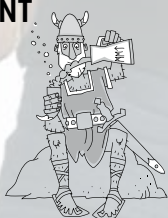


“ÖCHSLE



TRAVEL & ENJOYMENT

OVERVIEW OF ALL
GERMAN WINE
GROWING REGIONS



EXPERIENCE WINE

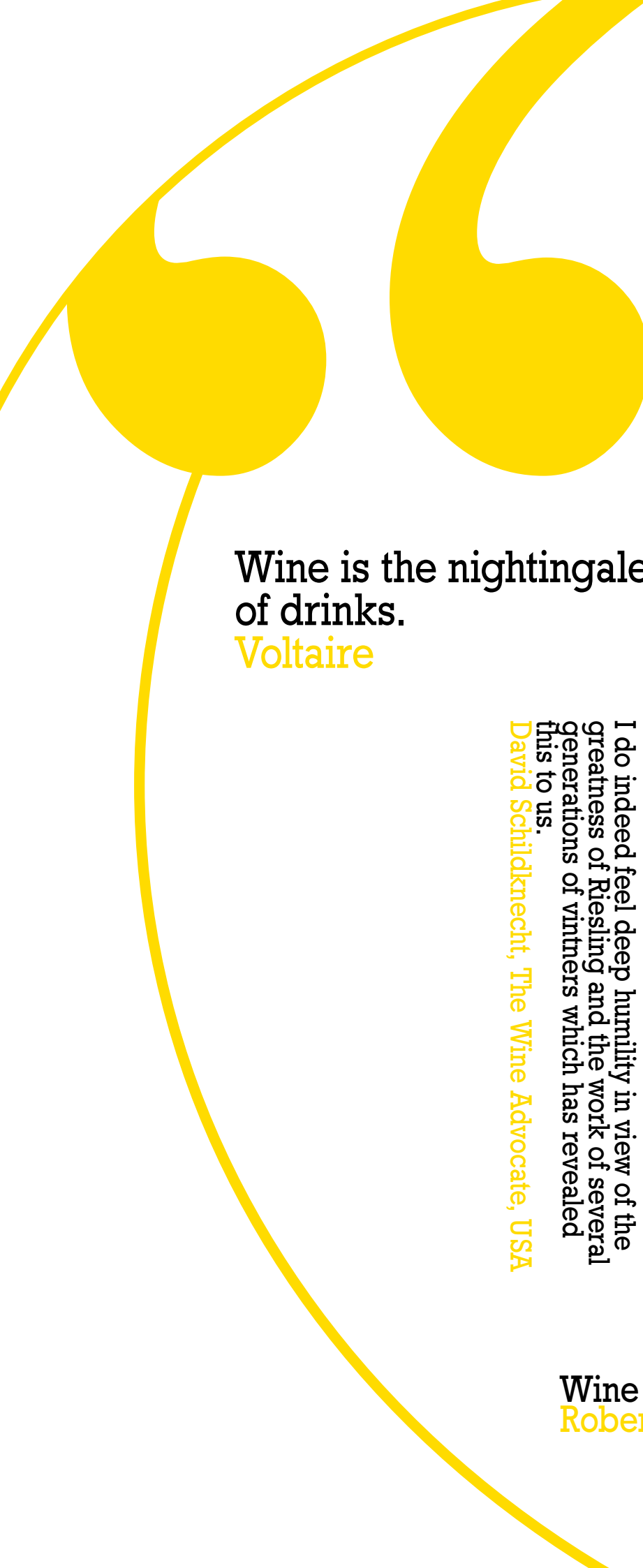
TIPS FOR
THE ACTIVE



WINE KNOWLEDGE

ALL YOU NEED TO
KNOW FROM AHR
TO ZELLERTAL





**Wine is the nightingale
of drinks.**
Voltaire

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

Wine is bottled poetry.
Robert Louis Stevenson

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

**It's a pity that one
cannot stroke wine.**

Kurt Tuscholsky

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, English author and wine critic

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

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, Hongkong

German wines are the antithesis of those produced in America... Thank god for German wine!
Paul Grieco, Restaurant Hearth, New York



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FIRST EDITION

August 2011

Definition of Oechsle: The riper the grape, the more sugar the juice contains. Measuring the must weight enables the vintner to make an inference about the ripeness of the grapes. The measurement is expressed in degrees Oechsle in Germany (see page 58).

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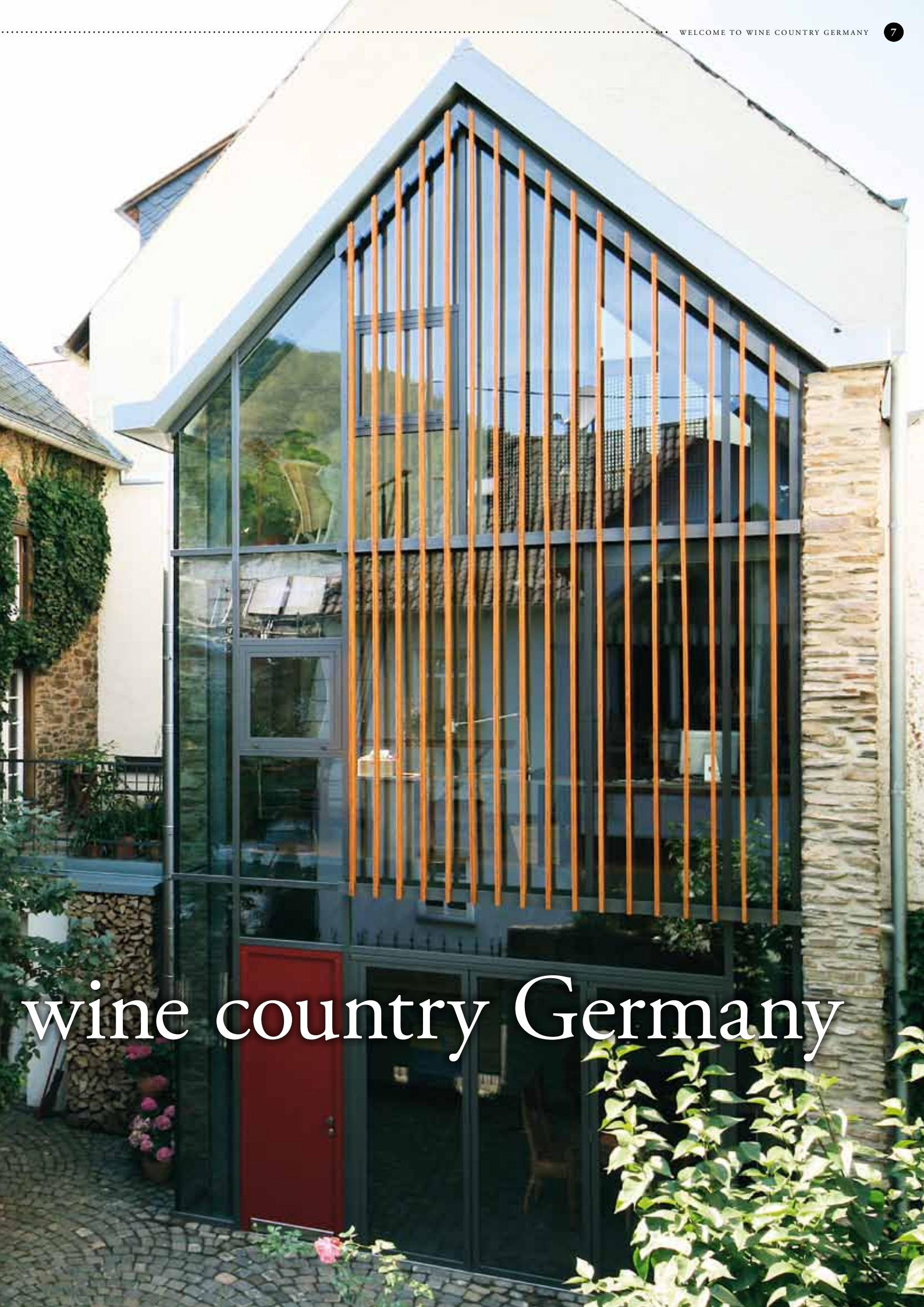
70 German wines and
international cuisine





Welcome to

Zeitgeist then and now:
Lubentiushof winery
in Niederfell, Mosel



wine country Germany



- 1_ Weingut Schloss Wackerbarth, Radebeul, Sachsen
- 2_ Winzerkeller Sommerach, Sommerach, Franken
- 3_ Vinothek Divino, Nordheim, Franken
- 4_ Weingut am Stein, Würzburg, Franken
- 5_ Weingut Horcher, Kallstadt, Pfalz
- 6_ Weingut Carl Koch Erben, Oppenheim, Rheinhessen
- 7_ Weingut Julius, Gundheim, Rheinhessen
- 8_ Weingut Meintzinger, Frickenhausen, Franken
- 9_ Weingut Rebhof, Nonnenhorn, Württemberg



Photo 2, 3, 4, 8 and 9: Dieter Leistner, © LWG, Veitshöchheim
 Photo 6: Dieter Leistner
 Photo 7: © Raum + Architektur Christiane Jeromin

200 years ago the vintners in Germany did not have an easy time. During a trip on the Rhine, the world traveller Georg Forster – who had sailed around the world with Captain James Cook – wrote about the German wine-growers:

“For six years he gets by miserably or anticipates the purchase price of the good grape harvest which usually happens every seven or eight years; when the wine is drinkable and available in good quantity, he will indulge himself in the profit for a while [...] and the following year will be a beggar again as before.”

Views of the Lower Rhine, 1790, Chapter I

Thankfully much has changed since then, and today, the “green” job of vintner is more in demand than ever.

Modern dynamism

For about 30 years, the German wine scene has been characterised by increasing dynamism. Until the 1980s, football and cars “made in Germany” were two fundamental things the quality of which even the most critical Germans themselves were convinced of. Since then, German wine has gained an equally worthy image on home soil. You need to understand that for a long time only wines from other countries such as France and Italy were deemed to be great by wine enthusiasts in Germany. The fact that Rheingau Riesling wines had sold at higher prices than many a Bordeaux wine in the past, had been forgotten.

Today, wines from German wine regions are typically represented again on the wine lists of top restaurants. Success in national and international wine competitions create maximum attention, every bookshop offers books and guides on German wines. Knowledgeable sommeliers recommend German

wines in television cooking shows. And, at a time when the Germans like to spend their holidays in their own country anyway, a holiday at a wine estate is in fashion. The wine growing regions have recognised the tourism potential of their landscapes and products.

New restaurant culture, new wines

What has happened? In the 1980s, a growing interest in fine cuisine – especially in French and Italian style – started up in Germany. Gourmet magazines proclaimed the doctrine of dry wine with meals. Italian and French gourmet restaurants in Germany offered a large selection of wines from these countries. German wines at that time were mainly made in a sweet style: “Too sweet”, as most gourmets said. It was not surprising that local wines had not managed to find a place on gourmet tables. Furthermore, offering meals was only a secondary objective of the traditional wine bar. In good German tradition you would have a bottle of wine in the company of friends but not necessarily

offer a set menu with it. There were no classical food combinations associated with the German grape varieties.

A lot has changed since then. When travelling to foreign countries the Germans learned how closely related wine is to the Mediterranean lifestyle and food culture. Just as in France or Italy they wanted to enjoy wine with dinner at home. The winemakers increasingly made their wines dry, and many pioneers were initially ridiculed for this by their colleagues! With a young generation of chefs a refined regional cuisine developed. Since the 1990s, cookery shows have had a boom on television. Cocooning – the life in a comfortably designed home, which includes a high-quality kitchen designed for cooking together with friends – has been a trend for years. Dry German wine is part of this new lifestyle.

Kissed awake from slumber

The wines and their appearance have changed over several generations. The young, highly trained winemakers from Germany have travelled the world and gathered experience in France, California, Australia and elsewhere. Many came home and started clearing out the cellar. Modern stainless steel tanks and barrique barrels were purchased, and the yield was reduced by green harvest – the thinning-out of unripe berries to concentrate the strength of the vine on the few remaining grapes. Fathers and grandfathers would look on in horror as the junior generation simply cut off healthy grapes in the vineyard! But the wines were of a new and better quality. Many young vintners introduced a completely changed range of wine, planted new varieties of grapes, designed modern labels and presented their wines in chic new wine shops.

Strength in unity

The German winegrowers' cooperatives have developed very dynamically in recent years. They all invested heavily in quality management, investments which have paid off and can be detected in the taste of the wines. You can see this for yourself, particularly in the regions where the co-operatives have the greatest economic importance and market about 80 percent of the wines: the regions Baden and Württemberg. Nationwide around one third of Germany's vineyard areas are farmed by cooperative members.

New winegrowers in the country

This new approach can be seen today in many wines. For example, in addition to the classic Weißherbst (rosé) there is now the Blanc de Noir, a white wine made from red grapes, which was immediately successful in the market. Barrique wines, which had once been rejected by the wine commissions during the testing of quality wines because of their lack of typicity, have long since been on the lists of almost all wine producers. The dynamics can also be seen in the growing segment of wines from organic farming. Only 20 or 30 years ago, the pioneers of ecological wine cultivation were smiled upon by many wine connoisseurs while today a large number of wines from leading enterprises have an eco certificate.

DID YOU KNOW?

In monarchies, the royal title is hereditary. Not so with the German Wine Queen, who is elected every year by a large panel of experts. Only the local wine queens from the 13 wine-growing areas can stand as candidates. The one who can best represent and explain the German wine – not only in the German language – with competence, skill and humour will be elected. During her term of office, the Wine Queen represents the German wine at numerous events and appointments at home and abroad, even as far away as Canada or Japan. The German Wine Institute has been organising the election of the Wine Queen since 1949. The German Wine Queen still wears a crown at official occasions, but the former traditional dirndl-look is a thing of the past. German Wine Queens are modern, highly trained young professional women with the talent to enthuse others with their passion for German wine.

HOW DO YOU BECOME A VINTNER?

What is the best job in the world? Vintner, of course! This is demonstrated by numerous celebrities, who one day fulfil their dream and buy a vineyard. But that is not enough to be able to produce good wines, as the incredibly versatile craft of winemaking must first be learned. Also the number of female winegrowers has been increasing for years. The profession is no longer a male domain! German universities enjoy a high reputation worldwide. A "Geisenheimer" (graduate from the Viticultural Institute Geisenheim) is a term known throughout the winemaking world. Another well-known educational institution is the University of Heilbronn. The colleges of Bingen, Kaiserslautern and Ludwigshafen together with the Dienstleistungszentrum Ländlicher Raum (Service Centre for Rural Areas) in Neustadt an der Weinstraße offer a course in Viticulture and Enology.

GOOD WINES START IN THE MIND

A vintner in Germany today is a multi-talent: farmer and grape cultivator, geologist, biologist, mechanic, meteorologist, oenologist, cellar master, marketing expert, quality manager, legal expert, entertainer and, more recently, a specialist in sustainable management - all in one person! A winegrower like that knows exactly what sort of wine he wants to make; a lot is left to nature, but nothing to chance. More likely than not he has expanded his knowledge by practical training in other countries. German wine-growing colleges, research and teaching institutions, have an excellent international reputation. "Geisenheimer" (graduates from the Viticultural Institute Geisenheim), for instance, are working in many vineyards all over the world. During training, the young future vintners already share their experiences, compare the wines of their home area with others, taste and work together with others. This peering over the rim of the proverbial tea cup broadens their horizons and prepares them to face competition from wines of other areas.

GOOD CONNECTIONS

Even after finishing their studies the young vintners stay in touch. This is shown by numerous groups in which the mostly young wine-makers develop and market their wines together. One of the first groups to be established was the "Leiwener Jungwinzer" (young vintners from Leiwen), some of whom have long since passed the

“age limit” of 30. The “Fünf Freunde in der Südpfalz” (Five Friends in the Southern Palatinate) have also attracted a lot of attention in the media, and their wines were and still are appreciated by connoisseurs. Other groups are called “Message in a Bottle”, “Junges Schwaben” (Young Swabia), “Next Generation” or “Südpfalz Connexion”. Many groups create a wine or wine type together, such as the “Rheingauer Leichtsinn” (Rheingau Improvidence), a summer-fresh sparkling

wine; or they are committed to a particular grape variety like the group “Frank & Frei,” which has helped the Müller-Thurgau to gain a new image in Franken. Under the motto “Generation Riesling” young vintners from all wine-growing areas are causing a sensation. They present the new vintage together, appear at trade shows and give all the wines from the German wine-growing regions – not just the Riesling – a modern, young look.

www.generation-riesling.de

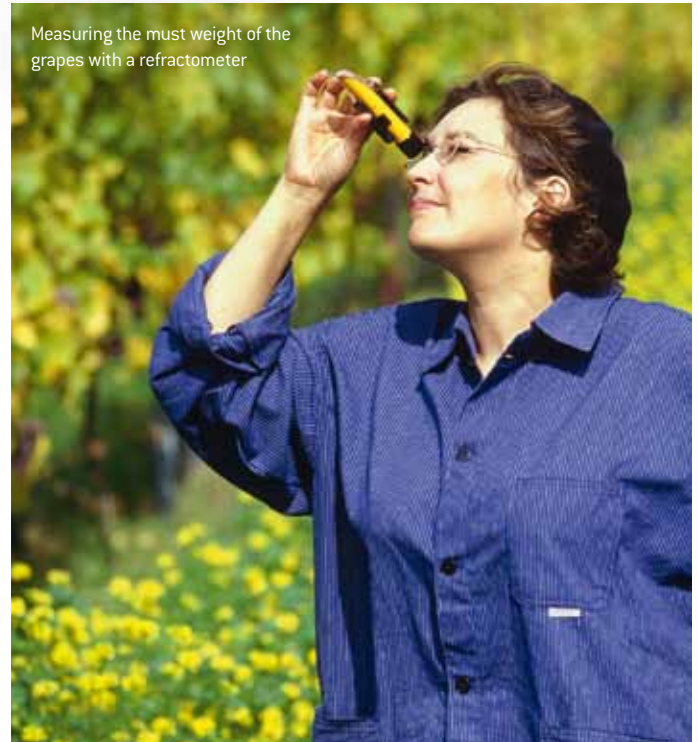
FACEBOOK, TWITTER ETC.

