

THE DELIGHTS OF ZWEIGELT



Eric Asimov of the New York Times wrote an insightful review of Austrian wines and regions. There is also an informative multimedia presentation which you should enjoy. [LINK](#)

"Today we're talking specifically about Austria. If Austria is known at all for its wines, it's for whites. Its dry, minerally rieslings are more full-bodied than Germany's, while its peppery grüner veltliners have actually achieved a modest vogue of their own. Yet as delicious as Austrian whites can be, the real excitement these days is in the discovery of its reds, most notably zweigelt (pronounced TSVYE-gelt) but also blaufränkisch."

[photo: Tony Cenicola/The New York Times]

I-WINEREVIEW.COM KUDOS

Reviews by i-winereview.com speak highly of the Anton Bauer 2005 Grüner Veltliner Gmörk from Donauland, and the Steininger 2005 Grüner Veltliner Steven Holl from Kamptal.

Anton Bauer 2005 Grüner Veltliner Gmörk Donauland score - 92

The 2005 Gmörk is a superb bottling. It has a brilliant green lemon-gold color, rich aromas of ripe melon and a honeyed mouth feel. It is a Gruner Veltliner with unusual depth and concentration, terrific melon flavors and a pleasant mineral aftertaste. You couldn't ask for more from a \$10 bottle of wine! (Dec '06)

Steininger 2005 Grüner Veltliner Steven Holl Kamptal score - 91

The 2005 Steven Holl is star-bright and lemon-colored with a touch of residual carbon dioxide and fresh aromas of pear and apple. On the palate, it exhibits crisp acidity, white pepper, and an extended finish.

The Modern Renaissance of Austrian Wine



With the arrival of the warm weather season, there are a number of wines appropriate with the foods we enjoy during these spring & summer months, as well as wines to enjoy on a hot humid day, including New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, Portuguese Vinho Verde, Spanish Albarino, Italian Pinot Grigio and dry German Rieslings. However, the wines we like to recommend most this time of year are from Austria (as in Europe; there are no kangaroos in Austria!).

Austrian wines are enjoying a renaissance and surge in popularity both here and in Europe for several reasons. The quality of their white wines has improved dramatically over the last decade. Back in the 1980's, Austria was exporting a fair amount of average, slightly sweet wine that was widely ignored by the wine press, with the exception of a handful of growers producing excellent dessert style wines.

As young winemakers began taking over the reigns of their family's vineyards, they were willing to experiment with different techniques including stainless steel fermentation, stringent vineyard management, and a decisive shift toward producing world

class dry table wines. These young winemakers also took advantage of traveling and working in other major wine growing regions including South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and the Americas. Here they learned the most modern winemaking methods; in particular, how to retain the freshness and acidity of the grape during fermentation, and cultivating other varietals like Sauvignon Blanc, Scheurebe, Pinot Gris and Chardonnay. They applied these methods to their established wineries and vineyards, thus blending the old with the new. These techniques have also dramatically improved their surprisingly excellent red wines. They are not the thin, tart reds associated with most German exports; these are juicy, spicy reds full of complexity and ripe fruit.

The best of them are produced in the Wagram Valley near Krems in Donau-land, as well as Burgenland near the Hungarian border. Finally, Austrian wines, especially Grüner Veltliner, are among the most versatile food wines produced in the world, and should have a place on any serious restaurant wine list.

As a result of this modern Renaissance, today's Austrian wines are markedly better in terms of vibrancy and balance. There are a number of young winemakers including Leo Hillinger, Anton Bauer, Gustav Strauss and Martin Mittlebach, as well as visionaries like Karl Steininger, who are willing to push the envelope with respect to their roots, and they are producing some of

the most exciting wines we've tasted in years.

In March of this year, the staff at Seaboard Wine had the opportunity to visit a number of Austrian wineries, and in a four day stretch we tasted hundreds of local wines. What impressed us the most about these wines was their freshness, structure and balance. They were fun wines to drink, they paired beautifully with the local cuisines, and they did not tire the palate like many domestic wines.

So what are the types of wines to look for? The king of grapes and most widely planted in Austria is Grüner Veltliner. It has become a part of their national identity and is receiving international acclaim. The best are grown in the terraced hillside vineyards along the Danube in the Wachau Valley. The underlying characteristics are delicate perfumed aromatics, and in the best wines a sort of fresh ground white pepper spice which is most intriguing. There is no oak aging, so the wines are bursting with crisp acidity and pure fruit flavors which can range from citrus to tropical depending on the vineyard site. Gruner Veltliner is probably our favorite warm weather white wine, served alone or with steamed shellfish, roasted chicken or grilled pork. It is the most versatile white wine to pair with food, and matches beautifully with challenging foods like tomatoes, asparagus & artichokes.

