

WINE COLLECTIVE

selected by Jacqueline Pirolo

MAY 2022: AUSTRIA

This month we travel to gorgeous Austria, a land of Alpine lakes, waterfalls, veal schnitzel, apple strudel and crisp wines as fun to drink as they are to pronounce!

We are very excited about this box because three of the four producers have just been released to the Miami market for the very first time by Neal Rosenthal, one of our favorite importers (see Wine 101). All of the wines in Neal's book speak to the place that they come from, the typicity of the grape, and you'll never hear the words "Natural Wine" from him, even though the foundational ethos of his business, founded in 1977, are:

90% of the ultimate wine is created in the vineyard; and, the role of the winemaker is to let the wine make itself, or "laissez le vin de se faire".

In essence, Neal describes wine as an agricultural product whose flavor and structure - those elements that make each wine unique - come from the combination of soil, climate, and grape variety. The holy trinity of terroir. Which is exactly what we preach.

Austria is a landlocked country with long ripening seasons, and massive temperature shifts throughout each day, at an elevation of 1,600 to 4,600 feet. These can all be very ideal traits for wine making, and we believe each of these producers have mastered them. Austria is well known for Grüner Veltliner and Riesling, which is often misunderstood as only sweet.

In this box we aim to hit you with some shocking juice that will open your eyes to the incredible indigenous vines of Austria. Enjoy!

WINE 101

The Importance of Wine Importers

Wine importers are people who go around and create/build relationships with wineries and producers, taste their wines and import those they feel would succeed in our market. In the store, you can turn the bottle around to see who is importing it, and you might not know the wine, but if you trust the importer you can know that will be an excellent selection for you.

#macchinmyglass

KITCHEN NOTE

Gigante Bean Salad

red bell peppers, spring onions,
red wine vinaigrette

Red peppers are roasted and smoked, peeled, and puréed with black garlic, olive oil and vinegar. Diced carrots, celery, and onion are added for texture. This dish will stand alone, pair with fish or meat, and disappear astonishingly fast.

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MACCH
ALINA

Josef Fischer

Riesling Federspiel Ried Steiger 2020

Producer: Josef Fischer
Name: Riesling Federspiel Ried Steiger
Variety: 100% Riesling
Vintage: 2020
Location: Wacchau Region, Austria
Follow: @weingutjoseffischer

The Fischer family has produced wine on the Danube's southern banks for centuries in and around their home village of Rossatz, in the eastern stretches of the splendorous Wachau, Lower Austria's westernmost wine region, home to the country's best-known wines. The winery itself traces its roots to 1898, and today fifth-generation Josef Fischer (or "Joe," to distinguish him from his father-also named Josef) works completely without synthetic chemicals in his beautifully tended vineyards. He inherited this deep respect for sustainability from his father, who, in a true instance of living up to one's surname, has been engaged in a decades-long passion project of breeding the fabled but near-extinct Huchen-the royal fish of the Habsburgs-and repopulating the river with them. The wines' striking front labels pay homage to Josef's pursuit.

Though they show notable concentration, Fischer's wines do not lead with power; rather, they are built around a tight acidity and saline minerality, emphasizing kinetic thrust over sheer richness. They are pure-fruited and precise without feeling polished, and they articulate soil variations in nuanced fashion. Finally, while certain Wachau wines can be lavish and impressive yet tiring after a glass or two, Fischer's are irresistible in their digestibility, freshness, and friendliness.

Serve chilled.

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Neumeister Gemischter Satz 2020

Producer: Neumeister
Name: Gemischter Satz
Variety: Gelber Muskateller, Welschriesling, Müller-Thurgau, and Scheurebe
Vintage: 2020
Location: Styria, Austria
Follow: @weingutneumeister

Styria is a winegrowing region of extremes with steep slopes, extreme weather conditions, and relatively small share of Austria's winegrowing spotlight, however the growers who do tough it out are necessarily deeply committed. In the southeast corner of Vulkanland Steiermark, close to where Slovenia's northwest corner meets Hungary's southwest corner, third-generation winegrower Christoph Neumeister farms 75 acres of vines spread over numerous steep hillsides around his hometown of Straden, planted at altitudes of 1120 feet above sea level. Soils here are diverse, with volcanic basalt, sandy loam, chalky limestone, and sandstone all influencing the characteristics of the grapes grown on these slopes.

Thoughtful, meticulous, and articulate, Christoph Neumeister took over from his father Albert in 2006, when he was just 25 years old, obtaining certification in 2013 for the organic viticultural practices Albert had begun employing in the 1990s.

Gemischter Satz originated as a co-fermented field blend produced from vineyards within and immediately around Vienna, but the much-beloved style has spread throughout Austria over the years. Neumeister's delightfully aromatic version is built around 40-year-old Gelber Muskateller, with fellow early-ripening varieties Welschriesling, Müller-Thurgau, and Scheurebe rounding out the blend. Fermented and aged entirely in stainless steel, it is dry, gently floral, and driven by brisk acidity.
Serve chilled.

