wien, Weingut Artner, Weingut Philipp Grassl, Weingut Wien, Weingut Wien Cuvée Blaufränkisch
- **Wien**: Weingut Wieninger, Weingut Hajszan Neumann, Weingut Christ, Weingut Fuhrgassl-Huber, Weingut Wagat am Pfarrberg
- **Wagram**: Weingut Markus Huber, Weingut Tom Dockner, Weingut Ludwig Neumayer
- **Wagram**: Weingut Josef Pritz, Weingut Reinhard, Weingut Bernhard Ott, Weingut Ernst Ecker, Weingut Ernst Ecker
- **Kremstal**: Weingut Stift Göttweig, Weingut Salomon Undhof, Weingut Malat, Weingut Stadt Krems, Weingut Geyerhof
- **Kamptal**: Weingut Bernhard Ott, Weingut Camillo Umschlaufer, Weingut Reed Lumen, Weingut Bruno Wenzel, Weingut Bruno Wenzel

### Enjoy the warmth of the Burgenland

In the warmer Burgenland to the east of Vienna, sate yourself with intense, spicy Blaufränkisch from Eisenberg's iron-rich soils, making sure to try wines from Reed Kalchofen, Szapary and Weinberg. While on the balmy Neusiedlersee, you can discover Blaufränkisch and Zweigelt with more lighter style of Blaufränkisch from Reed Neusiedlersee and unique cuvées of whites from Chardonnay, Neuburger, Weissburgunder and Grüner Veltliner from, for example, Reed Hirmondes.

### Producers to try:

- **Eisenstadt**: Thum Wachter, Wachter-Wiesler, Kratzer, Grosser Wein, Leyrer+Graf
- **Neusiedlersee**: Pircher, Erwin Tinhof, A & H Nittnaus, Toni Hartl, Birgit Braunstein



### Take in the views of steep terraced vineyards in Wachau

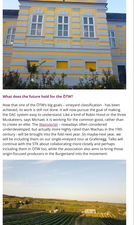
Finally, on a terrace with spectacular views over the Danube, sample the wines from Reed Wachau, Reed Spitzerberg and Reed Himmelberg and from outstanding vineyards such as Achleiten, Hollenburg and Loiserberg and think yourself blessed that you have had the chance to taste such wonderful wines on this magical part of Austrian wine.

### Producers to try: Prager, Domäne Wachau, Knoll, Rudi Pichler, Metzger

Disclaimer: There were so many excellent wines scoring around 90 points that it was difficult to limit which producers to try. I could easily have listed twice as many producers. Also, I have not tried all the producers I have chosen to tries myself so focus three in the case of Traisental – as there were only three producers whose wines consistently scored among the best in the region in my tasting notes.

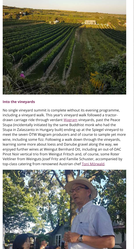
### Vineyard classification now enshrined in law

This year, Austrian Wine had various things to celebrate at the Grafenegg and Vinea Wachau tastings. Firstly, the completion of the DAC crisers, which, after years of work, now form part of the Austrian Wine Marketing Ecoglobe of the Thermenregion. The next step, Ioda Australian Wine (ISO Stick) Vorlex, is the official classification of the vineyards, which was signed into law in June 2021. It is based on the Burgundy classification system in regions with DAC status and is like system. Michael Moosbrugger, President of the DTW, who has been instrumental in progressing the case for classification, explained that it was a long and difficult process. It was difficult, as it will require some degree of harmonisation of the DAC system, as up till now, each region has effectively grow their own way, each with its own system. Some regions have a hierarchy, some have a three-tier one, some have Classic and Reserve styles, while others add an Ortswein and Lagenwein. Some have a minimum ripeness, some have much more strictly than others. Let's not even get into the complication of Wachau's Steinfeder, Federspiel and Smaragd... This makes it very complicated to explain Austria's DAC rules.



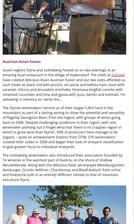

### The next steps

Such an official classification is a big step for Austria and the DTW, as it is based on the Burgundy system, which is well-established and has many points up, all eyes will be on Austria as they implement it. Transparency and credibility will be crucial for it to succeed, and of course, its success will be measured by how it is received by consumers. Work is now underway to apply to the National Wine Committee. Classification will be undertaken and Ecoglobe status confirmed based on numerous criteria similar to those in Burgundy, such as the quality of the vineyard, production and hand harvesting. Stricter sage classification can then be applied for after a further five years. Kamptal and Kremstal have already submitted applications for Ecoglobe status and have begun work on the DAC crisers. Erste Lage wines may be produced in the 2024 or 2025 vintage, according to Michael. A soft transition between the classifications of DTW and DTW has been agreed, meaning that once the Ecoglobe classification comes into force a region's private pine will exist and thus DTW Erste Lage will become Kamptal Erste Lage and so on.