Today, the German wine growers can be found in social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and others. There are also a number of wine forums, where like-minded people exchange information about German wines. These media are increasing in importance worldwide as regards the communication about recommendations of German wines.

Highlight of the wine year:
the harvest



Measuring the must weight of the
grapes with a refractometer



The mash is stirred regularly
during fermentation



Tasting the
new vintage



German wine history

in fast motion

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 not its exact cause.



before 50 BC

THE ROMANS

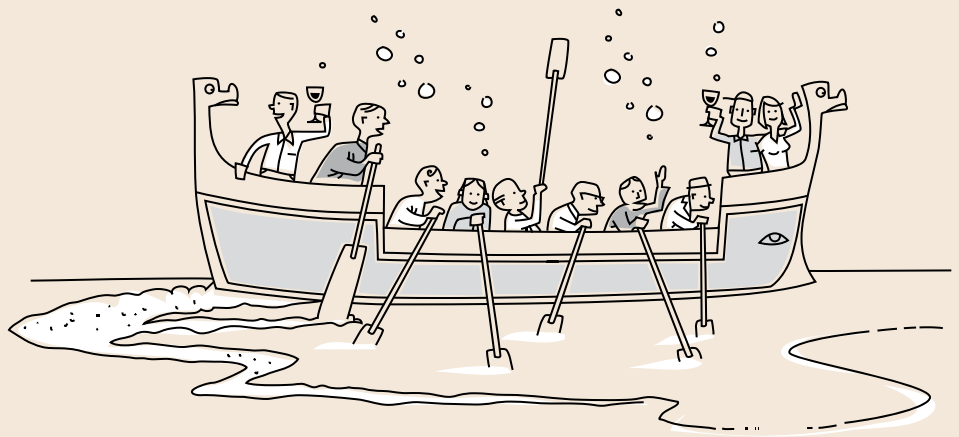
With the conquest of Germania the vine arrived at the Mosel and later at the Rhine. The Mosel is Germany's oldest wine-growing region, Trier – by the name of Augusta Treverorum – was the capital of the Western Roman Empire. Numerous excavations of wine-presses (e.g. at Piesport, Brauneberg and Erden) bear witness to the active culture of wine in the Mosel valley.

from 50 BC

“HAIL, MOSELLA”

The Roman consul and poet Decimus Magnus Ausonius describes the river and its steep vineyards in 483 hexameters: “Mosella”
The Romans carry wine on board ships. The “Neumagen wine ship”, tomb of a wine merchant from the 3rd century, is exhibited at the Rheinisches Landesmuseum (museum of the Rhineland district) in Trier - and tourists can travel on an 18 metre long replica in Neumagen-Dhron.

about 371 AD



DID YOU KNOW?

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

DID YOU KNOW?

The oldest wine in the world still liquid 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.

CHARLEMAGNE

The ruler of the Frankish Empire injected momentum into viticulture which was particularly practised by monasteries. The imperial and royal monastery Lorsch on the Hessische Bergstraße alone is said to have possessed about 900 vineyards around the year 850. From his winter quarters, the palace in Ingelheim, the Emperor recognised the suitability of the opposite side of the Rhine for viticulture, because on the southern slopes of the Rheingau region the snow melted

around 800



MONKS, NUNS, CHURCH DIGNITARIES

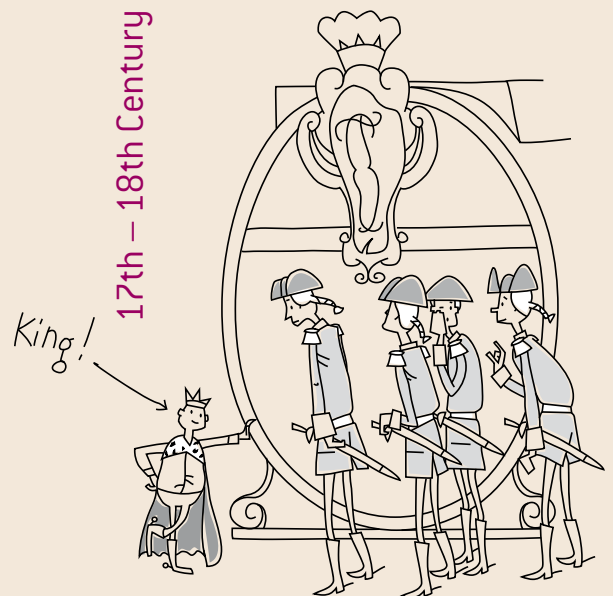
The foundation of monasteries such as Kloster Eberbach in the Rheingau region by the Cistercians (1136), the Benedictine Abbey of St. Hildegard near Rudesheim by Saint Hildegard of Bingen or the Augustinian Convent in Marienthal on the Ahr river (1137) are of great importance for viticulture. The monks planted numerous vineyards. Today, many names of vineyard locations still remind you that the church used to own these vineyards: Prälat (Prelate), Kirchenstück (Church Piece), Domdechaney (Cathedral Deanery), Abtsberg (Abbot's Hill), Domprobst (Cathedral Provost) ...

from 1100

earlier than elsewhere. He is often considered to be the founder of the so-called Strausswirtschaften – the seasonal wine bars: 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.



17th – 18th Century



LARGE DIMENSIONS

The vineyard area in Germany was never greater than before the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). However, during that war, many vineyards were destroyed and then lay wasted. Nevertheless, the rulers must have had a tendency towards gigantism. How else do you explain the Heidelberger Riesenfass (giant Heidelberg wine barrel)? The cask of 1751 holds up to 220,000 litres of wine - however, it was only filled three times. Tourists still gaze at it in wonder today.

THE MOUNTED SPÄTLESE MESSENGER

The discovery of the late harvest (Spätlese) was a coincidence: as the mounted messenger carrying the permission to harvest from the prince bishop of Fulda to the monks on the Johannisberg in the Rheingau was delayed for 14 days, harvesting could only begin after the berries were already affected by noble rot. "Such wine have I not tasted before," marvelled the cellarer. Why the messenger was late, is still unclear. But it is clear that the Spätlese to this day is one of the most important types of German wine. Incidentally, the term "Kabinett" can also be traced back to the monks. They stored their best wines in part of the cellar, which they called Kabinett.



1775



BIRTH OF THE ICE WINE

The birthplace of the German ice wine (Eiswein) is Dromersheim, a district of Bingen on the Rhine. It is thought that the first ice wine in Germany was picked there on 11th February 1830 from grapes of the year 1829. The wine-growers did not harvest the grapes because of their poor quality, but then decided to pick them in the winter in order to use them as cattle feed. They then noticed that the frozen grapes turned into a very sweet and tasty juice with a high must weight. They pressed the grapes, and ice wine was born.

1830

1787

ELECTOR CLEMENS WENCESLAUS OF SAXONY

The Elector and Archbishop of Trier played a crucial role as a wine connoisseur in shaping the wine region of the Mosel. He decreed that in order to improve quality all "bad" vines had to be replaced by Riesling vines within seven years. The result was one of the largest Riesling-growing areas in the world.

At last, that's the one!



1868

UNITY IS STRENGTH

As the "Winzer Verein zu Mayschoß" (wine-growers' association of Mayschoß) 18 vintners from the Ahr region formed the first German wine-growers' cooperative. Today there are cooperatives in all wine regions. About one-third of German vineyards are farmed by them. They are of great importance in Württemberg and Baden, where there are many part-time vintners.



PHYLLOXERA STRIKES

The vine pest came to Europe from North America and caused a viticultural crisis throughout the continent. In France, large parts of the winegrowing areas had been destroyed since 1865, when phylloxera appeared in Bonn, Saxony, Baden and on the Mosel. The desperate vintners tried in vain to combat the vine pest with petroleum and other means. Eventually in 1872 it was discovered that American vines were resistant. Since then, vines have been grafted onto American rootstock in Europe. Only a few vineyards in Germany still have self-rooted vines. However, the phylloxera louse has never been completely eradicated.



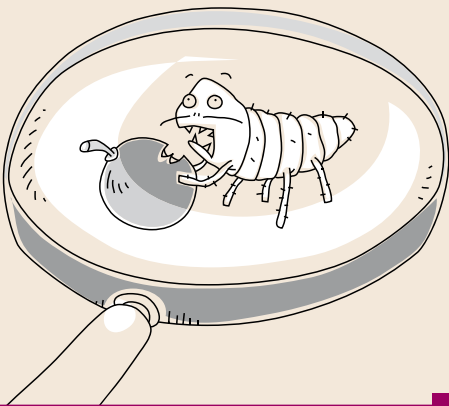
QUEEN FOR GERMANY

Elisabeth Gies, née Kuhn, from Diedesfeld in the Pfalz was 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 competent and popular ambassador of German wine at home and abroad. She certainly travels a lot: there are several hundred dates in her diary every year.
www.deutscheweinkoenigin.de

AN INSTITUTE FOR WINE

1949 also sees the establishment of the German Wine Institute, then under the name "Deutsche Weinwerbung GmbH" (German Wine Promotion). The Wine Institute, based in Mainz, which also runs the web site www.germanwines.de has a lot of useful information on topics such as grape varieties, wine regions, current events and publications. One area of operation of the German Wine Institute which has many information offices around the world is the international marketing of German wines.

from 1872

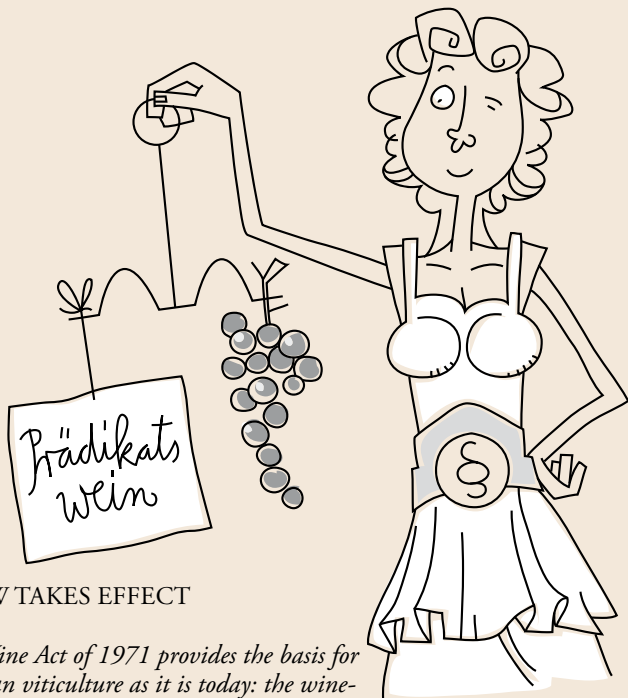


1949

1903 CONTROL IS BETTER

Since the Middle Ages, some rather draconian measures have been taken to punish wine adulterators: in 1471, a 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 conditions of production, compliance with regulations and the sensory quality of bottled and loose wines by random sampling in the vineyards as well as the correct labelling of the bottles.

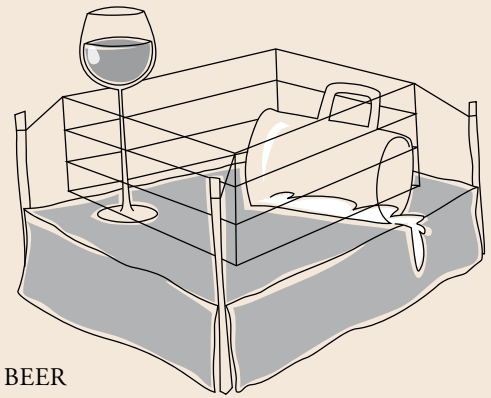




A LAW TAKES EFFECT

The Wine Act of 1971 provides the basis for German viticulture as it is today: the wine-growing regions, appellations of vineyard locations and large vineyard sites are still largely valid. Since then, there have also been clearly defined grades such as quality wine and predicate wine. The basis of the law was the creation of the Common Organisation of the Market in Wine in the EU.

1971



WINE BEATS BEER

For the first time, the Germans spend more money on wine than on beer. Although only just: the share of the household alcoholic beverage budget is 32.3 percent for wine, just ahead of the share for beer (32.2 percent). But in a country where beer consumption is much higher than the wine consumption, this is an historic moment. Since then the wine share has grown significantly.

RED WINE BOOM

The proportion of red wine varieties has been growing steadily since 1981, until it reached 36.9 percent in 2006. The reason: When replanting many vintners choose Pinot Noir, Dornfelder and other red grape varieties because Germans increasingly prefer to drink red wine. However, the area planted with red varieties has since then decreased slightly.

2001

2006

1990

NOW THERE ARE THIRTEEN

With the reunification of Germany the number of wine-growing regions increases to thirteen. The two additional areas are Sachsen and Saale-Unstrut.

1995

RIESLING RENAISSANCE

It is not that long ago that Riesling started to be seen again as the king of German wines – with a market share of over 60 percent Germany has the largest Riesling growing area in the world. The world's growing demand for German Riesling is associated with a change in the quality-oriented thinking and patterns of consumption. More and more winemakers rely on Riesling.

2010

LANDMARKS OF WINE CULTURE

Since 2010, the German Wine Institute has awarded prizes to "Landmarks of Wine Culture": places which are documenting the history and tradition of wine growing in an impressive way. These include old vineyards and wine museums as well as historical winepresses or traditional wine-growing communities.



TYPES OF GRAPE

RIESLING
 WEISSBURGUNDER
 GRAUBURGUNDER
 SPÄTBURGUNDER
 KERNER
 MÜLLER-THURGAU
 LEMBERGER
 DORNFELDER
 GUTEDEL
 GEWÜRZTRAMINER
 SCHWARZRIESLING
 SILVANER
 SCHEUREBE
 BACCHUS
 TROLLINGER

RED GRAPES  WHITE GRAPES 



RIESLING

THE UNDISPUTED KING Simply sniffing a Riesling is a great pleasure. Hints of apple, citrus, peach and apricot can be detected. The purity of fruit aroma combined with a unique fruit acidity make the Riesling into one of the greatest grape varieties in the world, which has been experiencing a true renaissance internationally in recent years. At the beginning of the 19th century German Riesling wines were among the most expensive in the world!

One can confidently speak of Germany as the home of the Riesling. After all, over 22,000 hectares in German vineyards are planted with Riesling which is about 60 percent of all the Riesling in the world. The Pfalz and the Mosel are the two largest Riesling-growing regions in the world. One of the first authenticated documents which mentions growing Riesling in this country is the invoice from a winery in Rüsselsheim to the Count of Katzenelnbogen for “six vines of Riesling planted in the vineyard”, dated 13th March 1435. Due to monastic viticulture this grape variety has introduced important new emphasis to the wine culture since the Middle Ages. The term “Johannisberg Riesling”, commonly used in the United States, is derived from the Johannisberg vineyard in the Rheingau, the oldest surviving Riesling

vineyard in the world. Riesling quickly spread into the German wine regions – particularly into the river valleys, whose heat-storing capacity was especially well suited to this variety. Thanks to German immigrants Riesling also advanced to other countries in the world, such as Australia, the USA and New Zealand.

Unlike most other grape varieties the character of a Riesling depends on the type of soil it grows in. Heavy clay soils promote a citrus fruit aroma, new red sandstone ensures a taste of apricot in the wine, and slate soils create a concise mineral note which is at times reminiscent of flint. Riesling wines can age beautifully. When matured, they often have a noble dark greenish-blue tinge that promises maximum enjoyment to the connoisseur.

A great grape like the 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 – regardless whether created dry, semi-dry or noble sweet. Riesling is wonderfully refreshing in this diversity and as a food companion goes particularly well with fish and poultry dishes with light sauces, or vegetable ragout. As the semi-dry variety, it is the ideal accompaniment to Asian cuisine. And then there are the

sweet treasures: Beerenauslese and Trockenbeerenauslese. Incomparable and extremely durable pleasures which have one thing in common: the noble rot (*botrytis cinerea*) gives the Riesling aromas further perfection. The 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 and it is neither too cold nor too dry, then there is nothing to stop the sweet pleasures.

The elixir from these individually hand-picked berries delivers concentrated flavours with bright Riesling acidity. The smell of dried fruit, honey, ripe pineapple and yellow peaches caresses the nose. These are 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 flavours and sweetness of a grape, which can reach must weights of up to 250° Dechslé. No wonder then that Riesling ice wines rate among the treasures of wine.

SPÄTBURGUNDER

THE TRENDY RED

Pinot Noir (Spätburgunder) is certainly the finest red wine variety in Germany. It only thrives in the best locations where it develops the complex characteristic cherry fruit aroma, subtle hints of smoke and almond and other fine fruit nuances, reminiscent of red berries.

Growing Pinot Noir 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 the 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 is one of the varieties which has already been cultivated for a long time. 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. From here, the grape variety spread further north

during the following centuries.

