



VDP. Die Prädikatsweingüter

THE NEW VDP.CLASSIFICATION



VDP.CLASSIFICATION – BACKGROUND

WINE LAW OF 1971

Germany has a long and successful viticultural tradition. The German wine law of 1971 created an enormous number of designations that not only confuse the majority of wine lovers, but also make it very difficult to identify/recognize which wines truly offer exceptional quality.

The 1971 wine law enables quality wines to be produced from any vineyard site within the German wine-growing regions. Thousands of vineyards have been consolidated (from ca. 30,000 to ca. 3000) and often named after the best-known site now within the borders of the newly created site.

Vineyard names that had been traditionally associated with high quality wines can now be used for wines of all qualities. The wine law established two types of vineyard sites: Einzellage (individual site) and Grosslage (collective vineyard site, i.e. made up of several individual sites – often including vineyards of many wine villages). There is no indication on the label as to whether a wine originates from an individual site that imparts site-specific characteristics (reflects its terroir) or from a collective site.

Traditional terms associated with wine quality have lost their significance. The use of the term "natur" or "natural" (not chaptalized) was forbidden. A quality wine category (QbA) was introduced and wines of this category can be chaptalized.

The overall volume of Prädikat wines on the market has been greatly inflated, because qualification for a Prädikat depends primarily on must weight.

The traditional term "Cabinet" that once denoted particularly fine wines now denotes the simplest of the Prädikat wines, Kabinett. There is no correlation between a quality category and style (taste profile).

New methods of cellar technology (e.g., the use of sweet reserve) enable winemakers to produce wines with residual sweetness at will, whereby this style was formerly achieved naturally.

For quite a period of time, it was difficult to find high-quality dry wines on the market.

VDP MEASURES

Since 1984, members of the VDP have developed an internal system of vineyard classification in an attempt to remedy some of the less-than-positive consequences of the wine law of 1971.

The VDP's vineyard classification is continually being refined, with the following goals in mind:

- 1) To assess the quality potential of Germany's best vineyard sites
- 2) To secure the future of Germany's unique viticultural landscape
- 3) To restore esteem for Germany's outstanding dry wines
- 4) To underscore the traditional connotation of the Prädikat as attributes reserved for wines with natural sweetness

Since 2001, the VDP has refined its internal classification model step by step, taking into consideration recommendations and comments made by customers and by members of the trade and press. Just as "Rome was not built in a day," the wine-law-related problems that have emerged over the past 42 years cannot be rectified in one step. Furthermore, the VDP must also work within the existing legal framework (respect labeling laws, for example).

After lively debate and fair discussion, the delegates unanimously voted to adopt the resolution proposed on VDP classification, in which the nomenclature of the VDP classification is more logically positioned; the correlation between top wines and their site of origin is strengthened; and the middle segment is more clearly structured. The resolution takes effect with vintage 2012.

The resolution includes the following points:

Four designations denote VDP appellations of origin

- VDP.GROSSE LAGE (comparable with Grand Cru in Burgundy)
- VDP.ERSTE LAGE (comparable with Premier Cru in Burgundy)
- VDP.ORTSWEIN (comparable with Village in Burgundy)
- VDP.GUTSWEIN (comparable with a regional or generic wine in Burgundy)

New designation to denote the origin of top-level wines – VDP.GROSSE LAGE – rather than Erste Lage

The top-level category has been renamed. A new category has not been created, but rather the terminology has been shuffled in order to reconcile the discrepancy between the designations Erste Lage and Grosses Gewächs, as well as underscore the equally high status of wines with residual sweetness produced from grapes grown in exceptional sites.

Review of the designation to denote wines in the middle segment – formerly known as wines from classified sites

All VDP regional associations and member estates have been assigned the task of critically reappraising the above-named category. The goal is to be more discriminating in determining what constitutes a very good site, i.e., do the wines produced from grapes produced in such sites really show site-specific characteristics...terroir...and if not, those sites should no longer be named on labels. In all, the number of classified sites is to be reduced.

