



Cape Winemakers Guild Technical Tasting Report

Tasting Title: Domaine Wachau
Presented by: Bruwer Raats (and Lizette Tolken CWM)
Date: 17 January 2019
Venue: Longridge Wine Estate

Intro - Lizette Tolken CWM

10% of Wachau is red (much lower than rest of Austria), 52% Gruner Veltliner, 16% Riesling, then Neuburger, Muller Thurgau and Gelber Muskateller.

12 miles along the Danube – very small but incredibly diverse area.

Austria – 18th largest wine producer in the world – was up to 3rd after the 2nd World War.

Vineyard area of Wachau - 1,344 hectares. 232 wineries

Most wineries dating back 8 generations, Nikolaihof since 707 AD

Incredibly-steep slopes of Danube => 1,000 YO manmade terraces – single rows per terrace – dry-walled, no mortar, water drains through, prevents erosion.

Soil types – most important – aim of tasting is to try and taste the terroir.

Tectonic plates collided 350 million years ago.

Heat and pressure forced the granite to metamorphosise into gneiss.

Lots of mica, quartz, feldspar – hopefully these minerals can be tasted in the wines.

Loess – closest to the river, most of the steep terraces and gneiss further back.

Best vineyard/'Grand Crus' mostly on north side of Danube – the Left Bank.

Temperature

Cool continental climate with warm air from eastern Pannonian plains, cooler air from Weinviertel from the north hits the western vineyards. Typically Eastern Wachau, richer and riper (not just the air temp, also richer gneiss soils), Western Wachau – steelier and fresher. Significant differences between sites. Big diurnal range throughout.

Vinea Wachau Nobilis Districtus

Quality scheme pre-dates DAC scheme in Austria, replaces use of German terms.

VWND founded in 1983 but dates back to 12th century. 200 members, trademarked terms.

Steinfeder – type of grass in Wachau, max abv 11.5%, fresh and early drinking

Federspiel – falconry term for a lure. Must weight of 17 KMW, abv 11.5%- 12.5%.

Smaragd – lizard. Abv of at least 12.5%, max sugar of 9g RS. Concentrated, top stuff.

Winemaking – no noticeable oak flavours allowed on VWND wines, old oak widely used. Skin contact permitted and varies from producer. Lots of lees – can be up to 13 years! Also botrytis – can be added to dry wines for texture.

Domaine Wachau

Based near Durnstein – where Richard the Lionheart imprisoned for a year.

Largest producer of Wachau, produces across all categories but primarily premium wines.

Close to 440 has of vineyards – 30% of the total area. Only winery with vineyards in all the prestigious sites.

300 YO cellar and big library going back to 1957.

Experimental range – the Backstage range – use eggs, oak, other winemaking techniques.

Styles of Austrian wine

GV – lean, mineral-driven wines, but can be riper and fatter. Richer than Riesling, slightly less acidity.

Riesling – more acidity, less weight than GV. Less likely to get the turpenes of German Riesling. Generally more body than German, but fresher and more lively than Alsace.

Minerality – common term. Primarily interpreted in Austria as salt or flint stones

Steinfeder Gruner Veltliner 2018 11.5%, 1.4g RS, 5.7g/l TA

Fresh, lively with some crisp apples and a savoury, saline edge. Zippy acidity, some mid-palate richness, crunchy yellow apples and slight white pepper tail.

Federspiel Kreuzberg GV 2017 12.5%, 1.5g RS, 5.6 g/l TA

(Southern bank, central Wachau). Light, green apples on nose, creamy mid-palate, hints of white peaches and some floral notes, savoury finish, fresh rather than racy acidity.

Federspiel Loibenberg GV 2017 12.5%, 1.7g RS, 5.6g/l TA

(East Wachau, northern bank – as are all from now on). Some honey notes with fresh flowers and some stone fruit. Richer in mouth, almonds with creamy texture, moderate acidity and good length at finish.

Carl van der Merwe – both had white pepper, celery, crushed green herbs, apples and apricots. More herbs and celery on 1st one, liked the freshness, quite definitive. Wine 2 – more yellow fruit, celery still there, slightly oily note on wine – skin contact or warmer site.

Bruwer – Loibenberg = most easterly vineyard, top of hills, ancient terraces, known as the ‘hotplate’ of the Wachau – from the warm air coming from the Pannonian plains.

Jeremy – temperature differentials? Wachau compared to Mosel is much warmer, more closer to Rheinhessen. Has to irrigate (unlike Germany).