Another popular white wine is Welschriesling, which is grown in Austria and throughout eastern Europe. It is actually of no relation to German Riesling. In fact, it is more like a Muscadet or Vinho Verde in style. Welschriesling is typically lighter and very crisp with a hint of citrus lime fruit and some mineral

notes. It's a great picnic or beach wine and pairs beautifully with salads, sautéed trout, shellfish or mild cheeses.

Riesling is also very popular in Austria and like their German counterparts, they can be bone dry or dessert style sweet. The best region is the Wachau Valley, and its wines are marked with a pureness of orchard fruit ranging from apples and pears to tangerines and apricots. The drier styles are very versatile when paired with fish, pork and spicy foods.

Other white wine varieties to look for include Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc, Scheurebe, Gewurztraminer, Gelber Muskateller, Muscat Ottonel (dessert style) and yes, even Chardonnay, which sometimes is blended with some of the aforementioned varieties. Also, look for the wonderfully balanced sparkling wines from Karl Steininger including sparkling Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, and Grüner Veltliner; plus the rich luscious dessert wines from Steindorfer, who won the prestigious International Trophy Winery of the Year in 2005.

The biggest surprise of our trip was the quality of the Austrian red wines. They were delicious; full of ripe fruit and spice not unlike a good Shiraz, Tempranillo or Cotes du Rhône. The most widely planted red variety is Zweigelt, which is a hybrid cross between Blaufränkisch and St. Laurent, which are also popular red wine varieties. Alone, Zweigelt is full of cherry fruit, soft spice and a round smooth finish. It is great with grilled meats, thick red sauces, and is a good



alternative to our Syrah or Merlot. The best producers include Leo Hillinger and Anton Bauer.

Austrian wines are definitely worth trying if you enjoy experiencing different wines and wandering off the beaten path of our domestic varieties. Wines from Austria are refreshing, complex and very food friendly, plus most retail in the \$9-\$20 range. For detailed information about these wines & vintners, visit www.kwselection.com

Please visit our web site at www.seaboardwine.com for a calendar of upcoming events, a listing of our featured Austrian wines, and a sampling of over 2000 hand selected wines we stock. Prost! DDG

Seaboard Wine & Tasting Bar
Seaboard Station, Downtown Raleigh
831-0850
www.seaboardwine.com
Mon-Sat 10-6, Thurs & Fri 10-8.
Tasting Bar Thurs & Fri 4-8.

Uncorked

Lovely Austrian Whites

By Michael Braverman

(06/12/2007) Tegernseerhof is not the easiest name for English speakers to pronounce. But it is well worth the effort. The winery has made it a bit simpler this year with new labels featuring a large “T” in a bold serif typeface.

Tegernseerhof is in a dramatically beautiful area of terraced hillsides along the Danube in the Wachau, a bit west of Vienna. Stone walls retain the heat of the sun and provide an ideal environment for grapes to properly mature in, even if they make harvesting a more difficult job. The region is best known for the grüner veltliner grape, another Austrian name that you ought to remember because it makes one of the loveliest white wines to be

found anywhere.

I sampled six wines from Tegernseerhof last week when Martin Mittelbach, a ninth-generation winemaker, was visiting East Hampton to promote his wines to wine store and restaurant buyers. Austrian whites in general, and certainly the output of Tegernseerhof, reflect a welcome move away from neutral, bland or overoaked wines to refreshing whites with distinctive character.

I began with a rosé made from zweigelt, a red grape indigenous to Austria. As with any rosé, color, temperature, and price count more than serious analysis. This one is a cheerful pink color that looked gorgeous sitting on a table in the sunshine with trees and grass in the background. It is best chilled but not icy, to bring out the fresh strawberry and rose petal aromas. The bright fruit profile is nicely balanced with crisp mineral notes for a very satisfying taste. The 2006 vintage, from a good



harvest in Austria, costs about \$12.50 a bottle, making it affordable for everyday summer drinking.

Tegernseerhof produces a dry riesling labeled Terrassen 2004. Peach, green apple, and white pepper are the dominant scents in this light, graceful wine. It is perfect for summer meals, with fresh vegetables, fish or chicken, or maybe just with a quart of Wainscott strawberries. It sells for about \$21.75.

Four different grüner veltliner whites from Tegernseerhof are distributed here on the East End, and they amply demonstrate the sprightly and lively qualities of this grape. Young grüner veltliner is generally a bright, fresh wine with citrus tones and peppery notes, and strong mineral underpinnings. For casual drinking, try the “T 26.” It is gently priced at \$13.50, a bargain for a wine of this quality. It has a charming balance of fruit and floral flavors, so you can use it for sipping or with meals.