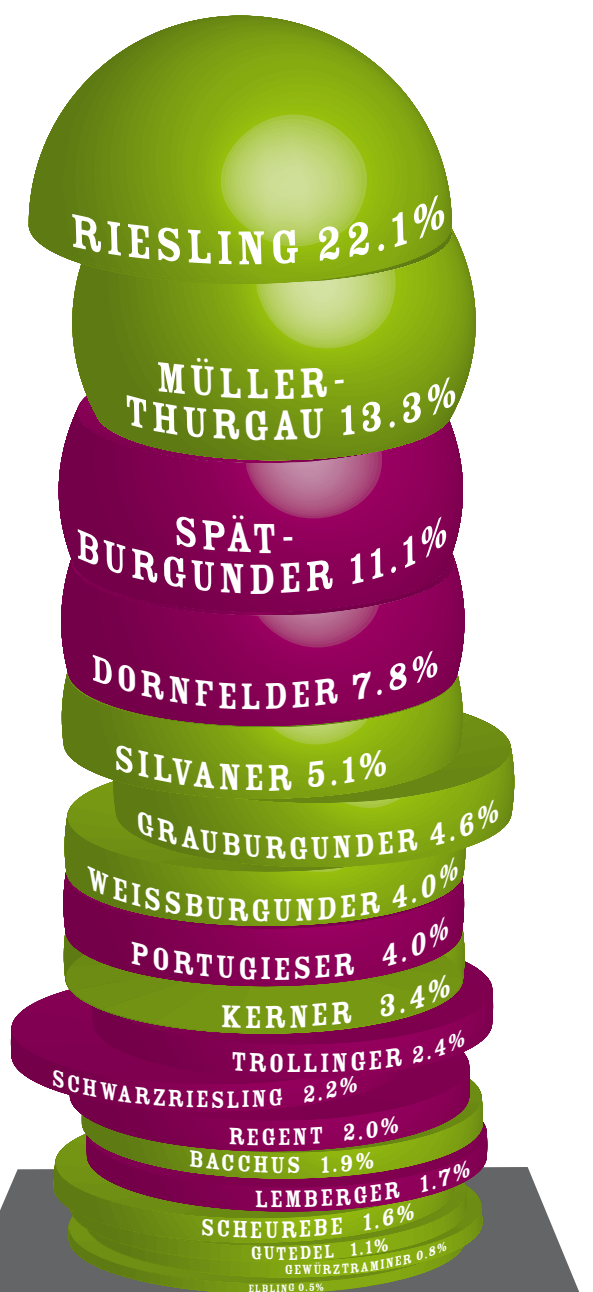
Pinot Noir makes high demands on climate and soil. The best locations are only just good enough for one of the finest representatives of red wine. As a so-called "Cool Climate" grape variety Pinot Noir – like Riesling – is virtually predestined for cultivation in Germany. The growing season in our latitudes 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. This makes it so exciting for wine lovers: Pinot Noirs from different German wine-growing areas are not interchangeable, and friends of wine will be able to taste where the wine comes from.

There are two main variants of the full-bodied, mostly dry, fine red: the type 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 of brighter colour. Both types do very well from well-measured storage in barrels. When separated quickly from the skins Pinot Noir must turn 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 5,800 hectares, most of the German Pinot Noir is grown in Baden. However, this noble variety plays a role in almost every wine-growing region. The main role certainly in the Ahr valley whose Pinot Noir causes international furore.

The most important grape varieties



Percentage of cultivated vineyards from a total area of 102.197 hectares in 2010

WEISSBURGUNDER (Pinot Blanc) Derives from the Pinot Noir and thrives excellently everywhere where it is too hot for Riesling. Light-footed, fresh and with its well-integrated acidity very popular with food. Smells and tastes of citrus fruit, pears, melons, green nuts. Well suited for making sparkling wine or maturing in barrique barrels and reaches impressive qualities in top locations.

GRAUBURGUNDER (Pinot Gris) Derives from the Pinot Noir. The sweeter version is labelled Ruländer, but Pinot Gris is today mostly produced as a dry wine which is very compatible with food and whose flavours 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.

MÜLLER-THURGAU (ALSO CALLED: 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 muscat. Müller-Thurgau is the second most widely planted grape in Germany, which ripens early and delivers a fresh, summery draught which can be enjoyed at any occasion and delight as fragrant sparkling wines, too.

SILVANER Comes from a natural cross between Traminer and Österreichisch Weiss (literally Austrian white) and is one of the oldest grape varieties. In 1659, the cultivation of Silvaner was first documented in this country, namely in Castell (Franken). Franken today has the highest percentage of Silvaner, but the biggest growing area of Silvaner in the world is located in Rheinhessen. This variety can express its terroir almost as well as the Riesling. The aromas often 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, classically with asparagus, but you should also try it with fish.

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

LEMBERGER This variety probably comes from Austria where it is known as Blaufränkisch and, in Germany, was especially popular in Württemberg during the 19th century. Lemberger was the favourite wine of Federal President Theodor Heuss, a native of Württemberg. The smooth, dark, berry-fruity Lemberger is becoming increasingly popular as an uncomplicated drinking wine for every day and also as a noble barrique wine for special occasions. The aromas are reminiscent of ripe black berries, plums and cherries, Lemberger can have a strong tannin structure, depending on the type.

TROLLINGER Württemberg's "bread and butter red wine" is light-coloured, light, palatable 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. The fragrant aromas are reminiscent of flowers and sour cherries. Tasty with a hearty snack between meals with bacon, ham and cheese as well as with typical Württemberg specialties. Serve lightly chilled.

PORTUGIESE This simple, fresh wine is often produced as a Weißherbst (Rosé). Portugieser has mild tannins and is the third most widely grown red grape in Germany. Incidentally, Portugieser is completely unknown in Portugal! It probably originates in Austria or Hungary. Typical aromas are red currant, raspberry and strawberry. With reduced yields Portugieser red wines are amazingly dense and can easily mature in oak barrels.

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, 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 nice sparkling wine.

ELBLING Has been found in Europe for about 2000 years and was probably called „Vitis Alba“ – white grape – by the Romans. In Germany, it is now almost exclusively grown at the Mosel. Light and lively with fresh acidity – a wine for simple pleasure which is also made into a great sparkling wine. There is no better thirst quencher for hot summer days than a dry Elbling!

BACCHUS This variety was bred in the 1930s by crossing Silvaner and Riesling with Müller-Thurgau. In 2010, just under 2,000 hectares of vineyard area was 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 rich in extract and fruity with an independent bouquet which sometimes is similar to that of Scheurebe. Bacchus wines with a very high must weight and sufficient acidity can be similar to Riesling; they have a flowery aroma with a hint of Muscat. With its finely spicy aroma, Bacchus goes well with Asian dishes and fruity desserts such as fruit salad.

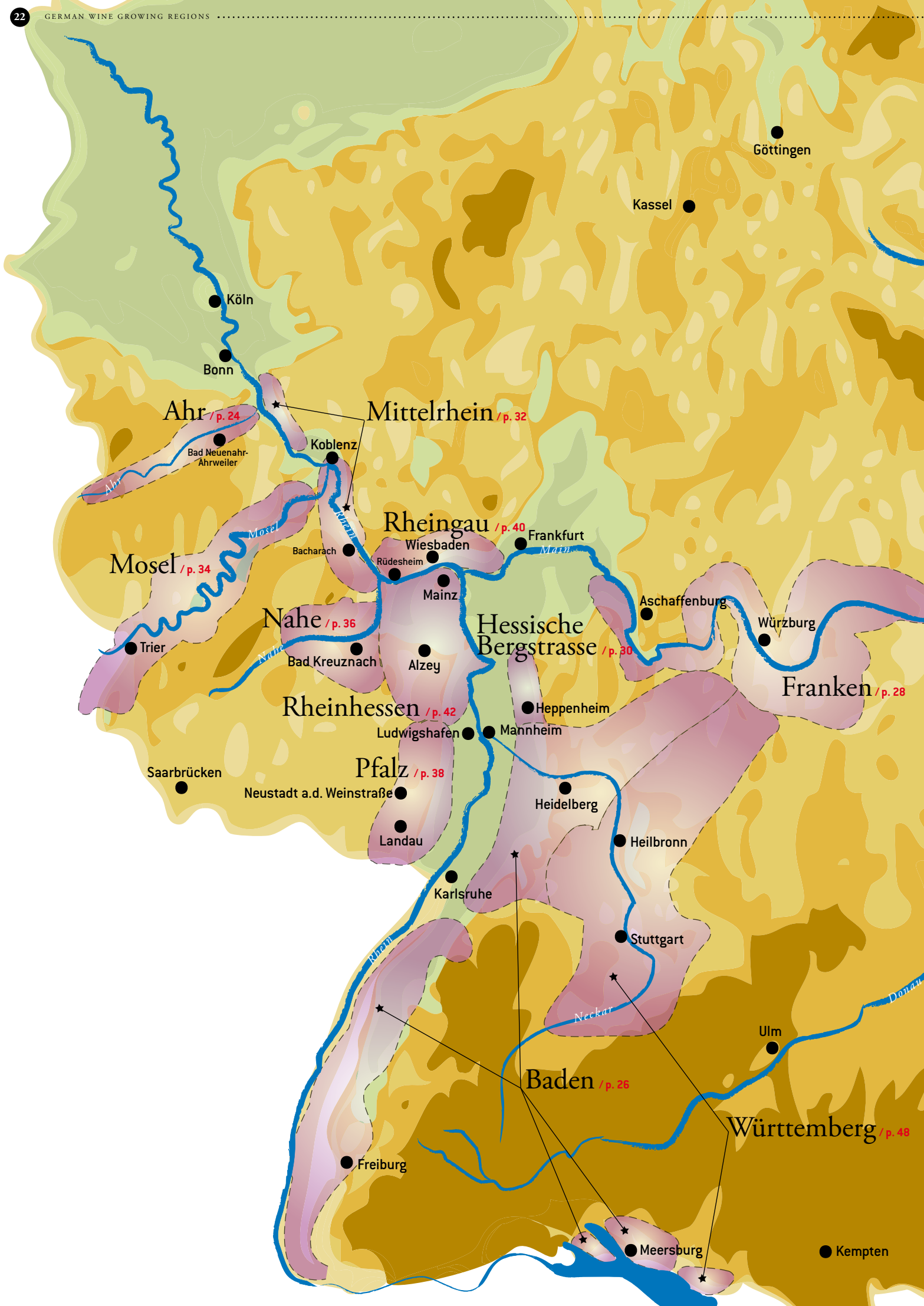
SCHWARZRIESLING (Pinot Meunier) Despite its name this old cultured vine is not at all related to the Riesling, but stems from the Pinot family. The name Pinot Meunier (Meunier = miller) points to the fine white hairs on the leaves which makes them look like they were dusted with flour. Pleasant as a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

SCHEUREBE Bred in Alzey in Rheinhessen by Georg Scheu in 1916 it is a cross between Riesling and Silvaner. One of the most popular bouquet varieties. Characteristically and intensively fragrant of black currant (cassis), also of 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 summer terrace wine.

GEWÜRZTRAMINER Traditional bouquet wine with the characteristic scent of rose blossoms; other aromas are those of 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. The planting of Gewürztraminer is currently increasing and the wine vinified in all its variants. The noble sweet varieties which are among the finest dessert wines are especially creamy and luxuriant and good companions for cheese.

KERNER This white variety, a cross 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 drop, which is a perfect food companion when vinified as a full-bodied wine. As a sweet late vintage it is an ideal summer terrace wine. It is also suitable as a base wine for sparkling wine and as a cuvée partner. The aromas are often reminiscent of green apples, pears and white currants.

REGENT The breeding of grape varieties has a long history in Germany, on the one hand in order to improve varieties or to create new ones, on the other hand to reduce the risk of infection with disease. Naturally, the wines derived from new breeds should taste good, too! Regent, a new red grape variety bred from Silvaner and Riesling crossed with 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 with a good tannin structure. Since the Regent is very resistant to fungal diseases, it can be found frequently in organic farming. The area under cultivation of Regent has grown from 70 to over 2,000 hectares in only one decade.



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Köln

Bonn

Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler

Koblenz

Bacharach

Wiesbaden

Rüdesheim

Mainz

Frankfurt

Trier

Bad Kreuznach

Alzey

Kassel

Göttingen

Aschaffenburg

Würzburg

Saarbrücken

Neustadt a.d. Weinstraße

Landau

Heppenheim

Mannheim

Heidelberg

Heilbronn

Karlsruhe

Stuttgart

Ulm

Freiburg

Meersburg

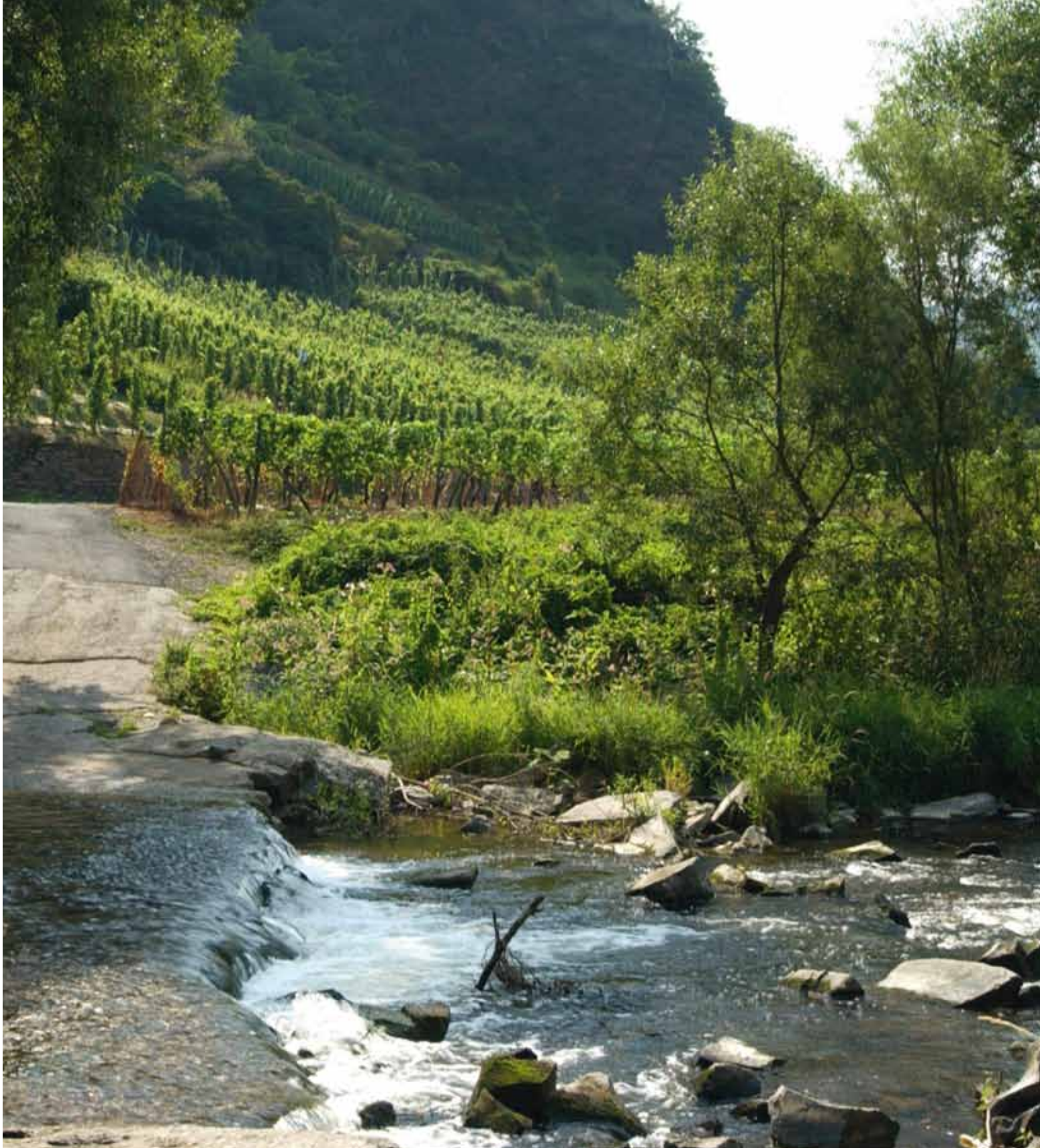
Kempten

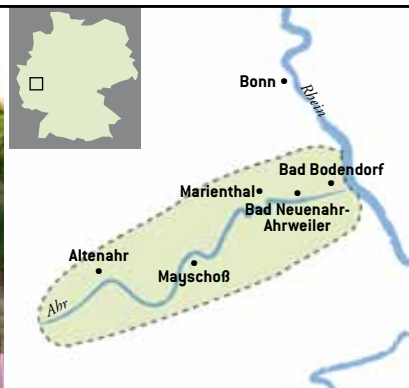


German wine growing regions

Ahr

Red wine paradise





THE AHR IS ONE of the smaller wine-growing regions with only about 560 hectares of vineyards. Its special feature: 85 percent of grapes grown in this region are red varieties which is a higher proportion than in any other German wine-growing area. Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir), Portugieser and Frühburgunder predominate, while Riesling is the most important white variety.

The region takes its name from the river Ahr which flows into the Rhine about 40 kilometres south of the former federal capital Bonn. The slopes of the picturesque Ahr valley mostly favourably face south. There is little rain, throughout the year the average temperature is quite low. The fact that the demanding Pinot Noir grows so well at the Ahr is mainly due to the soil. The Ahr valley is part of the Rhenish Slate Mountains. And the slate soil is an excellent basis for vines: During the day they store heat and release it again at night – like natural underfloor heating! The river also has a balancing effect on the climate.

Vineyard area:
ca. 560 ha,
85% red wine

Most important grape varieties:
Spätburgunder, Portugieser,
Riesling

Further information:
www.ahrwein.de



Mayschoß:
Cradle of winegrowers' cooperatives

Marienthal Monastery:
Wine tasting in the vaulted cellar

For two million years the river Ahr has carved itself into the slate mountains. The valley is narrow and the slopes are steep, especially at the Mittelahr. This wild and romantic valley is the most diverse botanical region of the Rhenish Slate Mountains and the habitat of rare animal species. This is where the wild cat and the eagle owl bid each other good night.

PINOT NOIR IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE MOST POPULAR GRAPE VARIETY IN THE AHR.

It only came to the region after the Thirty Years' War. Other vines had already been cultivated there by the Romans since the first century AD. The Ahr red wines are elegant and complex and have good aging potential.

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the first winegrowers' cooperatives in the world and the first one in Germany was founded in Mayschoß in 1868. And this is why it happened: bad harvests and oppressive duties meant that many winemaking families could no longer subsist on their work in the winery. Some emigrated, others joined together to collectively operate a wine cellar. An idea that works to this day – not only in the Ahr region!

page left:
vineyards at the Ahr

small photos above:
Marienthal Castle (left),
winegrowers' cooperative
in Mayschoß

Vineyard area:
ca. 16,000 ha,
56% white wine

Most important grape varieties:
Spätburgunder, Müller-Thurgau,
Grauburgunder, Weißburgunder,
Riesling

Further information:
www.badischerwein.de



*The Holy Spirit wine press
of Meersburg*

*Reichenau – where wine is cultivated
in water*

The Great Vat in Heidelberg Castle

*Volcanic rock garden at the Winklerberg
in Ihringen*

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 third largest wine region of the country.

