

Gruener Who?

America has always thought of itself as the proverbial gleaming castle on the hill; looking down on its subjects, imparting beneficial guidance and wisdom, leading all toward a better path. Our (somewhat) recent development as a wine producer echoes much the same scene; we allow for some limited homage to the French due to their heritage, we find Italian wines romantic, the Australian rambunctious...and that's about it. If we think of the rest of the wine world it's often only in regard to some new publicity (positive or negative) or a particularly well-regarded vintage, but mostly, we consider those 'other' areas less than...especially compared with our own burgeoning industry. After all, we beat the French in '76, didn't we? Can those other wine areas really compete? Don't they just make white wines anyway? (I neglected to mention that the new American wine castle is mostly red.

It's unlikely that I'll change that myopic outlook by invoking history, but here goes anyway. They've been making great wines in Austria since before Roman times. The Celts certainly grew vines along the banks of the Danube, and the third century Roman emperor Probus allowed for the legionnaires to cultivate and make wine for their own consumption as well as sale. Charlemagne's conquest of Austria (or at least what we view today as modern Austria) brought grape classification, formalized rules for vineyards and vinification, and a concern for good hygiene, and Burgundy's Cistercian monasteries established a presence around the same time. By the Middle Ages, Krems was well regarded throughout Europe as the center of a dynamic wine scene. And at the time of the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the Austrian Hapsburg Empire stretched through Hungary, Slovenia and Northern Italy; those wines were all considered Austrian! Not at all due to the quality of the wine, that empire was lost, and by 1918 the country had shrunk to its present size. Still, the grape growing areas in the eastern half of Austria were well tended and the wines equally regarded.

Scandal, however, struck in 1985. A significant portion of Austrian wine production was always sold to German bottlers, who then blended it with other non-descript juice for their low cost, *German*-labeled wines. A handful of Austrian producers 'spiked' their wines with diethylene glycol (er, a component in anti-freeze) to add body and sweetness. And although only a few producers were involved, and *none of the wines indicted were labeled Austrian*, exports plummeted worldwide. The Austrian government reacted decisively. They rewrote wine regulations following the strictest standards they could define and rebuilt their wine industry with a whole new outlook. While there had always been a small number of Austrian winemakers concentrating on high quality rather than bulk volume, the quality philosophy then became the standard in the uphill battle to rebuild image and economic viability.

Today's new generation of winemakers is unquestionably dedicated to quality—and very high quality at that; they have virtually re-created the category of Austrian wines by making complex, dry white and red wines for the *table*, meaning that they're meant to be consumed with food. Familiar grapes such as Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Gris are shining, yet the greatest successes may be found with less familiar grapes such as Grüner Veltliner, Müller Thurgau, Welschriesling, Blaufränkisch, and Blauer Zweigelt. It seems certain that with these indigenous varieties, both white and red, we can visualize both Austria's history and future.



www.the-wine-source.com

Anton Bauer

Located east of the city of Krems in the winemaking region of Donauland, Anton Bauer has been fashioning wines for four generations. Their terraced vineyards sit above the Donau River and are planted with both white and with increasing success red grape varieties. The white wines range in style from dry, crisp Rieslings to complex, age-worthy, 100% new oak raised Gruner Veltliner. The red wines are crafted from both indigenous varieties such as Blaufrankisch and Zweigelt as well international varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. While most definitely quality-driven, Anton Bauer's wines tend to represent terrific value for their price. We have chosen to feature two selections each from the white and red repertoire of this brilliant producer. [IAS]

2004 Gruner Veltliner "Gmork"

OK. We've got lots of unusual names working here. Gruner Veltliner refers to the most popular white grape grown in Austria and the name Gmork to a portion of the area around the winery. All new vocabulary aside, this crisp, bone dry, and intensely mineral wine is an ideal aperitif or perfect match for some fresh goat cheese.