The Bergdistal 2004 (\$22) and the Hohereck 2004 (\$34) are variations on the grüner veltliner theme. They are intense and powerful but so finely made that the scents and tastes seem perfectly organized. You can tell you are drinking a serious white wine.

Each time over the past few years that I have tasted Tegernseerhof’s Creation, I have fallen under its spell. Tegernseerhof does with grüner veltliner what the great Burgundy producers do with chardonnay: They coax an almost unimaginable complexity from the grape. Creation 2004 is made in small quantities with grapes from vines that are 40 to 60 years old. It is an enchanting wine, brisk, vibrant, with a soft, almost creamy feel, layered with depth and power. I am a frugal purchaser when it comes to wine, but I would not object to spending \$36 for Creation. For me it is as good as a white wine gets to be.

Tegernseerhof wines are available in several East End wine stores, including Domaine in East Hampton, and they will be appearing on some restaurant wine lists this summer.

—

Michael Braverman can be e-mailed duncorked@easthamptonstar.com.

The following quotes came from an article written in the New York Times...

The Unspeakable Delights of Zweigelt

Published June 13, 2007

“...Today we’re talking specifically about Austria. If Austria is known at all for its wines, it’s for whites. Its dry, minerally rieslings are more full-bodied than Germany’s, while its peppery grüner veltliners have actually achieved a modest vogue of their own. Yet as delicious as Austrian whites can be, **the real excitement these days is in the discovery of its reds, most notably Zweigelt** (pronounced TSVYE-gelt)...

...As for zweigelt, these wines are ripe for discovery right now. Their lightness makes them fine reds for summer drinking, while their spicy, floral flavors should sustain them in colder weather. Their price is right year round...



...Zweigelts took the four top spots in our list of favorites. Our No. 1 wine,

the 2005 Leo Hillinger, epitomized what we liked about them. It was *lively and refreshing, with cherry, mineral and spice flavors, energizing rather than fatiguing...*

...Similarly, our **No. 2 wine, the 2005 Steininger Novemberlese** *bright and vibrant, with aromas and flavors of cinnamon, sour cherry and flowers.* At \$16, the Steininger was also our best value...

...Anton Bauer Donauland Zweigelt 2005 *Juicy and appealing, with floral and cherry flavors...*”

The Washington Post



Food Section April 4, 2007

Sohm's Pizza Pairings

Wednesday, April 4, 2007; Page F09

Sure, wine director Aldo Sohm can advise diners at the upscale New York City restaurants Blaue Gans, Cafe Sabarsky and Wallse on great bottles to open with duck and venison -- such as the 1995 Vega Sicilia "Unico" Ribera del Duero that tops his lists at \$550.

But how would this wine expert respond when asked for a few tips for the rest of us -- say, pizza eaters who don't feel like shelling out more than 20 bucks to accompany a slice or two?

2005 Zweigelt Hillinger (Burgenland, Austria), \$17



Zweigelt 2005

Zweigelt is a traditional Austrian grape variety. Brilliant ruby red color with fresh cherry/blackberry aromas. Reminiscent of a full-bodied Cotes-du-Rhone with deep berry fruit, pepper, zippy spice and a warm full finish.

Enjoy with grilled meats and spicy vegetarian dishes.

Weingut Anton Bauer is recognized as leading winemaker

Winemaker Anton Bauer has just received rave reviews from Gault Millau in their recent evaluations and is ranked among the Top 10 Austrian white wine winegrowers, a growing and highly competitive field.

Gault Millau Austria has given high ratings to the wines of Anton Bauer of Feuersbrunn, Austria in the Wagram region. Bauer's *Gruner Veltliner Grande Reserve 2005* received 19 points on a scale of 20. This rating places Bauer in the Top10 white winemakers in his country. The Top 10 list is typically dominated by the wines of the well-known Wachau and South Styria winemakers. Anton Bauer views this as not only a confirmation of his years of hard work, but also a statement for the quality of the Wagram's terroir. „Through hard work, one can select grapes from the Wagram's sloped Loess soil to make complex and elegant wines. The wines have a certain creaminess, which is pleasant without being overshadowing the fruits and other flavors. “

Anton Bauer's places his emphasis on the Gruner Veltliner varietal. The 18 point rating for his *Gruner Veltliner Rosenberg 2005* shows that Bauer can produce a broad range of wines. He demonstrates an ability to draw out the key characteristics of each vineyard and highlight its advantages. „The careful selection of the perfect grape clusters is particularly important to me. During my analysis, the balance between the acid level and extraction are most essential, the ripeness alone is not determinant. With my *Gruner Veltliner Grande Reserve 2005*, the selection of the Barriques plays an additional and substantial role: this gives this wine its wonderful fullness in the nose, body and palate



ANTON BAUER