Baden is characterised by a particularly 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. This includes the warmer areas of Europe. It is said that because of the Belfort Gap Baden is Pinot country. Pinot Noir, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris thrive in this area.

page right above:
view of Meersburg and
Lake Constance

page right below:
vineyards in Baden
near Durbach

small photos below:
harbour at Reichenau

DID YOU KNOW?

Among the excellent white wines from Baden is the “Klingelberger”. This is simply a Riesling known by that name in the Ortenau. 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, had Riesling planted in 1782. The fact that this vineyard was first planted with only a single variety, was an innovation at that time.



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

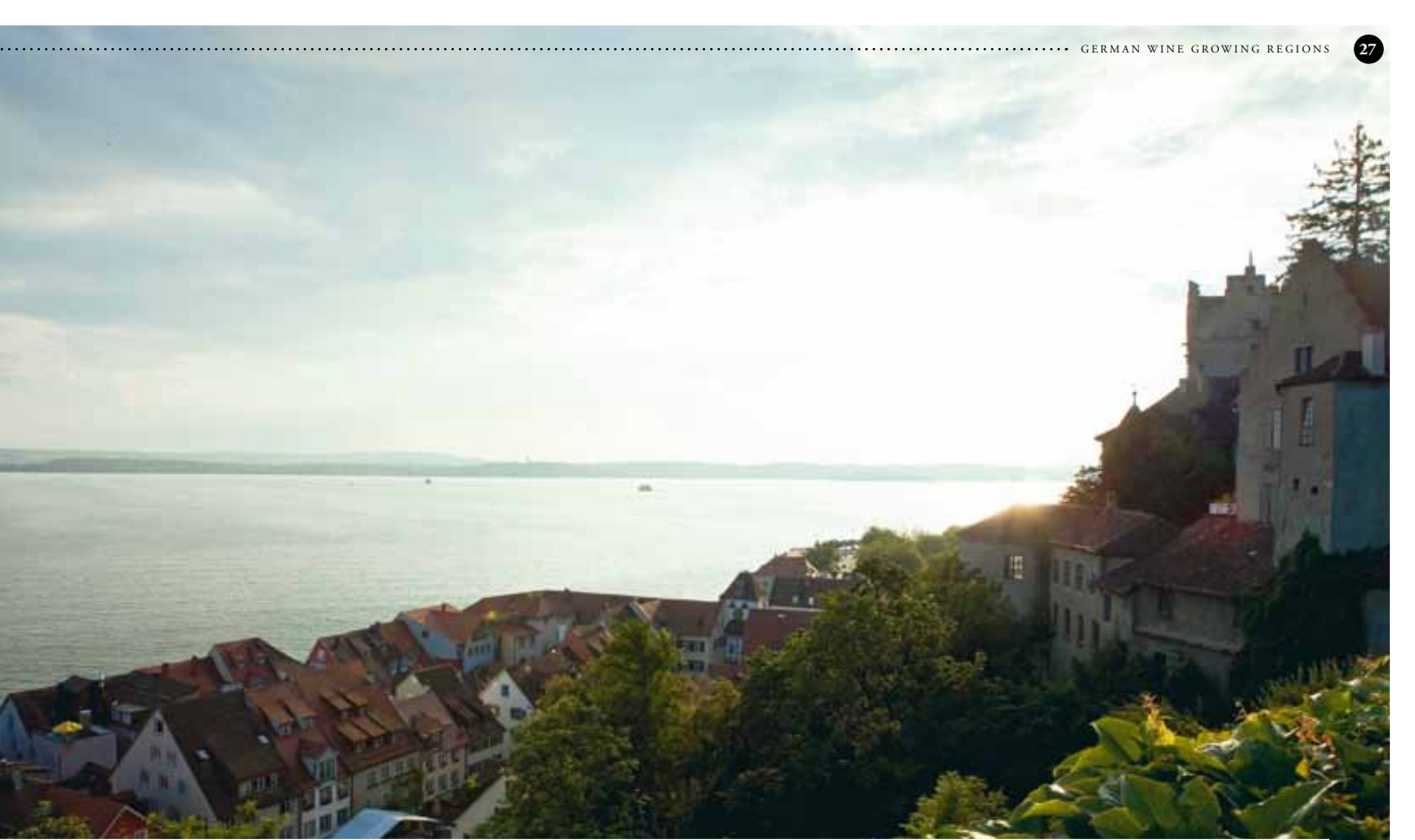
The diverse region of Baden offers a variety of soil profiles: from shell limestone and keuper in the Kraichgau and on the banks of the Tauber via lime, clay and marl deposits to the rich loess and clay soils, which contain volcanic scatterings at Kaiserstuhl, Tuniberg and in the Markgräflerland. Baden is divided into nine districts: Bodensee, Markgräflerland, Tuniberg, Kaiserstuhl, Freiburg, Ortenau, Kraichgau, Badische Bergstraße and Tauberfranken.

IN GERMANY, THE KAISERSTUHL GETS THE MOST SUNSHINE.

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 colourful bee-eater, the up to 40 centimetre long green lizard and the praying mantis. The name Kaiserstuhl (emperor's seat) originates from Emperor Otto III (980-1002) whose court was located in the local Leiselheim area “Gestühl” which remains a vineyard name to this day.

Baden has made a name for itself far beyond its borders for its high concentration of gourmet restaurants. Hardly any other region in Germany has so many restaurants with star chefs, a fact that is even known in the French Alsace. Culinary tourism across the border but also from other parts of Germany and Switzerland is constantly increasing.



Spoilt by the sun

Baden





THEY SAY “MAINFRANKEN IS WINE FRANKEN”, and rightly so as Franconian wine is produced along the Main river and its tributaries. Its distinguishing feature was and still is the Bocksbeutel, a flat, bulbous bottle. Why precisely this bottle shape was used in Franken remains unexplained. However, during excavations in the Franconian Wenigumstadt one of the oldest flat, bulbous bottles ever was found. It dates from about 1400 BC and is of Celtic origin. Did this bottle lead to the creation of the Bocksbeutel? In any case, the Bocksbeutel is quite practical: It doesn't roll down slopes! Good for a picnic in the gently rolling hills of the Franken river valleys.

Franken is the only German wine-growing region which is completely contained in the most southeastern German federal state of Bavaria. Here, vines are cultivated on about 6,000 hectares mostly situated around the baroque town of Würzburg.

PICTURESQUE TOWNS SUCH AS IPHOFEN OR CASTELL CAN ALSO BE FOUND IN THIS HOLIDAY PARADISE.

81 percent of the vines cultivated in Franken are white grape varieties. Silvaner is considered the classic Franconian variety. 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 cannot withstand harsh winters in all locations. 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 the palatable quaffing wine to an Auslese

*page left above:
countryside near Castell*

*page right above:
Escherndorf vineyards*

*small photos below:
the famous Bocksbeutel (left),
the Hofkeller (State Court Cellars)
in Würzburg*

B o c k s b e u t e l c o u n t r y

Franken



DID YOU KNOW?

One of the most famous Franconian vineyards and the oldest documented vineyard site by name in Germany is the "Würzburg Stein". Steinwein has long been a synonym for Franken wine. A 1540s Steinwein is today still stored in the cellar of the Bürgerspital winery in Würzburg. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, the German national poet, was a pronounced 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 am in a surly mood if I lack my usual favourite drink."

is also very dear to the Franconian wine-makers heart. A red grape speciality from Franken is the Domina.

The climate in the Franken wine country is mostly continental, but the Main has a balancing effect: summers are hot and winters cold. Mainfranken is protected from excessive cold and rain by the Rhön in the north and the Spessart in the west. And although there is little rain around Würzburg in the summer humidity is relatively high. Due to the low level of rainfall there is a high concentration of mineral content in the soil. No wonder that that minerally, earthy undertones are considered the main characteristic of the typical Franken wine.

Vineyard area:
ca. 6,100 ha,
81% white wine

Most important grape varieties:
Müller-Thurgau, Silvaner

Further information:
www.frankenwein-aktuell.de

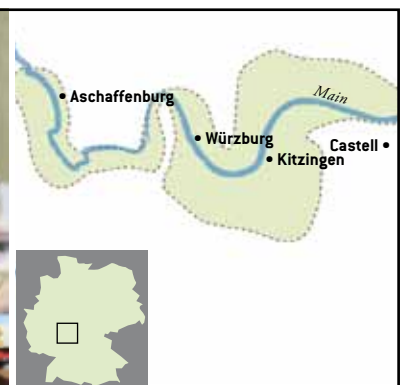


Staatlicher Hofkeller Würzburg

Bürgerspital zum Heiligen Geist winery

Juliusspital in Würzburg

Castell and Silvaner



THE 436 HECTARES UNDER VINE of the 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 rejoiced when he travelled 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 one reason for the construction of many of the numerous castles that line the Bergstraße.

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

Add to this the partly terraced vineyards – this region is beautiful throughout the year not only when the fruit-trees are in bloom! Characteristic soils of the Hessische Bergstraße are dry, but easily warming shifting sands which are low in nutrients and fine-grained, deep, water-storing loess.

Riesling is the "King of the Bergstraße". It makes up just under half of the grape varieties grown and thrives especially well at the Berg-

straße because of the long growing seasons. The remaining 53 percent of vineyards in this region share different varieties, such as Müller-Thurgau, Gewürztraminer and the rare yellow Orleans. For some time, red grape varieties have also increasingly been grown. These include Pinot Noir, Pinot Madeleine and Saint Laurent.

The Romans were probably the first wine-growers of the region who made use of the 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 to the UNESCO Global Network of Geoparks. 500 million years of the history of the earth are visible on 2,230 square kilometres between Rhine, Main and Neckar. The Hessische Bergstraße with its location between the Upper Rhine Rift and the crystalline Odenwald is an important part of the Geopark.

Vineyard area:
ca. 440 ha,
79% white wine

Most important grape varieties:
Riesling, Spätburgunder,
Grauburgunder

Further information:
www.bergstraesser-wein.de



*Adventure trail
"Wine and Stone" at
Heppenheim*

*Lorsch Monastery
and the history of
viticulture*

DID YOU KNOW?

The Odenwald forest has an "island", namely the Odenwald wine island. This is of course not a real island, but a small wine-growing region slightly separated from the rest of the Hessische Bergstraße around the town of Groß-Umstadt to the west of Darmstadt. Wine is cultivated here on a mere 62 hectares not far from the Hessian metropolis Frankfurt am Main which also has a vineyard, the Lohberg. However, this is firstly part of the Rheingau region, and secondly the Frankfurt people explicitly prefer a different kind of wine – that made from apples – called "Ebbelwoi".

page left:
Heppenheim vineyards

small photos above:
market place in Lorsch (left),
adventure trail "Wine and Stone"

ALL TOURISTS KNOW THE ROMANTIC RHINE. Victor Hugo and Mark Twain already raved about the spectacular scenery in the 19th century which inspired many paintings by William Turner. In contrast to most Germans, many a tourist from Japan or Korea can sing all verses of Heinrich Heine's Loreley song without any mistakes: „Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten ...“ („I don't know what it could mean...“). For the wine-connoisseur Mittelrhein means Riesling for a start. The cultivated area of the Mittelrhein measures 456 hectares and extends for about 110 kilometres along the Rhine from Bingen and the Siebengebirge to the gates of the former Federal capital Bonn.

Anyone who has ever travelled along this route by train, ship or car, will have seen many medieval castles and picturesque towns and also a lot of vineyards.

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

“Romantic wine” does not quite describe it properly, though. Most vineyards are located on steep slopes that demand hard work from the wine-growers. But the wines from the Mittelrhein region are worth the effort: the predominant slate soils yield mineral-rich and hearty wines with lively acidity.

page right above:
view of the Rhine and
Bacharach

page right below:
vineyards at Boppard

small photos below:
vineyards at the Mittelrhein,
St. Goarshausen

Vineyard area:
ca. 460 ha,
85% white wine

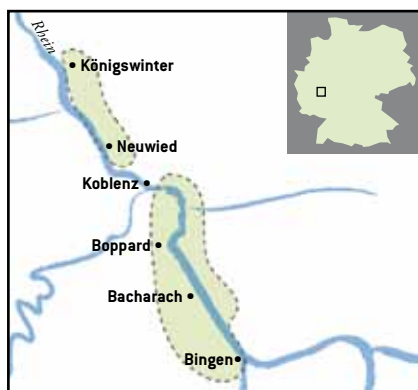
Most important grape varieties:
Riesling, Spätburgunder,
Müller-Thurgau

Further information:
www.mittelrhein-wein.com



Boppard Hamm:
the wine loop on the Rhine

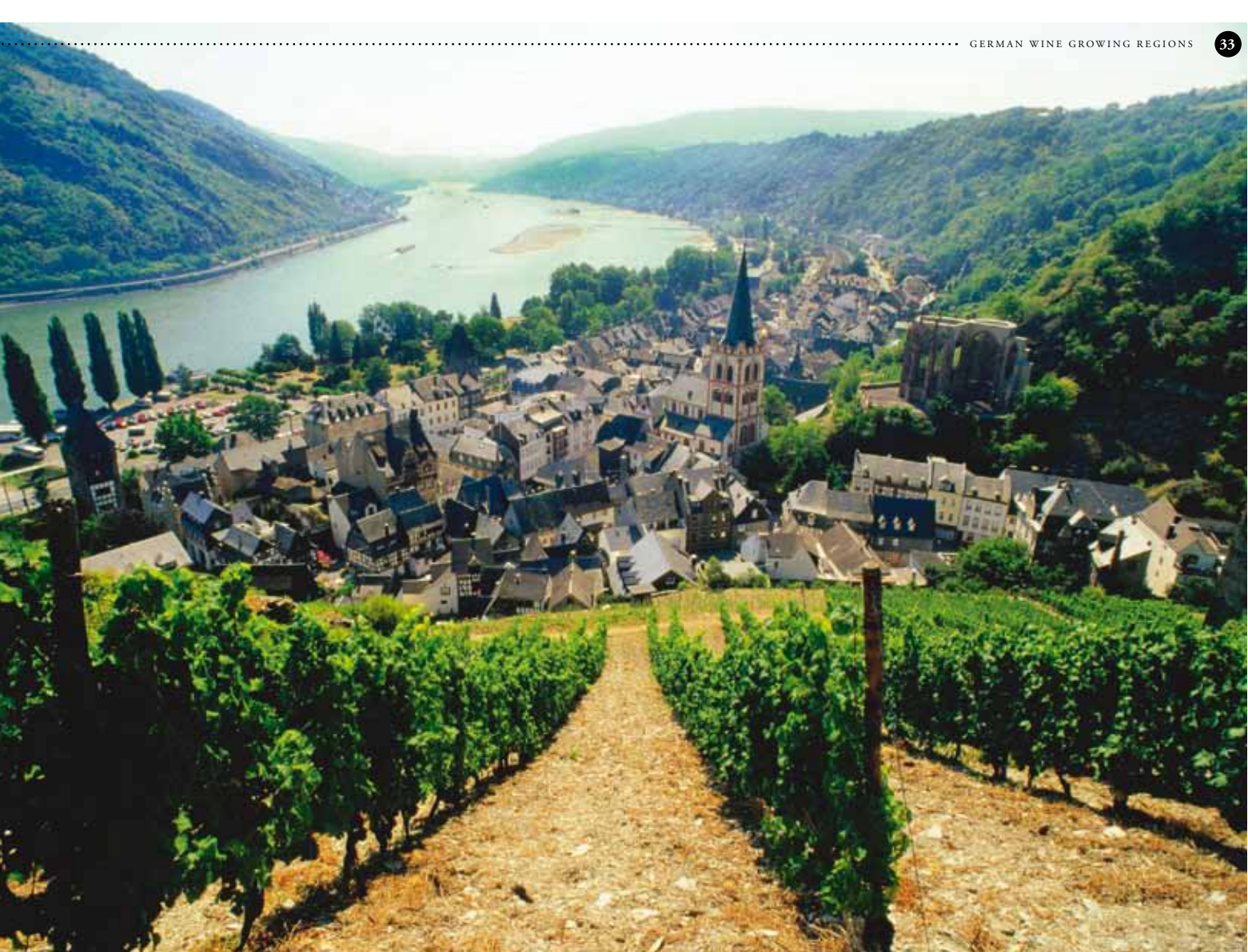
Bacharach:
Centre of the Romantic Rhine



DID YOU KNOW?

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 metre 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. They do not only need strong legs like the steep slope vintners but also muscular arms as the island can only be reached by rowing boat.

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!



Mittelrhein

Riesling and romance



E l e g a n c e a n d c l a s s f r o m t h e t e r r a c e

Mosel

NEXT TO THE RHINE, THE MOSEL is certainly one of the most famous German wine rivers. The magnificently meandering river is called La Moselle in France and Musel in Luxembourg until it turns into the Mosel at Perl, which flows into the Rhine at Koblenz after 250 river kilometres on German soil. The oldest German wine-growing region – which was already sung about by the Roman poet Ausonius – covers a total of almost 9,000 hectares of vineyards and extends to the tributaries Saar and Ruwer.

The wind at the Mosel comes mainly from the southwest. River and soil both store the warmth during the day and release it at night. Because of

the steep rocky slopes along the Mosel the sun rays hit the ground almost vertically, especially at the Bremmer Calmont, the steepest vineyard in Europe. Animals and plants which need a very mild climate and which would not be able to live or grow a few kilometres away in the mountains of the Eifel or the Hunsrück can be found at the Mosel: Apollo butterfly, kingfisher and green lizard, stonecrop and rustyback fern have all made a home for themselves there.

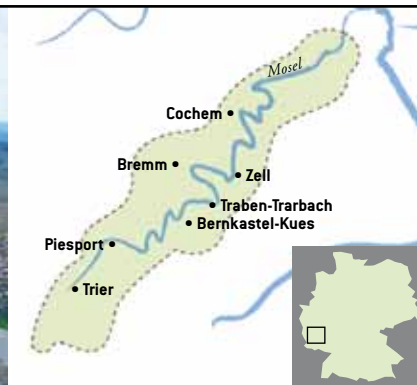
IT IS KNOWN THAT CELTS SETTLED AT THE MOSEL.

