



INFORMATION



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THE PROJECT

The desire: to LEARN. The idea: to EXPERIMENT. The foundation: FERTILE SOIL. The shadow: TRADITION. The common ground: RIESLING. The requirement: AUTHENTICITY. The goal: ANSWERS!

This is the launch of the project “WURZELWERK & WINZERS BEITRAG” (ROOTWORK & VINTNER OBLIGATION). Stefanie and Alwin Jurtschitsch (Langenlois, Kamptal, Austria), Johannes Hasselbach / Weingut Gunderloch (Nackenheim, Rheinhessen, Germany) and Max von Kunow / Weingut von Hövel (Oberemmel, Saar, Germany) all exchanged a portion of their harvest in 2012 with the motto, “give me your juice; I’ll give you mine.” Grapes from superb vineyards were vinified in three separate cellars, each with a personal interpretation according to the style of the house. This was the genesis of an extraordinary project.

The query of how one defines/explains/scrutinizes and simultaneously expresses terroir is a question that has long existed. The question of how much of “terroir” stems from the vineyard and what influence the cellar or the vintner plays remains unresolved. These young vintners were more fascinated by the mystery of terroir than by new oenological possibilities in the cellar even during their studies. The theme “terroir and origin” is an often-used buzzword in marketing presentations. As students in a flat-sharing community, their blind tastings attempted to determine the difference between origins from red slate and blue slate.

They delved ever deeper into the terroir theme. After studies, they each travelled the world discovering wines from various soils and climates, always comparing old and new traditions as they gained winemaking experience in foreign cellars.

While participating in the creation of superb, authentic, handcrafted wines with unique character of origin, the four young vintners strayed ever further from analytical thinking and handling and distanced themselves from typical winemaking that relies on the analysis of acid, sugar, pH and other lab parameters. More than this: they learned to read the vineyard and to taste the grapes in order to reach their conclusions. They strove to better understand the symbiosis of the vine and the vintner and to school their sensibility, their feeling for terroir.

Eventually, they each returned to their homes - back to the family winery, back to their roots, back to their own vineyards - to Scharzhofberg, to Rothenberg and to Heiligenstein. A change of generation took place nearly simultaneously in all three family wineries. Old traditions were challenged while making plans for the future and searching for answers to the questions like “who am I?”, “from where do I come?” and “how can I express this in my wine?”.

During a long walk through the Kamptal vineyards shortly before the harvest of 2012, the idea of exchanging grapes was conceived. Just four weeks later, grapes exchanged hands.

Their goal was not to create the “loudest” wine in the world, but to learn, to experiment, to share and to achieve something together. They endeavoured to tread new terrain and to fathom the mystery of terroir. Through the exchange of grapes and subsequent tastings and discussions, each learned more about their own vineyard.

The four spoke about their idea with their joint friends Julia Klüber (WeinBureau / WineVibes) and Paul Truszkowski (WineVibes & Drunkenmonday). Both were enthusiastic and talked about it with their network of friends. This impressive innovation was given a name and a face. The project “WURZELWERK & WINZERS BEITRAG” was born.

THE FACTS

_THE TERROIR

"Terroir includes physical elements of the vineyard habitat – the vine, subsoil, siting, drainage, and microclimate. Beyond the measurable ecosystem, there is an additional dimension – the spiritual aspect that recognizes the joys, the heartbreaks, the pride, the sweat, and the frustrations of its history." James E. Wilson

How is terroir (scientifically) defined?

The following factors determine terroir:

- Environment
 - Soil (type, depth, soil colour)
 - Climate (temperature, precipitation, insolation)
 - Topography (altitude, slope, exposition)
- Biological factors
 - Grape variety (or variety mix) and rootstock
 - Age of the rootstock
- Human factors
 - Technical: viticulture, oenology
 - History
 - Economy
 - And naturally, the dedication and involvement of the vintner.

All of the factors interact with one another and each contributes to what is referred to as the terroir of a wine region. The human factor is inseparable from terroir.

What influence does terroir have on wine?

Terroir influences the quality and the typicity of a wine.

