

Wine & Spirits

SPECIAL ISSUE

29th Annual
BUYING GUIDE

AS SEEN IN Wine & Spirits

Austria Burgenland

Anita & Hans Nittnaus

A pioneer in Burgenland, Hans Nittnaus's wines display the region's varied terroir and indigenous grapes in wines of power and elegance.

Noble Pannonia: In 1985, when Hans Nittnaus took over his family's estate in Gols, on the northeastern side of Lake Neusiedl, the region wasn't known to many outsiders. Rather than taking a varietal approach to his wines, he began bottling a wine culled from his top vineyards he called Pannobile, a combination of Pannonia, the Roman name for the area, and "noble." This became the basis of the Pannobile winegrower's association, now nine members strong, focused on wines from the area's best sites and grapes.

The Leitha Mountains: In 1999, Nittnaus couldn't find any zweigelt grapes in Gols, so he looked a little farther west, discovering limestone and slate hillsides in the Leitha Mountains that grew grapes with a distinct mineral imprint. You can taste that imprint with Nittnaus's 2012 Kalk und Schiefer, a dark blaufränkisch that uses its minerality to create space in the dark fruit, giving a sense of lift, light and air. It's because of wines like this that the Leithaberg is now an officially delimited winegrowing area with its own DAC.

Respekt: In his effort to showcase the terroir of the area through his wines, Nittnaus transitioned to biodynamic viticulture in the early 2000s, working with a group of other winemakers to found Respekt, an association of biodynamic growers in Austria and Germany. In the winery, he adheres to indigenous yeast ferments, and has decreased his use of barriques, preferring 500-liter barrels of Austrian and Eastern European oak. His wines can be quiet and slow to reveal their pleasures, but well worth the wait. His 2011 Alte Reben Blaufränkisch, from a warm, early vintage, feels simply rich at the outset, then glides into a complex weave of fruit, spice and earth, no one part speaking louder than the other, no sense of pretention or ostentatious display. It just tastes like wine, very good wine, from a very particular place. —T.Q.T.



Winemaker/viticulturist:

Hans Nittnaus

Owners: Hans & Christine Nittnaus

Founded: 1927

Acres owned: 86.5

Cases produced: 18,300

Estate grown: 60%

Importer: Monika Caha Selections/
Frederick Wildman and Sons, NY

Website: nittnaus.at

TOP-SCORING WINES

- 95 '11 Leithaberg Alte Reben Blaufränkisch \$45 (4/15)
- 92 '12 Burgenland Kalk und Schiefer Blaufränkisch \$20 (4/15)
- 90 '12 Burgenland Blauer Zweigelt \$18 (4/15)



MONIKA CAHA SELECTIONS INC.