Reg. Price: \$9.99 / TWS Price: \$7.99

2004 Gruner Veltliner Rosenberg

A more complex version of the Gmork culled from one of the greatest Gruner Veltliner sites in Austria (and in fact the world) the Rosenberg offers an expansive bouquet of ripe citrus fruits as well as a spicy, clean finish.

Reg. Price: \$13.99 / TWS Price: \$10.99

2003 Cuvee 9

A blend of Zweigelt, Blaufrankisch, Cabernet and Merlot, the cuvee 9 is the 9th installment of this solid red. Medium-bodied and smoothly textured this wine will work wonders with both a Sunday night roast and Tuesday night burgers.

Reg. Price: \$16.99 / TWS Price: \$12.99

2002 Wagram Reserve

Created by a similar blend as the Cuvee 9, the Wagram reserve is aged for 18 months in brand-spanking-new French oak barrels. This extended new oak aging adds layers of spice and toast, which integrate beautifully with the complex red berry fruit flavors possessed by the wine. Serious stuff worth cellaring if you have the patience.

Reg. Price: \$25.99 / TWS Price: \$19.99

Ernst Steindorfer

Steindorfer Eiswein Cuvee Klaus 1997

A blend of Welschriesling and Pinot Gris, this is a delicious dessert wine from the Neusiedlersee region. This region is known to produce some of the best sweet wines in the world. This Ice Wine (Eiswein) is produced from grapes harvested and pressed while still frozen. This means that the watery content of the grapes will remain in the press as ice, while concentrated sugary must flows out as "Liquid Gold". Really.

Reg. Price: \$31.99 / TWS Price: \$24.99

vol. 2, no. 5

Leo Hillinger

Leo Hillingers' family has been growing grapes and making wine in Jois for generations, but he journeyed through France, Germany, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand and as far as a field as California, before ending up back in Jois with a couple of vines and a dream to realize his wine philosophy. Today, 15 years later he's created his life's work with one of the most modern and stunningly beautiful wineries in Europe, 90 hectares of vineyards and a reputation for both perfection and passion in his wines.

Welschriesling 2004

Delicate green apple overtones with a fresh citrus/lime backbone and a crackling dry finish. This varietal is no relation to the Riesling grape, but is more akin to the Portuguese Vinho Verde or Loire Muscadet in style. A refreshing aperitif or serve with shellfish, salads, and creamy cheeses.

Reg. Price: \$8.99 / TWS Price: \$6.99

Pinot Grigio 2004

Made from the Grauburgunder (Pinot Gris) grape, this is a dry Pinot Grigio, crisp, and clean - it has some toasted almond flavors with citrus and stone fruits and a harmonic interplay of acidity and fruits on the finish.

Reg. Price: \$9.99 / TWS Price: \$7.99

Zweigelt 2004

A traditional Austrian grape variety, this is a very elegant and harmonious wine filled with ripe black cherry and subtle mocha notes. The palate features ripe, deep fruit with a gentle, smooth medium-bodied mouth feel. The finish is long and has slightly spicy, peppery nuances. Do you Zweigelt?

Reg. Price: \$17.99 / TWS Price: \$13.99

Small Hill 2004

This blend of 33% Pinot Noir, 34% St. Laurent, and 33% Merlot was aged for 12 months in French oak. Its fine, elegant nose leads the to explosive dark fruit flavors, smooth soft tannins, and a full, long-lasting finish.

Reg. Price: \$14.99 / TWS Price: \$11.99

Brigitte Steininger

Weingut Steininger is located in the heart of Langenlois. Langenlois is actually the largest wine town in Austria and it is in the Kamptal. Their perfectly balanced white wines and exceptional sparkling wines have received national and international awards, earning Steininger a reputation as one of Austria's best wineries.

Steininger Sauvignon Blanc Sekt,NV

A fresh approach to sparkling wine, this 100% Sauvignon Blanc shows scents of fresh peaches and apricots and finishes with crisp, dry and lemony acidity. A delightful and unique taste!