VDP.ERSTE LAGE – an opportunity to differentiate between the very best and very good sites

The use of the designation VDP.GROSSE LAGE to denote the absolutely finest vineyards of a region is valid for all member estates across the board, effective as of vintage 2012. The use of the designation VDP.ERSTE LAGE to denote very good sites is optional, to be determined region by region. The regions can also determine when, if ever, to introduce the use of VDP.ERSTE LAGE. In other words, some regions might feel the designation VDP.GROSSE LAGE suffices to describe their classified sites; other regions might wish to differentiate between their very best and very good classified sites, in which case they can opt to use the designation VDP.ERSTE LAGE to denote the latter.

Regional differences are taken into consideration

The VDP national association has set up an overall classification model. At the same time, the regional associations have considerable leeway in refining the model to take regional differences into consideration.

Clear vote on Grosses Gewächs

Henceforth, VDP.GROSSE GEWÄCHSE originate in a VDP.GROSSE LAGE – a clear statement that eliminates ambiguity. Members unanimously approved ongoing use of the designation VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS to denote the finest *dry* wines from Germany's finest vineyards, a term that has achieved international recognition since its introduction.

Prädikats are reserved for wines with residual sweetness

The Prädikats can be used for wines in all categories. The Prädikats are to be used exclusively for wines with natural, ripe sweetness – with one exception: VDP.GUTSWEIN, which can be vinified in any style (dry, off-dry, sweet). Specific taste profiles for the Prädikats are to be determined region by region.

Members are to refrain from using Prädikats for dry and off-dry wines, thereby enabling the Prädikats to resume their traditional meaning. Here, too, VDP.GUTSWEINE are an exception, as mentioned above.

In closing: The VDP classification is a work in progress. This resolution marks a further refinement of earlier models with regard to the language of the label (the correlation of "great" with "great") and simplified structure based on three broad categories: Gutswein, Ortswein and Lagenwein. The last category includes the designations VDP.GROSSE LAGE and VDP.ERSTE LAGE, comparable with Grand Cru and Premier Cru in Burgundy. In addition, the use of the internationally recognized designation VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS to denote Germany's finest *dry* wines was applauded.

According to VDP president Steffen Christmann: "With this step, VDP members have clearly underscored the significance of the vineyard as the basis of wine quality, i.e., the very finest German wines are produced from grapes grown in Germany's very finest sites. VDP growers embrace an international maxim that is not difficult to understand: the narrower the appellation of origin, the higher the quality of the wine – a principle that was the norm during the heyday of German wine at the start of the 20th century. At the same time, the VDP classification acknowledges that practices and traditions vary from region to region, and the regional associations have the freedom to take these into consideration within the overall framework set up by the national association. The sharper the profile established by a region or estate, the greater its chance of success in the market."

THE KEY TO TERROIR-DRIVEN VITICULTURE IN GERMANY

The classification statute of the VDP Prädikat Wine Estates defines the quality of a wine primarily by its terroir, i.e., origin in conjunction with quality. The maintenance and preservation of these special terroirs is the focal point – and means abstention from using the name of a district, a collective vineyard site or a less-than-top individual site. Only wines that reflect the character of their terroir are permitted to bear the name of a vineyard site.

