

Wildbacher and its Diversity

Every year, weather conditions will determine the wines to be vinified from Blauer Wildbacher. The autumn of 2002, for instance, was ideal for the production of sweet wines (Troockenbeereauslese at 42.4° Brix), in 2003 high degrees of ripeness with perfectly sound grapes and low acidity were achieved – especially suitable for reds, and 2004 with its slightly delayed growing season became a classic Schilcher year.

2005 and 2006 yielded crops varying from Schilcher to red wine to Beereauslese qualities.

2007 was an excellent year with extremely long hang times: early budbreak, start of flowering end of May, start of harvest mid-September. An Auslese was picked from our single vineyard Mitteregg in Bad Gams as early as on 20th October.

The harvest was completed on 21st November 2007 with perfectly ripe Wildbacher grapes at around 25° Brix for Lestoa´ ROT and „A Siassa“ as well as a Beereauslese for our Schilcher “Ganz a Siassa“.

Strohmeier´s Wildbacher-styles at a glance:

Schilcher: The Strohmeier Schilcher is characterized by a ripe and mild acidity with sustained fruitiness supported by a strongly mineral structure.

Single-vineyard Schilchers: Grapes are sourced from old plantings and picked late in the season at extremely low yields. Extended aging in wooden casks produces harmonious Schilchers that make perfect food partners.

Prädikat Wines (sweet wines): Ausleses are crafted from sound and fully ripe grapes. If the year is up to it, even Troockenbeereausleses are made of botrytized grapes. The high sugar levels offset by a crisp acidity make these wines lively and layered.

Red wines: Wildbacher vines carry small bunches with small berries, which – in hot years – produce very intense reds, in terms of both fruit and tannins. These have huge aging potentials.

Sparkling Wines: By careful grape processing – as little mechanical treatment as possible and aging on the lees – a balanced base blend is obtained. The second fermentation is carried out in bottles with lees aging for several months. Disgorgement takes place in our own sparkling-wine cellar.

Pomace brandy: From the pomace of our premium batches, a strong, expansive and distinctive brandy is distilled.

Schilcher (a brief survey)

Schilcher is a wine about which a lot of stories have grown up, starting from a mistaken identity or blend with ungrafted wines, which is why it was also known as a “brutal drop“ or “hedge crusher“, to positive effects which are attributed to this wine, such as its aphrodisiac or tonic effect.

Even today, there are many people who believe that Blauer Wildbacher is an ungrafted vine, and hence of American origin. Yet, there is no doubt about Wildbacher ranking among the oldest grape varieties cultivated in Central Europe, one of its parents being the medieval Heunischrebe, the other one being unknown.

Pips from funerary objects found in hill graves of the Celts in West Styria are the oldest proof of the presence of this grape. The first written records mentioning Schilcher were, however, only found in 1580, in a wine book written by the Viennese Johann Rasch.

Schilcher has retained a certain myth till today, which is probably to be attributed to its colour, on the one hand. On the other hand, there have always been balancing acts between Schilcher offering itself as an earthy, rustic wine and Schilcher winning fame by its superb quality. Thus,

in 1938, Schilcher reached a ripeness of almost 24° Brix, and the legendary 1947 was even more mature. Single bottles of this rarity are still available for tastings and proof of the outstanding quality and longevity of Schilchers.

Wine lovers and experts are amazed when tasting old Schilchers back to 1938...