- Quality
 - Numerous factors have an influence and they interact with one another.
 - Climate, soil and grape variety are the main parameters.
- Typicity
 - Terroir: the relationship of a product to a geographic origin
 - Inimitable typicity is present particularly in the highest quality wines.
 - The taste of a wine reflects the origin from which it comes.
 - Terroir is the original idea behind the AOC Premier and Grand Crus and the Ersten Lagen
 - Terroir is embodied in single vineyard wines

For what does terroir stand?

- Terroir stands for tradition, authenticity, and honesty.
- Terroir is the anti-thesis to the globalization and industrialization of the wine branch.
- Terroir continues tradition.
- Terroir means expression of geographic typicity despite oenological variations



THE FACTS _THE IDEA

Four people have fastidiously observed and continuously seek to fathom “their” terroir. They allow the soil to speak and strive to hear the quiet voice of terroir. Four people are rediscovering and defining the terms “soil”, “home” and “Riesling”.

These four people share quite a lot. Each of their wineries possesses a long tradition of wine cultivation and is currently undergoing a change of generations. They all share the same wine ideal and philosophy, have travelled broadly, and gathered experience beyond their years. The four people are above all else friends – friends that are seeking new and unconventional ways to redefine “home” for themselves.

These four vintners truly know what home means. After travelling far and wide collecting international experience, they have returned to their parents’ wineries. They are now the generation bravely taking the helm to face new challenges with innovation. Simultaneously they are mindful of old values: tradition, handwork, culture, customs, and the environment. Boredom is an unknown term – this is, after all, about the rediscovery of a vintner philosophy, a time for mindfulness, observation, and experimentation.

The exchange between the three wineries along with contact to other producers around the world has served to broaden horizons and find inspiration. This wine culture friendship is based on trust and intuition, on quiet observation, and on embarking on new paths. It is exactly this courage that defines the idea of the “social entrepreneur”. *“Social Entrepreneurs play the role of change agents by adopting a mission, recognizing opportunities, engaging in innovation, acting without being limited by resources currently at hand, exhibiting accountability.”* (Dees, J. Gregory)

Together they create wines that allow each of them space for individuality and the possibility of expression in order to create something new and grand. This philosophy redefines best practice for pioneering new approaches – a valuable supplement to already existing philosophies. “We seek realization of self and simply implement our ideas! We find answers to our questions ourselves,” is the motto and spirit. Terroir is a question that one can only answer and find for oneself. You have to look for it.

Wine is an art form to these four friends and terroir does not mean a specific vineyard that belongs to a vintner, but rather a vintner that belongs to his vineyard.

THE FACTS _THE FOUR VINTNERS



Maximilian von Kunow / Weingut von Hövel, Saar

The Hövel Winery, over 200 years in the family's ownership, is known for the steely, fruity style of Riesling that can only come from the Saar wine region. The family owns 2.8 hectares in the world-famous Scharzhofberg Vineyard where the blue slate yields vibrant Rieslings of extraordinary character. The aristocratic fruit and racy acidity of the Rieslings from this vineyard are unique in the world of wine. Wines have been fermented traditionally at this estate in large, old wooden casks as a matter of course for the past 200 years. "The Saar offers the chance to produce unadulterated, natural wines that are truly inimitable. A good Saar Riesling stands for pleasantly low alcohol combined with depth of flavour – a contemporary wine that finds comparison nowhere else in the world," states Maximilian von Kunow.

Meticulous hand selection and rigorous yield restriction ensure more flavour concentration, precision, and clarity simultaneously with more complex structure and mouthfeel than ever before. Tradition and the modern are united perfectly in this historic estate. For Maximilian von Kunow, modern means the return to positively experienced traditions.



Johannes Hasselbach / Weingut Gunderloch, Rheinhessen

Carl Gunderloch founded this winery in 1890. Since then the family has focused intensely on Riesling, which finds ideal preconditions in the 250-million-year old red slate. The climate and geological conditions allow the creation of expressive wines. The heart and soul of the estate is the prominent Rothenberg Vineyard in Nackenheim. The family winery currently cultivates 24 hectares planted nearly exclusively with Riesling.