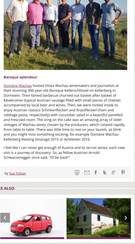
### What does the future hold for the DTW?

Now that one of the DTW's big goals – vineyard classification – has been achieved, its work is not over. It will now pursue the goal of making Austrian Wine Marketing Ecoglobe (AWM) the best wine marketing in the Mundialaxes, says Michael. It is working for the common good, rather than to create an elite. The Weinwelt – nowadays often considered synonymous with the DTW – is also working on a new vision for the 19th century, well be brought into the fold next year. So maybe next year, we will be including them on our single-vineyard tour at Grafenegg. Talks will also continue with the Austrian Wine Marketing Board (AWMB) with a view including them in DTW too, while the association also aims to bring those origin-focused producers in the Burgenland into the movement.



### Into the vineyards

No single vineyard summit is complete without its evening programme, including a vineyard walk. This year's vineyard walk followed a tractor-drawn carriage ride through the vineyard Wagram vineyards, past the Place of Power, the Kreuzberg and Hollenburg vineyards, and through the Stopp to Edelacker in Hungary. Hungarian producer Ferenc Szabó joined us for the sixth DTW Hungarian Producers Day, of course to sample yet more wine, including some Furi. Following a walk down through the vineyard, learning some more about loess and Danube gravel along the way, we ended up at Szabó's winery for a tasting of his wines and a meal. Among Ferenc Szabó's wines were his first Wagram Frührot and, of course, some Roter Veltliner from Wagram, Josef Pritz and Familie Schuster, accompanied by Hungarian cooking from restaurant Szabó and Chef Szabó.

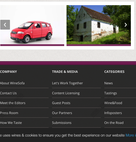


### Austrian-Asian fusion

Guest regions Styria and Lattelberg hosted us on two evenings at an amazing local restaurant in the village of Hadersdorf. The chefs at Kitzinger Restaurant Hadersdorf have a real talent for fusion cuisine, combining such treats as black cod with pecorino, sel gauze and baldrio ham, duck with caramel chicory and Jerusalem artichoke, Hirzenaua kingfish ceviche with Jerusalem artichoke and Kitzinger with pecorino and kohlrabi. Yes, salivating in memory as I write this.

The Styrian remembers remained sort of their slogan 'Life's hard in the mountains' as part of a tasting aiming to show the potential and versatility of flagship Sauvignon Blanc from the region, with groups of wines going back to 2010. Some producers brought along wines from the last harvest, somewhat starting out a Tonight wine that there is no stopper regarding which to grow wine than Styria! 50% of producers here manage to be organic, and the region's biodiversity is thriving. Some producers have created their codex in 2006 and began their rush of integrated production to give greater focus to individual vineyards.

The Lattelberg remembers also introduced their Sauvignon founded by 14 wineries in the warmest part of Austria, on the shore of shallow Neusiedlersee. Here, we tasted wines from Weingut Hannes Lackner-Gruber, Neubauer, Grüner Veltliner, Chardonnay and Blaufränkisch from and bestpoise soils in an entirely different climate to that of mountain viticulture Styria.



### Baroque splendour

Domäne Wachau hosted Vinea Wachau remembers and journalists at Schloss Dornbach, a baroque splendour overlooking the Danube in Dürnstein. Their famed barbecue churned out Sulzer after basket of Kitzeknamer Zupical Austrian sausage filled with small pieces of cheese and pickled cucumber, Kitzeknamer Zupical Austrian sausage filled with energy Austrian Lisiecs Schlemerfleischl and Kraut/Beisel Chars and cabbage pesta, respectively with cucumber salad in a beautiful panelled room with a view of the Danube. Of course, we tasted some of the wines and vintage of Wachau wines chosen by the producers, ranging from Gruner Veltliner from Sabre to Sabre. There was little time to rest on your laurels, as brisk and you might miss something exciting, for example Domäne Wachau Kellerberg Riesling Smaragd 2015 or Achleiten 2016.

I feel like I can never get enough of Austria and its terrior wines: each new visit is a journey of discovery. So, so fifteen Austrian Arnold Schwarzenegger-size tall. I'll be back!

by Sue Tallon

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