The Romans were particularly significant for the region, especially for its viticulture. Around 50 BC, Julius Caesar went to war against Gaul and travelled through the Mosel Valley on his way there. In 15 BC, the Romans founded Augusta

Treverorum, today's Trier, which even became the seat of government of the Western Roman Empire in the 4th century and grew into the largest town north of the Alps.

At the Obermosel between the border triangle of France, Germany and Luxembourg and the confluence of the Saar at Konz, shell limestone and keuper are the prevailing types of soil which provide a good basis for the Pinot varieties and the domestic Elbling. From Schweich to Koblenz slate is the main kind of soil: here the Mosel has slowly and persistently carved a gorge into the Rhenish slate mountains. Many vineyard names at the Mosel end in -lay, indicating the fact that the vines are planted on slate: the ancient Celtic term "ley" for slate has survived the ages in this way.





In addition to the spectacular, often terraced slopes to the right and left of the river, its many curves and turns are very characteristic. Riesling thrives especially well on the slate soil at the Mittel- and Untermosel; it has to root deeply here in order to gain plenty of minerals and fineness from the barren ground. Mineral elegance, an almost playful fineness and an often delicate residual sweetness characterise the Mosel Riesling.

page left below:
Bremm on the Mosel in morning mist

page right below:
steep slopes in Kröv

small photos above:
via ferrata at the Bremmer Calmont

DID YOU KNOW?

The most expensive sale of a vineyard to date took place in 1900 when the mayor of Bernkastel sold 4,300 square metres 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 was worthwhile, however, as the vineyard is now one of the most famous in the world and best in the region. Its peculiar name derives from the fact that in 1630 the Archbishop Bohemund of Trier was ill but surprisingly recovered after a few sips of wine and thus awarded the title of Doctor to the vineyard.

Vineyard area:
ca. 8,900 ha,
91% white wine

Most important grape varieties:
Riesling, Müller-Thurgau,
Elbling

Further information:
www.weinland-mosel.de



The Roman wine presses of Piesport

Winery of the Vereinigte Hospitien in Trier

Vineyard sundials at the Mosel

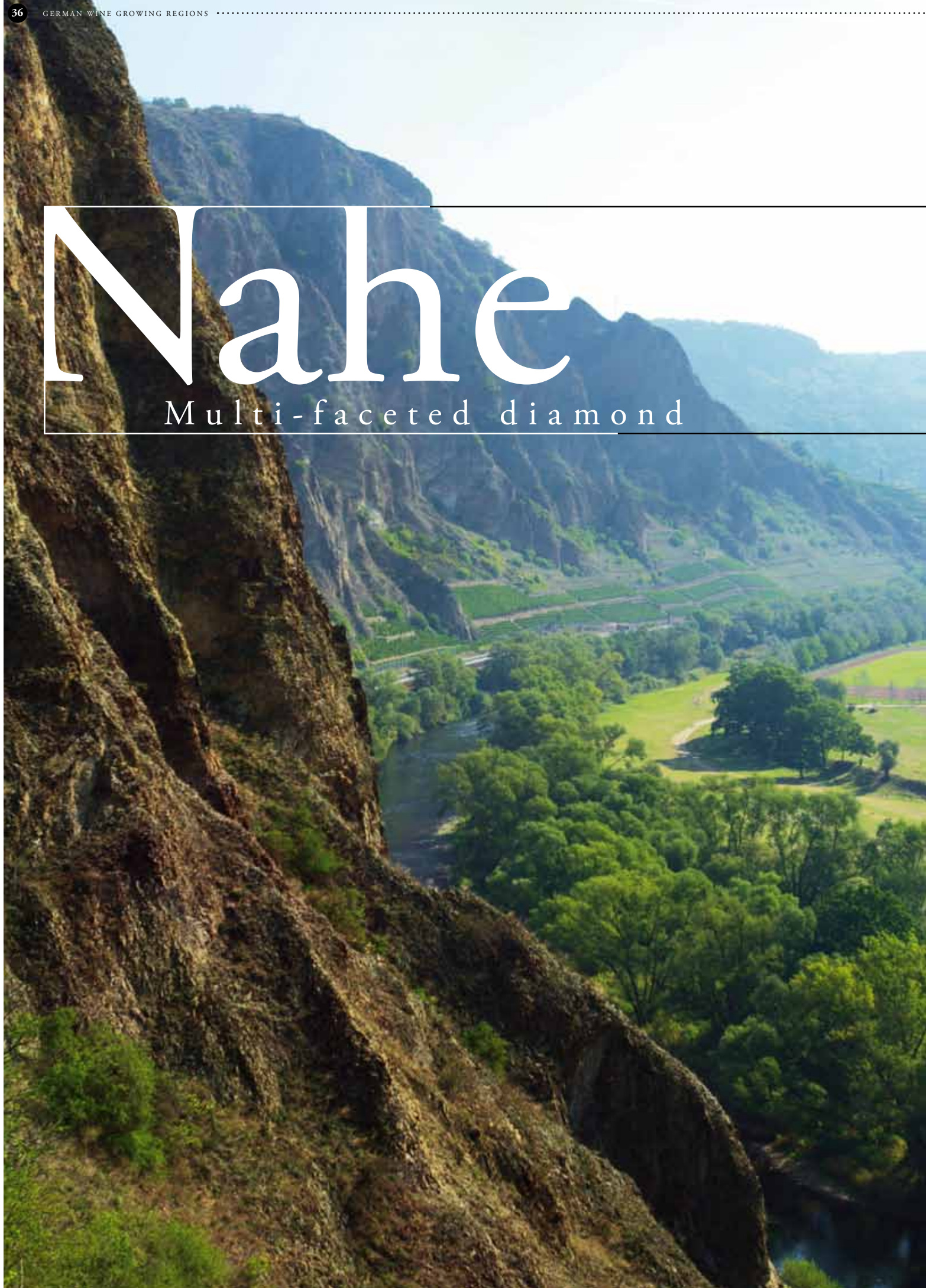
Traben-Trarbach

The Bremmer Calmont



Nahne

Multi-faceted diamond



page left:
view of the Nahe and the Rotenfels

small photos below:
Bad Sobernheim openair museum (left),
monastery ruins of Disibodenberg



PRECIOUS STONES ARE SMALL, but brilliant. This description also fits the nearly 4,200 hectares of the Nahe region which is sometimes even called a “treasure chest”. 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 the German top producers.

The Nahe river rises near Nohfelden-Selbach in the Saarland and flows into the Rhine near Bingen. The sixty kilometres of river from the river mouth are part of the growing region. This includes the valleys of the tributaries Alsenz and Glan.

The Hunsrück offers the quiet, idyllic area protection 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 – good for the vines which like to have 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 interface of the Rhenish Slate Mountains, 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. A versatile testing ground for the vintners which offers a wide range of wine for the connoisseur to enjoy. Riesling is grown on about 27 percent of the growing area. Among the red varieties Dornfelder and Portugieser dominate the field, but Pinot Noir is also grown here. This is truly a tasting room representing German wine.

Hildegard von Bingen (1098-1179) lived and worked on the Disibodenberg at the Nahe. In her holistic approach to medicine which is still relevant today she had 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.

The wines from the Nahe were referred to as “Rhine wine” in the past. The character of Nahe Riesling is indeed reminiscent of wines from the Rhine and the Mosel, nevertheless they have a distinctive “Nahe touch”. The Nahe was defined as an independent wine-growing region by the 1971 wine law.

Vineyard area:
ca. 4,200 ha,
75% white wine

Most important grape varieties:
Riesling, Müller-Thurgau,
Dornfelder

Further information:
www.weinland-nahe.de



Monastery ruins of Disibodenberg

The Schloßböckelheim Kupfergrube

Bad Sobernheim open-air museum

DID YOU KNOW?

The Nahe also has a wine route – like almost every region. But the Nahe vintners are working together with the German Gemstone Route, after all, the German gemstone stronghold Idar-Oberstein is not far away. Every year a special wine edition in a special decorative bottle is put on the market. It is called “Edelschliff” (noble cut). Every bottle is furnished with a precious stone – in 2010, it was an epidote, and inside the bottle is a liquid gem: a selected wine from the Nahe!

Vineyard area:
ca. 23,500 ha,
62% white wine

Most important grape varieties:
Riesling, Dornfelder, Müller-Thurgau,
Portugieser, Spätburgunder

Further information:
www.pfalz.de/wein-und-genuss



The Roman vineyard in Ungstein

Rhody unter Rietburg

Deidesheim:
small wine village – great politics

Wine Museum in Speyer

THE BEAUTIFUL PFALZ with its gentle climate is situated between the Pfälzerwald (Palatinate Forest) in the west – the largest contiguous forest area in Germany –, Rheinhessen in the north, Baden across the river Rhine in the east and the Alsace in the south. Vines are grown in the southeast of this region in the foothills of the Pfälzerwald. Many vines: The Pfalz with an area of some 23,500 hectares is the second largest wine growing region in Germany. The 144 Palatinate winegrowing communities are largely bordering the Deutsche Weinstraße (German Wine Road). This is the oldest German wine tourism route (opened in 1935) and it stretches for about 85 kilometres from Bockenheim in the north to Schweigen on the French border, where it ends at the German Wine Gate.

page right above:
vineyards in front of
Hambach Castle

page right below:
almond trees in bloom

small photos below:
Rhody unter Rietburg



From higher locations in the frequently nice weather you can enjoy the beautiful views across the Rhine plains to the imperial cathedral in Speyer and to Heidelberg on the other side of the Rhine. The almost Mediterranean climate at the Weinstraße enables almonds, figs, lemons and olives to bloom. The almond blossom which immerses the Weinstraße in bright rose pink in the spring inspires the first festivals of the year in a region rich in wine festivals.

THE FAVOURITE CHILD OF THE PFALZ WINE-GROWER IS THE RIESLING WHICH IS MOSTLY FULL-BODIED AND JUICY IN THIS AREA.

With about 5,500 hectares the Pfalz has the largest area under Riesling vines in the world. The second most common wine is the Dornfelder which is known and loved as a palatable red. In addition, many other grape varieties thrive here. If their wines correspond to a predetermined profile particularly typical varie-

ties such as Weißburgunder, Grauburgunder and Spätburgunder and, of course, Riesling, are marketed under the name DC Pfalz which means Districtus Controllatus. Thus, a bottle like that contains a typical Pfalz wine.

The wine-growing region Pfalz can be roughly divided into two subdivisions: The northern part approximately extends from Neustadt an der Weinstraße to the Zellertal near Worms and is called Mittelhaardt. Here the soils are light and very water-permeable, the vines have to be deep-rooted. Riesling is an important species in this area. 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 the Südpfalz!

Incidentally, the largest wine festival in the world is celebrated in the Pfalz: the Dürkheimer Wurstmarkt (sausage market). This festival has been a market for pilgrims since the 15th century. According to the Palatine practice plenty of sausage is available here, together with bread and wine, of course. In 1832, the festival was officially called "Wurstmarkt" for the first time.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Deutsche Weinstraße goes through many typical wine villages with timber-framed houses where vines are growing across the road. Once a year, on the last Sunday in August, on an event-filled day the entire German Wine Road is reserved for pedestrians and cyclists: an 80 kilometre long wine festival with more than 300,000 cyclists, walkers and skaters!



Where almond trees bloom

Pfalz



Rheingau

Royal Riesling

THE RHEINGAU EXTENDS from the west of Frankfurt along the Rhine which in this region follows a whim of nature. The Rhine which otherwise mainly flows from the south to the north takes a sharp bend near Mainz, almost exactly at a latitude of 50 degrees north, and flows from the east to the west past popular locations such as Eltville, Oestrich-Winkel and Rüdesheim to Assmannshausen. The slopes of the Rheingau are facing exactly south and thus make optimal use of the 1,600 hours of sunshine a year. The Taunus mountains provide natural protection

against cold winds from the north and against heavy rainfalls.

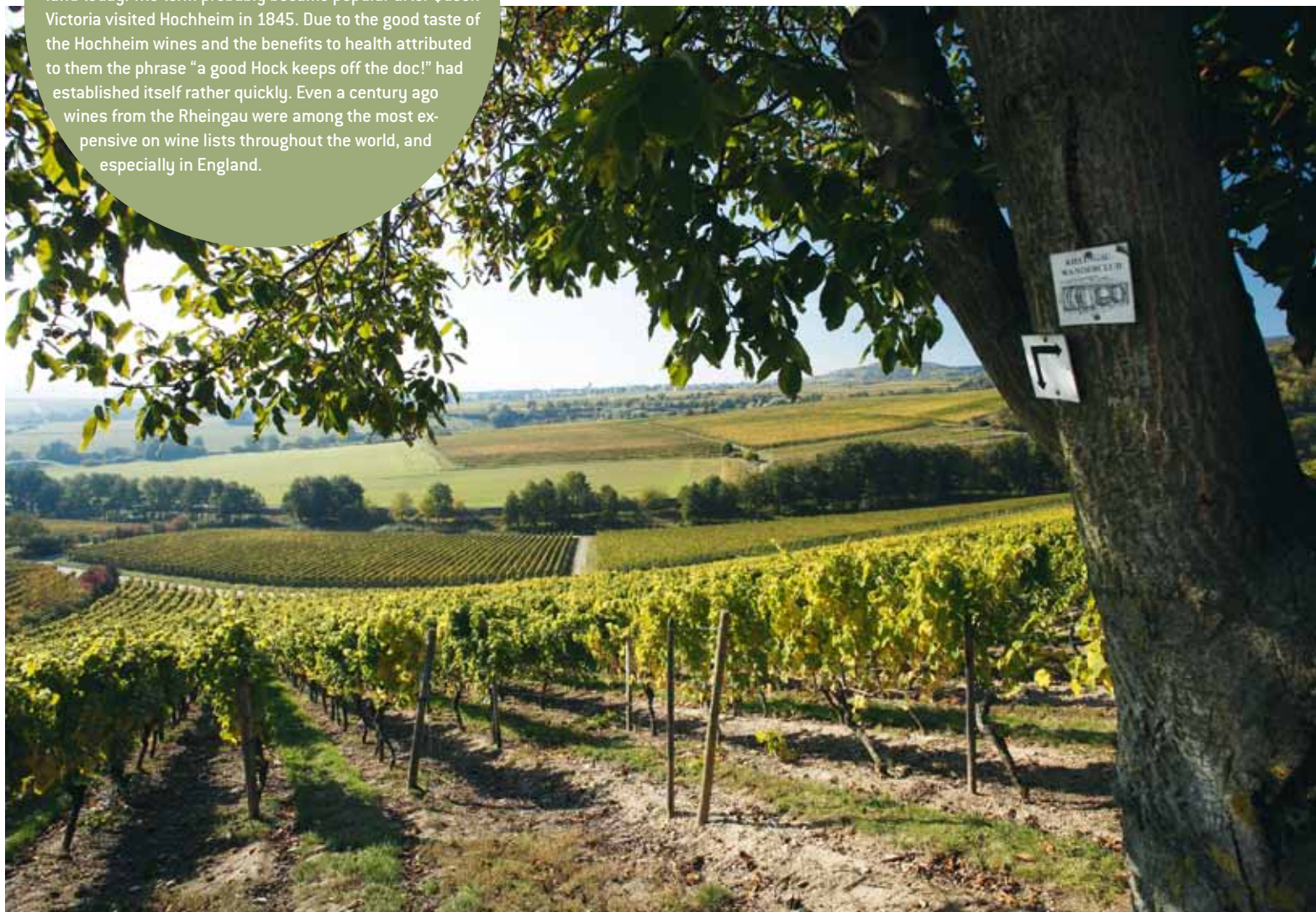
RIESLING IS THE UNDISPUTED KING AMONG THE GRAPE VARIETIES.

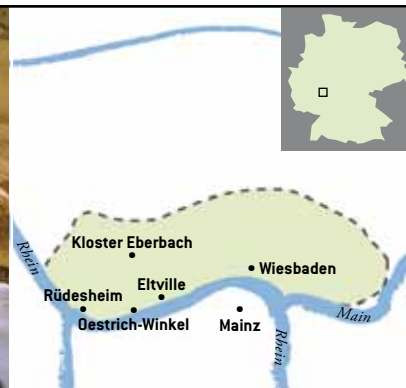
This demanding, late-ripening variety feels particularly at home here, develops characteristic touches of mineral and is marked by a fresh fruit acidity. The Spätburgunder, just like the Riesling, is a member of the noble grapes and thrives especially well around Assmannshausen.

The Rheingau is a very popular tourist travel destination where old monasteries and castles are idyllically nestled in the wine landscape. For 120 kilometres, the Rheingau Riesling Route leads through the picturesque wine villages. Wine tav-

DID YOU KNOW?

The town of Hochheim am Main is also located in the Rheingau region. This wine town with its famous wines is the origin of the term "Hock" for Rhine wine which is still used in England today. The term probably became popular after Queen Victoria visited Hochheim in 1845. Due to the good taste of the Hochheim wines and the benefits to health attributed to them the phrase "a good Hock keeps off the doc!" had established itself rather quickly. Even a century ago wines from the Rheingau were among the most expensive on wine lists throughout the world, and especially in England.





erns and seasonal vintners wine bars invite you to stop for a glass of Rheingau wine, and cultural and historical attractions can be found by the wayside. For example, the Oestrich wine loading crane of 1744. It is the last remaining one of its kind on the Rhine. With its help Rheingau wines got on the river and from there into the whole world. Visitors to the distinctive vantage points of the Rheingau such as the Niederwald monument and Johannisberg Castle are presented with the historical centres of viticulture. Among them is the former Cistercian abbey of Kloster Eberbach, 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 the Spätlese (late harvest) has its origin.