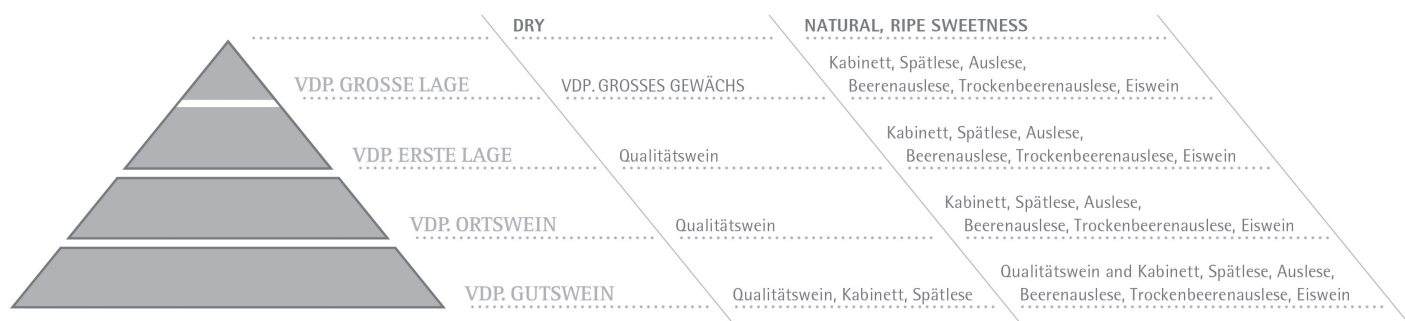
Terroir is determined by three components, a “magic triangle” that includes the overall quality and character of a vineyard site; the skill of the grower; and the quality of a vintage. Terroir is recognizable in a wine.

The quality of a vineyard is defined by its soil (topographical position, climate, and microclimate). Only certain grape varieties are well-suited for a specific terroir. Our knowledge about the best sites and the most suitable grape varieties is based on centuries of experience.

Realigning the classification pyramid into four tiers is a refinement of the VDP classification that enables the VDP regions to determine their use of site names based on a hierarchy. In addition, this step represents a more logical progression of VDP classification nomenclature; it reinforces the importance of site as the origin of the finest wines; and it more clearly structures the classification’s middle segment.

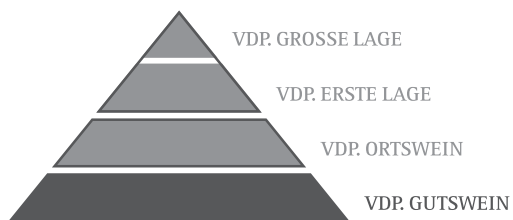
Membership criteria and standards for all wines within the VDP.CLASSIFICATION

- Ownership of winemaking and cellar facilities
 - Possession of good and excellent vineyards
 - Reduced yields of 75 hl/ha (maximum)
 - Plantation of at least 80% traditional grape varieties
 - Ecologically friendly and sustainable viticulture
 - Traditional winemaking techniques
 - Must weights higher than the minimum prescribed by law
 - Harvest by hand, especially for the categories Auslese, Beerenauslese, Trockenbeerenauslese and Eiswein
 - The VDP logo – a stylized eagle bearing a cluster of grapes – continues to be mandatory on capsules
- Estates and their wines are inspected and certified on a regular basis to ensure ongoing high standards, from vineyard maintenance to cellar technology.



The refined VDP.CLASSIFICATION is valid as of vintage 2012.

VDP.GUTSWEIN – GOOD FROM THE GROUND UP



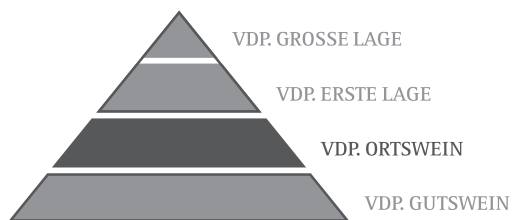
VDP.GUTSWEIN – GOOD FROM THE GROUND UP

VDP.GUTSWEINE, or regional wines, originate from an estate's holdings within a region. They are entry-level, house wines that meet the general standards prescribed by the VDP.

At least 80% of the estate's vineyards are planted with traditional grape varieties typical of their region, as prescribed by the VDP.

Yields are restricted to a maximum of 75 hl/ha.

VDP.ORTSWEIN – SOURCED FROM SUPERIOR SOILS



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VDP.ORTSWEINE, or village wines, originate from a village's traditional vineyards that are planted with grape varieties typical of their region.

GRAPE VARIETIES

At least 80% of the estate's vineyards are planted with traditional grape varieties.