Federspiel Bruck Riesling 2017 12.5%, 1.6g RS, 8.4g/l TA

(Furthest West, away from the Danube, narrow valley, vineyards grown on both sides) Some resin and dried peaches. Zippy acidity, green unripe apples, high but not racy acidity, lacks a bit mid-palate, crunchy finish.

Federspiel Loibenberg Riesling 2017 12.5%, 2.6g RS, 7.6g/l TA

(East Wachau). All perfume, litchis, mandarin oranges on nose, more pronounced on nose. Richer in the mouth than previous, acidity less racy, only medium + at best.

Kevin G – 2 beautiful wines, definitely showing their terroir. W4 slightly more generous, both showing incredible purity. W3 white peach, grainy apple, touch of kerosene – acidity v important here. W4 more fruit and poise, zesty acidity, riper stone fruit, more generosity of body. Tried to stay away from minerality – feels its more associated with structure than flavour. Both the Loibenberg wines were riper and richer, v clear difference for me.

Carl S – 2 iconic vineyards of the Wachau but the Bruck today the less elegant. Loibenberg definitely showing more intensity and flavour.

Bruwer - The winemaking isn't important – it's always the terroir that must show in the wine.

Jeff – on the cooler Bruck wine tasted a touch of turpene but not on the riper block – believes this is to do with longer hangtime.

Warren – finds turpenes generally comes on the sweeter styles more easily.

Smaragd Axpoint GV 2017 13.5%, 1.9g RS, 5.8g/l TA

(West Wachau). Crunchy apples, some peachstone and pith. Fresh and lively acidity with spice and pepper notes, some savoury edge at finish.

Smaragd Kellerberg GV 2017 14%, 2.8g RS, 6.5g/l TA

(East Wachau). Pepper, aniseed, fennel on nose. Peaches, mandarin oranges, naartjies - lacks a bit of acidity to balance the richness of mid-palate.

Johann J – can see the effect of the winemaker here – old wood, lees, skin contact. W5 can see the cool climate – much thinner layered wine. Phenols a bit on the edgy side, on limit of extraction, needs to be backed up a bit more richness. W6 better-balanced, richer texture, nice floral notes, ripeness of fruit balanced with the tannins and the texture. Can see the link but also see the winemaking style, rates W6 highly.

Etienne – 14% is quite bold for a European wine. Shows the ripeness they can achieve.

Smaragd Singerriedel Riesling 2017 13.5%, 4.9g RS, 7.2 g/l TA

(West Wachau). Perfumed, litchis, slightly confected notes, some lime juice and lime cordial, huge amounts of orange citrus, grapefruit, pink grapefruit. Good balance of acidity running throughout.

Smaragd Achleiten Riesling 2017 14%, 4.0g RS, 7.7g/l TA

(Central Wachau). Shy nose, oranges and grapefruits – touch of marmalade and sugar. Lively acidity cuts through richness of fruit, food wine, acidity not quite integrated enough, slightly warm abv, keeper.

Bruwer – altitude of Singerriedel very important for the coolness of this wine – 400m above sea level – very dramatically steep. Achleiten = legendary vineyard, ave age of vines 40 YO, dry-stone walls dating back to 12th C. Upper terraces of schist.

Sebastian – going back to the GV shows them in a diff light after the Rieslings. Fascinating aromatics on W7 – more classic Riesling apples, pears, perfume. Good entry, quite phenolic mid-palate, acidity very high – needed to cut through phenolics and food. Slight bitter finish but diminishes on 2nd taste. Skin contact? Very beautiful wine, different style of Riesling. W8 – textured, savoury. Unusual aromatics - umami, teriyaki, spicy, nuttiness and oiliness – lacks fruit. Acid prominent, edgy savoury flavours with pepperiness. Abv slightly dominant and out of balance. Would have picked it a week earlier!

Smaragd Achleiten Riesling 2012 13.5%, 3.5g RS, 5.6g/l TA

Turpenes starting to show, some peachstone talcum powder notes. Good acidity, well-integrated, nice touch of sweetness in there, rounded finish.

Smaragd Achleiten Riesling 2002 13.5%

Shy nose of some peaches, yellow wrinkly apples, touch of almond and marzipan. Lovely peachy perfume notes, lots of almonds, still very fresh. Tails off slightly at finish.

Achleiten Riesling Kabinett 1982 12.5%

Full-on turpenes and resin, savoury and umami some orange marmalade, spice, smoke. Softer acidity but holding on beautifully. Probably drink up.

Vote of thanks by Gottfried – thanks to Bruwer and Lizette. A pleasure to taste these site specific wines.