After his studies in economy, Johannes Hasselbach sought winemaking experience throughout his world wine travels, which lead him to various wineries in Australia, Canada, Chile and New Zealand. After this valuable “detour”, the inquisitive economist took over responsibility for the family winery and further developed it dynamically. His exchange with friends, colleagues and winery interns from all over the world remains a valuable inspiration for him as a vintner.

Alwin & Stefanie Jurtschitsch / Weingut Jurtschitsch, Kamptal

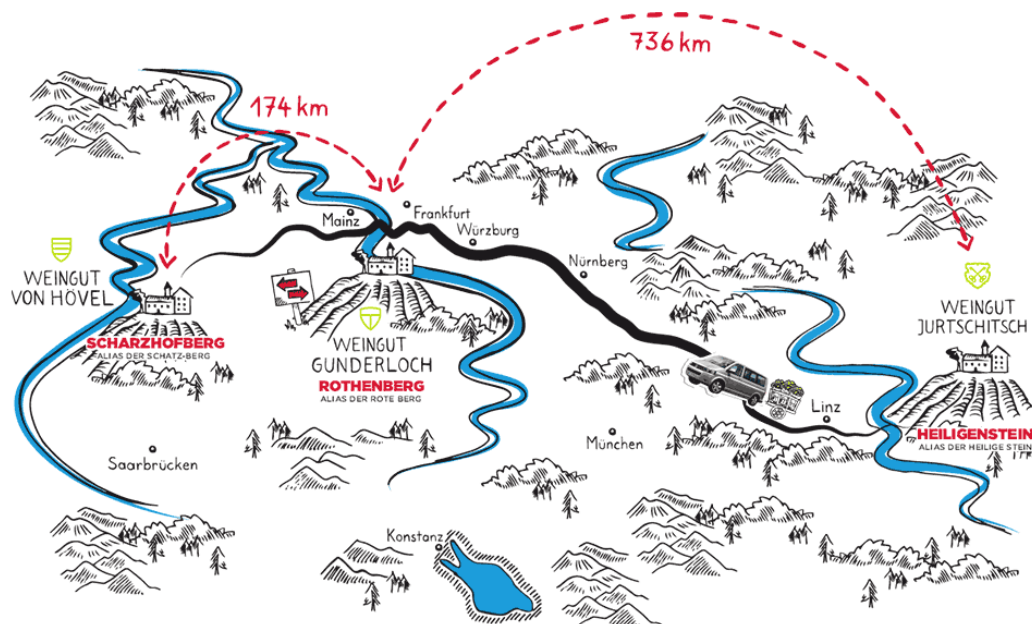
The Jurtschitsch winery has long been a paradigmatic example of best Austrian wine culture. Stefanie (maiden name Hasselbach, daughter of the Gunderloch estate) and Alwin Jurtschitsch have managed the family winery since 2009 with a new interpretation of exemplary vineyards. Their goal is to vinify wines of utmost authenticity, complex wines with unique terroir character in a cool and elegant style that express the individuality of their various Langenlois vineyards. New parameters, which in reality return to old traditions, are the foundation for organic cultivation, healthy soils, minimal intervention in the cellar, and continuous experimentation to explore the inexhaustible possibilities of terroir in the wine world.



Minimal intervention is the rule in the wine cellar. The symbiosis of preconditions in the local vineyards, the thoughtful and respectful interaction with nature, gentle vinification, and an open mind for new “old” ways are the means with which Stefanie and Alwin Jurtschitsch produce wines to meet the highest quality demands.

THE FACTS _THE VINEYARDS

The wines stem not only from three of the most exciting terroir, they are also three of the very best Riesling vineyards in the world. Because European law demands that grapes for quality wines not be sourced from a foreign country – even if they come from the best origins in the world, the vintners had to come up with a creative solution. The historic vineyard names could not appear on the labels. Instead the wines had to be declassified and simply labelled as “European Table Wine” to comply with the law. In order to honour the names of the great vineyard origins, fantasy names were chosen that are similar: “Schatz-berg” for Scharzhofberg, “Rote Berg” for Rothenberg and “Heilige Stein” for Heiligenstein. Knowledgeable connoisseurs understand!