MAXIMUM YIELDS

Reduced yields of 75 hl/ha

TASTE PROFILE

Dry VDP.ORTSWEINE are labeled "Qualitätswein trocken".

Each region can define the taste profile of off-dry (halbtrocken, feinherb) quality wines.

Village wines with residual sweetness are labeled with one of the traditional Prädikats.

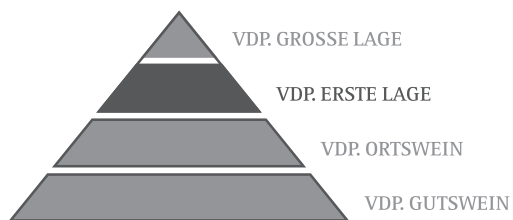
(Kabinett, Spätlese, Auslese, Beerenauslese, Trockenbeerenauslese, Eiswein)

IDENTIFICATION MARKS

The name of the village is the appellation of origin of a VDP.ORTSWEIN.

The VDP logo – a stylized eagle bearing a cluster of grapes – continues to be mandatory on capsules. The use of a strip on the capsule to identify wines in this category (Ortswein) is optional.

VDP.ERSTE LAGE – FIRST CLASS!



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VDP.ERSTE LAGEN are first-class vineyards with distinctive characteristics that are reflected in the finished wine. They provide optimal growing conditions for consistently achieving a ripe crop from which wines of substance and high quality are produced, as evidenced over a long period of time. They are planted primarily with traditional varieties, as well as other grape varieties that yield very high quality wines.

As of vintage 2012, the following regions will implement a four-tier system:
Baden, Franken, Pfalz, Rheingau, Saale-Unstrut, Sachsen, Württemberg

GRAPE VARIETIES

Traditional varieties, but also selected new crossings, as prescribed by each region. Please see the regional list of permissible grape varieties for additional details.

MAXIMUM YIELDS

Reduced yields of 60 hl/ha.

HARVEST

Grapes are harvested selectively by hand and must be at least ripe enough to qualify for Spätlese status.

TASTE PROFILE

Dry VDP.ERSTE LAGE wines are labeled "Qualitätswein trocken."

Each region can define the taste profile of off-dry (halbtrocken, feinherb) quality wines.

Prädikats are no longer used to denote dry VDP.ERSTE LAGE wines.

VDP.ERSTE LAGE wines with residual sweetness are labeled with one of the traditional Prädikats (Kabinett, Spätlese, Auslese, Beerenauslese, Trockenbeerenauslese, Eiswein), the taste profiles of which are determined by each region.

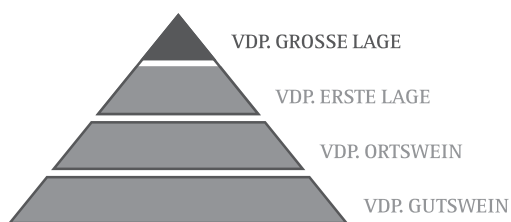
IDENTIFICATION MARKS

The VDP logo – a stylized eagle bearing a cluster of grapes – continues to be mandatory on capsules, but will be supplemented by a strip on the capsule to identify wines in the VDP.ERSTE LAGE category.

MARKETING

VDP.ERSTE LAGE wines make their market debut on 1 May of the year after which the grapes were harvested.

VDP.GROSSE LAGE – THE PEAK OF THE PYRAMID



VDP.GROSSE LAGE – THE PEAK OF THE PYRAMID

VDP.GROSSE LAGEN are the very best vineyards of Germany, within which the finest parcels have been narrowly demarcated as those whose terroir qualities are discernible in the finished wine. With their site-specific characteristics, these wines are particularly expressive. They have exceptional aging potential. They are planted with specific traditional varieties best suited to a particular individual site, as determined by each region.

All VDP regional associations are reassessing the sites classified to date in order to determine which sites qualify for VDP.GROSSE LAGE status in their respective region. In sites in which more than one proprietor has holdings, the decision will be made on a regional level.