Reg. Price: \$24.99 / TWS Price: \$19.99

"THIS WINE IS TOO GOOD FOR TOAST-DRINKING, MY DEAR. YOU DON'T WANT TO MIX EMOTIONS UP WITH A WINE LIKE THAT. YOU LOSE THE TASTE." — Count Mippipopulous in *The Sun Also Rises*, 1926, by Ernest Hemingway

Weingut Strauss/Gustav Strauss

The "Weingut Strauss" (the Strauss wine estate) started in 1810 under the name "Schopper". In 1948 Karl and Johanna took over the business, which their son Karl, who graduated from the Fruit and Wine Growing College in Silberberg with great distinction, carried on. Now run by brothers Gustav and Karl Jr., the family run operation continues to strive for excellence in their wines.

Samling 88 – Scheurebe 2004

Made from 100% Scheurebe, this is a very unique wine. Rich aromas of peaches and wild flowers leap from the glass leading to ripe peach and stone flavors, enlivening acidity and a full dry finish. Named for Dr. Georg Scheu, who engineered the grape, Scheurebe is thought to be cross of Sylvaner and Riesling, although it could be something else. Called Samling 88 in Austria (seedling number 88 was the one selected by the good doctor) it's seldom as exciting as this version.

Reg. Price: \$9.99 / TWS Price: \$7.99

Sauvignon Blanc Classic 2004

Classic Sauvignon Blanc with full ripe citrus fruit, lemon drop and delicate herbal notes followed by a clean crisp finish. Perfect warm weather aperitif, and pairs well with light foods, mild cheeses, shellfish and seafood. Fans of Sancerre will love this wine!

Reg. Price: \$14.99 / TWS Price: \$11.99

Pinot Blanc Classic 2004

Tastes like full-bodied Alsatian Pinot Blanc for half the price. Subtle floral aromas permeate a core of soft pear fruit and fresh acidity, followed by a long smooth finish.

Reg. Price: \$10.99 / TWS Price: \$8.79

Weingut Tegernseerhof/ Martin Mittlebach

The "Weingut Tegernseerhof" is a fifth generation family enterprise with approximately 24 hectares of vineyards in the best crus (called "Reiden") of the Wachau. Superbly run by the father and son team Franz and Martin Mittlebach, the estate produces full and flinty Grüner Veltliners and delicate, spicy Rieslings.

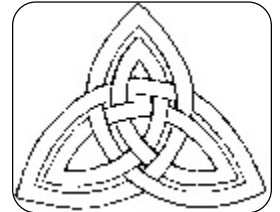
Grüner Veltliner Bergdistel 2003

Seductive aromas and flavors of candied citrus, pineapple, and mineral mingle with hints of white pepper. The wine is full with a firm structure and creamy texture. Powerful and delicious, this is a Grüner that stands among the finest in Austria.

Reg. Price: \$24.99 / TWS Price: \$19.99

Beers of the Week

Not many people know that St. Patrick was actually a wealthy, not particularly religious Englishman who was kidnapped by some Irishmen who attacked his family's estate and held him prisoner back in Ireland. As one might expect, Patrick had a lot of personal time while in captivity, and he found religion in his solitary work. After six years he finally escaped to England only to return about 15 years later to convert his pagan captors. None of us are really sure what this has to do with drinking beer, but we have some good deals on Irish libations anyway.



Guinness Draft 12pk bottles

Reg. Price: \$13.99 / TWS Price: \$10.99

Guinness Draft 4pk cans

Reg. Price: \$7.49 / TWS Price: \$5.99

Harp 12pk bottles

Reg. Price: \$11.99 / TWS Price: \$9.99

Smithwick's 12pk bottles

Reg. Price: \$11.99 / TWS Price: \$9.99



Join us Friday, March 31st from 6-10 pm at the Evergreen's Carriage House, 4545 N. Charles Street, for

BLACK GRAPES IN BALTIMORE:

A celebration of pinot noir

**A WINE TASTING FUNDRAISER
TO BENEFIT UNITED WAY OF
CENTRAL MARYLAND'S YOUTH
ACHIEVING POTENTIAL INITIATIVE**

Bid for wine-related items at live & silent auctions!