Nittnaus, Anita Red Blend 2018

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Producer: Nittnaus
Name: Anita
Variety: Zweigelt, Blaufränkisch and Sankt Laurent
Vintage: 2018
Location: Burgenland, Austria
Follow: @n.i.t.t.n.a.u.s

The Nittnaus family has resided in the town of Gols, on Lake Neusiedl's eastern edge, since 1684. Today, third-generation Hans Nittnaus and his wife Anita helm the winery his grandfather Johann began in 1927. Hans & Anita are regarded today not only as influential pioneers of contemporary Burgenland's dynamic wine scene, but as among the greatest growers in all of Austria. The Nittnaus estate today encompasses 105 acres spread among two distinct subregions of northern Burgenland. To the east of Lake Neusiedl, in the Neusiedlersee appellation, soils are of sandy clay with varying levels of flint; this is the site of the family's historic holdings. More recently, Hans and Anita have acquired vineyards in the Leitha hills, to the west of the lake, whose poorer soils of limestone and slate render Blaufränkisch of striking energy and minerality. "Anita" shows off Nittnaus' knack for producing lip-smackingly delicious reds out of Burgenland.

Nittnaus' cellar practices serve to highlight rather than stifle the lovely character of their abundantly healthy fruit. Their red wines are simultaneously refreshing and digestible, and sneakily solid in their construction despite their spicy exuberance and luscious fruit. Theirs are the wines of seasoned masters who have learned over years of experience how to produce wines that taste precisely and proudly of where they are from.

Serve slightly chilled.

Nittnaus, Blauer Zweigelt 2019

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Producer: Nittnaus
Name: Blauer Zweigelt
Variety: 100% Zweigelt
Vintage: 2019
Location: Burgenland, Austria
Follow: @n.i.t.t.n.a.u.s

Burgenland is Austria's easternmost wine region and borders Hungary along its entire eastern flank. It makes up more than a quarter of Austria's vines and produces the country's most respected red wines, due to the proximity to Hungary's warm Pannonian plains which ensures proper ripening for the indigenous Zweigelt grape.

The Nittnaus family has resided in the town of Gols, on Lake Neusiedl's eastern edge, since 1684. Today, third-generation Hans Nittnaus and his wife Anita helm the winery his grandfather Johann began in 1927. Hans & Anita are regarded today not only as influential pioneers of contemporary Burgenland's dynamic wine scene, but as among the greatest growers in all of Austria. They work according to strict biodynamic principles, and every single action in the vineyard is aimed at transforming the potential of the vines in the Lake Neusiedl region into unmistakable wine quality.

Nittnaus' cellar practices serve to highlight rather than stifle the energetic and lovely character of their abundantly healthy fruit. Their red wines are simultaneously refreshing and digestible, and sneakily solid in their construction despite their spicy exuberance and lip-smacking fruit. Theirs are the wines of seasoned masters who have learned over years of experience how to produce wines that taste precisely and proudly of where they are from. Serve slightly chilled.

Stadlmann Pinot Noir 2018

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CALINA
Producer: Stadlmann
Name: Pinot Noir
Variety: 100% Blauburgunder (aka Pinot Noir)
Vintage: 2018
Location: Thermenregion, Austria

Eighth-generation vintner Bernhard Stadlmann has tended the vine since 1780 in the rolling hills of Austria's Thermenregion, just 20 minutes south of Vienna. He took the reins from his father Johann with the 2006 vintage. Bernhard holds three doctoral degrees, but he chose ultimately to dedicate his life to refining the traditions established by his long chain of predecessors, and so Bernhard's wines are complex, distinctive, and saturated with a sense of place.

Stadlmann owns 50 acres of vines in 35 separate parcels in the northern sector of the Thermenregion, a chain of gentle east-facing slopes with soils of varyingly mixed limestone and clay. If this topography brings Burgundy to mind, that is no accident: Cistercian monks brought Burgundian varieties, including Pinot Noir, to the Thermenregion in the late 12th century, surely sensing a certain kinship with the lands from which they had come.

Produced from vines planted well south of the cluster of northern-Thermenregion villages that comprise the majority of their holdings, Stadlmann's Pinot Noir, called Blauburgunder locally, is simultaneously fresh and substantial, offering the textural harmoniousness of their white wines, as well as a lifted and elegant spice character that puts one in the mind of excellent red Burgundy. Like the estate's white wines, this is fermented and aged entirely in large, well-worn oak casks and bottled without fining and with only a gentle filtration.

Serve chilled.

Stadlmann Rotgipfler Anning 2020

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CALINA
Producer: Stadlmann
Name: Rotgipfler Anning
Variety: 100% Rotgipfler
Vintage: 2020
Location: Thermenregion, Austria

In the rolling hills of Austria's Thermenregion, just 20 minutes south of Vienna, the Stadlmann family has tended the vine since 1780. Eighth-generation Bernhard Stadlmann, who took the reins from his father Johann with the 2006 vintage, holds three doctoral degrees, but he chose ultimately to dedicate his life to refining the traditions established by his long chain of predecessors. Bernhard's wines are complex, distinctive, and saturated with a sense of place.

Although the Thermenregion's global popularity is often eclipsed, it was here that Austria's most prized wines were produced historically. Only about 300 acres of Rotgipfler still exist in the Thermenregion, and Stadlmann has clearly perfected the management of these finicky varieties through accumulated generational wisdom. Rotgipfler, named for its red "rot" shoots, must be carefully managed to avoid overproduction, and these varieties' late-maturing nature, a result of the daily cooling winds which descend eastward from the nearby Alps, only serves to increase the possibility for calamity during the lengthy growing season.

Stadlmann's Rotgipfler is named after the Anning hills which characterize the northern part of the Thermenregion. Produced in large part from younger vines planted in the lower, flatter parts of these hillside vineyards, the Rotgipfler Anning ferments with naturally occurring yeasts in neutral oak from nearby Vienna, and rests until it is bottled the May after harvest. Its core of round, broad, melon-like fruit is given ample definition by a blatant salinity.

Serve chilled.