The logo  (formerly used to identify wines in the top echelon of the pyramid) has been redesigned. As of 2012, new demarcated VDP.GROSSE LAGEN can be legally created from expanded or geologically heterogeneous individual vineyard sites by using EU protected designations of origin (geschützte Ursprungsbezeichnungen/GU) or traditional parcel names listed in the vineyard registry. This is a process that will take years. As such, the list of Grosse Lage sites will continuously evolve."

GRAPE VARIETIES

Choice of grape variety is narrowly restricted to specific traditional varieties that are best suited to a particular site or parcel. Please see the regional list of permissible grape varieties for additional details.

MAXIMUM YIELDS

Reduced yields of 50 hl/ha

HARVEST

Grapes are harvested selectively by hand and must be at least ripe enough to qualify for Spätlese status.

CERTIFICATION

In addition to meeting the general standards prescribed by the VDP, VDP.GROSSE LAGE wines are subject to additional inspections and examinations. Quality-oriented measures in the vineyard, particularly those affecting yields, are monitored in every site throughout the growing season and before the harvest. Prior to and after bottling, the wines are tasted by a tasting panel.

TASTE PROFILE

A dry wine from a VDP.GROSSE LAGE is designated VDP.GROSSES GEWÄCHS and labeled "Qualitätswein trocken."

A wine with natural, ripe sweetness from a VDP.GROSSE LAGE is labeled with one of the traditional Prädikats. (Kabinett, Spätlese, Auslese, Beerenauslese, Trockenbeerenauslese, Eiswein)

IDENTIFICATION MARKS

The VDP logo – a stylized eagle bearing a cluster of grapes – continues to be mandatory on capsules, but will be supplemented by a strip on the capsule to identify wines in the VDP.GROSSE LAGE category.

VDP.GROSSE GEWÄCHSE will be bottled in bottles bearing the "GG" logo.

MARKETING

VDP.GROSSE LAGE: Prädikat wines with natural, ripe sweetness make their market debut on 1 May of the year after the grapes were harvested; VDP.GROSSE GEWÄCHSE white wines, on 1 September of the year after the grapes were harvested; and VDP.GROSSE GEWÄCHSE red wines, on 1 September two years after the grapes were harvested.

VDP.GROSSE LAGE and VDP.ERSTE LAGE Permissible grape varieties for

Region	VDP.GROSSE LAGE	VDP.ERSTE LAGE (if applicable)
Ahr	Spätburgunder, Frühburgunder, only noble-sweet: Riesling	Not applicable
Baden	Weissburgunder, Grauburgunder, Spätburgunder, Riesling, Chardonnay, Lemberger (only Kraichgau and Badische Bergstrasse)	Silvaner, Scheurebe, Gewürztraminer, Muskateller, Sauvignon blanc, Auxerrois, Schwarzriesling, only lusciously sweet : Rieslaner
Franken	Riesling, Silvaner, Weissburgunder , Spätburgunder	Grauburgunder, Scheurebe, Rieslaner, Traminer, Frühburgunder, Müller-Thurgau, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Muskateller, Lemberger
Hessische Bergstrasse	Riesling, Weissburgunder , Grauburgunder, Spätburgunder	See VDP.GROSSE LAGE
Mittelrhein	Riesling, Spätburgunder	Not applicable
Mosel-Saar-Ruwer	Riesling	Not applicable
Nahe	Riesling	Not applicable
Pfalz	Riesling, Weissburgunder , Spätburgunder	Grauer Burgunder, Chardonnay, only lusciously sweet : Scheurebe, Gewürztraminer, Muskateller
Rheingau	Riesling, Spätburgunder	See VDP.GROSSE LAGE
Rheinhessen	Riesling, Spätburgunder	Not applicable
Saale-Unstrut	Riesling, Weissburgunder, Grauburgunder, Spätburgunder, Frühburgunder, Traminer, Silvaner	Blauer Zweigelt
Sachsen	Riesling, Weissburgunder, Grauburgunder, Spätburgunder, Frühburgunder, Traminer	See VDP.GROSSE LAGE
Württemberg	Riesling, Weissburgunder , Grauburgunder, Spätburgunder, Lemberger	Silvaner, Chardonnay, Muskattrollinger, Gewürztraminer, Muskateller, Sauvignon Blanc, Samtrot, Schwarzriesling, Trollinger