Taste wines from more than 20 wineries made primarily of Pinot Noir and its sister grapes, Pinot Gris (Grigio) and Pinot Blanc!

Enjoy delicious light fare from Watson's Catering!

Support United Way of Central Maryland!

Tickets are \$65 per person. Reserve your spot today!

Call United Way at 410.895.1574

vol. 2, no. 5

three

Mark Your Calendar!



LAST SUNDAY
SUPPERS
AT IGGIES

WINE DINNER

Sunday, March 26, 5:30 pm
at Iggies, 818 N. Calvert St. (Mount Vernon)
\$40 per person, including tax
For reservations, call the store at 410.467.7777

WINE DINNER

Oyster Madness

Monday, March 23, 5:30 pm
Oceanaire Seafood Room, 801 Aliceanna St.
\$50 per person, including tax and gratuity and
valet parking.
For reservations, call the store at 410.467.7777

WINE DINNER

Ed Sbragia of Beringer Wines

Monday, March 28, 6:30 pm
Ruth's Chris Steakhouse, 600 Water St.
\$125 per person, including tax and gratuity and
parking.
For reservations, call the store at 410.467.7777

WINE TASTING

Austrian Wine Tasting

Wednesday, March 8, 5-7:30 pm
*Join Austrian winemakers Anton Bauer,
Leo Hillinger, Martin Mittelbach,
Brigitte Steining, and Gustav Strauss
for an evening of eye-opening wines
from Austria, one of the most unique
wine producing countries.*

For a complete up-to-date
listing of our events, check our website
at www.the-wine-source.com

THE WINE SOURCE
3601 Elm Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21211
(410) 467-7777
www.the-wine-source.com

Comments from the Cheese Cave

Cheese and Red Wine, Caught in the Act!

According to a recent study from the University of California at Davis when it comes to wine and cheese pairings there is no magic formula. During the study eleven *trained* wine tasters (remember there are no amateur wine tasters at UC Davis) were presented with cheap and expensive versions of four different varietals- Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah and Pinot Noir. The tasters evaluated the different flavors and aromas of each wine both

alone and when preceded by eight different cheeses - Mozzarella, Teleme, two cheddars from Vermont and New York, Emmental, Gruyere, Gorgonzola and Stilton. After cheese, the wines were judged to taste flatter because



the cheese was able to suppress attributes like astringency and oak. The strong flavors of Gorgonzola and Stilton had the greatest effect, although even the milder cheeses also made a difference by masking the wines flavors.

Most of the media coverage of this study has ignored the fact that the wines tested were all red varietals, not to mention all cow's milk. Almost any cheese monger or sommelier will tell you they have always known that red wines, which are often tinged with oak or are higher in tannin, can be a difficult match for cheese. A crisp, lively white wine or an effervescent, sparkling wine is almost always a better match. Sherry, Madeira and sweet white wines are some of the finest wines to pair with cheese, but Amontillado and Sercial remain the freaks of the wine world. When in doubt, pair red wine with sheep's milk cheeses- Manchego, Pecorino, Etoriki, Zamarano and Ossau-Iraty are subtle, rich sheep's milk cheeses that won't drown out most red wines.

A Few Red Wine Friendly Cheeses:

Midnight Moon: An aged goat's milk cheese reminiscent of Parmigiano. Try with Zinfandel.

Etoriki: This mellow and sweet sheep's milk cheese has no bite and pairs well with any young red wine.

Zamarano: Some call it extra-hard Manchego, but Zamarano is often more complex than most run of the mill Manchego. Pair it with Rioja.

Tomme Crayeuse: A tart, creamy cow's milk cheese that tastes great with California Pinot Noir.

Tomme du Levezu: Raw sheep's milk from the Pyrenees region with a nutty flavor. Try with a fruity Cotes-du-Rhone.

vol. 2, no. 5