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

Vineyard area:
ca. 3,100 ha,
85% white wine

Most important grape varieties:
Riesling, Spätburgunder

Further information:
www.kulturland-rheingau.de



Kloster Eberbach

**Johannisberg Castle
and the invention of Spätlese**

Oestrich-Winkel

*page left below:
the Eltville Steinberg*

*page right below:
vineyards beneath
Johannisberg Castle*

*small photos above:
Eberbach Monastery*





NOWHERE HAS THE REVIVAL of German wine in the last two decades been felt as strongly as in the largest German wine region Rheinhessen – both in terms of quality and as regards the image of the wines. The 26,500-hectare wine region is today considered one of the most “dynamic” because the vintners, many of whom belong to a young, well-educated generation, have recognised the potential of their vineyard locations and have invested in their cellars and vineyards with much expertise.

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

The green, undulating sea of vines with picturesque villages nestled amongst them are located between Mainz, Worms, Alzey and Bingen. Because of the strong agricultural use

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. Accordingly, the area is one of the driest and warmest in all of Germany – which is good for wine and for fruit growing.

In Rheinhessen there are quartzite, porphyry, slate and volcanic rock as well as characteristic deposits from the Tertiary. This soil diversity is complemented by red slate, an interesting rock formation which is much older than the depos-

DID YOU KNOW?

Mainz, the state capital of Rheinland-Pfalz, is also the capital of Rheinhessen. Since 2008, it has been a proud member of an illustrious circle – the Great Wine Capitals Global Network. It is composed of nine towns from the major wine regions of the world. Besides Mainz these are Bordeaux, Florence, San Francisco, Christchurch, Bilbao, Mendoza, Porto and Cape Town. 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.

*page left above:
the red slope at Nierstein*

*page right above:
trullo (small round vineyard hut)
at Flanheim*

*small photos below:
idyllic winery in the
Rheinhessische Schweiz*

Rheinhessen

Change through dynamism



its from the Tertiary. It can be found in the east at the “Roter Hang” (red slope) near Nierstein and in the west in the Rhein Hessische Schweiz (Rhine-Hessian Switzerland). Thanks to the diverse soils and microclimates many different grape varieties are grown in Rheinhessen which can lead to a single vintner harvesting and producing 30 or more different wines per year.

The ratio of white to red wine varieties is 69 to 31 percent. Silvaner is the traditional grape variety of the region, and Rheinhessen has the largest acreage of Silvaner worldwide. Riesling, Müller-Thurgau and Pinot varieties are also grown. Significant red varieties are Dornfelder, Pinot Noir and Portugieser. “Winzersekt”, sparkling wine produced in a traditional manner according to strict criteria, was launched some 30 years ago.

Sometimes little huts can be found in the Rheinhessen vineyards which make you believe that you are at the Mediterranean rather than in Germany: the Trulli (singular: Trullo). These small round vineyard huts with their domed roofs of which there are 30 to 40 in Rheinhessen are often painted brilliant white. Presumably, these small houses have always been used as shelters by the vintners and vineyard workers. They survived the passage of time because, due to the shortage of wood in Rheinhessen, they were built of stone.

Vineyard area:
ca. 26,500 ha,
69% white wine

Most important grape varieties:
Müller-Thurgau, Riesling,
Dornfelder, Silvaner,
Portugieser, Spätburgunder

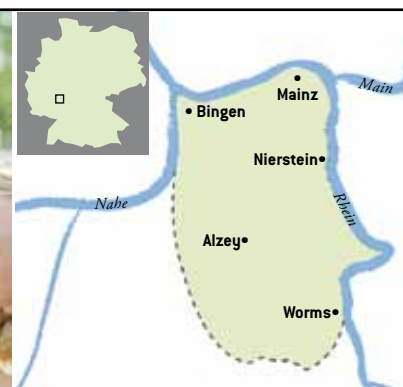
Further information:
www.rheinhessen.de



*The Liebfrauenstift-Kirchenstück
in Worms*

The Niersteiner Glöck

The Kupferberg Visitors' Centre in Mainz



A piece of heaven

U Saale- Unstrut





page left:
vineyards at the Unstrut

small photos above:
wine bar in Freyburg (left),
Rotkäppchen sparkling wine cellars

Wine-growing at the Saale and the Unstrut has been documented since 998: There is a deed of donation of Emperor Otto III in which viticulture is mentioned. The average temperature in this region is comparatively low so the local viticulture needs protected vineyards. Especially in the river valleys heat islands are generated whose microclimate allows the grapes to flourish beautifully. The climatic conditions lead to a kind of natural reduction in yield, the harvest amount at the Saale and the Unstrut is an average of only 50 hectolitres per hectare.

Müller-Thurgau is the main representative of the grape varieties at the Saale and the Unstrut. The relatively low yields give the wines a special finesse which also benefit Weißburgunder (Pinot Blanc) and Silvaner, the second and third most widely grown grape variety. Delicate and lively with fresh acidity – this describes best the character of the fine wines from the Saale, the Unstrut and the Wachtelberg. You should try the wines locally as especially the rare red wines rarely leave the region.

THE VINEYARDS OF the wine-growing region Saale-Unstrut are located in southern Sachsen-Anhalt near Freyburg and Naumburg, in northern Thüringen around Bad Kösen and in a part of Brandenburg to the southwest of Berlin on about 740 hectares of land. The Werderaner Wachtelberg eight kilometres west of Potsdam measuring six hectares is the northernmost vineyard in Europe which is approved by the EU for the production of quality wine. Here we are at a latitude of about 51 degrees North!

The rivers Saale and Unstrut run through an old cultural landscape which is characterised by steep terraces, stone walls, orchards and river meadows. For over 1,000 years, vines have been cultivated here.

THE BEAUTY OF THE LANDSCAPE HAS ATTRACTED PEOPLE AT ALL TIMES.

The Bronze Age Sky Disk of Nebra for example which was found in 1999 is evidence for the age of this cultural landscape. It is considered the oldest celestial representation of the world.

Vineyard area:
ca. 740 ha,
73% white wine

Most important grape varieties:
Müller-Thurgau, Weißburgunder

Further information:
www.weinbauverband-saale-unstrut.de



The sparkling wine cellars Rotkäppchen

The vineyard huts

The "Stone Picture Book" at Naumburg





The continental climate, which means warm summers and cold winters, is defining for 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.

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.

It was probably a bishop called Benno who 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 wine-growing in 2011. Although the date is not entirely proven the Sachsen wine is definitely worth celebrating!

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

Dresden is the centre of this wine-growing area and the icing on the cake with its urban beauty. Dry stone walls that provide picturesque surrounds for the steep slopes and terraces are typical for the region. They are not only beautiful but also offer a habitat to rare plants and animals.

Sachsen

Eastern highlight





In Sachsen, predominantly white grape varieties are grown. The ratio of white to red varieties is 81 to 19 percent. Less than one percent of all German wines come from Sachsen. No wonder then that Sachsen wines are rarely found on the market. So once more it is best to go to the region and enjoy the wine locally!

One native speciality can be particularly recommended: the Goldriesling which is cultivated on 12 hectares of vineyard. Goldriesling is drunk young, is light and fresh with a delicate spicy note. The health missionary Pfarrer Sebastian Kneipp already recommended this wine with his health treatments in the 19th century. Another good reason to try it!

*page left above:
panoramic view of the old town of Dresden*

*page right above:
vineyard terraces in Radebeul*

*small photos below:
Wackerbarth Castle*

DID YOU KNOW?

What the bocksbeutel is to the Franconians, the club-shaped bottle is to the Saxons. This peculiar bottle which resembles a bowling pin was invented in 1931 in the former Weinbau-Versuchs- und Lehranstalt Hoflößnitz (viticulture research and teaching institute) near Dresden. With its museum, wine bar and vineyard Hoflößnitz is still a centre of Saxon wine culture worth visiting.

Vineyard area:
ca. 480 ha,
81% white wine

Most important grape varieties:
Müller-Thurgau, Riesling,
Weißburgunder

Further information:
www.weinbauverband-sachsen.de



Schloss Wackerbarth:

*Hoflößnitz and the
club-shaped bottle*





Vineyard area:
ca. 11,500 ha,
71% red wine

Most important grape varieties:
Trollinger, Riesling,
Schwarzriesling, Lemberger

Further information:
www.wwg.de



*Sparkling wine manufacturer
Kessler in Esslingen*

*Hornberg castle
in Neckarzimmern*

*Pfedelbach and the barrel
of the prince*

ure of wine available in a pub was a “Schoppen” which is half a litre. Most of the wine produced in Württemberg is consumed locally, particularly in cosy countryside wine taverns which are run by the vintners and only open during the summer season.

The system of wine cooperatives is firmly rooted in Württemberg. Many vintners or vine dressers as they are called here in Württemberg are part-time wine-growers who deliver their grapes to cooperatives. Of course there are also many wineries in the region that market their wines themselves.

A speciality is the Schillerwein. Unlike other rosé wines Schillerwein is made from a mixture of red and white grapes which are already mixed together prior to fermentation. The term “Schillerwein” has nothing to do with the great Württemberg poet Friedrich Schiller but probably has its origins in the Middle Ages.

IT COMES AS NO SURPRISE that the state of Baden-Württemberg is home to the two wine-growing regions Baden and Württemberg both of which with their own character.

With around 11,500 hectares under vine Württemberg is the fourth largest German wine-growing region. Red grapes predominate here, with a share of 71 percent. And this is not only the palatable Trollinger: other favourites of the Württemberg vintners are Pinot Meunier (Schwarzriesling), Lemberger and Pinot Noir (Spätburgunder). Not to forget Riesling which is grown on about 2,000 hectares and is the most important white wine variety in Württemberg.

The wine-growing area of Württemberg is located on the river Neckar and on its tributaries Rems, Enz, Tauber, Kocher and Jagst. A Württemberg wine enclave also includes the vineyards of the Bavarian banks of Lake Constance near Lindau.

THE HILLY LANDSCAPE ALONG ITS RIVERS IS EVIDENCE OF THE GEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF WÜRTTEMBERG.

The volcanic origin of many a hill can be seen in its cone shape. Five kilometres east of Heilbronn is Weinsberg which is the seat of the prestigious National Training and Research Institute for wine and fruit growing. Important grape varieties like Kerner and Dornfelder have been bred here.

In Württemberg wine was considered a “staple food” for a long time – just like beer in Bavaria. Until the First World War the smallest meas-

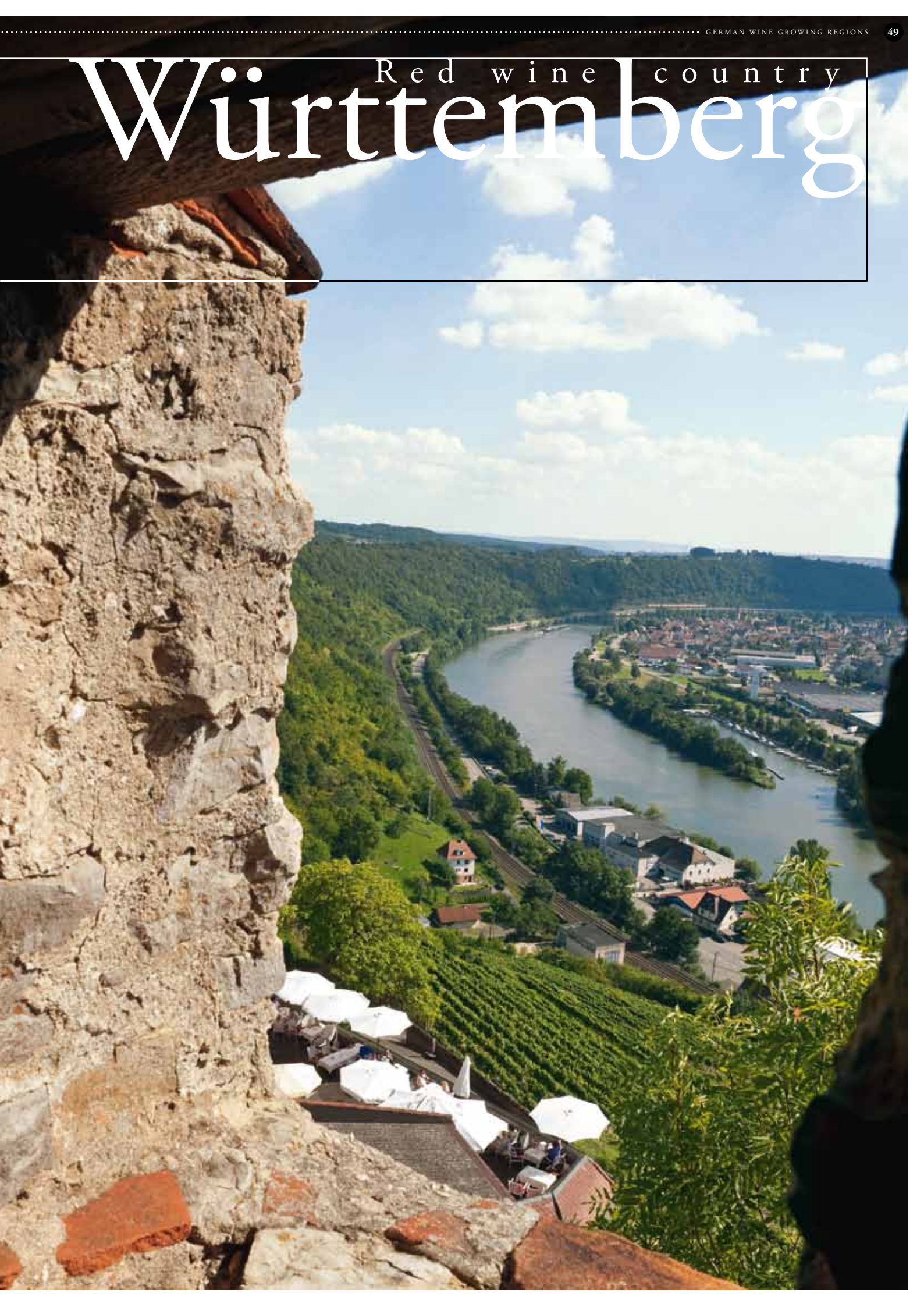
DID YOU KNOW?

Sommeliers, wine connoisseurs, and people living in the growing areas know that there is an appropriate glass for every type of wine. In Württemberg, this is a very strange receptacle: a glass mug. The only wine glass without a stem has a convenient handle on its side and is mostly used in the traditional wine taverns. In general, the inhabitants of Württemberg drink more wine than the people in all the other regions in Germany.

page right:
*view of the Neckar from Hornberg
Castle*

small photos above:
*bottle store at the sparkling wine
manufacturer Kessler (left),
romantic timber-framed buildings
in Niedernhall*

Red wine country Württemberg



The biography of wine

Wine and people have something in common: their biography makes them into individuals. Not just the grape variety and its geographic origin – soil and climate at the vineyard location – but also the processing in the cellar are critical factors which shape every wine. To continue the metaphor of the biography (by the way, connoisseurs swear that wine is “alive”!): The childhood in the vineyard is followed by the youth in the cellar. Grown up, the wine ends up in the bottle with the consumer and may perhaps mature some more in his cellar to become a senior. So what does the course of life of a wine look like?

In the beginning was the vineyard

Every gardener knows that some plants need sun while others prefer shade. Types of vine also have different requirements for their location. In Germany, one of the northernmost wine-growing countries in the world, the river valleys are ideal locations. Why? On the mostly steep slopes on the river banks, facing south or southeast, the sun hits the ground at an optimal angle. The water reflects the sun's rays and provides balanced temperatures. The slate rock which is sometimes exposed (for example at the Mosel) stores the heat of the day. The nights may then not only be cold but cool nights in autumn are even responsible for ensuring that the fruity aromas develop in the grapes and the wines made from them.

Growth has to be trained

The original form of the vine was a forest plant that climbed up trees. Therefore, vines need help with growing by providing either wire trellises or sometimes just individual posts. The grapevine sprouts anew every year. The vintner only leaves one or two shoots in order not to get too many grapes. It is crucial for the quality of the wine how many grapes a vine has to produce (and nourish). Rule of thumb: The fewer the better – because the strength of the plant is concentrated more strongly in the few grapes. Depending on the type of training a vine supplies one to two kilograms of grapes. The vintner speaks of the yield which is usually quoted in hectolitres per hectare. This is an important variable in the biography of wine as the yield substantially influences the quality! In order to reduce the yield quality-conscious wine-growers even cut out surplus grapes or split

them in the middle before they reach maturity.

A vineyard needs to be cultivated

A lot of work is required for the grapes to grow healthily. Some vintners plant grass or other plants in between the rows of vines to prevent erosion and to supply natural fertilisers. Every vineyard is a monoculture and therefore more susceptible to pests and diseases and therefore, maintenance measures are necessary. Pests are often prevented from reproducing by nature-identical pheromones. The leaves are cut back to allow better air circulation between the vines which helps the grapes to dry faster after a rain shower and it also increases sun penetration. There is a lot to do in a vineyard throughout the year, even in winter after the harvest when the canes are pruned so that the vine can form new shoots in spring.

Harvest time at last!

From bloom in May or June until harvest in September or October the grapes ripen for about 100 days. At best, the weather during this time is not too hot, not too cold, not too wet and not too dry. Sugar, acid and many other ingredients develop in the ripening grapes. Now the moment in which sugar and acid are in an optimal ratio is very important. Experienced vintners taste a few grapes every day or measure the amount of sugar in the must with a refractometer in order to determine this moment. Depending on the weather, it can become very exciting: Will the wine-grower risk waiting another day or two? The sugar content in the grape also determines the final quality grade of the wine.

The harvest itself is one of the romantic im-



ages that every wine lover has in mind. On the steep slopes the harvest workers pick the grapes by hand and pour them into a pannier which is then carried from the vineyard on the back of a strong man. Harvesting machines are often used on flatter sites which shake the ripe grapes from the vines as gently as possible. The grapes are now quickly taken to the cellar! There, the berries are separated from the stems and then pressed. By destemming, the bitter substances from the stems do not get into the wine.

The skin determines the colour

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 any grape is colourless, the skins of the berries contain dyestuffs, especially the blue grapes. In order to get the red colour into the wine, the vintner has to leave the juice to stand for a while with the solid components of the grapes, the so-called mash. Fermentation will eventually set in and the dyes are extracted from the grape skins by the alcohol that is produced. This can take up to several weeks, then the mash is pressed and the red wine stored in barrels for further aging. If you separate the must from the mash after only a few hours you get a rosé wine. In contrast, white grapes are pressed immediately and separated from the mash. If you proceed the same with red grapes this results in a light coloured wine, a Blanc de Noir.