SAMPLE WINE LIST



VDP. Die Prädikatsweingüter

BEISPIELE FÜR DIE AUSLOBUNG VON WEINEN DER NEUEN KLASSIFIKATIONSSTUFEN IN EINER WEINKARTE

Stand: 27.02.13

SORTIERUNG NACH WEINGUT

WEINGUT CHRISTMANN, GIMMELDINGEN, PFALZ	0,75 l
2012 Idig, VDP. GROSSE LAGE, Riesling GG, trocken	00,00 €
2012 Idig, VDP. GROSSE LAGE, Riesling Spätlese	00,00 €
2012 Königsbacher Ölberg, VDP. ERSTE LAGE, Riesling, trocken	00,00 €
2012 Königsbacher Ölberg, VDP. ERSTE LAGE, Riesling Spätlese	00,00 €
2012 Gimmeldingen Riesling, trocken, VDP. ORTSWEIN	00,00 €
2012 Gimmeldingen Riesling Kabinett, VDP. ORTSWEIN	00,00 €
2012 Pfalz Grauburgunder, trocken, VDP. GUTSWEIN	00,00 €
2012 Pfalz Grauburgunder Kabinett, VDP. GUTSWEIN	00,00 €

SORTIERUNG NACH WEINBAUREGION

PFALZ	0,75 l
2012 Weingut Oekonomierat Rebholz Im Sonnenschein, VDP. GROSSE LAGE, Weisser Burgunder GG, trocken	00,00 €
2012 Weingut Christmann Gimmeldingen Riesling Spätlese, VDP. ORTSWEIN	00,00 €
2012 Weingut Dr. Wehrheim Pfalz Riesling, trocken, VDP. GUTSWEIN	00,00 €

SORTIERUNG NACH KLASSIFIKATIONSSTUFE

VDP. GROSSE LAGE	0,75 l
2007 Weingut Oekonomierat Rebholz, Pfalz Im Sonnenschein, Weisser Burgunder GG, trocken	00,00 €
2012 Weingut Christmann, Pfalz Idig, Riesling Spätlese	00,00 €
2012 Weingut Dr. Wehrheim, Pfalz Mandelberg, Weißer Burgunder GG, trocken	00,00 €

Weine aus VDP. ERSTE LAGE aus den Jahrgängen vor 2011, dürfen als VDP. GROSSE LAGE bezeichnet werden.

MEDIA MENTIONS

"I wonder how many of you realize that not only is Germany's geography unique, but quite how extraordinary the VDP is. I can't think of any other organization in any other wine-producing country like it. There are organizations that impose the law, and there are lots and lots of little regional councils and groups, but I can't think of any other country that has a national organization devoted solely to upholding quality and managing to do it without splitting apart."

JANCIS ROBINSON MW

*SPEECH AT THE CEREMONY VDP CENTENNIAL
SEPTEMBER 2010*

"Newcomers to German wines might be best served by putting down their Deutsch dictionary and simply looking for an eagle clutching grapes on the label. Since 1910, the symbol of the *Verband Deutscher Prädikatsweingüter (VDP)* has denoted a quality producer."

WINE SPECTATOR

JULY 2010

"The turn away from the ripeness of grapes at harvest to a classification of the finest sites as the ultimate measure of quality is the defining step in Germany's return to its roots and will certainly pave the way to new horizons."

JOEL PAYNE

PUBLISHER, GAULT MILLAU WEINGUIDE, JANUARY 2013

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