The Scharzhofberg alias DER SCHATZ-BERG

The steep 28-hectare slope is situated between Wiltingen and Oberemmel. The exposition is south to southeast with parcels on the west border of the site facing southwest. The slope gradient is 30 to 60%.

The soil is comprised of weathered slate and clay with high iron content. The fine earth is silty clay with ferrous, reddish content. The vineyard is planted exclusively to Riesling. The Hövel winery owns 2.8 hectares. The wind-exposed valley east of the village of Wiltingen is unique. The forest on the mountaintop regulates humidity and guarantees good aeration of the most elevated parcels. The middle of Scharzhofberg forms a convex that stores warmth. Wines from the Scharzhofberg are restrained in their youth and gain markedly in spice and aroma intensity with bottle maturation. On the palate they are highly elegant and rich in extract. The wines are famed for their capacity to age. This is a legendary vineyard with a world-class reputation!



The Rothenberg alias DER ROTE BERG

The Rothenberg site encompasses around 20 hectares and is situated at the north end of the “Roter Hang” between Nackenheim and Nierstein directly on the Rhine River. Five hectares comprise the heart of the Rothenberg Mountain where the grapes for the Wurzelwerk project are sourced.

A rock strata from the Oberrotliengenden period (early Permian, around 280 million years ago) came to the surface as a steep slope facing southeast towards the Rhine during the tertiary era (around 30 million years ago) as the River carved its gorge.

The Rothenberg has red plates of shale with thin calcareous veins. The red colour is due to iron content (hematite) that formed during subtropical climate conditions. The Rothenberg has a slope gradient of 30 to 80%. Its wines are fine and mineral and possess tremendous ageing potential. Riesling vines here yield racy, delicate, fruity wines of extraordinary elegance.

The Heiligenstein alias DER HEILIGE STEIN

The Heiligenstein is a mountain in the village of Zöbing (near Langenlois) that belongs to the foothills of the Manhartsberg Mountain in Lower Austria. Its altitude reaches 360 m. The Kamp River flows at the southwest foot of the mountain. The mountain's unique geology stems from the Permian era around 270 million years ago. The soils are compressed desert sandstone with abundant quartz and high silicate content. The soils become increasingly red towards the east.

The forest on the plateau brings cool, humid air to Heiligenstein, which is welcome in the warmest and most highly exposed site in the Kamptal region. Flora and fauna thrive between the vine rows that otherwise are found only much farther south in Mediterranean regions.

There are several myths surrounding the name of Heiligenstein. Historically, the site was called Hellenstein or Höllenstein. Because most of the vineyards were once in the hands of the Catholic Church, the mountain eventually became the name “Heiligenstein”. The names “Hellenstein” and “Höllenstein” do not come from the hellish heat of the Heiligenstein, but stem from the word “Halde” which refers to an abrupt drop-off or slope. Rieslings from the Heiligenstein are exceptionally fine and spicy in their expression.

THE WINES

9 Riesling Wines from 3 Vineyards and 3 Wineries



The Scharzhofberg alias DER SCHATZ-BERG

1/9

Von Hövel 2012er "Der Schatz-Berg" (Scharzhofberg), Saar

2/9

Gunderloch 2012er "Der Schatz-Berg" (Scharzhofberg), Rheinhessen

3/9

Jurtschitsch 2012er "Der Schatz-Berg" (Scharzhofberg), Kamptal / Österreich



The Rothenberg alias DER ROTE BERG

4/9

Von Hövel 2012er "Der Rote Berg" (Rothenberg), Saar

5/9

Gunderloch 2012er "Der Rote Berg" (Rothenberg), Rheinhessen

6/9

Jurtschitsch 2012er "Der Rote Berg" (Rothenberg), Kamptal / Österreich



The Heiligenstein alias DER HEILIGE STEIN

7/9

Von Hövel 2012er "Der Heilige Stein" (Heiligenstein), Saar

8/9

Gunderloch 2012er "Der Heilige Stein" (Heiligenstein), Rheinhessen

9/9

Jurtschitsch 2012er "Der Heilige Stein" (Heiligenstein), Kamptal / Österreich



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