Fermentation

Now the fermentation process starts. Yeasts convert the natural sugar in the grape must into alcohol and thereby produce heat and

carbon dioxide. This results in the bubbling of the fermenting must! If fermentation takes place slowly and gently at low temperatures, the fruity aromas will be better preserved. Therefore, most of the fermentation tanks today have a cooling device for temperature control. Among the naturally occurring yeasts there are many which may produce undesirable flavour substances. In order to better control the fermentation process, the wine-maker usually adds selected strains of yeast. However, as in the past, some producers still rely on the naturally occurring yeasts in the vineyard for fermentation. This spontaneous fermentation is risky as it is difficult to control but it can produce wines of great character.

The youth in the cellar

With fermentation the youth of the wine has started. Some white wines are left on the lees for a longer time by the vintner so that they can develop a finer taste. The dead yeast cells are then separated from the wine. Now the wine needs more time to develop. Some wines, particularly red ones, are filled into small new oak barrels (barriques) which give them additional structure and certain flavour substances in the course of several months. While some wines are offered for sale just a few weeks after the harvest, others may spend many months in the cellar of the winemaker. Some are young, fresh and fruity, others complex, fully matured and multi-faceted!

Bottling and sealing

Bottling is the moment in which the vintner releases his wine into the world as a young adult. Now he cannot do anything else for it! But wine is lively, and even in the bottle processes occur that ensure a change in the

What is a barrique barrel?

The traditional barrique with a capacity of 225 litres comes from France. It is a small barrel usually made of oak, in which especially red wines develop richer flavours and structures. Due to the aging in a barrique wines often get a roasty or spicy note. For several decades many German wineries have matured their red and also white wines in barriques and have achieved excellent results. Other wines are aged in stainless steel tanks or in the traditional large oak barrels. These wines have no or almost no wood character.

taste. Above all this development is caused by oxygen (oxidation). Therefore, the bottle should be sealed as airtight as possible. On the other hand, a little oxygen is entirely desirable for complex red wines! Natural cork has long been considered the ideal closure because it guaranteed both tightness and a certain permeability for oxygen. Today, there are a number of closure types such as screw caps or glass closures which keep the bottle absolutely tightly closed. The maturing of a wine is an exciting thing, a decade-old drop with hints of noble maturity can be a great experience. But young wines with their fresh fruit aromas have their followers, too.

Did you know?

While completely fermented young wines are sometimes marketed in other countries in the year of crop, people in many German growing areas appreciate the wine even before the end of fermentation. There are many different terms for this

in German in the various wine regions: *Federweißer, Roter Rauscher, Sauser, Brauser* or *Bitzler*. This cloudy, still fermenting must is lively and sparkling and contains about five percent by volume of alcohol and a lot of natural

sugar. The bottles must not be sealed so that the carbon dioxide gas can escape. A glass of this delicious tingly sweet *Federweißer* goes very well with warm onion tart! You can buy the new wine at a winery but also in many supermarkets

or enjoy it at a stand at a wine festival. In the Federal State of Rheinland-Pfalz which is richest in wine in all of Germany more than two million litres of fermenting wine are drunk every year!

Wine means work



There can only be one – one vintage, that is. Nature does not grant the wine-grower a second chance. In order for the wine to turn out well a lot of work has to be done throughout the year. “The quality is growing in the vineyard” – this vintners’ saying sounds simple but really says a lot! You can indeed ruin a good wine in the cellar but you can never “improve” a bad wine.

11-2

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.



After the harvest is

3-6

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.





Now it has to be ensured by leaf pruning that the foliage optimally fulfills the supply of nutrients. Too much foliage is not good for the air circulation in the vine rows, and the ripening grapes also need sun. Lateral shoots which are not required are removed. In warm and humid weather, the risk of fungal diseases is high. Vines are fast growing plants with a growth performance of up to three metres a year! Maturation of the red grapes is heralded by a change in colour. Surplus grapes are thinned out ("green harvest") to improve the quality: the remaining grapes benefit from the full strength of the vine. Early maturing varieties are already harvested in late August and are of-

ten used for the preparation of the first Federweißer (new wine) of the year. Federweißer is fermenting grape juice with about 5% alcohol by volume which is very popular in Germany during harvest time in autumn.

In September, the grapes ripen fully. The optimal ratio of sweetness and acidity (physiological maturity) is important. The wine-grower checks the ripening process daily. The main harvest usually starts with Müller-Thurgau in mid to late September. But the birds also have an appetite for fresh grapes. They have to be scared away.



before
the harvest!

7-9



10-11

October is harvest month in particular for Riesling and Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir)! The leaves have changed colour and are yellow or red. Now there is intense activity in the cellar and in the vineyards. The proverbial "golden" (sunny and dry) October provides for the best qualities. In some years harvesting has to take place very quickly because of the

weather. It is important that the grapes are perfectly ripe, healthy and dry. Diseased or rotten berries are often cut or picked from the grape by hand. Several phases of harvesting may be necessary. Flat vineyards can be harvested by harvesting machines. Grapes on hilly and steep slopes can mostly only be picked by hand.



Organic wine

Strictly speaking, eco or organic wine is wine made from organically grown grapes. The eco vintner has to follow strict regulations when working in the vineyard. Mineral fertilisers and certain pesticides against diseases and pests may not be used. Only agents specifically licensed for organic viticulture are permitted. Planting green vegetation between the rows of vines, once the distinguishing feature of an organic vineyard, is today also practised by many conventional or integrated wine-growers. The conversion from conventional to organic farming takes three years. Currently around 5,000 hectares, or about five percent of German vineyards, are farmed organically, and the trend is rising!

The largest association of organic wine-growers, Ecovin, was founded in 1985 and now has over 200 members who farm about 1,200 hectares. Furthermore, there are the associations Demeter, Naturland and Bioland. Biodynamic cultivation is a special form of ecological viticulture which is based on the theories of the founder of Waldorf education and anthroposophy, Rudolf Steiner. Here, certain preparations for strengthening are added to the soil, and the vintner tries to take into account and make use of the influences of the moon and the planets.

Even conventionally operated vineyards try to limit the use of synthetic agents completely, or at least as much as possible. It is now widely

known that a healthy soil life makes the vines more resistant and the wines more complex. Instead of using pesticides against the dreaded Grapevine Moth (*Lobesia botrana*) the majority of wine-growers nowadays counts on the environmentally friendly “confusion” technique with the help of pheromones. If the concentration of pheromones of the female grapevine moth in the vineyard is too large, the males no longer find their females. Thus, the main animal pest in this country can no longer reproduce.

Vineyards are exploring entirely new paths with fungus-resistant grape varieties. These are breeds which are less susceptible to certain diseases and therefore make pesticide treatment unnecessary. The resistant varieties are especially interesting for organic wine-growers. The most successful of these new breedings is the red variety Regent which today is grown on more than 2,000 hectares. An important question asked by wine connoisseurs is: Do organic wines taste better than others? To which the Ecovin association responds: “In general, Ecovin wines do not taste any different from wines of the same quality from conventional cultivation”. However, they meet the demand for a product that has been made in harmony with nature as much as possible.

“Did you know?”

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 maturity 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.



Wingler
2010
Riesling
KABINETT
TROCKEN
RHEINGAU

2010
Wein Post 8500
Riesling
KABINETT-TROCKEN
RHEINGAU
12,0% vol.

The label

Calling card of the wine

The label tells you what is in the bottle. Sometimes details can also be found on the back label. In any case, the particulars on the label are for your information and may therefore not be misleading. What may and what has to be on the label and in what form is therefore clearly defined by the wine description legislation.

MANDATORY INFORMATION

This must be on every label in all European wine-growing countries! The data has to include the quality category (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 of Qualitätswein and Prädikatswein have to state their official quality control test number. The aforementioned wines and sparkling wine of certain regions also have to state the specified region of origin, Landwein labels must name the relevant Landwein region. Furthermore, the bottler has to be listed. Since 2006, sulfites contained in the wine have to be referenced on the label.

QUALITÄTSWEIN BESTIMMTER ANBAUGEBIETE

(Quality wine from one of the 13 specified wine-growing regions) The most frequent category is abbreviated "QbA". Every

Qualitätswein has to undergo an analytical and sensory evaluation, and the label then bears the official quality control test number. The grapes of a Qualitätswein must be 100 percent from the specified region. Other requirements for the certification as QbA

concern the minimum must weight (see page 58) and the natural sugar content of the grapes.

PRÄDIKATSWEIN

(Quality wine with special attributes) If a wine meets more stringent requirements than those applicable to the QbA category it can

be offered as a Prädikatswein. The special attributes are defined by one of six categories which must be identified on the label indicating the type of wine. It is often mentioned in connection with a grape variety, e.g. "Riesling Spätlese" or "Müller-Thurgau Kabinett". In ascending order of ripeness at the time of harvest the attributes are:

KABINETT: Light and elegant wine with a low alcohol content

SPÄTLESE: Elegant and powerful type of wine with pronounced fruit aromas

AUSLESE: Mostly sweet, delicately fruity wines made from fully ripe grapes

BEERENAUSLESE: 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.

TROCKENBEERENAUSLESE: Very elegant, sweet wine of extreme longevity made from shrivelled raisin-like berries, very high natural sugar content, the aromas are reminiscent of honey and exotic fruit, the consistency is often nectar-like

EISWEIN: Harvested and pressed while frozen, ideally made from healthy grapes (temperature below minus 7 degrees Celsius), very high natural sugar content. Only in exceptional years is the harvest of an Eiswein possible. Eiswein has an exceptional longevity and can be stored for decades.

DID YOU KNOW?

Quality wine testing is conducted in every region by an officially appointed independent testing commission. The wines are judged by experts in a blind sensory examination. They have to be flawless and typical for the variety and area. Only if they reach a certain score and pass a chemical-analytical examination will the official quality control test number be issued. Therefore it is said that the "quality in the glass" is the decisive factor and not a particular vineyard location or even the name of the producer.

What exactly is the must weight?

The riper the grape, the more sugar the juice contains. Measuring the must weight (of the sugar content) enables the vintner to make an inference about the ripeness of the grapes. The measurement is expressed in degrees Oechsle in Germany. One degree Oechsle means that

a litre of must is 1 gram heavier than a litre of water. In some years Trockenbeerenauslesen can have more than 200 degrees Oechsle! Most of the natural sugar is converted into alcohol during fermentation. The riper the grapes, the more alcohol can be formed. Sugar which remains

in the wine after fermentation is called residual sugar. The name Oechsle derives from the Pforzheim goldsmith and inventor Christian Ferdinand Oechsle (1774-1852) who developed the refractometer to determine the must weight.



only be produced from Riesling and Pinot Noir (Spätburgunder). With a maximum of 13 g/l residual sugar they are more likely to be classified as dry. They also have to pass an additional sensory evaluation. Outside of the Rheingau, these top class dry wines (made from different grapes, typical for their growing region), defined by the classification model of the Verband Deutscher Prädikatsweingüter (VDP) – Association of German certified wineries – are called Großes Gewächs. On the label they can be identified by the initials “GG”.

LANDWEIN

(Superior table wine) German Landwein is one of the wines whose geographical origin is declared on the label. It is an uncomplicated wine which is typical for its region. Landwein is always dry or semi dry. In Germany a total of 26 Landwein regions are defined by law – this includes more recently Schleswig-Holstein Landwein as in the far north of Germany, like on the island of Sylt, ten hectares of vines are now cultivated.

CLASSIC

This term was introduced with the 2000 vintage. Classic wines are quality wines made from traditional grape varieties typical for the region that always taste harmoniously dry. There is therefore no further information indicating the taste on the label.

ERSTES UND GROSSES GEWÄCHS

(First and Great Growth) In the Rheingau region in the top segment the term Erstes Gewächs (First Growth) can be found on the label. These wines are subject to stringent quality guidelines such as low yields, hand picking and pruning, and the vineyards from which these wines may come are clearly defined parcels of land. First Growths may

DEUTSCHER WEIN

“Deutscher Wein” without further indication of origin must be made exclusively from German grapes and come from approved vineyards and grape varieties. In Germany, compared with other countries of cultivation, only small amounts of this quality are produced. Together with Landwein they make up about five percent of German wine production.

Vineyards

There are about 2,600 vineyard sites in the German winegrowing areas. Each of them is recorded in an official register, the vineyard roll. Their sizes vary considerably. The smallest individual site of Germany is the Walporzheimer Gärkammer at

the Ahr which comprises less than one hectare. With 85 hectares the prestigious location Würzburger Stein is the largest individual German site. Wine connoisseurs can sometimes already draw conclusions about the typicality to be expected of

the wine from the appellation alone as it often 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 at

BOTTLER AND WINEMAKER

Every bottle has to declare the bottler. This is not always identical to the producer of the grapes. Wineries buy grapes or wines which they process further and market, for example, under a brand name. The winery is the bottler. Cooperatives and wineries are usually producers as they process grapes from their own cultivation. Sometimes, however, vintners buy additional grapes.

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE LABEL

What does the buyer look for first on the label? Probably for the vintage and the grape variety. Both are almost always stated on the label, however, the indication of the vintage and grape variety is not obligatory. It is clear that the grapes (at least 85 per cent) have to be harvested in the declared year and have to be obtained from the named variety. By the way: It is possible with Eiswein that it was only picked in January. However, the vintage to be stated will be the year in which the grapes ripened.

VINEYARD SITES

It is also allowed but not required to name the vineyard sites where the grapes were grown. Today the winegrowers usually only list the site on the label if the wine owes its particular characteristics to the vineyard. The name of a site consists of the name of the village or town and the name of the vineyard, for example Forster Ungeheuer or Bernkasteler Doctor.

DIFFERENCES IN TASTE

Dry and semi-dry wines are nearly always indicated on the label. If no indication is given the wine is usually sweet to noble sweet. By controlling the fermentation the producers can offer wines with different taste levels. If the fermentation is for example interrupted by cooling before all the sugar has been converted into alcohol the wine retains a natural sweetness. The levels of dryness are defined by law:

DID YOU KNOW?

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



the Mosel (Rosenlay, Sonnenlay, Laurentiuslay) comes from the Celtic and means slate or slate rock. Sometimes the appellation provides information on the previous ownership (Klostergarten – monastery garden, Grafenberg – count's mountain,

Kirchenstück – church owned land). A complete graphical overview of aerial photographs of all vineyards is published in the Deutscher Weinatlas (Atlas of German Wines) available via www.germanwines.de

TROCKEN – DRY for wines with a residual sugar content of up to a maximum of 9 grams per litre

HALBTROCKEN – SEMI-DRY for wines with a residual sugar content of up to a maximum of 18 grams per litre

LIEBLICH – SEMI-SWEET for wines with a residual sugar content of up to a maximum of 45 grams per litre

SÜSS – SWEET for wines with a residual sugar content of more than 45 grams per litre

What a wine tastes like also depends very much on its fruit acid content because the acid attenuates the taste of the sweetness. Therefore, wines which according to their residual sugar content are deemed semi-sweet might still taste semi-dry. It has become customary to call such wines “feinherb” – elegantly dry. The term “feinherb” which has no legal limits is often used as a synonym for semi-dry.

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 “Germany sparkles”. ◀.....

Sekt (sparkling wine) and Secco: German wine-growers are specialists in producing sparkling wines. You can enjoy the moment with a glass of sparkling wine. Not only when there is something to celebrate! Nowhere in the world is more Sekt consumed than in Germany: in 2009 it was about 3.9 litres or 5.2 bottles per person. No wonder then that there is a great variety of sparkling wines in Germany.

HOW DO THE BUBBLES GET INTO THE SEKT?

Sekt is produced by means of a second fermentation. This produces carbon dioxide which remains in the product and is the characteristic of sparkling wine. Most branded sekts are fermented as cuvées from different base wines in large pressure tanks which guarantees more uniform lots. The bottling takes place only after completion of the fermentation process.

Germany

The quality characteristic for sekt is primarily the base wine and secondarily the production process. The wineries usually make smaller, more individual lots and therefore frequently use the classical method where the second fermentation takes place in the bottle. The individual bottles are then "wobbled", i.e. turned and slowly raised until the yeast has settled in the bottle neck after which the yeast is removed while the Sekt remains in the bottle.

"Winzersekt" is a term for a sparkling wine produced by this traditional method from the winery's own grapes vinified on the estate of a producer. It bears the abbreviation b.A. if the grapes come from a specified region. The term was created 30 years ago in Rheinhessen. Under certain conditions the term Crémant is also approved for use in Germany: pressing of whole clusters of grapes, using traditional method of fermentation in the bottle, indication of the growing region, using only grapes from certain approved varieties. Meanwhile there are even sekt manufacturers in Germany who have specialised in the production of sparkling wine.

ENJOY THE FUN: SPARKLING SECCO

Secco or semi-sparkling wine are aerated wines of a slightly lower internal pressure with added carbon dioxide. The term Secco, inspired by the Italian Prosecco, has come to be used as a kind of generic term; the official name is Deutscher Perlwein. Semi-sparkling wines or Seccos are summery fruity refreshments which give great drinking pleasure. Due to the elimination of the tax on semi-sparkling wines in Germany and the simplified procedure they are generally cheaper than Sekt. They are increasingly popular with the Germans.





sparkles

DID YOU KNOW?

The word "Sekt" originates indirectly from Shakespeare! A well-known actor, Ludwig Devrient, ordered his favourite drink champagne in the Berlin wine bar "Lutter und Wegner" (still in existence today!) around 1825 with a quote from Henry IV: „Bring er mir Sekt, Schurke — ist keine Tugend mehr auf Erden?" (Act II, 4: "Give me a cup of sack, rogue. Is there no virtue extant?")

Shakespeare had Falstaff actually order a sack, a dry sherry wine. But as Devrient meant sparkling wine the expression "Sekt" for sparkling wine became popular. In 1925 it became the official designation because the term Champagne could no longer be used for German sparkling wines. By the way: Johann Gottfried Herder translated the French term "Mousse" for the bubbles in sparkling wine with "Schaum" (foam) in 1779: the Schaumwein was born!

THE PIKKOLO

The „Pikkolo", a small sekt bottle with a capacity of 0.2 litres, is a German speciality. It is a registered trademark of the Henkell sekt manufacturer from the 1930s which was used for the dry Henkell sekt. Young apprentices in the hotel and waiting trade were then also called Pikkolo, and a cartoon figure called „Pikkolo" was the advertising character for Henkell. Today, the term is commonly used for miniature sekt bottles of other makes as well. There's always time for a „Pikkolo"!



Actively experience wine

Germany's 13 wine-growing regions offer both outstanding wines as well as extremely varied ways of discovering the country and its people. If you stay directly at a vintner's you will find the best conditions for an exciting and relaxing holiday in an authentic atmosphere. Many producers offer outstanding accommodation.

Walking & Climbing

You can enjoy wonderful walks almost anywhere where vines are planted. In the Rheingau and Mittelrhein for example, there is the 320km long Rheinsteig. Especially the section between St. Goar and Bacharach leads through impressive vineyards with breathtaking views of the Rhine Valley. A classic wine walking trail is the Ahr red wine trail from Altenahr to Bad Bodendorf. Walking trails of many kilometres traverse the Kaiserstuhl and Tuniberg in Baden. If you want to be more sporty then the steepest vineyard in Europe, the 378 metre high Bremmer Calmont at the Mosel, or the Rotenfels at the Nahe provide challenges; however, the latter is only suitable for experienced climbers.

Bicycle Tours

The banks of the rivers in all wine regions are ideal for exploring by bicycle. The active cyclist can ride along the river Main for more than 600km of cycle paths from the source to the mouth and get to know the romantic wine-growing areas. At the Mosel there are suggestions for tours for tourists on the over 1,000km long cycle track network, including luggage transport on request. The wine roads, for example through the idyllic valleys of the Tauber, Jagst, Kocher and Rems in the Württemberg region, or the Bocksbeutelstraße in Franken, offer a lot of variety for the eye and the legs all year round.

Water Sports

Those who prefer to replace the bike with the boat will find many boat rental stations along the 217 kilometre long „Wasserwanderroute Mosel“ (water route trail) and more than 60 berths for the walk on land in between. Even water-skiing is possible on the Mosel at Bullay, wet-suit included. There are also beautiful water route trails on the Saale and Unstrut. The Nahe tributary Glan as well as the Lahn are suitable for canoeing and kayaking enthusiasts.

Rails & Skates

The wine-growing regions can be explored in a more leisurely way but also with physical exertion on railway tracks – on handcars which can be hired – they are lots of fun and are available in the Nahe and Pfalz regions. Inline skaters will profit from visits to the Rheingau and Mittelrheintal during the “Rhine-on-skates” event: In August, the main road through the UNESCO World Heritage Site is given over to skaters on a stretch of 135 kilometres for one day; the route goes from Rüdesheim to Koblenz.

In the Air

If you are after a flight experience you have come to the right place in the Mittelrhein region. In Bad Ems on the Lahn you can take paragliding training flights. Many hot-air balloons can be seen above the gently undulating vineyards of Rheinhessen when the weather is nice – a popular trend sport which is also offered from the Southern Palatinate to Baden and across to the Hessische Bergstraße.

Hooves or Motorbike

Those who consider the air not to be safe may prefer the back of a horse: In the Südpfalz tours between wine and wood are on offer for riders – or just rent a scooter and explore the vineyards like that! Guided motorbike tours are also offered at the Mosel while the Baden wine region provides beautiful routes combined with culinary delicacies.

Golf

For all those who like to tee off, the Pfalz, for example, is an ideal destination. The Deutsche Weinstraße golf course situated in the middle of vineyards near Dackenheim even has holes which are named after grape varieties.

Visiting the vintner

Shopping at a winery is always an adventure! No wonder then that many wine-growers, cooperatives and wineries have expanded their sales rooms: this is where they receive their customers! They have turned into modern vinoteques of architecturally exciting designs, real lounges where wine can be enjoyed wonderfully relaxed, while the eye discovers ever new structural details. Rustic but uncomfortable chairs or bar stools, plastic vine leaves, old vats and crocheted tablecloths have long been a thing of the past as regards decoration. Many of these stylishly decorated rooms have been awarded architectural prizes. Not only wine is for sale here but also much more: wine jelly, gourmet food, chocolate, grape seed oil, vinegar, fruit brandy, liqueurs, glasses and other accessories ...

Many wineries also offer cellar tours to their visitors. This makes the wine connoisseur's heart beat faster! Modern wineries often have romantic old cellars with large, carved wooden barrels alongside impressive high-tech equipment: pneumatic grape presses which process the grapes very gently, gleaming stainless steel tanks with



Photo: Dieter Leistner @ LWG, Veitshöchheim

computer-controlled cooling, air-conditioned barrique cellars and fully automatic bottling systems. Often the force of gravity is used in a clever way to avoid unnecessary pumps and mechanical stress of the grapes or must. The frequently considerable financial investment has a single goal: better quality and satisfied customers!



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 want?



“ Did you know?

Holidays are precious. So why lose time searching? In the wine-growing regions, there are over 500 tourist guides with expert wine knowledge offering a wide range of wine-related activities – from vineyard walks to culinary wine tastings. Most tour guides are volunteers, all have undergone special training and take much pleasure in presenting their region.

Further information:
www.tourismus.deutscheweine.de

Holiday at the vineyard

If the visit to the vineyard has turned into an extensive wine tasting – vintners are always happy to answer questions of interested customers – the obvious question is: Could we not stay overnight? There are guest rooms or holiday apartments available in many wineries as spending a holiday at the vineyard has become popular. Vintners always come up with something for their guests: carriage rides and guided walks through the vineyards, bicycle tours with luggage transport, wine tastings with culinary themes to match the season, cookery courses, theatre performances and concerts. A holiday at the vineyard is never boring!

What exactly is a Riesling Lounge?

One could say: the tasting room 2.0! In a Riesling Lounge, fans can sample and enjoy top wines (not just Riesling) from all German wine-growing regions in a relaxed atmosphere. Such lounges have been established in several German cities with the support of the German Wine Institute: in Berlin (mesa Restaurant Grand Hyatt), Mainz (Hofgut Laubenheimer Höhe), Munich (RETT&ERs Feinschmecker), Frankfurt (Restaurant Zarges) and Cologne (Excelsior Hotel Ernst). A Riesling Lounge is an independent bar with trained staff.



Enjoy with pleasure

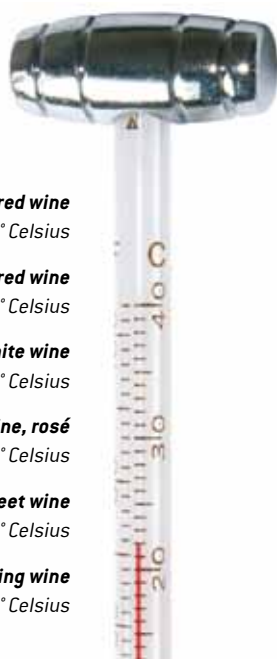
Hints
on dealing
with
German
wine



Learning by doing is good but it would be a shame to miss out on enjoyment with fine wine. With a few rules of thumb you can enjoy wine with pleasure from the beginning.

You only need...

... the right temperature



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

Since hardly anyone makes an effort to actually measure the temperature of the wine, a rule of thumb applies: sekt, white wine and rosé wine should be put into the refrigerator at least two hours before serving. It is better to pour it a bit too cold as the wine warms up very quickly in the glass at room temperature. When it is hot outside a table cooler for the bottle should be used. Cooling collars which have been in the freezer are very practical. You can even cool down warm wine with it. With red wine it has to be "room temperature", rather a bit cooler than too warm.

... the right glass

It has to have a stem and a tulip-shaped cup. For red wine this should be larger and more voluminous. The thinner-walled the glass, the more elegant and intense the flavour. Fill the glass only up to its widest point. This allows the fragrance to unfold in the cup, and you can easily assist the release of the aromas by swirling the wine by rotating the glass. The colour of the wine can most easily be seen if the glass is clear and not coloured.



... the right corkscrew

Have you ever discovered at a picnic that you have forgotten to take a corkscrew? Getting the cork out of a bottle can be a strenuous job when you do not use the correct model. Even the Swiss Army knife is only partially useful (maybe best as a substitute in the above-mentioned situation!). Simple, but effective the so-called waiter's knife which uses leverage, or models that are placed on the bottle and simply unscrew the cork. A good thing then, that more and more wines are sealed with a screw cap or glass stopper. You need no tools to open them!



... the perfect companion

We are not talking about your friends although they are also an important factor of the enjoyment. For the enjoyment of wine you also need a good mineral water. Some bread also makes sense. And of course the right food. But that is a separate chapter.



... some accessories depending on the situation

For example, a carafe for decanting. This means transferring the wine from a bottle to a carafe. If you want to separate a mature red wine from its deposit in the bottom of the bottle you have to do this very carefully, so that the deposit is not disturbed. If a wine is to get contact with air so that its aromas can unfold better you can decant the wine quickly, too. Not every wine has to be decanted but it almost never does any harm. By the way: sometimes, small crystals can be found in the bottle which can also get into the glass: tartrates. They do not influence the quality or the taste of the wine. They are formed when the minerals come into contact with the tartaric acid. Rather a sign of good quality!





THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING

This is quite commonly said. It is almost the same with wine because every sip is another experience and increases your connoisseurship. When tasting wine the most important thing is, if and how a wine tastes or what taste differences there are between two wines. Secondly – and this is an important aspect with professional tasters – a wine should be described as objectively as possible so that it is understandable for others. For this there is a specialist taster jargon (“nose” for “fragrance”, “body” for a strong sensation in the mouth, and so on). Even if you are not used to it you can describe what a wine tastes like – by simply thinking of similarities: “This wine reminds me of fresh apples.” With a little practice this will become quite fun because wine is probably the only beverage with such an elaborate “pleasure language”. Of course you can limit yourself to the terse statement: “The wine tastes good to me!” But you will notice: wine connoisseurs want to know why a wine tastes the way it does.

Tip: Organise a little wine tasting for your friends. For this you need four or five different wines. Which ones? It is helpful to have a theme, for example “Riesling” – you can then compare several Riesling wines, perhaps from different regions. Or you compare several varieties: Pinot Noir (Spätburgunder), Portugieser, Dornfelder – all from one growing area. It can be interesting if the participants initially do not know what wine they are trying. You can wrap the bottles in aluminium foil or serve the wine already poured into glasses. This method is called a blind tasting and allows you to focus on the wine, without the possibility of knowledge about the origin, variety, or the producers influencing the verdict. Just as exciting: comparison of the vintage. Two or three vintages of the same wine from one vintner show very clearly what maturation means. Often the mature wines prove to be the more multi-faceted drops which are superior to the “youngsters”! And often even the greatest wine-connoisseurs reach their limits when they are asked to evaluate a wine without knowing what it says on the label.



“Does it have to be cork?”

Natural cork is the traditional wine bottle closure (also for sparkling wine). However, in recent years, more and more producers have been using different closure types in order to avoid the risk of cork taste. Plastic stoppers make the same typical popping sound on opening as natural cork. The screw cap is another practical alternative and is now the method of closure on every third wine bottle in German cellars. The glass stopper, incidentally an invention from Germany, also makes a good visual impression and can be used to re-seal an open bottle.

CRASH-COURSE IN WINE TASTING

The gods have put tasting before drinking – at least this is often the case with wine lovers. Tasting means trying a wine but not necessarily drinking it. Professional tasters spit out the sample sip after they have moved it around in their mouths extensively. Not only the tongue but almost all the senses are involved.

1. The eye

Look at the colour in the glass, if possible in daylight and in front of a light background. The colour is bright and clear? This is a good sign. A wine may not be cloudy. On the edge of the glass (hold it at an angle) you can sometimes see that a wine is matured. Mature reds have brown edges, young ones have purple ones.

2. The nose

Smell at the glass while slowly swirling its content. In this way the aromas combine better with the air. Is the smell pleasantly fresh, clear and pure? Do you recognise 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 the sample sip back and forth in your mouth. If you inhale air at the same time – the famous “slurping” of the “experts” – the flavours are transported to the olfactory organs more easily. 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!



INTO THE CELLAR!

German wines have a good ageing potential which of course depends on the grape variety and style of the wine as well as the vintage. With red wine it is the tannins, with white wine the acidity and sweetness which give the wines what the expert calls “storage potential”: the ability to develop positively in the bottle over time.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A WINE MATURES?

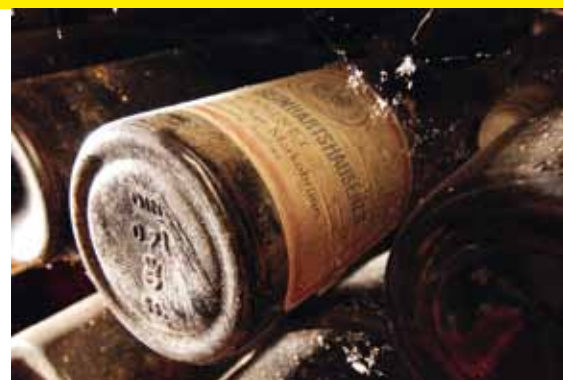
Mature wines are often more harmonious and at the same time more complex. Some aromas only develop after some time. During maturation certain molecules combine, partly influenced by the presence of oxygen in the bottle. The fact that a wine changes chemically manifests itself in the colour among other things. It becomes more intense for white wines while red wines often get a little lighter and may change from blackish red to brownish or brick-coloured.

HOW TO STORE WINE CORRECTLY

Horizontal storage in a room which is protected from light, vibrations and strong smells with a constant temperature of about 12 degrees Celsius is ideal. People who have no cellar can store their wines in the bedroom where it is 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 cork 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 vineyard locations and good vintages can be stored for five to eight years to mature without a problem, as can good red wines. Noble sweet wines have a huge potential which can achieve several decades. Rule of thumb: The more alcohol, acidity, sweetness or tannins a wine has, the greater its potential for maturity as these four components act as preservatives! 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 during storage and should therefore be enjoyed directly after purchase.



DID YOU KNOW?

Recognising and naming aromas – an amusing challenge for any wine lover which requires some practice. A good aid is the aroma wheel. On this the typical flavours of German wines are clearly listed, separately for white wines and red wines. Do you have strawberry, raspberry or rather lychee in the nose? Leather, coffee or maybe liquorice on the palate? With the aroma wheel you will soon get the knack of it!

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German wines and international cuisine

A love match

German wines are wonderful drops to enjoy on their own, whether it is the glass of simple wine at a summer festival or the glass of fine red wine in front of the fireplace in winter. But they can also be different. Riesling, Spätburgunder and others are excellent companions to modern cuisine from all over the world.

German wines are a perfect match for Asian cuisine. This is now almost a truism. Asian cuisine is indeed a broad term – from Thai cuisine dominated by coconut milk to the extremely spicy dishes from the Chinese province of Szechuan, from the clear flavours of Japanese cuisine to the mild to spicy curries of the Indian one ... However, among the wines from the German wine-growing regions a matching companion for every type of food can be found!

Many aromas and spiciness

You should try a dry Muscatel with dishes containing fresh ginger. Or an aromatic Scheurebe with a curry made with coconut milk. Actually, these can also be enjoyed with mature wines. But beware: the food partners of powerful wines should not be too spicy. Alcohol acts as an amplifier to spiciness which can then quickly become too violent. Wines which are low in alcohol with a noticeable residual sugar content go much better with spicy dishes. Sugar has a soothing effect on spiciness. Salty dishes which include sushi dipped in soy sauce like wines with a lively interplay between sweetness and acidity, for example Riesling.

Dry Kabinett, semi-dry Spätlese, Trockenbeerenauslese, Eiswein, Winzersekt, all made from a single grape variety, but many different wines – this can often all be found in a single wine-estate in Germany. No problem then to select the companions for a multi-course dinner from only a single type of grape which can show its diverse potential. Some guests will not believe it – wines can develop in substantially different ways.

Little effort, a lot of pleasure

If you do not want to cook a big meal, you can quickly prepare enjoyable snacks: three types of cheese and two or three different wines – these are six to nine combinations which provide lots of material for conversation. A mild soft cheese, a spicy hard cheese, a blue cheese, served with a Riesling and a Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir), perhaps even a Trockenbeerenauslese – and of course plenty of bread!

A sweet ending!

A group of people with a sweet tooth can be pleased with a similar tasting with chocolate. Rules of thumb: Wines which 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. Flavoured chocolates (with fruit or flowers) are a big experimental field combined with aromatic wine (Gewürztraminer, Muscatel, Scheurebe): Sometimes it fits wonderfully, sometimes not at all. If you discover a great combination – remember it! A better ending to the menu is hardly conceivable.



German wine and food

STYLE / AROMA		SUBTLE		INTENSE
LIGHT	KABINETT DRY Weißburgunder Elbling Silvaner Riesling	poached fish	KABINETT DRY OR SEMI-DRY Gewürztraminer Scheurebe Bacchus Müller-Thurgau	Asian dishes
		poultry		wildfowl
ROBUST	SPÄTLESE DRY / AUSLESE DRY Silvaner Weißburgunder Elbling Riesling	leaf salad with vinaigrette sauce	SPÄTLESE DRY Dornfelder Lemberger Spätburgunder Grauburgunder	braised vegetables
		veal cutlet		spicy pasta dishes
		rich freshwater fish		goose, duck
		mussels, lobster		game
		asparagus with sauce hollandaise		roast beef or lamb
		strips of meat in cream sauce		rich cheese



Rule of thumb: Light (low fat) food with low alcohol wine, delicate flavours 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 rich, powerful wine with pronounced fruity aromas, barrique wine or, in certain cases, with sweet wine. Pronounced sweet wines (Beerenauslese, Trockenbeerenauslese, Eiswein) are deli-

cious exceptions. Preferably try them with desserts or strong cheeses (blue cheese). So much for the theory!



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